

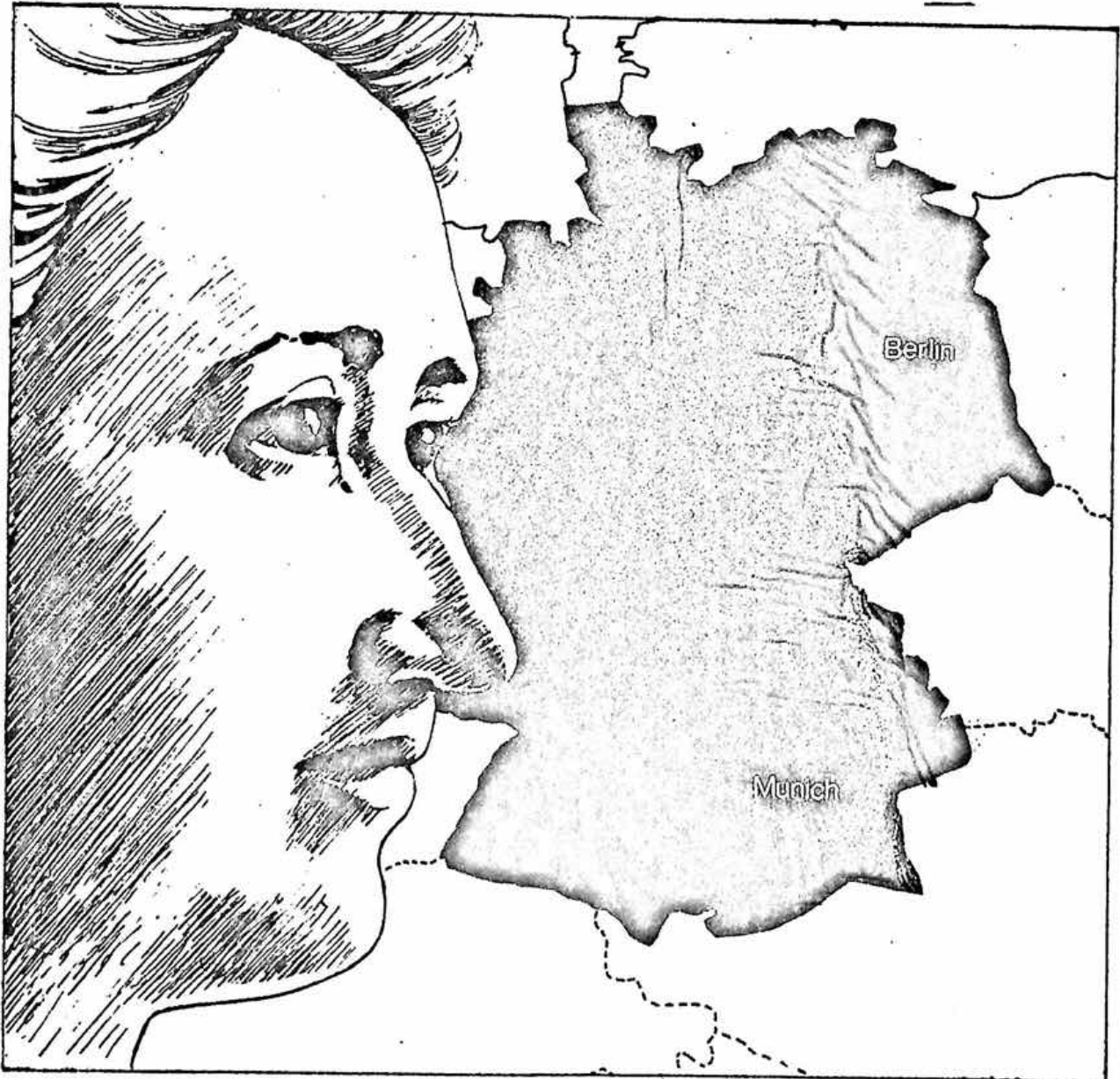
COMPASS

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Revisionism in Germany Part one: to 1922.



INTRODUCTION

Continuing the series of reports on the development of revisionism in the international communist movement, the report which follows deals with Germany in the period up to the end of 1922.

