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Information for the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SED, 'Visit by Two Officials from the CCP Central Committee to the GDR (16 July to 23 August 1981)'

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Summary:

East German and Chinese diplomats discuss ongoing political and economic changes in China and in the GDR.

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[SED Central Committee]
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Information
for the Politburo of the Central Committee of the SED [Socialist Unity Party of
Germany]

RE: Visit by two officials from the CCP Central Committee to the GDR (16 July to 23
August 1981)

[signed]
[Günter] Sieber
[Head of Department of International Relations]

CC:
1st to 30th copy: Politburo
31st to 43rd copy: [Department of] International Relations
[44th to 53rd copy: Ministry for State Security]

From 16 July to 23 August 1981 Chen Dexing, Deputy Head of the Sector USSR and Eastern European Countries in the Department of International Relations of the CCP Central Committee, and Du Kening, official in the same department, visited the GDR. They came upon invitation by the Ambassador of the PR China in the GDR. Several weeks before the arrival of the officials from the CCP Central Committee, the embassy of the PR China had announced their visit to the Foreign Ministry of the GDR. The embassy forwarded to the Foreign Ministry requests to arrange for consultations and excursions of those two "guests of the ambassador".

The Foreign Ministry was tasked by the [SED] party leadership to prepare a program according to the requests made by the embassy of the PR China. All costs were paid by the Embassy of the PR China in the GDR.

The stay by the two officials from the CCP Central Committee was the first visit to the GDR by CCP party officials formally reported to a GDR agency since the midst of the 1960s.

The arranged information, consultation, and visitor program was implemented according to the requests made by the Chinese guests. They had extensive exchanges at the City Administration of Berlin (Comrade [female] Mensch, Comrade Grenz), the Central Institute for Socialist Economic Guidance at the SED Central Committee (Comrade Professor Dr. Friedrich), the Academy of Educational Sciences (Vice President Comrade Professor Dr. Kaiser), the Academy for State and Law (Comrade Professor Dr. Klett), the Office for Youth Issues, the District Council of Gera, and the City Councils of Gera and Jena. The guests did visit the State Combine KWO ["Kabelwerk Oberspree", cable products and electric equipment] in Berlin, the [Optics] Combine Carl Zeiss in Jena, three Agricultural Production Collectives, the city

district of Marzahn in Berlin, new residential developing areas in Gera, the Iskra Memorial Site and the [Georgi] Dimitrov Museum in Leipzig, as well as cultural, historical, and recreational sites and areas in Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig and during the excursion to the District of Gera. This way the Chinese guests were exposed to a wide range of GDR reality.

According to their requests, the officials from the CCP Central Committee were extensively briefed about basic questions of the SED's economic policy. The briefings covered in particular the functioning of combines (process of their genesis, achievements and experiences, advantages in management structures, problems); the system of central, local, industrial branch, and factory planning; questions of economization, intensification, the economic use of material, the effective use of basic resources; and the role played by science and technology. The [Chinese] were made familiar with Gera's development as an industrial district with intensive agriculture.

An additional focus of information concerned questions of socialist democracy. Addressed were structures and functioning of the state apparatus; the procedures in effect for people's assemblies; the cooperation between party, state organs, and mass organizations; the role of competition; and the relationship between the party and masses.

The guests were also treated to consultations on issues of selection of cadres; the system of education, vocational training, and adult education; the uniform socialist education system; and on the party's political and ideological work, as well as on training of its party cadres.

Furthermore, they received information on basic principles of youth policy, the main focus and objectives of youth legislation, the role of the [mass organization] Free German Youth {FDJ}, and the perspectives of the youth.

All opportunities were used to make the Chinese officials familiar with the SED's social policy and its achievements.

Without exception, statements by representatives of GDR institutions were characterized by a high level of political awareness and respective professionalism. The Chinese guests and the accompanying employees of the Chinese embassy took extensive notes throughout.

In order to deepen the information provided in the meetings, the officials from the CCP Central Committee received published material and documentations, information brochures, as well as textbooks.

