

INFORMATION REPORT CONFIDENTIAL

CD NO.

25X1A

COUNTRY Germany

DATE DISTR. 18 Oct 50

SUBJECT Political Activities of the Soviet-Zone
Trade Unions

NO. OF PAGES

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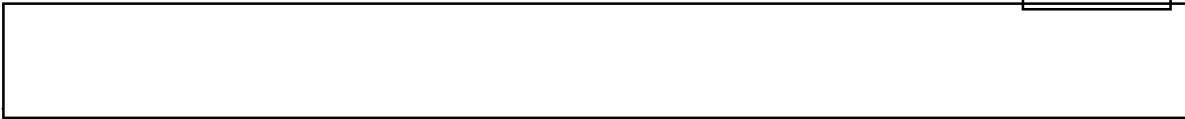
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Preliminary Note:

[redacted] the Soviet Zone leadership sometime ago came to the conclusion that any amalgamation of the East and West German trade unions, by subversion of top-level functionaries or by negotiations is no longer possible. They have therefore decided to try a new scheme: ideological merger via personal liaison on grass root level. (1)

To accomplish this, it was first necessary for the SED to have absolute political control over the Soviet Zone trade unions (2) and second, to send trusted contact men to the West. Following are two reports, the first of which indicates the steps taken by the SED politicians during the last two years to gain complete political control over the FDGB (Freier Deutscher Gewerkschafts Bund - Free German Trade Union League, the central labor organization in the Soviet Zone); the second describes the recent visit of one liaison officer to the West. (3)

I. The Fight for Political Control of the FDGB.

1. Until about summer 1948 the SED retained an outward and apparent attitude of neutrality towards the FDGB. Up to that time the functionaries of the several Laender organizations and industrial unions had a certain freedom of action. The old-time Communists in the unions attempted, of course, to honeycomb the organization with their friends, but pertinent arguments against certain appointments were still heeded.
2. At the end of May 1948 the so-called "Hettstedter conference", held at the Buntmetallwerk in Hettstedt, changed all that. It was found that the existing trade union organizations, especially on plant level, were too much interested in "only trade unionism" (nur Gewerkschaftertum) (2) and not sufficiently interested in the new political order; therefore it was decided to superimpose upon the existing organization a system of political appointees known as the plant union groups (Betriebs-Gewerkschafts-Gruppen), modelled after the Soviet system of trade union committees. The most important part of the new organization was the plant union executive committee (Betriebs-Gewerkschafts-Gruppen-Leitung - commonly referred to as the BGL); it became the new spokesman for the workers.

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Next Review Date: 2008

Document No. 79
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 Class. Changed To: TS S C
 Auth.: AR 70-2
 Date: 2006 25

