

[Seite: - 1 -]

Germany

Berlin Socialdemocrats discuss the Past and the Future

On September 14th, 1945 a meeting of the Berlin Socialdemocrats took place in the large meeting hall of the "Neue Welt" [1]. For several hours an audience of thousands of people listened to the speeches of OTTO GROTEWOHL [2], chairman of the Executive of the Berlin Socialdemocratic Party, and of WILHELM PIECK [3], chairman of the Communist Party. We reproduce below the most important passages of Grotewohl's speech - published in the Berlin Socialdemocratic paper "Das Volk" [4] of September 15th and 16th - which throws considerable light on the situation in Berlin, and especially on the views and ideas which are to-day held by working class circles there. Our readers should bear in mind the external conditions prevailing in that city which, in one way or another, compel everyone to express his views in a more or less veiled form.

Where do we stand?

Loud applause greeted Otto Grotewohl as he got up and spoke:

"June 17th, 1945 was a historic occasion for us Socialdemocrats, for it brought us the rebirth of the Socialdemocratic Party of Germany. In the midst of economic, political and cultural chaos more than 1,500 Socialdemocratic fighters met together to lay the first foundations for the beginning of the work of reconstruction. Three months have passed since then and to-day we put ourselves the question: Where do we stand and whither do we want to go?

We want to answer this question clearly and with complete sincerity and frankness before the German working class and the world at large. In 1918 Germany was a democracy in the full sense of the word, a democracy where the people had full sovereignty. The democracy of the Weimar Republic was complete, and large sections of the German working class therefore believed that the Weimar democracy contained the Magna Carta of Socialism. We believed it, the bourgeoisie, however, KNEW and DREADED it. This is where our guilt for the coming into power of Hitler starts. The guilt of the working class for the establishment of the Hitler regime does not only consist in the fact that in 1932 and 1933 it did not prevent it from coming into power. It also consists in the fact that starting from the birth of the Weimar democracy the workers concentrated upon political tactics, without realising that it was their task to have a political strategy as well. The capitalists, on the other hand, grasped from the outset that total democracy spelt mortal danger for them.

The big capitalists had to fight for the preservation of their war profits and had to get rid of the burden of reparation payment. They found their way into parliament and into socialisation commissions and, using the instruments of democracy, they started to clip

the wings of the working class. They became the lords in the financial

[Seite im Original:] - 2-

sphere and thus secured for themselves all the decisive means to lead the masses.

The three men who wrecked Germany, Stinnes, Hugenberg and Kirdorf, acquired the Press and the Film and all other key positions. They speedily completed their work. Soon there was not one bourgeois paper or periodical which did not, in one way or another, ranging from direct purchase to personal corruption, become their prey.

Stinnes was one of the founders of that `BIG POOL' (grosser Topf) of 500 million Gold Mark which, like the war treasure in Spandau, was not allowed to fall below a certain level. Out of this `Big Pool' publishers and publishing houses were bought and corrupted. In this way heavy industry and landed property fought their illegal struggle during republican times, long before Hitler came into power. There was a boom period for rationalisation and reconstruction. The Social-democratic Party and the Trade Unions were in their hey-day too. The social institutions and the co-operative organisations of the working class made tremendous headway.

Two Grave Mistakes

Two grave mistakes were, however, made during that period: The first was to ignore the anti-democratic preparations made by the big capitalists, and the second was, not to fight these preparations. The workers did not realise that the revolution of 1918 and the terrible experience of the inflation had made proletarians out of millions of middle class people who could have become susceptible to working class propaganda. The Weimar Republic lacked ideas which appealed to all these classes. Large sections of the German people became political flotsam. The Social-democratic Party did not keep abreast with these developments. We had confined ourselves to organising the manual and clerical workers and civil servants, and were preoccupied with the tactical problems of parliamentary and economic democracy.

