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Twenty five Years After the Unification of the Working Class

Speech of Comrade Walter Ulbricht,
First Secretary of the Central Committee
of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany,
at the Meeting of the Commission to Prepare
the 25th Anniversary
of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany,
held on 17 December 1970



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We are preparing the 25th anniversary of the unification of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the unity of the working class. It is my task to explain a number of basic problems in connection with the unification of the KPD and SPD to form the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), and in this connection to present a few important historical experiences.

The unification of the KPD and the SPD was only possible after the military defeat of Hitler fascism by the glorious Soviet Army. At unspeakable sacrifices the glorious Soviet Army had vanquished fascist German imperialism and liberated the German people from nazi barbarism. The victorious red flag of the Soviet Union, the world's first workers' and peasants' state, waved from the Reichstag building. Our thanks to the heroism of the Soviet soldiers who opened the gates of the prisons and jails and returned their liberty to the imprisoned anti-fascists! Our thanks for having destroyed fascist German imperialism and its military power!

The Soviet people thereby gave the progressive forces of the German people the great opportunity to begin a new political life. The underground anti-fascist democratic fighters liberated from the prisons and concentration camps by Soviet soldiers met in Berlin, which was lying in ruins, with the comrades from the leadership of the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party. We were linked by grief for the comrades and friends who had given their lives as pioneers of the united front against fascism—such as Ernst Thälmann, the leader of the German labour movement, and Rudolf Breitscheid, the chairman of the social democratic Reichstag parliamentary group. We were linked by the iron will to fulfil the oath of the hundreds of thousands of victims of fascism who had sworn in the underground struggle against fascism in the concentration camps, in the resistance movement of various countries: No more division in the German labour movement! Everything for the unification of the Communist Party of Germany and the Social Democratic Party of Germany! Everything for the joint action of all opponents of Hitler!

What are the main characteristics of the development of the German labour movement? After German Social Democracy had developed into a Marxist party in the last decades of the last century under the influence of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, bourgeois influence in the form of revisionism had penetrated the party since the end of the 1890s in the period of imperialism. This led to a split in the German labour movement. The clearly apparent

sign of this development was the shift of the Reichstag group of the SPD to the side of the imperialist German war policy at the beginning of August 1914. Only in the struggle against the imperialist war and the war policy of the majority of the social democratic leadership was the Spartacus League formed. The founding of the Communist Party of Germany in the fire of the November Revolution was the turning point in the history of the German labour movement. Now a Marxist party was struggling in Germany, a party which had friendly links with the party of the Bolsheviks and Soviet Russia.

The development of the Communist Party into a Marxist-Leninist mass party which won the majority of the working class and carried out a real alliance policy required a few decades. The party proved its Marxist-Leninist maturity when, after the victory of the Soviet Union over Hitlerite Germany, it published a program which made possible unity of action between Communists and Social Democrats, the unification of the two workers' parties and the creation of a bloc of all anti-fascist democratic parties. This strategy and tactics was contained, in its basic lines, in the guiding resolutions of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International and particularly in the speech of Georgi Dimitrov and the resolutions of the Brussels Conference of the KPD.

When the German people found themselves in the deepest catastrophe of their history it was the Soviet Union, soldiers of the Soviet Army, the Soviet commanders and economic experts who aided the German people in their distress. In the midst of the depression and hopelessness which at that time was still predominant among the people a party appeared before the people, the KPD, and called for the unification of the working class and all opponents of Hitler. In its appeal of 11 June 1945 it showed the way to take advantage of the great opportunity to build a new, anti-fascist, democratic Germany with their united efforts.

Filled with the conviction that what is good in the German people would be activated by anti-fascist unity, we Communists and Social Democrats together called to our German people: Only diligence, the truth, humanity will enable us to overcome the catastrophe and regain the confidence of the other peoples. Only the abolition of the roots of fascism and militarism will make it possible for Germans to regain the confidence of the peoples.

The Communist Party and the progressive forces in the Social Democratic Party drew the lessons from the history of the German labour movement: No repetition of the mistakes of 1918! An end

to the division of the German people! No leniency towards nazism and reaction! No more instigation and hostility towards the Soviet Union; for wherever this instigation appears imperialist reaction raises its head! That was the common guiding principle of Communists and Social Democrats. The statement of the joint committee of the KPD and SPD of 21 December 1945 says:

"The historic moment has come to draw the lessons from the entire past of the labour movement and to prepare the Unity Party of the Workers!"

The Communist Party of Germany posed the strategic task of first carrying through the bourgeois-democratic revolution to an end under the leadership of the united working class, uprooting imperialism, militarism and nazism and establishing a united, peace-loving, anti-fascist and democratic republic. The KPD was in favour of carrying out the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the end as an anti-imperialist revolution. This program was the result of thorough theoretical and political preparatory work by the leadership of the Communist Party, begun at the party conferences of Brussels and Bern and continued in the "Free Germany" National Committee." Proceeding from the principles of Marxism-Leninism the KPD had developed the bases for a policy of the revolutionary transformation of society and the anti-fascist democratic reconstruction corresponding to the conditions in Germany after the victory over fascism. This program of 1945 had a powerful unifying force.

I. For the Unification of the KPD and SPD

The Central Executive of the Social Democratic Party of Germany addressed the people on 15 June 1945 with an appeal to build an anti-fascist democratic German republic. The appeal agreed with that of the KPD in many points or at least approached them. The basis for collaboration, for united action and the later unification of the KPD and SPD was thus given.

In many places Communists and Social Democrats had immediately started joint work after the liberation. In getting production going again, in organizing the democratic self-administration and in the formation of anti-fascist democratic mass organizations Social Democrats, Communists, democratically minded members of bourgeois circles and other anti-fascists cooperated to overcome the consequences of fascism and war. To the Communists

and Social Democrats who at that time developed collaboration on their own initiative the unity of the working class was the only possible consequence from the jointly conducted struggle against fascism, from the common suffering in prisons and concentration camps. The membership of the two parties pressed their leaders to take the road of unification quickly and consistently.

