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**From S. Tiul'panov's Report at the Meeting of the
Commission of the Central Committee of the CPSU
(b) to Evaluate the Activities of the Propaganda
Administration of SVAG -- Stenographic Report,
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. . . What is the situation in the party itself today?

-- I believe that in no way should even the SED's victory in the district elections be overestimated. There are a number of obvious major shortcomings that threaten the worker, Marxist, and pro-Soviet nature of the SED, which it strived to attain at the outset and remain important in its work [today].

Most importantly, since the unification [of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) and Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) in the SED in April 1946] there has been a noticeable decline in party work within the SED itself. There is a marked political passivity among the former members of the SPD, which will long be felt among members of the SED. The Social Democrats still feel frustrated by the attitudes of our apparat; the commandants have treated them with cautious distance; and they felt that they were not trusted completely and that they were treated inequitably. We have gotten past this by now to a certain extent, but not completely.

Secondly, even the most farsighted Communists feel the need to discuss every issue with the Social Democrats in order not to offend them, [and this] has led to a lessening of flexibility within the party. We sensed this especially during the elections and referendum. One can also feel this in the Central Committee of the party.

Full attention has been given to the technical questions of the organization, but not to its political character. Organizational questions of the party were considered, while issues having to do with the apparat and with the masses, especially in Berlin, were obviously neglected. This was demonstrated by the fact that there were no [SED] leaders at the biggest enterprises. The Social Democrats took advantage of this [fact] and strengthened their position in Berlin precisely in the large enterprises and among the basic [workers'] organizations.

Despite the merger of the parties, there is still a sense that two distinct groups exist. The results of the elections, which were discussed in the Saxon party organization, offer [only] the most recent example. The results of these elections prompted extremely heated debates.* First of all, they [the Saxon party members] were disconcerted by the results because they had counted on a much higher percentage of the vote, reflecting the extent to which they overestimated their influence among the masses. They were overly complacent because they could count on our administrative support. They were reassured by the fact that they had more paper, posters and other resources, and, if necessary, there was always the possibility to put some pressure [on the population]. This led in Saxony to a major overestimation of their influence on the masses. It was immediately obvious at the Saxon party meeting... that there was a group of Social Democrats talking on the one hand and a group of earlier Communists on the other. One still notices this everywhere....

Organizationally the party is also still not fully formed, which can be seen in the fact that even the exchange of party membership cards has not yet been implemented, or, if it has been implemented it has been done in such a way that the individual's files are processed but they keep their old membership cards. Both Social Democrats and Communists keep their cards. And when you talk to them, they pull out their old membership cards and say: "I am a former Communist and member of the SED." This shows that the party is not fully accepted as a real Marxist party....

We have another dangerous problem here. --And I don't even know whether it is the more dangerous... and that is the presence of sectarianism among some former Communists. This sectarianism is expressed in conversations, which are held in private apartments and sometimes during the course of [party] meetings. [They say] that we [Communists] have forfeited our revolutionary positions, that we alone would have succeeded much better had there been no SED, and that the Social Democrats are not to be trusted. Here is an example for you: once one of my instructors came

and said: "I am a Communist, so it's not even worth talking to him [a Social Democrat], you can tell him by sight." These are the words of the Secretary of the most powerful organization [in Berlin] and this kind of attitude is cultivated by [Hermann] Matern. This is not to mention [Waldemar] Schmidt, who has gone so far as to invent the existence of a spy apparatus among Communists [allegedly] to inform on Social Democrats [in the SED]. This is over now, but serious problems remain.

At the moment, it is hard to evaluate the strength of sectarianism among the [former] Communists, but one could estimate that in the Berlin organization approximately 10 percent [of the members] are so discontented that they are ready to join another group in order to break off with the SED. The problem is less serious in other regions. From the point of view of the Communists [in the SED] the party is considered to be more solid [than among former Social Democrats]. But there is the danger that these Social Democrats hold key positions, and their group has much more power. It is impossible to evaluate the phenomenon of sectarianism in a simple manner, because, at the same time, the right wing [the Social Democrats] dreams of the day when it will be able to drop out of the SED. [They] have established contacts with the Zehlendorf [SPD] organization (we even have names) and with the [Western] Allies.

Nothing is simple. The same [Otto] Buchwitz, who completely supported the unification, supervised the process in Saxony, and had served time in [Nazi] prisons, when he comes here [to Berlin] he stays with those Social Democrats who are members of the Zehlendorf organization. When he was confronted with this fact, he responded: "But he is my old friend, and our political differences are not relevant." Therefore, contacts between the Berlin Social Democrats [in the SED] and this group [the Zehlendorf, anti-SED Social Democrats] sometimes have the character of a party faction, and sometimes simply of Social Democrats getting together.... We should very cautious with them.