The multiplicity of parties was a result of a political strategic mistake. It thus happened that during the economic and financial crisis of 1929 till 1931, Hitler became the effective instrument of Big Business. At that time the very existence of the big capitalists was at stake. Our democratic constitution gave us the possibility of nationalising any industry, and the big banks had virtually already come under the influence of the State. The big industrialists acted as it was necessary for them to act in order to save their lives. Hitler was their saviour. A government was needed which would not nationalise. Away with Democracy! Through the good offices of von Papen **[5]**, Hitler found his way to the Herrenklub, and then to the magnates of heavy industry. The bankers Levy-Stern **[6]** financially stabilised the Party. Unemployment figures rapidly mounted, because, in order to speed up the process, big industrialists closed their factories. Bruening's emergency measures in the sphere of foreign -, home- and social policy - which demanded tremendous sacrifices from the workers in the form of wage and salary cuts - were in vain. On January 30th, 1933 Hitler took over. It was the Government of Hitler and Hugenberg.

The Drama of 1933

Our two political mistakes, not to realise that the capitalists are illegally working against the democracy and not to organise those middle class elements who had

become outcasts from their own class, reacted against us. The drama of 1933 did away with democracy, as democracy was the precondition for the existence and rule of an organised working class; in its place there was established the dictatorship of the capitalist upper bourgeoisie and landed propertied class. The organised working class, divided against itself, was incapable of subordinating big industry and landed property to the power of the State. It was, furthermore, incapable of securing the loyal support of broad pauperised sections of the population to such an extent as to be able to avert the coup d'etat of the

[Seite im Original:] - 3-

big capitalists by democratic means.

We must raise the question of our own guilt to clarify and understand our own position. If, however, one working class group or party condemns other groups or persons in order to whitewash itself, we consider this a display of arrogance which behoves nobody and which, moreover, is only calculated to hinder the process towards organised unity of the German working class. We did not even know that a democracy had to use force to safeguard its constitution! Nor did we know that the working class, once deprived of the weapon of democracy, is completely defenceless against capitalist dictatorship. The possibilities provided for in article 48 of the Weimar Constitution to safeguard democracy through employing the power of the executive organs of the State, were left unused. But the enemies of democracy used them in order to do away with democracy altogether. What is necessary now, is to come to an understanding amongst ourselves about the events of the past, to realise our mistakes and sins of omission, to realise that we were wrong in believing that we no longer lived in a period of class struggle. We believed we were able to do without a strategical plan, and to manage with parliamentary tactics and with the conquest of positions inside the democratic State.

We must realise that on our road to Socialism we must organise the pauperised masses and the bourgeois intelligentsia. It is also necessary for us to admit to the masses where we failed and thus create the basis for confidence in our leadership of the working class. Finally, we must pursue a policy which is so incontrovertibly correct and simple that it will become impossible for more than one big workers' party to exist.

The War of Conquest

In 1933 we lost the fight for democracy and socialism. The events which followed from 1933 to 1945 were an absolutely logical consequence of the situation created by the coup d'etat of 1933. National Socialism pretended to have abolished unemployment by putting people in totally unproductive work; people fell for this deception because, without a free press and public discussion, the bluff could not be called. As the 'work for all' programme consisted in armament production, it was bound to end up in a war of conquest.

In 1938 there were no more unemployed, the deception could no longer be continued. Then Hitler coined the slogan: 'We must export or die!' But after the remilitarisation of the Rhineland, the invasion of Austria, the Sudetenland and Memel the world would have, of course, boycotted German products. The choice for Hitler was therefore admission of the Nazi failure - or war! There was no way out, the choice fell on WAR. The big industrialists knew that any war would become a matter of life or death for them. But since the servant had become the master, they stumbled into the second

world war. Pangermanism became triumphant once more, and took hold of the people, misguided and betrayed by their leaders. The West, unprepared for the war, all but collapsed under the first impact. Then came Hitler's treacherous attack on the Soviet Union. Hitler quickly advanced to the gates of Moscow, the oil wells of Baku, the African desert. Japan almost swallowed China and the whole of the Southern Pacific up to Burma.

The Guilt of the Working Class

We, the organised working class, have certainly our share of guilt for the drama of 1933, but this share must be clearly established. When there is no freedom of association, of the press, of discussion, of coalition and no right to strike, and the choice left to the workers is to starve and die, or to work and keep silent, revolution becomes impossible. In capitalist society democracy is more necessary and indispensable for the working class than the air they breathe. When democracy falls and fascist dictator-

[Seite im Original:] - 4-

ship takes its place, the organised working class becomes atomised, and every individual worker completely helpless. A highly developed capitalist economy without democracy is a state of civil war, with only the one camp armed. The S.A., S.S., Gestapo and S.D., the concentration camps, the gallows and, finally, the guillotine are the external, striking symptoms of this.