After the establishment of unity of action in June 1945 the Central Committee of the KPD and the Central Executive of the SPD in Berlin and the leading functionaries of the two parties from the provinces of the then Soviet occupation zone agreed upon steps towards the unification of the two parties. At the Conference of the Sixty on 20 and 21 December 1945 Comrade Otto Grotewohl, Chairman of the SPD, and Comrade Wilhelm Pieck, Chairman of the KPD, reported on the unity of the working class. The conference was filled with the striving for the political unity of the working class by the unification of the two parties. In opposition to this a group of rightwing social democratic leaders led by Gustav Dahrendorf, Gustav Klingelhöfer and Otto Suhr appeared. Concerned about dying capitalism they had no confidence in the force and ability of the working class to build a new anti-fascist democratic state power, to punish the war criminals and control and rebuild the economy.

The participants in the conference of the sixty fulfilled the assignment of the party members which they represented, and of the working class. The agreed upon measures for the struggle for the anti-fascist democratic transformation and the collaboration of Communists and Social Democrats in the administrations, the economy and in the trade unions. Of special importance was the agreement on the joint publication of the theoretical periodical *Einheit*. The decision of the Conference of the Sixty states:

"The expansion and deepening of united action should be the start of the implementation of the political and organizational unification of the labour movement, that is, of the merger of the Social Democratic Party of Germany and the Communist Party of Germany into a unity party."

Current demands for the minimum program and as goal "the implementation of Socialism by way of the exercise of the political rule of the working class in the sense of the theory of consistent Marxism" were agreed upon. At the same time it was determined that in accordance with the ideas of proletarian internationalism firm relations with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union would be established.

The conference elected an editorial commission to draft the program of the party consisting of four members each from the KPD and SPD to which the following comrades belonged: Wilhelm Pieck, Walter Ulbricht, Franz Dahlem, Anton Ackermann from the KPD; Otto Grotewohl, Max Fechner, Helmut Lehmann, Gustav Dährendorf from the SPD. This editorial commission later submitted the draft of the "Principles and Goals of the SED".

The Unity Congress of the KPD and SPD, the foundation congress of the SED on 21 April 1946, was a triumph of Marxism and an expression of the ability and force of the working class now to go consistently on the road of the anti-fascist democratic and Socialist revolution under the leadership of its revolutionary party. Through the historic handshake between Comrades Wilhelm Pieck and Otto Grotewohl the unification of the SPD and KPD to form the SED was sealed at the Unity Congress.

The pressure for the unity of the working class also existed to the same extent in the western occupation zones. United action agreements were concluded between the KPD and SPD in many West German towns. In South Baden there was a joint KPD-SPD provincial committee for the unification of the two parties. But the imperialist occupation powers, the West German big bourgeoisie and rightwing social democratic leaders like Schumacher jointly conducted the struggle against the establishment of labour unity. At the same time they employed all means to obstruct the unification in the East of Germany and to force social democratic functionaries into an anti-communist confrontation.

The unification of the working class was a complicated political struggle, it took place in the struggle of classes for the political domination of Germany, in the dispute with the western occupation powers who did everything possible to prevent the unification of the labour movement. Our opponents knew very well what the unification of the KPD and SPD signified, namely, the end of the dictatorship of monopoly capital and the feudal Junkers over the working people. Out of fear of the people, out of fear of the democratic development the rightwing forces intrigued against the unification of the labour movement with the aid of the western occupation powers. And they began to prepare the division of Germany.

But in the Soviet occupation zone where the democratic forces had been given the liberty to organize by the occupation power a powerful movement for the unification of the two workers' parties developed.

I already said that the unification of the working class was a complicated process. It required great political ability on the part of Comrade Wilhelm Pieck, Chairman of the KPD, and Comrade Otto Grotewohl, Chairman of the SPD, to lead the two workers' parties to success in this relatively short time.

A new chapter in the history of the German labour movement began on 21 April 1946. It is characterized by the fact that the revolutionary party of the united working class had assumed the leadership of the people and that the Socialist Unity Party of Germany concluded a firm alliance with the peasantry and the other working sections of the people in accordance with Marxist principles.

With the approval of the Soviet friends further anti-fascist democratic parties were founded which, under the leadership of the SED, united in the bloc of anti-fascist, democratic parties. Thus, the unification of the KPD and SPD, the unity of the working class, the development of united, free trade unions at the same time influenced the union of all Hitler opponents, even those who were not yet in agreement with the program of the Socialist Unity Party.

The knowledge that with the military defeat of fascist German imperialism the working class had to take the leadership of the people into its hands, the perception of responsibility in the struggle to liquidate Hitler fascism and the construction of an anti-fascist democratic Germany led to a great initiative on the part of the working people. Millions felt that now the beginning must be made of going a new road. Even if it lasted a long time until the broad masses of the people understood the full significance of this historic event they nevertheless felt that the road marked out by the SED program was the only possible one in order to overcome the consequences of the war and to establish a new Germany.

II. The Process of Working Out the Basic Ideological Questions From the Angle of Marxism-Leninism

Although at the time of the unification of the KPD and SPD the united party was filled by the will to apply Marxist theory it cannot be said that it was already a Marxist-Leninist party. The members of the KPD and SPD came into the common party with the firm will to strengthen unity. But they came with differing ex-

periences, with different traditions, with a different political education. Moreover there were both rightwing opportunist and also sectarian conceptions.

