

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Germany (Russian Zone)

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SUBJECT SED - Clarification of Organizational Terms
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1. Kontrollkommissionen (Control Commissions): The Control Commissions of the SED appear to be the most powerful of the recently constituted bodies which have been superimposed on the regular party organizational structure. They have not only investigative power in examining the conduct and efficiency of party work and personnel, but also full and specific executive authority to give operational decisions and instructions overriding the decisions of the regular party leadership. That is to say, if the Kreisleiter of a certain SED Kreis proposes to initiate a program of action with which the Control Commission of that Kreis or of a higher headquarters (i.e., Landesverband or Central Secretariat) disagrees, the Control Commission is empowered to overrule his plan and order an alternative program initiated. Control Commissions exist only on Kreis, Landesverband (of the five Soviet Zone Länder and of Berlin), and Central Secretariat level. Source does not know whether the Control Commission members are chosen from the level which they control (i.e., whether members of a given Kreis Control Commission are chosen from functionaries of that Kreis) or whether they are appointed from among the functionaries of the next headquarters. It appears clear, however, that membership is appointive rather than elective, as is the case with the Screening Commissions. The Control Commission on the Central Secretariat level is known as the Zentralkontrollkommission.

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Comment: According to recent reports, Hermann Matern, formerly co-chairman, with Karl Litke, of the SED Landesverband Berlin, has been appointed to head the Zentralkontrollkommission.)

2. Untersuchungskommissionen (Investigating Commissions): The Investigating Commissions were not, as previously thought, recently created in the purge and reorganization move which set up the Kontroll- and Überprüfungscommissionen. They have been in existence from the time of the creation of the party. Formerly extending down to the Stadtbezirk or City District level, they are now set up only on the Kreis, Landesverband, and Central Secretariat levels. A Kreis

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Investigating Commission consists of three members; source does not know the composition of the commissions on the higher levels. The Investigating Commissions are not charged with initiating investigations into conduct of party affairs. They work only in conjunction with the regular Party Courts (Parteigerichte), for whom they serve as a body for the sifting of evidence in cases where formal charges have been preferred against party members.

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Comment: In their capacity of sorting evidence for the Party Courts, the Investigating Commissions perform a function somewhat analogous to that of the Staatsanwaltschaft under German criminal court procedure. They differ from the Staatsanwaltschaft in that they do not prefer charges and do not serve as the prosecution in court.)

3. Überprüfungskommissionen (Screening Commissions): The Screening Commissions are set up on all levels from the house or Factory Block (Wohn- or Betriebsgruppe) level, through City District, Kreis, and Landesverband level, up to and probably including the Central Secretariat. Theirs is the basic responsibility for conducting the current investigation of all members and functionaries in preparation for the proposed purge of unreliable and inactive members.
4. Partei-Aktivs: According to source, the so-called "Partei-Aktivs" were selected from activists in various fields of party work: functionaries, governmental office holders, propagandists, and so forth. Having been selected, probably by the Landesverband under whose jurisdiction they held membership, as exceptionally reliable activists, they were formally listed as members of the Partei-Aktiv and admitted to a greater degree of trust than the average functionary. They are, for example, invited to meetings at which party leaders outline party plans with more than usual frankness. Normally, several Partei-Aktivs, i.e., individuals with that designation, will be found in each Kreis, each major governmental subdivision or administration, and so forth. They are not, however, organized into groups of Partei-Aktivs, and hence have no organic leadership, and are not set up as activist cadres.
5. Funktionsaktiv, Funktionskorps, or Funktionsstab (Functionary Activist Groups): The functionary Activist Groups have not yet been set up. Their creation will be a by-product of the current purge action, in that recommendations for suitable functionaries for appointment will be made by the Screening Commission charged with the investigation of all members. The functionaries will be selected on the basis of their activity in agitation and propaganda, organizational and class struggle experience, and ability. They will be appointed by, and receive special identity documents, authority, and assignments from, the Landesverband. It is planned that they will constitute special groups directly under the Landesverband, ready and willing for any assignment. Plans for Berlin envisage a group of 600 to 800 members.

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Comment: Readers are cautioned to bear in mind that the Functionary Activist Groups are only in the planning stage. It would not be safe to assume that they will be constituted as now planned. It should further be remembered that, although these groups are probably planned for the entire Soviet Zone, at present there is specific information only that the Berlin group is to be constituted.

The original plans, which seemed clear at the time of their promulgation, are now not entirely clear to SEC functionaries themselves.

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Certain functionaries now believe that the SED Kreise will be empowered to designate members of the group, while others believe that the Kreise will have subordinate Functionary Activist Groups of their own.

It is the opinion of source that the creation of the "Funktionär-aktiv" discussed here constitutes a redesignation, in effect, of the "Partei-Aktivs". Whether this conversion represents a mere juggling of terms or a practical streamlining and strengthening of the loosely organized Partei-Aktivs into an activist striking force, source is not prepared to prognosticate.)

6. Zehnergruppen (Ten-man Groups): Theoretically the Ten-man Groups have existed within the party framework from the beginning. In actuality they have been little more than groups on paper. Approximately two months ago, SED Landesverband Berlin decided that the groups should be reactivated as elite party tactical units (Parteeinheiten). Several measures were instituted to accomplish this change, among them instructions to the Ten-man Group leaders to begin immediately to familiarize themselves with the character, reliability, and party interest of their subordinates. These leaders were also instructed to begin the collection of dues, which formerly had been collected by the City District, in order to force them into contact with the personnel of their groups. Further, on the pretext that larger assemblies were no longer practical because of the fuel and electricity shortage, regular meetings formerly held on the House or Factory Block level have been ordered held in the future within the Ten-man framework. The members of the House Block Screening Commissions are to pay particular attention to the Ten-man Groups under their jurisdiction.

Comment: The reader is again cautioned to bear in mind that the decision to reactivate the Ten-man Groups was made by Landesverband Berlin. This means that there is no specific evidence on which to base an assumption that the same reorganization is underway for the entire Soviet Zone.)

7. Aktionsausschüsse (Action Committees): Source had no evidence on the existence of Action Committees within the framework of the SED Landesverband Berlin.

8. Comment: [REDACTED] source also discounts the existence of Action Committees in Berlin.)

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