The liberation from Hitler and his allies, the big German industrialists, could not come from within, it had to come from without. Had the revolt of July, 1944 succeeded, this too would have been a liberation from without, because at that time the war fronts had already receded from Stalingrad and Tiflis to Poland, from El Alamein to Italy, and from the Atlantic Wall to the vicinity of the Rhine. Defeat was within reach. Let us pay tribute to the men of the 20th July, whether they belonged to the General Staff and the nobility, the bourgeois intelligentsia or business circles, the Civil Service or the working class, or whether they were individual revolutionary fighters!

On August 12th, 1945, at the historic demonstration of the four antifascist democratic parties in Berlin, I expressed my fundamental conviction regarding the question of guilt from the point of view of the German people. Here I want to speak about it once more from the point of view of the working class. I want to stress: German big industry and the N.S.D.A.P., THEY ARE GUILTY. The German Reich as a State and the German people as its population can be held responsible, this is the right of the victor. Reparations too, are the right of the victor. Large sections of the working class accepted democracy at the hands of the victors, gladly fulfilled their duty, and welcomed the victors as their liberators, too.

Liberation and Democracy

Liberation and the revival of Democracy brought duties to the working class, but rights, too: The right to rebuild their organisations and their press on their own responsibility, the right to choose freely their occupation and to participate in the newly created administration, the right to unity, work and bread, within the limits granted to us by the victorious powers. Only the safeguarding of these rights will create the guarantee that the fight against fascism and militarism will be successful.

Being democracies, the occupying powers are interested in the elimination of the

spirit of fascism and militarism in Germany. As only a strong, organised working class can take on the responsibility for this, the workers have right to demand freedom for their organisations and publications and a say in all matters of administration. They hope that independence and freedom of decisions will be granted to them, as they can only fulfil their task of preventing the return of militarism and fascism to the extent that the victorious democracies are willing and able to create the conditions for the unification of the remaining territory of Germany, and for work and bread for its population.

The Position of our Organisations

On June 10th, 1945 Marshal Zhukov [7] gave the permission to form political parties and trade unions under the control of the occupation authorities in the Soviet occupied zone. On June 17th, 1945 the Socialdemocrats of Germany re-entered the political scene. The appeal of the Executive Committee met with enthusiastic response from our comrades in town and country. Money contributions came from everywhere. Out of the vacuum sprang local groups and branches, often quite spontaneously and unsystematically. Owing to the complete lack of mail service and the bad transport facilities, the comrades were in many places completely left to themselves. But years of organising experience, and enthusiasm coupled with some brilliant feats of improvisation, created a new skeleton of the Party. To-day the whole of the Russian occupied territory is covered with a close net of local

[Seite im Original:] - 5-

branches, which are co-ordinated into area organisations. Following the pattern of the provincial administrations and counties (Provinzialverbaende and Laender) these local and area organisations are coordinated into the following district organisations: Gross-Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg, Sachsen-Anhalt, Thueringen and Sachsen. These district organisations are run by district executives which consist of able and experienced comrades.

Das Volk

Our paper 'Das Volk' now appears in a larger edition. [8] The development of our press steadily advances. There will soon be five district papers in the towns where the District Executives meet. This work of ours meets with understanding and helpfulness on the part of the Russian occupation authorities. We greatly appreciate the fact that the Russian administration is in principle prepared to satisfy our claims regarding the return of our property such as printing shops, houses, etc. which the Nazis had stolen. To deepen our work the Central Committee appointed a number of subcommittees on which our own experts serve. Speakers' notes and handbooks, a series of pamphlets and a socialist diary are in preparation. At the beginning of the winter we shall start with a systematic training of our officials and speakers, to secure the development of able and self-confident younger comrades.

Economic Situation

A glance at the economic and political situation points to the task in front of us:

The economic situation of Germany in August, 1945 is completely lacking the co-ordination of normal production in society. Even a rough stock-taking makes this quite obvious. Let us first consider the facts as they are now before the Potsdam decisions

officially take effect - facts, however, which have already partly forestalled these decisions - and let us, for the sake of simplicity, compare them with the situation in 1933. In spite of the war casualties, the present population of 62 millions is almost the same as in 1933 (65 millions). The territory of Germany will, however, be smaller, and the territory for agriculture will be much smaller still.