At that time about one third of the members of the party were communists, one third were social democrats and one third former non-party opponents of Hitler. At its foundation our party counted a total of 1,298,000 members of whom 473,000 are still alive today. The number of new, formerly non-party Hitler opponents quickly increased. Along with the older comrades who had gathered experience in the hard struggle against German monopoly capitalism and German fascism there were many young anti-fascists with enthusiasm but still without experience and without a Marxist training in the labour movement.

Already in the process of unification, after the formation of the Committee of the Sixty and the editorial commission we had begun to discuss all political and organizational questions jointly. The unification was linked with a thorough discussion of all questions. But this process of clarification had only rightly begun at the time of the Unity Congress. There were still compromises on many questions. But the resolutions of the party congress made it possible to continue with this clarification purposefully.

The "Principles and Aims of the SED" adopted at the congress was a Marxist program that rested on the appeals of the KPD and SPD of June 1945 and corresponded to the then level of development of the party. It gave the basis for being able to go the road to the solution of the main problem of that period—the uprooting of imperialism—by the anti-fascist democratic revolution and the transition to the socialist revolution.

There were thorough discussions of the program in the Committee of the Sixty and the editorial commission. Members of the KPD in the editorial commission had submitted a draft program on the road and goal of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. It contained all fundamental questions and the minimum demands. But with the given political situation the task was to say what was most essential as briefly as possible so that it could also be grasped by the broad masses of the working class and the people.

It was clearly stated already at the Conference of the Sixty that the Socialist Unity Party is to be "the class party of the workers, the party of all strata of the working people." As it was jointly determined that the party was to develop on the ground of consistent Marxism-Leninism the guiding line was thus given for the editorial commission. In this commission the causes of imperialist

war, the causes of fascism, the road to the final liquidation of fascism, the unity of the working class and its leading role were thoroughly discussed. Discussions took place on how to successfully conclude the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the end as an anti-imperialist revolution and how, at the same time, to take into consideration the problems of the transition to the historic goal, the struggle for Socialism. The Socialist Unity Party of Germany struggled for the new anti-fascist democratic state in which the working class exercised political power on the ground of the democratic republic.

At that time there were undoubtedly some comrades who wanted to make the leap to Socialism right away. But the comrades from the leadership of the Communist Party like the comrades from the leadership of the Social Democratic Party had drawn the lessons from the 1918–19 November Revolution. And these lessons said that it was not possible to arrive at Socialism in one leap, especially under the then existing conditions. So it was not hard to convince the comrades of the necessity of the struggle for the anti-fascist democratic republic, in order from that base to be able to struggle for the political power of the working class.

This road could be successfully followed only if the SED developed into powerful Marxist-Leninist party able to lead the working class and all the working people successfully in the class struggle. The class struggle had assumed new forms. The opponents of the anti-fascist democratic transformation renounced a frontal attack, but they sought to penetrate into the leaderships of the petty bourgeois parties and the newly formed administrative organs. They forced the struggle by economic and psychological means and the activity of agents. The shock the people received as a result of the military defeat and the consequences of the war was exploited by them for their anti-communist propaganda.

There was only one road for the SED: purposefully to develop the party into a party of a new type in the Marxist-Leninist sense. And the party did develop in this way!

At that time the leading bodies of all party organizations were composed of Social Democrats and Communists on a parity basis. All problems concerning the development of the party into a Marxist-Leninist party, into a party of a new type, were jointly discussed and jointly decided by the former Communists and Social Democrats. The party developed into a party of a new type by learning to apply creatively the Marxist-Leninist theory

on imperialism and the revolutionary transformation of society and the experiences of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the specific conditions of our country.

I must say here that the Soviet friends in the high command of the Soviet armed forces in the Soviet Military Administration and the town and local commanders very sensitively respected the opinion and point of view of the leading bodies of the SED and very sympathetically helped to promote a policy of the construction of an anti-fascist democratic order which made it possible to strengthen the unity of the working class and further develop and consolidate the alliance policy with the peasantry and other strata of the people. The party organizations and members of the party learned in the course of establishing the anti-fascist democratic administrations. They learned to manage the enterprises, to organize supplies, to carry out the land reform, to plan the economy and check on the economic organs. The worker functionaries could now make good use of a large part of their former experience as trade unionists in the construction of the anti-fascist democratic order. Everywhere in the Soviet occupation zone Communists and Social Democrats fraternally extended their hand to all other opponents of Hitler. It was necessary to carry out the construction of the anti-fascist state power and to overcome the need and suffering of the postwar period and at the same time to construct the Marxist party. All the misery and rubble—including the ideological rubble left behind by Hitlerite fascism and the rule of big capital—had to be removed in order to be able to begin anew from the very basis.

On another occasion we have already emphasized that the real foundation document of our Socialist Unity Party is the Communist Manifesto, for the Socialist Unity Party of Germany considered the basic tasks formulated by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto as its main tasks.

The development of our party was linked with a great ideological work. Lenin's works on imperialism 'State and Revolution', Engels' work 'Socialism: Utopian and Scientific' and a number of other basic works were studied. The 'History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union' was widely disseminated.

In view of such principled ideological educational work the rightwing social democratic functionaries from the west asked the question: Is then this Socialist Unity Party of Germany honest about the struggle for democracy? Or is that not just a transitional stage after which will come the dictatorship of the Communists within

the SED? In their demagogic propaganda campaign against labour unity, against the united party of the working class they asked the question: What about inner-party democracy in the SED?—The situation of inner-party democracy with us was excellent; for it was guaranteed in the new statute of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, and the parity composition of all leading party bodies guaranteed the enforcement of the principles of the party statute.