Among the more important points covered in this report are:

1) the influence on the Communist Party of Germany in its early years of the thought of Rosa Luxemburg, whose ideas on many political questions were closely akin to those of Leon Trotsky (Appendix: p. 82);

2) the opposition of the CPG, under the influence of the anti-Soviet views of Luxemburg, to the formation of the Communist International (p. 18);

3) the strong "leftist" trends in the leadership of the CPG in its early years -- manifested in its opposition to work in the mass trade unions (p. 15), its boycott of the elections to the Constituent Assembly in 1919 (p. 13), its initial refusal to oppose the counter-revolutionary Kapp Putsch in 1920 (p. 29), its adoption of the "theory of the general revolutionary offensive" and the manifestation of this theory in the premature "March Action" of 1921 (p. 43);

4) the adoption by the Communist International, under the influence of Leon Trotsky, in 1921 of the right revisionist concept that a "workers' government" -- a coalition government of Communist and social-democratic parties -- representing the "interests of the working class" could be formed by parliamentary means and could proceed to take control of production and transform the capitalist state into a "workers' state". (p. 61).

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REVISIONISM IN GERMANY

PART ONE: to 1922

1871 to 1917

The unified German state officially came into existence in January 1871, by means of the armed force of the aristocratic landowners of Prussia (the Junkers), under the leadership of Count Otto von Bismarck. The bourgeoisie supported, but did not lead, this movement.

Formally, the Second German Reich (i.e., Realm) -- the first Reich was the mediaeval Holy Roman Empire -- was a federal state, embracing 4 kingdoms (Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg), 6 grand duchies, 5 duchies, 7 principalities, 3 "free cities" and the "Reichsland" of Alsace-Lorraine.

Because of the manner of its formation, however, the new state was an autocracy, retaining many of the characteristics of a feudal state, dominated by the Junkers of Prussia (where the franchise was limited to the well-to-do), and this ruling class was closely linked with the officer corps of the German army (which was essentially the Prussian army) and with the imperial house (the King of Prussia was constitutionally the Emperor of Germany). The Emperor was supreme commander of the army and navy. The Parliament (Reichstag) was elected by universal male suffrage, but its role was essentially "advisory".

There was at this time no German cabinet. The one Minister was the Imperial Chancellor, who was appointed by the Emperor and was also Prime Minister of Prussia. The Chancellor -- Bismarck until March 1890 -- appointed the heads of the departments of state and presided over the Federal Council.

The first party to be formed in Germany claiming to represent the interests of the working class was the General German Workers' Association (Allgemeine Deutsche Arbeiterverein) (ADAV), founded in May 1863 under the leadership of Ferdinand Lassalle.

As Marx and Engels correctly concluded, Lassalle had signed a secret agreement with Bismarck, by which he undertook to strive to direct the working class into alliance with the Prussian aristocratic landowners, into

"... alliance with absolutist and feudal opponents against the bourgeoisie",

(K. Marx: "Critique of the Gotha Programme", in: "Selected Works", Volume 2; London; 1943; p. 570).

so that

"... Lassalle's organisation is nothing but a sectarian organisation and as such hostile to the organisation of the genuine workers' movement".

(K. Marx: Letter to A. Bolte, November 23rd., 1871, in: *ibid.*; p. 616-7).

2.

It was in these circumstances that in August 1869 a rival party claiming to represent the interests of the working class was established -- the Social-Democratic Workers' Party (Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei) (SDAP), under the leadership of Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel, which was influenced by Marx and Engels.

In May 1875 the two parties merged at a Unification Congress held in Gotha into the Socialist Workers' Party of Germany (Sozialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (SAPD)). The desire of the leaders of the SDAP for unification with the ADAV was such that they agreed to the opportunist programme adopted at the congress (known as "the Gotha Programme"); this was a mixture of Lassallean and distorted Marxist ideas with the former predominating, and was strongly criticised by Marx, who described it as

"... a thoroughly objectionable programme tending to demoralise the party. . . .