In all cases where means of production or goods are left in industry, commerce, transport and agriculture, the capital necessary for production and distribution on any considerable scale - including the payment of wages - is lacking. Moreover, the consumers have not got the money to start buying and thus to set the ball rolling. This has far-reaching consequences, which also affect the finances of the State and the planning of taxation, for in this sphere too, all sources are sealed and all planning has become impossible.

The Potsdam Decisions

What do the Potsdam Decisions mean for us? They present us with the bill we must foot in payment for the devastations Hitler has wrought in the world. But although they lay in heavy burden upon the German people, they show at the same time that we were spared many a thing with which we would have had to reckon, had Allied policy been dictated by a mere thirst for revenge. Germany will not be destroyed, but will have the opportunity for reconstruction.

The conditions of peace will be prepared. They will be presented to the German people when a German government in a position to accept them will have been formed.

We are filled with deep concern at the horrible misery of the masses of refugees coming from the East; they number hundreds of thousands, men, women, children. The heads of the governments and

[Seite im Original:] - 6-

of the authorities in charge have stated their endeavour to induce those who are carrying out the Potsdam decisions to do so in a sensible and humane manner. (Great applause)

The tragedy of the refugees does not only call for all the human compassion of which we are capable, but also for our effective, practical help.

The demand expressed in our programmatic appeal, to seize the big estates has been fulfilled. An old-standing demand of peasants, agricultural labourers, political parties and reformers has materialised. One of the deepest roots of militarism and fascism has been eradicated.

But not only territory but also the amount of production has been reduced. Article 13 of the Potsdam decision says: 'In organising German economy primary emphasis shall be given to the development of agriculture and peaceful domestic industries.' This means that, in the main, our economic life will be confined to agriculture and to the consumption goods industry, the so-called light industries. So far we can reckon that at least 30 per cent of our industrial plant was destroyed through aerial bombing. What we, who are living in the Soviet occupied zone, were most concerned about was the question whether we shall be able to form economic, legal and transport unity with the rest of Germany. Article 14 of the Potsdam decisions says: 'During the period of occupation Germany shall be treated as a single economic unit.' Finally, the aim of

German economy is also served by the establishment of five central German administrative departments, run by five Secretaries of State, for the whole of the German people.

An important decision regarding economic policy is the following: 'To ensure in the manner determined by the Control Council the equitable distribution of essential commodities between the several zones so as to produce a balanced economy throughout Germany and reduce the need for imports.'

The principle behind these decisions seems to be, after all, that the different occupation zones shall carry on their separate economic life and that the barriers between the zones shall only be lifted to facilitate the necessary exchange of goods. Exports and imports will be under the control of the Secretary for Foreign Trade. 'An import- and export-programme for Germany as a whole', is the term used in this connection.

The Living Standard in Germany

An important point of the Potsdam programme is the control for the maintenance of an average living standard for Germany. Measures shall be promptly taken to effect repair of transport, to increase coal production, to maximise agricultural output and to effect emergency repair of houses and essential utilities. The apparatus to carry out this programme should be taken over by the German administration.

Prisoners of War

The number of Germans who are still prisoners of war to-day can be estimated at about ten millions. This is an extremely important problem for both our present and future development. Ten million men, most of them between 18 and 55 years of age, constitute half the enfranchised male population of Germany. The case of the prisoners of war is another instance of how the whole of the German people are suffering for the crimes of the Nazis, who shamelessly broke the Geneva agreement. The Russian prisoners of war in particular were treated quite inhumanely.

And yet, we still have hope that the Allies will not let the innocents suffer for the crimes of the guilty ones. (Long applause)

[Seite im Original:] - 7-

Economic Reconstruction

The reconstruction of our economy is impossible without far-reaching and careful planning. The minimum needs of the population must be established, the necessary raw-materials given to the factories and the finished goods must be sold to the consumers according to a scheme of priorities. New financial resources must be opened up and distributed between the central and local administration, industry and agriculture.

In all cases the first capital investments must be made by the State.

This will be a plan for reconstruction, extending over four to six years or more. During this time those who cannot be employed in the towns must find accommodation, food and work on the land, until enough capital has been accumulated through the efforts of the people to find them occupations in new industries. Productive agricultural settlements must be created and settlers must be trained. We consider it indispensable

for the trade unions to take an active part in all these developments.