I would like to say here quite clearly: All of us, whether former Communists or Social Democrats, mutually influenced each other and learned from each other. That was true in particular of the practical questions of carrying through the anti-fascist democratic revolution, for example, in the field of planning, economic management, the land reform, the school reform, the overcoming of the nazi ideology. The valuable qualities and good traditions which had been developed and fostered by the members of the two parties in their organizations were combined in joint work. That was true, for example, of the firm and close connection of the old workers' officials with their organization and the ability to indefatigably carry out political spade-work among the masses. It also included scientific objectivity, the sense of responsibility, courage and creativeness in working out new social problems—qualities which had developed in the KPD in particular in developing its strategy and tactics since the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International.

All basic political measures of that time were in essence measures of the bourgeois-democratic revolution which for the most part should have been carried out already in 1848–49. But unfortunately this had not been done at that time so that in 1945 we first had to abolish the power of the Junkers and big agrarians and the remnants of feudalism.

The practice of the struggle for the anti-fascist democratic order convinced everybody of our determination to create a firm democratic basis in the then Soviet occupation zone.

The Socialist Unity Party of Germany consistently held to the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin. On the question of democracy Lenin had said:

"The proletariat alone can—and, according to its class position, must—be a fully consistent democrat, a determined enemy of absolutism, and be incapable of compromise. The proletariat alone can be the champion of political liberty and democratic institutions."

And Frederick Engels wrote in his 'A Critique of the Draft Social Democratic Program of 1891':

"These are attempts to convince oneself and the party that 'present-day society is developing towards socialism' without asking oneself whether it does not thereby just as necessarily outgrow the old social order and whether it will not have to burst this old shell by force, as a crab breaks its shell, and also whether in Germany, in addition, it will not have to smash the fetters of the still semi-absolutist, and moreover indescribably confused political order."

The classical writers thus clearly posed the task of conducting the democratic revolution to the end and creating the conditions for the transition to the Socialist revolution.

Paragraph 1 of the party statute of the united party states:

"Anyone may become a member who recognizes the decisions of the party congress and this statute and obligates himself to act in the sense of these decisions and to work actively in the party."

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That is the same principle which the Bolsheviks, as is known, represented in the struggle around the party statute in the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Russia. And this provision of the party statute was enforced. All party members have actively worked for the implementation of the decisions and for the fulfilment of the new tasks. This great activity, which embraced the broad masses of the working people, was nicely expressed in the May Day 1946 demonstration. That was the biggest May Day demonstration which had taken place in Berlin up to then. The slogan of the song "Brothers, join hands!" really seized the millions of the working class and of the entire working people.

Looking back it can be said that in our party the scientific elaboration of all new social problems and their explanation to the working class and the entire people was law from the very beginning. And this scientific work, this great ideological and political work was always linked with the solution of the living, current problems—at that time the construction of the anti-fascist democratic state power and the preparation of planned economy. Here it must be especially emphasized that the SED and the newly established state administrative bodies always had the full support of the CPSU and the Soviet government.

III. The Struggle for the Leading Role of the Working Class

It was a law of development that the working class had to take the leadership of the construction of the state into its hands. I have already said that the strength of the working class was multiplied by the union of the KPD and SPD. In addition there is the fact that at the same time the united class organization of the workers in the united Confederation of Free German Trade Unions was created. Its program proceeded from the theory of Lenin on the class tasks of free trade unions. The struggle of the working class for the leadership of society was, as has been said, a law of development. After the imperialist German big bourgeoisie had driven the German people into two war catastrophes and by means of crises into times of desecration of German national culture, the big bourgeoisie had finally forfeited the right to leadership. It was the task of the working class to draw up the balance sheet of history and to constitute itself as the leaders of the nation. But that required that the party of the working class develop into a party of a new type and learn to exercise state power.

In the editorial commission formed in December 1945 from representatives of the KPD and SPD the questions of the historical task of the SED and the German working class were also discussed in the consultation on the principles and aims of the Socialist Unity Party. It was emphasized by both sides that the working class must be the leading force, by means of the Marxist policy of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. Just as in France, feudalism, the rule of the feudal princes and big landowners was ended by the great French Revolution—that is, by the bourgeois-democratic revolution—the same is true of other countries—the transition to monopoly capitalism in the 1890s showed that capitalism in Germany had entered its last phase. With this transition to imperialism the period of wars and proletarian revolutions had begun. The sharpening of the internal and external contradictions of capitalism and the intensification of class struggles showed that imperialism is the last phase of capitalist rule.

In Germany the new class, the proletariat, had appeared on the political stage for the first time in the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1848–49. Marx and Engels had proclaimed the historic mission of the working class in the Communist Manifesto. By creating the revolutionary party of a new type under the leadership of Lenin the force was then created in Russia which was able, politically, theoretically and also organizationally, to lead the prole-

tariat in alliance with the poor peasantry to victory over the bourgeoisie in the Great October Socialist Revolution.

In Germany the leftists in the SPD first became aware of the necessity of the party of a new type under the influence of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the complete shifting of the social democratic leadership—beginning with August 1914—to the side of the imperialist war policy. With the betrayal of the social democratic leadership—the split in German Social Democracy paralleled the organization of the revolutionary, Marxist forces up to the founding of the Communist Party of Germany. The development of the KPD into a revolutionary party of a Marxist-Leninist type and the bitter experiences of the class-conscious workers in the Weimar Republic and in the time of Hitler fascism prepared the ground for the anti-fascist democratic unity, for the implementation of the popular front policy after 1946.

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In this connection I would like to deal with the consultations in the editorial commission and also in the Committee of the Sixty on a number of basic questions of the policy of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, as we jointly discussed them at that time. The necessity of the struggle for the leading role of the working class was substantiated in the editorial commission. The working class had to bear the greatest suffering of all other strata of the people as a result of nazism, war and defeat. But the working class was also called upon, before all other strata, to take over the leadership in overcoming the catastrophe because it represented the majority of the people. Its most progressive forces, it was stated at the time, had most consistently conducted the struggle against fascism and imperialist war policy and had therefore represented the national and social interests of the people. The working class thus represented social progress most consistently. It had the mental and material means to bring about a social transformation. And it alone is the great unifying force able to gather all progressive forces of the German people for the great task of the renewal of Germany.