Therefore, there are two wings [in the party.] There is another major shortcoming of the Central Committee of the SED and its district committees. They do not seek out and develop new cadres who can work consistently with the party aktiv.

In addition, the party is just beginning the theoretical elucidation of all of our earlier disagreements [with the Social Democrats]. The journal, "Einheit," which has [Otto] Grotewohl among its authors, as well as others, is still rarely read by the regular members of the party, and moreover, it is seldom read by [SED] functionaries.

There still remains in the party a whole list of major [unanswered] questions. The time has come to ask these questions clearly. Otherwise the party may become dominated by opportunistic and conciliatory members. Deviations from Marxist positions pose a substantial danger for the party. There is a significant percentage of petit-bourgeois members [in the SED]; 40 percent to 51 percent workers. Still, neither the Communists nor the Social Democrats understand the new forms shaping the struggle for power, the movement towards socialism. They do not understand that the SED is not a tactical maneuver, but the situation by which they can achieve [....] that which was accomplished in our country by different means. They do not speak about the dictatorship of the proletariat, but about democracy. [Still], they have no understanding of the nature of the struggle after World War II.

Then there is another issue; the party can very easily retreat into nationalist positions. My comrades and I observed this even at the large meetings. When Grotewohl spoke in Halle about social questions and equality between men and women, he was greeted very quietly. But as soon as he touched upon the national question, all 440 thousand [sic] applauded.

Recently this issue was raised at the large party meeting in Chemnitz. They argued

that they did not have to orient themselves either on the Soviet Union or on Great Britain. They should be oriented on Germany. That said that Russian workers live badly and that they, the Germans, should think only about the German working class.

And now I would say the following. I am not sure that for all that the party proclaims on its banners, [whether] they have managed to distinguish between the correct national viewpoint on this question and the nationalistic and chauvinistic [one]. In all the major addresses and reports in the preelection period, in the speeches addressed to wider audiences, the contents diverged from our censored versions. As a way of demonstrating confidence in themselves, they carried this to extremes. This was the case, when, at Poland's border, Pieck stated that soon the other half [Polish-occupied Germany] would be theirs. After Molotov's speech, they [the SED party leaders] were given permission to state that as a German party they welcomed any revision of the borders which would improve the situation of Germany....

They are allowed to make this statement, but we run the danger of allowing the party to revert to extreme nationalism. Despite this, the SED's propaganda was unable to convince the population that the party is a real German party, and not simply the agents of the occupation authorities. There are still countless such shortcomings and failures of [the SED's] propaganda....

Here is the principal question -- how should the party develop? Those whom the Old Social Democrats call functionaries, understand their connection with the party in this struggle, and we firmly count on them. They are the basic party unit; they are those we call the party aktiv. All the rest at best carry their membership cards and pay their party dues, but do not view the party's decisions as binding. An example of this is Leipzig. Neither the provincial leadership [of the Saxon SED] nor Berlin understand the conditions in Leipzig. Twice they met and twice they rejected the positions of the Central Committee and the [provincial] committee. This is [not serious] under the conditions here, but in a different situation, such as during the Reichstag elections, these questions will require great attention.[...]

As for the situation in the [SED] Central Committee itself. Grotewohl is the central figure after Pieck in the Central Committee; and he enjoys authority among and the respect of not only Social Democrats but also Communists. (I am still working especially closely with him. I visit him at his home. He has not visited me yet, but I would like to invite him to mine.) All of his behavior demonstrates that he sides with Marxist positions quickly and firmly, and for him there is no problem of speaking up at any meeting, and of speaking up very strongly and saying: if we look at the struggle in our social life, then we will crush our enemies by force of arms. However, at the beginning [of the occupation] he would have never used this expression, but he [now] sees and feels that these things are acceptable. Nevertheless, he has a very well-known past as a Social Democrat. I remember how he hesitated before he came to [his present stance]. I remember his [hesitation] during his last discussion with the Marshal [Zhukov, in February 1946], when there was only he [Grotewohl] and no one else, and the Marshal tackled the question of the political situation -- whether or not he [Grotewohl] wanted or did not want [to join with the Communists], this was the political choice. [Zhukov] pointed out the differences between us and the [Western] Allies. Nevertheless, [said Zhukov,] I am used to fighting for the interests of the working class, and we, if necessary, will crush all [opponents]. Grotewohl demanded permission to travel to another zone. He went, reviewed [the situation], and said, I will go along with you [the Soviets].

