

Ulrich von Beckerath, ...

5.7.1949.

Ihr Brief vom 2.d.M., eingeg. heute.

Lieber Herr Dr. Runge,

...

“Ich weiss nicht, ob Ihnen bekannt ist, wie i.J. 1923 die Währungs-Besprechung zwischen Luther und dem Bürgermeister Petersen in Hamburg verlief. Petersen hatte in Hamburg eine Goldwährung geschaffen, und die Hamburger kriegten ihre Löhne in Goldmark. Luther fuhr entsetzt hin und wollte dem Petersen imponieren, sprach sogar von Hochverrat, Reichswehr einmarschieren lassen, verhaften etc. Kam aber an eine ganz falsche Adresse. Petersen erklärte, dass er den Bürgerkrieg annähme. Eine Stadt von 1 Million bringt 100.000 Bewaffnete auf, das erklärte er ihm, und was die Verhaftung anlangt, so möge Luther froh sein, wenn **er** ihn nicht durch seine Hamburger Polizei vom Fleck weg verhaften liesse. Der Petersen sah nicht so aus, als ob er Spass machte und war auch ganz der Mann, um zu tun, was er androhte. Luther liess die Ohren hängen, fuhr nach Berlin, und kurz darauf war die Reichs-Notenpresse stillgelegt.” ...

English translation:

Ulrich von Beckerath, ...

July 5th, 1949

Your letter dated July 2, 1949, arrived today

Dear Dr. Runge,

...

“I do not know if you know what the currency meeting of Luther and Mayor Petersen in 1923 in Hamburg was about. Petersen had created a gold currency in Hamburg, and the wages of the Hamburg citizens were paid in gold marks. Luther went there horrified and tried to browbeat Petersen; he even talked about high treason, about the Reich army marching in, about having him arrested, etc. However, Luther had picked the wrong man to bully. Petersen announced that he would accept civil war. A city of 1 million can raise 100,000 armed defenders, he told him, and as for the arrest talk, Luther should be glad that **Petersen** was not inclined to have him arrested on the spot by his Hamburg police. He did not look as if he were joking, and he was also a man who did not issue idle threats. Luther returned to Berlin with his tail between his legs, and shortly thereafter the Reich's printing press was shut down.” ... [i]

[i] Ulrich von Beckerath, letter to Mr. Runge dated July 5, 1949. Citation provided by Theo Megalli