There was complete agreement on these questions in the editorial commission. We also discussed there the lessons from the history of the German labour movement. That should be of special interest to the younger generation. It was stated in the editorial commission that the German labour movement, which first sprang from various sources, united as a consequence of capitalist development in the stream of the Social Democratic Party of Germany

which adopted the theory of Marxism as its guiding line and was firmly united as a result of the persecutions under the anti-socialist law of Bismarck. However, with the development of imperialism, new divisive tendencies appeared, since a part of the social democratic leaders saw in the imperialist development the possibility of a peaceful growing into Socialism, while other leaders—in particular Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg—demanded the application of new, more effective methods of struggle against the concentrated power of capital and its state apparatus of force and the reestablishment and application of Marxist theory. The entire history of the German labour movement is filled with the struggle between the two streams in the German labour movement. In the First World War the split in Social Democracy became an open one. It showed two basically different conceptions on the role of the working class and on the attitude towards imperialism and the state. The antagonisms deepened in the course of the war since the Great October Socialist Revolution and in the November Revolution on questions of abolishing the power of monopoly capital, the banks and big landowners, the complete disarming of the military units, especially of the voluntary formations and other civil war troops of reaction, and on the question of the establishment of real democracy.

In connection with these lessons from the history of the working class it was emphasized in the editorial commission that communist, social democratic and Christian workers, anti-fascist peasants and progressive intellectuals had joined together, in the period of the growth of the influence of Hitlerite fascism and its domination, in the struggle against Hitlerite fascism and against the bloody Hitler regime. The united front of all anti-fascist forces of the German people had evolved. At the same time the policy of national catastrophe caused the differences within the labour movement to move into the background. Thus, the prerequisites for the creation of a new, united revolutionary workers' party as the leader of the German working class and of all progressive, democratic forces came into existence.

We also discussed the minimum demands in the editorial commission, those demands which were to be implemented in the period of the anti-fascist democratic revolution. At the same time it was emphasized that the implementation of the demands of the minimum program could not be the final goal of the Socialist movement. The implementation of these demands could neither abolish capitalist exploitation nor eliminate the anarchy of the

capitalist mode of production. The goal of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany which was to be created had to be the liberation of the working people of Germany from exploitation, economic crises, unemployment and imperialist war-mongering. This aim could be implemented only by the erection of a Socialist mode of production the prerequisite for which is the abolition of the capitalist private ownership of the means of production.

Then it was stated further: On the basis of the recognition of the fact that the big bourgeoisie would furiously resist the socialization of the means of production and the construction of a planned economy the Socialist Unity Party of Germany would strive for the political rule of the working class in order to be able to break the resistance of the bourgeoisie and guarantee Socialist development. Since the working class and the working masses interested to the same extent in Socialism form the overwhelming majority of the German people, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany would strive to establish workers' power by democratic means. The basic condition for such a democratic development was the liquidation of big landownership and the old big banks, the purging of the managements of the industrial enterprises of fascists and war profiteers and the appointment of reliable anti-fascists and democrats to administrative positions in the organs of self-administration. That was especially true of the police and the administration of justice.

Thus, not simply an anti-capitalist program but an anti-fascist democratic and anti-monopoly program was established. It was stated that democratic development requires the liquidation of big landownership, the big capitalist banks, etc. Then it was stated that by means of these democratic safeguards the material power of the small minority of capitalists and reactionaries was to be weakened to such an extent that a democratic development would be possible. In case the owning classes undertook to prevent the free democratic expression of the will of the masses, the working class would prevent that attempt with force and fight for the power of the working class in alliance with the working peasants and the progressive intellectuals, using every possible means.

That was the basic line which was established at that time in the editorial commission and which then—although not in such detail as I here describe it but nevertheless in essence—was confirmed in the Committee of the Sixty.

After 1945 the struggle for the construction of an anti-fascist democratic state power from below, for the leading role of the working class, for the establishment of real democracy, was carried out.

In view of this democratic development in the then Soviet occupation zone the USA and the West German monopoly bourgeoisie prepared to split off the western zones out of fear of democracy, and form the West German separatist state on the basis of a coup d'état by Adenauer, a state which was closely linked with the imperialist western powers. Thus the USA and the West German big bourgeoisie were able to split the working class in two ways, once in the western zones themselves by preventing the formation of united action between Communists and Social Democrats with the aid of petty bourgeois elements in West German Social Democracy, and again by splitting off West Germany.

After the constitution of the West German separatist state as a NATO state which was integrated in the USA's global strategy, the people in the German Democratic Republic solved the national question by developing the GDR step by step into the Socialist German nation-state.

IV. The Alliance Policy of the SED

From the very beginning our party consistently applied the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin on the alliance policy of the revolutionary workers' party. In doing so the SED exactly considered the peculiarities of a highly developed industrial country which was heavily damaged materially by fascist rule and the Hitlerite war and the majority of whose population had been poisoned intellectually and ideologically with reactionary and imperialist ideologies, a country which in addition was split by the policy of imperialists at home and abroad.

Under these conditions the alliance policy was of course especially complicated. The struggle to uproot German imperialism, militarism and nazism and for democratic construction after 1945 was the main content of the alliance policy. The allied bloc parties took an active part in the struggle for punishing nazi and war criminals and for constructing an anti-fascist democratic order.

As a result of the fact that in addition to Communists and Social Democrats representatives of various strata of the people including bourgeois circles were to be found in the newly formed state organs of self-administration, these administrations in fact bore the character of coalitions. It was possible to have a broad circle of people from other working strata cooperate in the construction of the new anti-fascist democratic order and to activate them.

