

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT SED and Soviet Activities in Connection with Church Conference

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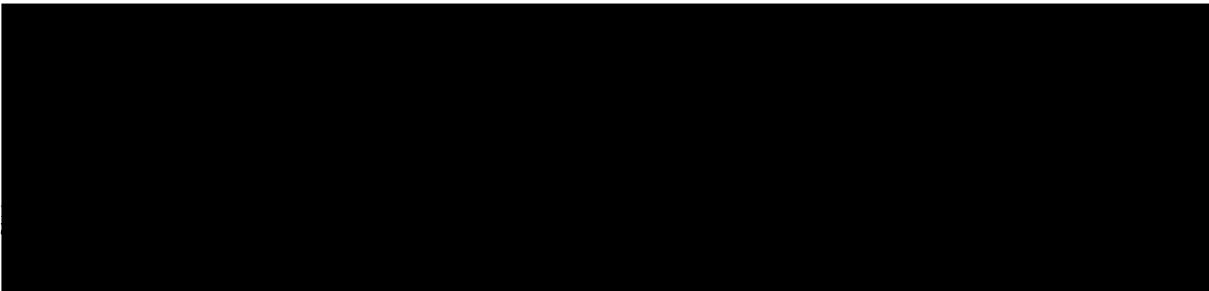
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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.



- Several weeks before the opening of the Evangelical Church Conference in Berlin, a detailed study on the institutions, personalities, and characteristics of Protestant life in Germany was prepared for the SED Politbüro by Wilhelm Girmus, member of the editorial staff of Neues Deutschland and specialist on religious affairs. This official study also dealt with the foreign connections of the German Evangelical Church, especially those in "American-dominated" territories.
- Just before the Berlin Conference convened, Girmus gave comprehensive oral instruction on several occasions to a small inner SED circle, including Pieck, Grotewohl, and Ulbricht, concerning the intertwining relationships and interests of the German Lutheran church and the Western bloc. The Girmus memorandum was also submitted to the Soviet authorities in Karlshorst, and Girmus personally briefed Semasonov and several officers on the latter's staff regarding the political background of the Lutheran church.
- The active and cooperative participation of the SED leadership in events of the Berlin Evangelical Conference was the result of Soviet directives. Originally the East Zone government had wanted to assume an attitude of reserve. The Soviets demanded, however, that Pieck should make public appearances.
- Organizational measures for exploiting the Conference for Communist national unity and peace propaganda, while concealing the relationship between these measures and the SED, were considered by the SED Politbüro. Above all, the FDJ was given strict instructions to sponsor no kind of action directed toward hindering or disturbing the Conference in any way. The FDJ was requested to attend all mass meetings, however, for the purpose of supporting any statements or occurrences which could be used in any manner for East-oriented agitation. Together with the Politbüro, an SED pastors' collective, led by Pastors Kleinschmidt and Keenschaeper, was responsible for directing this FDJ participation in Conference discussions and meetings.
- The Ministry of State Security carried out a total control of all East Zone residents traveling to Berlin for the Conference and placed informants on all special trains to the East and West Berlin delegation camps.

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