Free Trade Unions

At this juncture we want therefore to discuss shortly our fundamental attitude to the trade unions. It is a fact that the political parties were mainly recruited from class conscious elements of the working class, whereas manual and black-coated workers joined the trade unions in many cases for economic and other reasons. According to their appeal to the workers of Berlin one of the principal aims of the free trade unions at the present time is the complete eradication of fascism and the rebirth of our people. We therefore regard them as organisations with whom we can fraternally co-operate. There is also a great need for educational work inside the trade unions.

The influence of big industry has been broken by the Potsdam decisions. The demands for deliveries of industrial plants and the task of creating an average standard of living have brought about this fundamental change. Thus our economy is no longer a privately owned one, and there is no need for us to make detailed investigations about nationalisation. (Long applause).

At this moment nothing is left to us except our capacity to work. We must not allow fascist employers of the past to have under their control this one precious possession of ours. The influence of the workers in the factories must rapidly become of decisive importance.

It is the task of the trade unions to tackle immediately the question of factory management. The agrarian reforms have done away with one of the main roots of fascism, and the liquidation of big industry with the other.

We Social Democrats consider the solution of the big and complex trade union problems so important that our Central Committee has decided to form within the Party a Trade Union Committee whose task it is to help in establishing the aims of the Trade Unions and in stimulating their activities.

The Middle Class Intelligentsia

We must also win over those sections of the population which are destined to play an important part in the economic life of the future: the Scientists and Research Workers, Business men and Technicians. Science, too, is responsible for the shameful downfall of Germany.

We know on the other hand of the silent opposition of some scientists to the violation of science by the Third Reich.

[Seite im Original:] - 8-

We must now build up a new economy and a new State. We ask those people in Germany who had a scientific thriving to co-operate in that.

Never in history was a people confronted with more tremendous economic tasks. They cannot be solved without the aid of science. The reconstruction of the State needs as a prerequisite a re-orientation of public opinion and of the whole educational system. What we are concerned with is a revision of the German cultural legacy which we want to enrich and stimulate by adding to it the cultural values of other nations.

Help is needed

The potentialities left to Germany by the Potsdam agreement determine at the same time the possibilities of our policy. The starting point is to look at Germany as a whole. In this situation whosoever pursues separatist policies inside Germany is a political grave-digger. (Strong applause). At this moment we are not concerned with choosing to look to the East or to the West. The position is clear: Germany is a country occupied by four powers.

Therefore, for the moment it is not a problem for us whether to orientate ourselves towards the East or the West, we must take measures to secure our mere physical existence.

The winter is in front of us with all its grave dangers to health.

From our own resources we cannot combat the misery of the forth-coming winter, and must therefore ask for help from all the peoples in the world. If the world out of humanitarian considerations assists us we must thankfully accept this help. (Applause).

Education

In order to maintain our public life we were granted participation in the administration by the occupation authorities. It is our task to establish a good and smooth relationship with all occupation authorities and to prove that the German people are determined to fulfil loyally the tasks entrusted to them. The sooner and the more thoroughly we can prove to the world at large that the German nation has now abandoned the harmful theories which plunged the world into war twice within a generation, the sooner the military occupation of Germany will be ended, and the greater is the prospect that Germany will rise once more as a democratic nation. (Frantic Applause).

The punishment and extermination of war criminals and of the active Nazis and the liquidation of all Nazi influence in the administration and in public and private life is a task which must be finished after a certain time. But more important and far-reaching is the educational work which must be carried out amongst the whole of the German people. The German educational and school system must be reformed root and branch. A complete break with the past is indispensable. (Applause).

In view of the importance of the educational task we deeply regret the fact that at the Bishops' conference in Treysa which took place between August 28th and September 1st, some church people went so far as to raise the demand for confessional schools and for church supervision of the schools, of the training of teachers and the choice of textbooks. Such demands show a lack of understanding of the times in which we are living. (Applause). They are a relapse into the period of cultural reaction and are strongly opposed by us. The Social Democrats adhere to their old demand for the separation of Church and State.