The consistent alliance policy began with the agreements with the peasantry on agricultural policy, on cooperation between town and countryside. It developed further in the common struggle to enforce the democratic land reform. The establishment of the machine-lending stations was a great aid to the working peasants and contributed to the further consolidation of the alliance. The workers of the machine-lending or machine-and-tractor stations gave great help to the working peasants. They shared in developing and consolidating peasant mutual aid.

The democratic-minded old intelligentsia was brought into the collaboration in confidence. That was possible only by the fact that from the very outset the SED acted as a consistent humanist party and fostered and further developed everything that was humanist and progressive in the history of our people, and mercilessly fought against everything of a militarist or nazi character.

Our alliance policy also especially included active work to draw in working youth, the farsighted policy of the leadership of the SED which did not ask young people what they had done before May 1945, what ideological nonsense they had believed at that time, but from the very beginning had confidence in them and gave them responsibility. We said to youth: Let us begin a new life together! Let us begin work on a new Germany! Let us all help to make young people industrious skilled workers and let them understand that the remnants of German fascism must be liquidated if their future is to be assured.

Our party has done great work from the very day of its foundation, in order to overcome the fascist ideology in the heads of the people and include all people in collaborating on economic reconstruction.

The stable power of the working people which has developed on the basis of the nationally-owned enterprises, the planned economy, the reliable protection by the Soviet Army against all imperialist onslaughts made it possible to bring about the transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat democratically, together with all strata of the people, and then further develop the alliance between the working class and the peasants and other sections of the people.

When we say that the period from 1945 to the foundation of the republic is the period of the anti-fascist revolution that does not mean that in this period the elements for Socialist construction were not created. Of course, the big nationally-owned enterprises, the machine-and-tractor stations, the state trading enterprise were

elements of Socialism. But the situation for the systematic consistent construction of Socialism had matured only at the beginning of the 1950s. The beginning of Socialist construction can be dated from the Second Party Conference and the carrying out of the first five-year plan.

V. The Foundation and Development of the German Democratic Republic

The Socialist Unity Party of Germany has given a new sense to German history. All periods of German history were characterized by the exploitation of man by man, by the domination of an exploiter and oppressor class, which had appropriated the soil and the decisive means of production and with the aid of militarism had carried out the exploitation of the majority of the population. After the ruling class of monopoly capital had led Germany into catastrophe in two world wars and through the boom-crisis-war cycle had forfeited its right to lead Germany, the working class was called upon by history to take the country in its hands.

It is the historic merit of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany that, through the unity of the working class and the development of the SED into a party of a new type, it was able to place the national interests in the hands of the working class. After the USA and the West German reactionaries had formed the separatist state from the three zones occupied by the western powers the SED proposed to the People's Council which was elected in the Soviet occupation zone that the German Democratic Republic be founded. The GDR came into existence in the struggle for the abolition of fascist German imperialism, for the overcoming of racism, militarism and the domination of the monopolies.

The SED proceeded from the historical lesson that the German people could regain prestige in the world and be a useful member of the family of nations not through imperialism and war but only by the creation of a people's democratic state order, by the performances of its scientists, the quality work of its working people, the final liberation of the peasants with the aid of the land reform and the cooperative system as well as by the fostering and further development of the humanist traditions of the German people.

The vital interest of the German people demanded a firm alliance with its liberator, the people of the country of the Great October Socialist Revolution. Therefore, friendly collaboration with the

CPSU and with the Soviet occupation organs was a basic condition. The working class and people of the GDR had to acquire the confidence of the Soviet people and the other peoples' democracies by their performances.

It was a question of making the GDR a bulwark of peace in Central Europe with the experienced anti-imperialist fighter Wilhelm Pieck as President and the anti-fascist fighter Otto Grotewohl as Prime Minister at the head.

The policy of the SED has been characterized from the beginning by the struggle for the safeguarding of peace and the consolidation of the alliance with the Soviet Union. The task was, in view of the restoration of German imperialism in the German western zones, to consolidate the results of the victory over Hitler fascism and to bring about agreements corresponding to the provisions of the Potsdam Agreement of the victor powers. It was a question of making ineffective the sole representation pretension of West German imperialism contained in the Paris treaties and the Bonn constitution and irrespective of these treaties to enforce the provisions of the Potsdam Agreement which marked out an anti-fascist democratic road for the German people. As a consequence of the granting of sovereignty in 1955 the international authority of the GDR was strengthened, the alliance between the Soviet Union and the GDR was further consolidated and clarity was established that the safeguarding of peace is possible only through the establishment of relations with the GDR based on equality and international law. The conclusion of the mutual assistance pact between the Soviet Union and the GDR was an important support for our young Socialist state and at the same time served to consolidate the Socialist community of states of the Warsaw Treaty. If it was possible for the Soviet Union to conclude a treaty with the FRG in 1970 in which the status quo and the existing frontiers are recognized that is a result of the purposeful peace policy of the Soviet Union since the victory over Hitlerite fascism and of the successful development of the GDR and the peoples' democracies which have allied themselves in the Warsaw Treaty.

After the foundation of the German Democratic Republic the SED seized the initiative of working out the first five-year plan. There was no talk of Socialism in this five-year plan. But it served both the overcoming of the consequences of the war and the capitalist maladministration, and the creation of the basic elements of Socialist development.

With the foundation of the German Democratic Republic the

Socialist epoch of German history was ushered in. With the decisions of the Second Party Conference on the principles of the construction of Socialism, on Socialist state policy, planned economy and social policy the transition from the anti-fascist democratic administration to the creation of the state power of the workers and farmers as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat was completed. The working class and its allies—the working peasants and the intelligentsia—were faced with the great task of learning how to construct the Socialist state and the Socialist economy and how to develop Socialist culture.