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3. Labor now had two representative groups in every shop: the old, elected, shop council (Betriebsrat) and the new appointed BGL. At first many old-time trade union men such as Hans Jendretzky, a labor organizer since 1912, a lifelong Communist, in 1948 first chairman of the FDGB, were of the opinion that the shop council, which enjoyed the trust and confidence of labor, should continue to represent the workers in economic questions, while the BGL would attend to the political functions. This opinion represented a deviation from the established course and quickly led to Jendretzky's entire elimination from labor affairs. Since he wielded considerable influence in trade union and party circles, his elimination was accomplished by kicking him upstairs to the SED Land Directorate (Landesvorstand).
4. His natural successor to the chair would have been the second chairman, Bernhard Goering. However, the latter was a former SPD member and considered politically unsuitable to establish the SED hegemony over the labor organization. Since he could not be simply passed over, as he enjoyed considerable following among the rank and file of party and union, he was dramatically recalled from an international trade union conference in Hungary only to announce that he "voluntarily ceded" his claim to the chair to Herbert Warnke, a true party liner and vassal of the SED.
5. Warnke's selection did not find universal favor within the unions. However, he was the only choice after Pieck had categorically declared that only a pre-war Communist could head the FDGB, and the more suitable candidate, Ernst Krueger, was rejected by the Soviets because he was alleged to have broken all possible avenues of approach to West German labor by his clumsy tactics. Krueger was subsequently also kicked upstairs to the SED Land Directorate.
6. Before that event, however, some very drastic political developments occurred. The Warnke-Krueger faction took over the Soviet Zone trade unions at the Bitterfeld conference in November 1948. The new management demanded a clear political line and stated unequivocally that that could not be accomplished as long as some "old line" (SPD) functionaries, with their personal following, remained in positions from which they could sabotage the new policies. However, the assumption of political power was not quite as simple as the announcement thereof. The leading positions in the several Land and industrial organizations were indeed, to a large extent, in the hands of old-time SPD trade union men. A wholesale discharge was out of the question, their tie with the membership being too strong. They had to be eliminated slowly, one by one, a process that took two years.
7. The first step was to eliminate local influence. At Bitterfeld the former shop councils with their SPD domination, were simply abolished as "no longer essential under the new order of political and social conditions". For the first time, (SED) party discipline was demanded and established at the plant level.
8. Now the long process of eliminating other SPD personnel in crucial positions began. To cite but a few examples:
 - a. The first victim was Theodor Kotzur of the railroad unions. It was found that he had been guilty of deviation at a lecture held at the trade union school at Beesenstedt. Early in 1949 he and all his SPD district leaders were dismissed.
 - b. In November 1949, at the Cottbus Convention, August Blume of the leather trades was strongly attacked. A short time later he, and all the SPD functionaries in the leather trade unions in Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, and Brandenburg were fired. The corresponding jobs in Thuringen and Mecklenburg were already held by KPD men.
 - c. Ludwig Kuechel, the first chairman of the IG (Industrial Group) Textile was one of the most difficult men to dispose of since, according to a confidential report of the FDGB Headquarters, he enjoyed the support of a considerable portion of the working population of the then newly formed German

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Democratic Republic. It was therefore decided that he must be persuaded to step down voluntarily. When he categorically refused, a new plan was hatched. Three formerly independent industrial groups, Textile, Clothing, and Leather, were scheduled for amalgamation and Kuechel was bluntly informed that there was no place for him in the new organization, and that no new position was available for him. At the end of March 1950 he was placed on indefinite leave together with all four other SPD Land chairmen of the now defunct textile groups: Gebauer of Sachsen, Koal of Brandenburg, Pechmann of Sachsen-Anhalt, and Boack of Mecklenburg. The fifth Land chairman, in Thuringen, was a KPD member, and hence for him a position was available. Kuechel was the next to the last former SPD member in a real key position in the Soviet Zone trade union hierarchy. It is anticipated that the last, Karl Oltersdorf, will be disposed of in August 1950, even though he was the only SPD trade union official who agreed to the SPD-KPD merger without reservation.

9. The officials mentioned are of course not the only ones eased out. There were also such men as Rudi Eckert and Karl Meisner, both of Dresden; Kurt Pohling, Leipzig; and Adam Wolfram, Halle. Every time there is a change, for any reason whatever, the new man is an SED adherent. With the disappearance of the old SPD men, the centralistic principles prevail more and more. By now, no industrial group, nor even the central directorate, may publish any resolution without the approval of the SED. By April 1950 the SED formally informed all their party members in key positions in the FDGB, i.e. all officials who had more than local jurisdiction, that they were under the sponsorship of the party (von der Partei betreut). This means none of them may change jobs without permission of the party.
10. Despite all this effort, however, the political penetration of the trade unions has been generally confined to the full-time labor functionaries. The rank and file participate in elections only because they are held during working hours.
11. The Western labor organizations receive a great deal of attention. Only recently the central directorate has established a special office for West German liaison. Officially it is run by Fritz Apelt; actually, however, Herbert Warnke, himself, is in charge. Every IG has been informed that they are expected to establish a similar office and appoint one of their full time chairmen to run it. A great deal of propaganda material has been assembled and a "Unification of German Labor" program on a personal liaison basis is planned. The chief channel for the material and the liaison will be the West German KPD.