The school should be an institution of the State and should therefore be solely subject to State administration and control. Churches and religious communities can administer their affairs independently, - and the same principle holds good for the school as an institution of the State. This attitude does not indicate any hostility towards the Churches or religion. We stand for absolute freedom of

[Seite im Original:] - 9-

conscience and religion and will not allow any curtailment of the principle of religious tolerance. The churches have, of course, the right to give religious instruction. But only

parents or their representatives have the right to decide whether their children should take part in the religious instruction of the church.

There are still people in Germany opposed to our views on education who think that they must keep to two so-called intellectual traditions of the German people: The one is the so-called patriotism of the German bourgeoisie, the other is Germany's military tradition. The so-called patriotism has been shamefully exposed during the twelve years of Hitler domination. On the other hand, nobody is thinking of objecting to a genuine love of one's country which is the best guarantee that the necessary reconstruction work will be carried out. Moreover, true patriotism is in harmony with loyal international collaboration in the interest of world peace and world security. (Frantic Applause).

The Unity of the Working Class.

I want to make a few remarks regarding the problem of unity and the Communist Party. In all the spheres I have discussed, the unity of socialist activities is not only necessary but also possible. The Socialdemocratic Party of to-day is not the same as it was in 1932, nor has the Communist Party remained unchanged. Both parties have realised that they must co-operate and that their co-operation in the new anti-fascist, democratic People's State is indispensable. Social developments do not allow the working class to be split. This realisation brought about the agreement of June 19th, 1945 between the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Central Committee of the Socialdemocratic Party. This agreement expresses the determination of the representatives of both parties to do their utmost to create, through good collaboration in the anti-fascist struggle and in the work of reconstruction, conditions for the political unity of the working class. Those who analyse these conditions will agree with me that they are not yet fulfilled to such a degree that they would warrant a merger of the two organisations.

We did not merge our organisations in May or June because we realised that both groups must get accustomed to the newly created situation and understand its exigencies. We do not underestimate the difficulties which our friends from the Central Committee of the Communist Party experience in convincing every one of their members that democracy has become a historic necessity. In this respect we have an easier task with our supporters. Our difficulty consists in dispelling the doubts our supporters have as to the sincerity of the new Communist line. (Applause). Whoever listens attentively to the heart beats of both organisations will realise that there are still some impure sounds. The communist workers must be told that successful co-operation is only possible if they completely do away with their habit of regarding their socialdemocratic colleagues as traitors. (Frantic applause). But the socialdemocratic workers must be told equally energetically that they must give their unqualified and comradely co-operation to the communist workers (Applause). It is an impossible state of affairs that in organisations and local self-government bodies the principle of democratic equality is often completely neglected and attempts are being made to snatch positions from each other. If competition takes place it should be only competition regarding the quality of our real achievements. (Frantic applause). I think I am at one with our friends from the Central Committee of the Communist Party that we must energetically oppose any petty jealousy and sectarianism from either side. The sooner we can create favourable conditions, the sooner the day will come when our organisations can merge into one.

On this occasion I want emphatically to refute the view expressed again and again by some circles in the Soviet occupied zone, and also in the Western parts of Germany,

that the Socialdemocratic Party of Germany, under the influence of the Soviet occupation authorities, is completely behind the Communist band wagon. Of course, the activities of the political parties are subject to the control of the occupation

[Seite im Original:] - 10-

authorities; this applies equally to the situation in the Western zone. But I want to take this opportunity to thank the Russian administration for its generosity in granting independence to our organisation and its complete tolerance regarding our political activities. This thanks I also address to the Central Committee of the Communist Party; we have no reason to doubt their determination to work together with us in a spirit of mutual confidence.

We extend our hands to everyone who is sincerely prepared to co-operate with us. We address these words especially to our friends in the Western part of Germany. After the establishment of political parties in the Western part of Germany, the first step towards political unity must consist in the creation of a united Socialdemocratic Party. (Applause). We hope that our comrades in Western Germany will make their decisions solely according to the needs of the German workers. We want to tell them in particular that considerations of a personal nature must not be allowed to interfere, and we want to assure them that none of our Berlin comrades calls out for a united Socialdemocratic Party because he has any claims to assume its leadership. We Berlin Socialdemocrats consider ourselves solely as trustees until better people feel that they should take our place. We would greatly regret it if for lack of accurate information, our comrades in the Anglo-American zone were to reach decisions which might prejudice future developments. Although regrettable, it would not be of such vital importance if this were only to handicap the organisation. The main issue is that the German working class should make the Socialdemocratic Party its spokesman, qualified to speak to the Allies and the world at large on behalf of the entire working class and the German people. (Applause). A sober and realistic assessment of the international political constellation should make it clear to everyone what 'role' the Socialdemocrats should play. I only want to pose a few questions:

1.) Will the Soviet Union regard the present bourgeois parties in Germany as the authorised representatives of the German people?