On the basis of the Socialist relations of production Socialist emulation developed in the enterprises, villages and institutions. The knowledge that Socialism gives all citizens—even former big peasants and private entrepreneurs—the opportunity to develop within the framework of the state laws contributed to developing the Socialist economy, to the comprehensive participation of the working people in shaping the joint social life and in developing and strengthening the state power of the workers and farmers. If at that time some people asked what will become of the big peasants who now belong to agricultural production cooperatives, will they work honestly or not? We answered: That will be shown by practice! All who work honestly and take part in Socialist construction benefit; they will belong to the community. Practice proved us right. Only those who could not accustom themselves to honest work left for the West in good time.

Why do I that? Of course, the ideological and political development of bourgeois circles bears a relationship to the tempo and degree of the political and economic development of the GDR. The consolidation of the state power of the GDR as was expressed in the plebiscite on the Socialist Constitution of the GDR in 1968 had a great effect on broad circles which had formerly been ensnared in bourgeois ideologies, who had not yet decided and were not yet clear about the perspectives.

As for the former big peasants and the semi-state entrepreneurs their development is also connected with the advance of Socialist planned economy and Socialist industry. To the extent to which Socialist planned economy develops under the conditions of the economic system of Socialism and the scientific and technological revolution the relations between the semi-state undertakings and the nationally-owned industry change, and the relations also develop between the former poor and middle peasants and the

former rich peasants who are now all members of agricultural production cooperatives (LPGs). In a highly developed LPG of Type III a former big peasant can only count for something and have a prosperous life such as the other cooperative members lead when he completely fulfils his cooperative tasks as a member of a team or as team leader. This work in the agricultural production cooperative, this collaboration in the community leads to the step-by-step education of the people. The young generation rising out of these former capitalist forces no longer even know about the old rule of exploitation. These young people consistently work for Socialist society.

In judging Socialist construction up to 1961 we should not forget that until then the frontiers with the occupation area of West Berlin and the FRG were open.

The imperialist forces of West Germany and the social democratic leadership inflicted great political and material damage on the GDR during this period. The decision of the Bundestag of 30 June 1960 which was in fact to be the start of the general attack on the GDR demanded consistent security measures. In accordance with the decision of the Warsaw Treaty states and the decision of the government of the GDR the frontiers with West Berlin and the FRG were effectively secured. As during the period of the open frontiers along with the economic laws of Socialism were effective the economic laws of capitalism—linked with black market operations and subversive activity—the effective security of the frontiers meant the definitive state demarcation with the Federal Republic.

Only at the Sixth Congress of the SED in January 1963 could it be determined that the foundations of Socialism had been created and that the Socialist relations of production had won. This concrete situation enabled the Sixth Party Congress to adopt the program of Socialism and to pose to the party and people of the GDR the task of the all-round construction of Socialism. The Program of Socialism begins with the words: "A new epoch has begun in the history of the German people, the epoch of Socialism." And we can now add: In the German Democratic Republic the foundation of Socialism and Socialist relations of production have already been led to victory.

This Program further states: "Socialism is the first stage in the development of Communism." It can be said without doubt that since the Sixth Party Congress Socialism has developed on its own foundation, has created its own material and technical basis, that cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other Socialist countries

has been organized and that the Socialist development of the consciousness of the working class and the working people takes place consistently. Socialist democracy and the Socialist community of man are developing on the foundation of the new Socialist Constitution of the GDR.

VI. On the National Question

The integration of the FRG in NATO and the imperialist global strategy of the USA on the one side and the development of the sovereign Socialist German Democratic Republic on the other have brought about an increasingly sharp state demarcation between the two states and social systems. The GDR has developed as the Socialist German nation-state in the process of the development of the workers' and farmers' power and Socialist construction.

The bourgeois German nation which developed in the process of the transition from feudalism to capitalism and which existed within the framework of a united state from 1871 to 1945, no longer exists. The GDR is the Socialist German nation-state, the process of forming a Socialist nation is taking place within it. For this, irrevocable facts have come into existence. The FRG is an imperialist state of NATO and embodies the remaining part of the old bourgeois German nation under the conditions of the state monopoly capitalist system of rule.

This real state of affairs is the starting point for the GDR's foreign policy towards the FRG. The GDR's foreign policy aims at creating the most favourable external conditions for the construction of Socialism, of keeping the advance along the road to Socialism free of obstructions, not least, in order to be more effective externally. The dialectics consists in the fact that an assured peace is the best prerequisite for Socialist construction and, the other way around, the strengthening of Socialism is the decisive element for the safeguarding of peace and the further changing of the relation of forces in favour of Socialism.

Whereas the opponent wants to utilize relations with the GDR in order to bring about a rapprochement between the GDR and the FRG in the sign of a fictitious "national community" and to gain a foothold in the GDR with the social democratic social theory, our policy is directed at establishing relations with the FRG which without restriction comply with international law, take account of the objective and inevitable further demarcation between the

systems and thereby frustrate all plans for any kind of "inner-German relations". If the policy of the opponent is tantamount to being clamped with the GDR it can for us only be a question of decisive demarcation. That is the prerequisite for an offensive policy of peaceful coexistence towards the FRG.

The rightwing social democratic leaders now make an effort to prove that they are more suitable than the conservative forces to maintain the monopoly capitalist system, that they are better able to mask the imperialist system socially and democratically and to penetrate into the Socialist countries. The intended "social democratization" of the Socialist countries as advocated by such circles as journalists of US monopoly capital and also West German rightwing social democrats is nothing but the attempt to liquidate Socialism step by step and introduce a transformation in the direction of the restoration of capitalism. Towards the GDR they apply for this purpose the formula of the so-called unity of the nation and the "special inner-German relations" allegedly arising out of it. There is no doubt that the refusal to apply international law to relations between the FRG and the GDR is an important disrupting factor against European security. All the more necessary is it to purposefully conduct the struggle for relations between the GDR and the FRG based on equality and international law by the establishment of diplomatic relations and for the admission of the GDR in the United Nations.