II. Commencement of Operations in Western Germany.

12. The first two men selected by the FDGB as emissaries to the West were:
 - a. Ferdinand Geissler, formerly 2nd chairman of the IG Clothing, now chief of the Labor Affairs and Sociological Section of the Central Directorate of IG Textile, Clothing, and Leather, in Berlin. Geissler is officially a CDU member and came to the FDGB via the Christian trade unions; however, he has always voted with the SED and can be considered a fellow traveler. He left on 18 July 1950 for the Western Zones. Since he had not returned nor reported at the time of this report, no details of his trip are known
 - b. Max Besenreuther, formerly 2nd chairman of IG Textile, now chief of the Economic Section of the Central Directorate of the three merged IG's, left on 20 July 1950. He is a member of the SED, formerly of the KPD. He reported first to the West German KPD's main office in Frankfurt and was instructed to proceed to Offenbach, Mainz, Neustadt/Hardt, and Pirmasens, (the last three are in the Rhineland/Palatinate section of the French Zone).
13. His orders were: a. To check the reliability of Communist trade union officials in West Germany.

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- b. To bring back any resolutions of the trade unions.
- c. To sound out public opinion.
- d. To discuss future trade union tasks.

All Communist trade union officials on his route were informed of his coming via party couriers.

14. In Offenbach Besenreuther visited the Communist secretary of IG Leather. For appearance's sake, he included later the representatives of the Christian trade unions in the conversation. He considers the Communists in Offenbach as "reliable". No details of his visit to Mainz are available.
15. In Neustadt/Hardt, Besenreuther found fertile soil. Karl Breyer, the first chairman of the local DGB (Deutscher Gewerkschafts-Bund - German Trade Union League, the West German central trade union organization) committee is a Communist, tried and true. He escorted his guest to various factories and demonstrated to him, in his own way, that the members of the local unions are anti-SPD and pro-Soviet Union. Besenreuther reported that Breyer and his Communist assistants use their offices well for the cause of the party.
16. In Lambrecht, a suburb of Neustadt, the local Communist trade union leader, Ohler, refused to take Besenreuther to any plant. "I am sixty years old," he stated, "and cannot afford to lose my job." Besenreuther reported him as unreliable, "to be used only for work that does not expose him publicly, not to be admitted to the cadre."
17. In Pirmasens, Besenreuther made the usual visits and also spoke at a KPD rally. A few soldiers present were introduced as Communists. (4) Besenreuther reported from Pirmasens that every night 8-10 freight car loads of war material are unloaded in the woods surrounding Pirmasens, Zweibruecken, Annweiler, and Landau. He reported also that the key positions in the trade unions were well penetrated and that the comrades are well established in their offices. He was amazed at the high number of Communists with full-time jobs in the industrial groups, but noted that the Communist representation in the parent organization, the DGB, is poor.
18. Besenreuther brought back resolutions of trade unions, against imperialism and war mongers, and for friendship with the Soviet Union which, he reported, were arrived at voluntarily and in free discussion. With workers he discussed wages and social questions, the functions of activists and their remuneration, the codecision law, etc. Well supported by the local staff, he encountered few arguments.
19. During the evenings, he solicited public opinion from bourgeois circles in the taverns. The most frequent question he encountered concerned the nationalization of enterprises in the Soviet Zone. He explained to the citizens that only 8% of the industrial enterprises in the Soviet Zone are under public management, and that commerce, trade and crafts are in private hands. His explanations were accepted with great relief. However, he pointed out in his report, the population is gripped by a fear of war. "When the Soviets come, they'll all run," he stated.
20. Discussion of future tasks centered mainly around the formation of cadres: Cadre I is to be formed from "reliable" comrades in the unions. Cadre II is to be formed from sympathizers within the union or in bourgeois circles. Members of Cadre II are to be informed in an unobtrusive manner of the possible tasks to be accomplished. In any case, the leadership must remain in the hands of Cadre I. The main fields of recruiting are to be the unions. The full time union officials are responsible. One of the best ways to prepare the ground is to create unrest, to spread rumors, but to avoid setting any definite date.

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[Redacted] Comments:

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1. For a similar, earlier, attempt [Redacted] [Redacted] 25X1

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3. The basic reports are at times very sketchy and presume that the reader has knowledge of technical and organizational details of the FRGB. Where necessary for clearer comprehension the essential details have been included [Redacted] but for simplicity, extensive annotation has been omitted.

4. Presumably French occupation troops.

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