2.) Will the Western Powers regard the Communist Party of Germany as THE representative of the German working class and the whole people?

I leave it to each one of you to answer these questions for yourself; this will at the same time make you realise the future role of the Socialdemocratic Party. (Applause). It is obvious:

The Socialdemocratic Party has the task to act as a focus for the various radiations of political life in Germany."

The speech was concluded by some historical reflections.

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- 1 - *„Neue Welt“*, eine der ersten Zeitschriften, die in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone 1945 erscheinen durften, Artikel aus russischen Zeitungen.
 - 2 - *Otto Grotewohl* (1894-1964), Politiker, SPD, seit 1946 SED, leitete verschiedene Ministerien im Land Braunschweig (1920-1924), MdR (1925-1933), in der NS-Zeit kaufmännisch tätig (zeitweise Haft aus politischen Gründen), Vorsitzender des Zentralausschusses der SPD (1945-1946), führend am Zusammenschluss von KPD und SPD zur SED beteiligt, gemeinsam mit Wilhelm Pieck Vorsitzender der SED (1946-1950), Mitglied des ZK und des Politbüros der SED, Präsident des Deutschen Volkskongresses (1947-1949), Vorsitzender des Ministerrats der DDR (1949-1964) und stellv. Vorsitzender des Staatsrats der DDR (1960-1964).
 - 3 - *Wilhelm Pieck* (1876-1960), Politiker (1895 SPD, 1918/19 KPD, 1946 SED), Mitgründer des Spartakusbundes (1917), Abgeordneter des Preußischen Landtags (1921-1928), MdR (1928-1933), Emigration nach Frankreich (1933), später in die UdSSR, Vorsitzender der Exil-KPD (1935), Generalsekretär der Komintern (1938-1943), Mitbegründer des Nationalkomitees „Freies Deutschland“ (1943), Rückkehr nach Deutschland (1945), Forcierung der Vereinigung von KPD und SPD zur SED (1946), gemeinsam mit Otto Grotewohl Vorsitzender der SED (1946-1954), Präsident der DDR (1949-1960).
 - 4 - *„Das Volk“*, Zeitung der Berliner Sozialdemokraten, erschien vom 7. Juli 1945 bis 21. April 1946 und ging nach der Zwangsvereinigung von SPD und KPD zur SED im *„Neuen Deutschland“* auf.
 - 5 - *Franz von Papen* (1879-1969), Zentrum, Mitglied des preußischen Landtags (1920-1928, 1930-1932), Reichskanzler (Mai bis Dezember 1932), Vizekanzler unter Hitler (1933-1934), Botschafter in Wien und Ankara, nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg amerikanische Kriegsgefangenschaft, Freispruch in den Nürnberger Kriegsverbrecherprozessen (1946).
 - 6 - *„H. Levy-Stern Aktiengesellschaft“*, Bankhaus in Berlin, das nach *„Europe speaks“* die NSDAP finanziell unterstützte.
 - 7 - *Zhukov = Georgy Konstantinowitsch Žukov* (Schukow) (1896-1974), Marschall der Sowjetunion (1943), erfolgreichster russischer General während des Zweiten Weltkriegs, Sicherung Moskaus gegen die deutschen Truppen (1941-1942), Zerstörung der deutschen Armee in Stalingrad (1942-1943), erfolgreiche Führung der russischen Truppen im Kampf um Berlin (April 1945), Oberbefehlshaber der sowjetischen Truppen in Deutschland (1945-1946), Verteidigungsminister (1955-1957), Mitglied des Parteipräsidiums der KPdSU (1957), Enthebung von allen Partei- und Regierungsfunktionen (1957).
 - 8 - Fußnote im Original: *„But the paper of the Communist Party still receives a much larger allocation of paper than the Socialdemocratic one (our own correspondent).“*