The Chinese guests used their stay at institutions mentioned above to pose extensive and detailed questions. Their questions referred to the following specifics:

□in the field of the economy:

background for the formation of combines, type of combines, actual advantages in management through combines;

rules for construction with investments, what is meant by the refinement of raw materials; by measures to overcome differences in development of production and within the GDR territory; by responsibilities of industry guided from the district level;

attitudes towards the private sector in economy and trade; distribution of profits made by factories; implementation of economic accounting methods;

interrelation between industrial and agricultural production; proportion between wages in industry and agriculture; calculation of working units; regulations for private economic activities by members of collective agricultural farms; questions of fluctuation.

□on the subjects of work of the party and the state apparatus, as well as the activities of the mass organizations:

how is party work implemented in state organs of the medium and lower level; what are experiences with the development of socialist democracy; the implementation of legislation regarding petitions; the struggle against bureaucratic red tape and the enforcement of the socialist legal order; questions of individual and collective responsibility; the work of the trade unions.

□in the field of working with cadres: criteria for selection, education, and training of state officials; making use of experiences from the old cadres; application of revolutionary traditions in the process of education; are there occurrences of competition between old and young cadres; explanation of the [SED] terms “reservoir of cadres”, “cadre talent pool”, “cadre reserves”, and “cadre nomenklatura”.

□on issues of social policy:

regulations for building private homes; calculation of bonuses at the end of the year; general questions regarding implementation of the principle of material incentives; questions of environmental protection in large cities.

□concerning political and ideological issues:

ideological education in schools and universities; concrete details about the one-year party course; defense against ideological subversion from the West; crime activities among the youth.

The issues and subjects the Chinese guests inquired about were almost exclusively related to problems with current relevance to the actual situation of the CCP and the PR China. Foreign policy matters were hardly addressed. There only were some questions concerning developments in the People's Republic of Poland, coupled with the advice one should learn from the mistakes made in the PR Poland.

The Chinese guests did not talk about issues of relations between GDR and PR China. However, they repeatedly expressed their interests to become familiar with the actual situation in the GDR and expertise acquired by the GDR.

Unofficially Chen and Du were invited to a meal by two members of the Department of International Relations of the GDR Central Committee, Helmut Ettinger and Horst Siebeck. They [Chen and Du] accepted the invitation. However, during the conversation they avoided any remarks on relations between SED and CCP (see attachment).

Attachment

Note

on a Conversation with the Deputy Sector Head from the Department of International Relations of the CCP Central Committee, Chen Dexing, and another Official from the Department, Du Kening,
on 31 July 1981

The two officials from the Department of International Relations of the CCP Central Committee, who stayed in the GDR as guests of the Ambassador of the PR China, were invited to a meal in the palace restaurant of the Palace of the Republic by Comrades Horst Siebeck and Helmut Ettinger, political assistants in the Department of International Relations of the SED Central Committee. They [Siebeck and Ettinger] were assigned with obtaining further information [from the Chinese] about the objectives of their visit to the GDR.

The Chinese official introduced themselves as officials from the Sector Soviet Union and Eastern European Countries [in the CCP Central Committee]. They acted friendly but reserved. They adopted a passive attitude and showed only minor initiative in keeping the conversation going. They expressed their satisfaction about the opportunity to establish contacts. They emphasized the need of talking to each other and become familiar with mutual positions through direct exchange.

The purpose of their visit would consist in obtaining information about developments in the GDR through seeing them with their own eyes. Experiences acquired by the GDR in various fields have to be viewed firsthand. They hinted implicitly that the work of the [PRC] embassy cannot sufficiently meet this purpose. They expressed their satisfaction about the meetings, conversations, and visits arranged for them.

During the course of our conversation, there existed the opportunity to explain positions of the SED on various issues, like for example on the struggle for peace and on developments in the PR Poland. Although certain [of our] explanations stood in contrast to the official Chinese position (for instance regarding the counterrevolutionary threat in the PR Poland), they did not react to them. They also ignored critical remarks about the Chinese position on such issues.

No explicit statements were made by the Chinese representatives on the questions of party to party relations. Hope was expressed [by the GDR representatives] for further meetings of this kind.