In conjunction with a new [wave of] dismantling and with the fact that difficulties [in the economy] will not diminish but may even get more serious, the danger exists that if we leave here that we will leave behind only one such figure [as Grotewohl], that even in the Central Committee we don't have prominent figures who would be able to lead the masses during the transition.

Fechner--the second Social Democrat, who wavers a great deal, a powerful parliamentary agitator, activist, a member of the Reichstag.... He appears to be a rather amorphous figure, not much of a battler, though he has produced a number of fine documents, denouncing [Kurt] Schumacher [of the SPD West].

Of the other Social Democrats who are there--Lehmann, Gniffke: one can rely on them with considerably less certainty. In the provinces we have only one such figure -- Buchwitz, on whom one can rely, but he is the age of Pieck....

As for the Communists, Pieck is undoubtedly the most acceptable figure for all party members. Pieck is the all-around favorite, but often he says things that he should not; he too easily accepts compromising alliances and sometimes states even more than the situation permits.

I do not see any sectarianism on Ulbricht's part. Ulbricht understands organizational work, and he can secretly forge any political alliance and keep it secret. But Ulbricht is not trusted as a person. He speaks with greater precision and he understands [the political situation] better than anyone else. But they [members of the SED] don't like Ulbricht; they do not like him for his harshness. Moreover, relations between Grotewohl and Ulbricht are not satisfactory. Recently Grotewohl said [to Ulbricht]: you know, Pieck is the leader of the party, not you. However, at big meetings, Ulbricht always commands a great deal of respect, and even more for his efficiency at the meetings of the Central Committee, of the district committees, of functionaries, and others....

Now I will move to the characterization of the LDP [Liberal Democratic Party]. The LDP was regarded by all of us as a counterweight to the CDU [Christian Democratic Union], which during the last year, from the beginning of the liberation though all of 1945 until the beginning of 1946, constituted the major party (within the framework of democratic organizations), to which were attracted reactionaries [and] anti-Soviet elements who were looking for outlets to express their discontent.

I will begin with the CDU. We understand perfectly well that it is impossible to change the position of the hostile classes and that it is impossible to make this party pro-Soviet. But we can accomplish the goal of depriving [the CDU] of the possibility of making anti-Soviet and ambiguous statements; [we] can strengthen the scattered democratic elements in this party. Therefore, when this party turned out to be an obvious threat and synonymous with everything reactionary, we undertook to arrange the replacement of [Andreas] Hermes with [Jakob] Kaiser [in December 1945].... Currently, this party has a very diverse composition, comprised of the following elements: first of all, there is a significant group of workers and Catholic peasants, but mainly [the CDU includes] those who belonged [before the war] to the Center Party. Approximately 15 to 20 percent of the party is comprised of office workers and bureaucrats....

For a long time, we thought of the LDP as a counterpoint to the CDU. I would even say that we promoted [the LDP] artificially. In October and November of last year, we used [the LDP] every time we had to put pressure on the CDU. In other words, we suckled a snake at our own breast. And in fact, before these elections this party never enjoyed any credit [among the population] or any authority....

[Now I will speak about] the leadership of the Kulturbund.** We have come to the firm conviction that it is now time to replace [Johannes R.] Becher. It is impossible to tolerate him any more. I spoke against [his removal] for a long time, and we had many reservations. But now, especially in connection with [the process of the] definition of classes and the intensification of the political struggle, we must prevent the Kulturbund from becoming a gang of all the members of the intelligentsia. We need it to become the cultural agency of the democratic renewal of Germany, as well

as a society for [promoting] cultural relations with the Soviet Union. The Kulturbund ... has to be changed and has to have its own leading aktiv. Without them, it [the Kulturbund] can only be of harm and not of use, and Becher cannot and does not want to change it.

In his intellectual aspirations, Becher is not only not a Marxist, but he is directly tied to Western European democratic [thinking], if not to England and America. He is ashamed to say that he is a member of the Central Committee of the SED. He hides this in every way. He even never allows us to call him Comrade, and always Herr Becher. [He] avoids any sharp political speeches in the Kulturbund. Becher is well known enough; in the current situation he represents the progressive intelligentsia. He would not, and did not want to, let [Erich] Weinert into the Kulturbund. He did not want to let [Friedrich] Wolf take part in it, and he despises all party work [....]

* [Local (Gemeinde) elections were held in the Soviet zone on 1-15 September 1946; State Assembly (Landtag) and Regional Assembly (Kreistag) elections in the Soviet zone, as well as voting for the Berlin city government, were conducted on 20 October 1946.--N.M.]

** [Kulturbund refers to the Kulturbund fuer demokratische Erneuerung--the Cultural Association for Democratic Renewal. See David Pike, *The Politics of Culture in Soviet-Occupied Germany, 1945-1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 80-88. --N.M.]