The future role of the FRG in the dispute between the Socialist and the imperialist system will be determined to a considerable extent by the internal development of the state monopoly system, the class forces and class struggles in the Federal Republic, by the development of the political and parliamentary relation of forces arising out of them and by the position of the FRG in the world imperialist system.

VII. The Results Attained

If we now look back on the results of the anti-fascist democratic revolution and the Socialist revolution in the German Democratic Republic before the 25th anniversary of the unification of the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party to form the Socialist Unity Party of Germany we must say that in this historically relatively short period of time it has been possible to make great progress in developing the GDR into the Socialist German nation-

state which is fraternally and irrevocably linked with the Soviet Union and the other fraternal Socialist countries. The safeguarding of peace could only be made possible by strengthening the GDR on the road of Socialist construction and the firm alliance with the Soviet Union.

In what does the historical importance of the treaty between the Soviet Union and the Federal Republic consist? Important results of the victory of the anti-Hitler coalition over Hitlerite fascism are formulated in terms of international law—by the obligation to recognize the existence frontiers, to do everything possible to bring about European security, to establish for this purpose normal state relations between all states of Europe, including between the FRG and the GDR and to work for the admission of all states in the United Nations, especially for the admission of the GDR and the FRG.

The SED has fulfilled its program. The following four tasks have been implemented:

1. The unity of the working class on the territory of the GDR was brought about by the agreement between the KPD and the SPD. The SED developed into a militant Marxist-Leninist party which is firmly linked with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and with the fraternal communist parties of the Socialist countries and the other countries, and with the progressive democratic parties of the liberated countries.
2. The workers' and farmers' state has consolidated itself politically, economically, militarily and culturally in accordance with the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state and is firmly integrated in the Socialist community of states through membership in the Warsaw Treaty.
3. Thanks to the peace policy of the Soviet Union, the GDR and the other countries of the Socialist community of states it has been possible to create the longest period of peace on German soil in this century. That was to a great extent obtained by the military protection of the Soviet Union and the development of the GDR as a bulwark of peace against West German militarism and West German imperialist reaction.
4. The Socialist social system has been and is being comprehensively built since the adoption of the Program of Socialism at the Sixth Party Congress in 1963.

When it is asked what progress has been obtained by the development of the Socialist German state and its Socialist democracy; by the construction of the National People's Army and other military

security organs; by the shaping of the Socialist system of planning and managing the national economy; by the creation of the integrated Socialist educational system; by the development of the Socialist national culture—it can be said that the basic features of the national structure of the German Democratic Republic have been formed. In this period the decisive steps on the road to the Socialist state of the German nation were taken.

The Seventh Party Congress was able, on the basis of the progress of Socialist construction—and proceeding from the prognosis for further development—to give the guiding lines for the all-sided shaping of the developed social system of Socialism and for implementing the scientific and technological revolution. Today, a quarter of a century after the founding of the SED, we can say that the SED is the only German party which has fulfilled its program under the slogan: Everything by the people, with the people and for the people! We have purposefully, and at the same time with flexible tactics, gone the historically necessary road pointed out to us by Marx, Engels and Lenin, the road along which August Bebel, Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Ernst Thälmann, Rudolf Breitscheid struggled at the head of the German working class and the working people. We have been able to uproot imperialism, abolish the exploitation of man by man, construct to a wide extent the Socialist social system and develop Socialist national culture.

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The Socialist Unity Party of Germany has proved to be the most successful party in German history, because it is the party of the united working class and has consistently acted in accordance with the principles of Marxism-Leninism. What is decisive is that in the successes of the anti-fascist democratic and Socialist revolution the historic performance of the party became visible, that it was able to convince the people, to win them for cooperation in the fulfilment of these great historic tasks. Frederick Engels once said that there can be no social progress which has not first gone through the heads of the people. And just that is what matters.

Our Socialist social system is as good as we know how to establish it. It is as good as the Socialist consciousness of GDR citizens develops. By representing the interests of the entire working people our party as the party of the working class has always been conscious of the full responsibility of addressing all citizens, of convincing all citizens, of winning all citizens for cooperation in the solution of the great problems of Socialist progress.

We know that in the period of the developed social system of Socialism and the scientific and technological revolution the party must concentrate its attention still more on convincing the people. It is a question of getting all GDR citizens, young and old, to develop a Socialist consciousness, of having all working people become good specialists, because otherwise the scientific and technological revolution cannot be implemented successfully. That will also contribute to further developing the Socialist community of man.

Our party is a party of unity, also in the most international sense. Its entire work is oriented on fraternal friendship with the Soviet Union and the other Socialist countries and at the consolidation of the unity of the countries of the Socialist community. At the same time its internationalism obligates it to work for the unity of the communist and workers' movement in the world, to promote the union of all anti-imperialist forces in the world, to support these forces and to collaborate fraternally with them. Since it has been in existence the SED has educated the people of the GDR in a spirit of Socialist internationalism and above all in a spirit of inviolable friendship with the Soviet Union. Our party considers the safeguarding of peace against the imperialist global strategy as the common strategic main task of the Socialist community, so that by means of the joint political, economic, ideological, cultural and military efforts the superiority of the Socialist social system over imperialism will be universally achieved.

The Socialist Unity Party of Germany has developed into a Marxist-Leninist party in the truest sense of the word. It is the party of the working class and the party of the united working people of the GDR. In this sense we want to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany.

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