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Page 7  
Despatch 40  
From Berlin

1. 12th Plenum of Central Committee Announced for Early March

The SED Politburo announced that the 12th Plenum of the SED Central Committee would be held during the first half of March. According to the announcement, the Plenum will occupy itself primarily with the economic plans for 1961.

2. Katarn Implies There Will Be No Berlin Crisis in the Near Future

In a speech delivered January 13 in Karl-Marx-Stadt (Chemnitz), SED Politburo member Hermann Katarn, generally regarded as second most important member of the SED, strongly implied that there would be no Berlin crisis in the near future. Freie Presse, the SED daily in Zwickau, reported that Katarn said that "many people now say that so much was proclaimed and so little has happened" and that the party members would like an explanation for the failure to achieve any results on West Berlin since 1958. In reply he argued that "much has happened" because

"in the whole world everyone now understands that the West Berlin problem must be urgently solved. Inasmuch as we have placed the question on the agenda and continue to do so we are creating in the world this point of view. Previously no one had discussed the question of Berlin."

Comment: Neues Deutschland omitted this passage in its report of Katarn's speech. Other reports reaching Berlin indicate that Politburo and leading Central Committee members have been touring the provinces, "playing down" the importance of an early attainment of a "demilitarized free city of West Berlin."

3. East German Commentary on the 1961 Kirchentag

Increasingly the East German press has associated the events which transpired in Marburg during Volkskammer President Dieckmann's recent visit there with the question of the holding of the 1961 Kirchentag (see Soviet Zone News #3). Neues Deutschland of January 22 used this association in an editorial attack on FRO Bundestag President Gerstenmaier, one of the most prominent backers of the Kirchentag. The paper alleged that, through Klaus von Bismarck, Gerstenmaier is closely associated with those elements in the Kirchentag which wish to exploit religion for revanchist and militarist purposes. Commenting on Gerstenmaier's observations that the East German regime's forbidding the 1961 Kirchentag in East Berlin parallels "the methods of the National Socialists in their worst period," Neues Deutschland insisted that the reception of Dieckmann in Marburg demonstrates where the Nazi ideology is still alive. "The GDR will not permit that the cross be exploited on behalf of the swastika," the paper wrote.

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Page 3  
Despatch 432  
From Berlin

On January 21 the East GDR daily Neue Zeit reported that Georg Götting, East GDR Secretary General, stated that he hoped church leaders would "seize the only possibility for a proper religious Kirchentag by accepting the offer to hold the Kirchentag in Leipzig." Neue Zeit also carried a report that Dr. Manfred Mueller, Dozent at the Theological Faculty of (East Berlin's) Humboldt University, believed that the holding of the 1961 Kirchentag in West Berlin would be most inappropriate. Ostsee Zeitung of January 14 reported that Pastor Joop expressed similar views in Rostock.

4. East German Press Continues Exploitation of Marburg Incident

During the past week the East German press continued its propaganda exploitation of the Marburg incident involving GDR Volkskammer President Dr. Johannes Dieckmann. A veritable flood of articles appeared in the East press describing Dieckmann's "heroic behavior before fascist mobs in Marburg" and what it called the logical conclusions to be drawn from the incident. For example, Neues Deutschland of January 21, in an editorial on the incident, said that it was "an act of fascists whose symbol was no longer the swastika but the sign of the cross of the Junge Union and the emblems of reactionary student fraternities." The editorial stated that the "neo-fascists" in the Federal Republic are "financed, directed and commanded by old, experienced fascists such as Himmler's bloody helper Globke, Goebbels' intimate Lemmer, and SA man Schroeder."

The same paper had a series of articles this week which described the prevailing intellectual atmosphere at Marburg University as similar to that of the period immediately following World War I at which time Marburg students reportedly participated in Free Corps acts of violence against workers in Thuringia.

5. East Press Charges Federal Republic Government Ordered "Confiscation" Documents Incriminating Globke

The East press this week reported that the West German Federal Chancellery had taken steps "to save its Director Globke by ordering the confiscation of the documents turned over to the Hessian Prosecuting General's office." The documents were transmitted on January 17. The GDR press described the documents as clear proof of Globke's complicity and responsibility for the death of millions of Jews. Neues Deutschland of January 18, in a report on the transfer of the documents, said that the Hessian Prosecutor General, (fmr) Eauer, had signed a receipt for the documents and, as reported by the UPI (United Press International), had declared in effect that they were authentic. The next day the same SED daily quoted conversations among what were described as well-informed sources in Bonn who reportedly admitted that the documents were true copies of original documents.

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6. East German Attacks on Allied Travel Restrictions

On January 22 Neues Deutschland attacked the Allied Travel Office and the restrictions imposed on East German travel by the denial of Temporary Travel Documents to certain categories of travelers. For the first time since the imposition of current restrictions in September, Neues Deutschland cited the ATO directly instead of claiming that Federal Republic pressure on the NATO nations was hindering travel by East Germans. It alleged that the legal foundation for the existence and the activity of the ATO had ended with the passing of the Allied Control Council in 1948, for "since that time two German states have arisen with each having the power to issue passports."

The editorial stated that ATO restrictions "injure the sovereignty of other states, since some American or English occupation officer in West Berlin decides whether a GDR citizen can visit Norway or Denmark, Belgium or Holland" and said that

"this is not only incompatible with international law but is directed against the interests of the people in these states. The practice particularly injures firms in these lands engaging in commerce with the GDR or cooperating with it in other fields."

The Halle Freiheit on January 25 attacked France for refusing to issue visas to four East German sport journalists wishing to report on an international ski meet at Courvichel and for also refusing visas to East German student athletes planning to attend a Grenoble student sport tournament. Neues Deutschland on January 21 reported that the Executive Committee and Presidium of the (East German) League of German Journalists had protested to French Premier Debré about the visa refusal to the four journalists.

7. Neues Deutschland Prints Gomulka's Demand that Adenauer Recognize the Oder-Neisse-Line

Neues Deutschland of January 23 and 24 carried excerpts from the Plenum speech of Polish Party leader Wladyslaw Gomulka accusing the Adenauer Government of being the main opponent of peaceful coexistence and international relaxation. The paper also published those parts of Gomulka's speech which dealt with the proposed school reform, the struggle against revisionism, the need to maintain international solidarity of all Communist Parties and, the "false" speculations of the capitalist West that a division in the socialist camp will develop. Neues Deutschland stressed Gomulka's remark that if "Adenauer and his government would openly recognize that the Polish-German border along the Oder-Neisse-Line has been finally established, such an act would contribute greatly to a rapprochement between Poland and the Federal Republic."

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