The programme is no good, even apart from its sanctification of Lassallean articles of faith".
(K. Marx: Letter to Wilhelm Bracke, May 5th., 1875, in: *ibid.*; p. 552)

while Engels remarked:

"This programme . . . is of such a character that if it is accepted Marx and I can never give our adherence to the new party established on this basis, and shall have very seriously to consider what our attitude towards it -- in public as well -- should be".
(F. Engels: Letter to A. Bebel, March 18-28th., 1875, in: K. Marx: *ibid.*; p. 593)

Two attempts on the life of the Emperor in May and June 1878 provided the official pretext for the passage in October of that year of an Anti-Socialist Law which banned all socialist parties, their publications and their meetings. This repressive legislation was renewed periodically until, with the increasing influence of the capitalist class, on the accession of Wilhelm II as Emperor in 1888 the authorities decided to replace the policy of attempted repression of the workers' party with one of striving to transform it into a political instrument of the ruling class among the workers. Bismarck was forced to resign as Chancellor in 1890 and the Anti-Socialist legislation was allowed to lapse.

However, the long years of repression had exposed many illusions about the character of the state and pressed the rank-and-file in the direction of revolutionary thinking. As a result, the programme adopted by the Second Congress of the party, held at Erfurt in October 1891, was ostensibly Marxist in its formulations. At this congress the name of the party was changed to the Social-Democratic Party of Germany (SPG) (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) (SPD).

With the development of German monopoly capitalism, in the last decade of the 19th. century SPG leader Eduard Bernstein began a movement to revise Marxism by removing its revolutionary content. Although revisionism was rejected in theory at the congress of the party held in Dresden in September 1903, the party became increasingly revisionist in practice. This was seen most obviously in the attitude of the SPG leaders who held important posts in the trade union movement; under their influence, the trade unions became less and less organs of working class struggle and more and more instruments of the monopoly capitalists to foster peaceful "industrial relations".

It was under these circumstances that the membership of the SPG grew from 348,000 in 1906 to 1.1 million in 1914. By this time it was the largest single party in the Reichstag (with 110 deputies) and operated 110 daily newspapers, headed by "Vorwärts" (Forward) published in Berlin.

As the clouds of the First Imperialist War began to gather, the Seventh Congress of the Second International held in Stuttgart in August 1907 adopted a resolution sponsored by Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg (the latter then representing the Polish Social-democrats) which called upon socialists

"... to exert every effort to prevent the outbreak of war by the means they consider most effective...."

In case war should break out anyway, it is their duty to intervene in favour of its speedy termination and with all their powers to utilise the economic and political crisis created by the war to rouse the masses and thereby to hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule".

(Resolution of 7th. International Socialist Congress, cited in: V. I. Lenin: "Collected Works", Volume 18; London; 1930; p. 468).

The Stuttgart anti-war resolution was reaffirmed at an Extraordinary Congress of the Second International held in Basle in November 1912, the manifesto adding:

"It is with satisfaction that the Congress records the complete unanimity of the Socialist parties and of the trade unions of all countries in the war against war".

(Manifesto of the Extraordinary International Socialist Congress, cited in: V. I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 469)

However, when on August 4th., 1914 German Chancellor Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg announced in the Reichstag that German troops had invaded Belgium, the SPG deputies voted unanimously in favour of war credits for "the war of national defence".

On the same evening Rosa Luxemburg organised a few left-wing friends into the nucleus of what shortly became the International Group (Gruppe Internationale) to carry

forward the line of opposition to the war which had been agreed upon internationally at Stuttgart and Basle. The group was seen joined by SPG deputy Karl Liebknecht, who speedily regretted his vote for war credits. When the second War Credits Bill came before the Reichstag in December 1914, Liebknecht voted against it. In January 1915 the International Group began to issue a series of "Newsletters" exposing the character of the war and the treachery of the leadership of the SPG in supporting it. In April 1915 they published the first and only issue of the journal "The International" (Die Internationale), under the editorship of Franz Mehring; it was immediately suppressed and Mehring imprisoned.

In an effort to check the increasing support which the International Group was now winning among the more politically conscious workers, in June 1915 a group of leading members of the SPG, headed by Karl Kautsky, Hugo Haase and Eduard Bernstein, took up a centrist position in relation to the war and issued a manifesto entitled "The Demand of the Hour" which suggested that the war might have changed its character from a "war of national defence" to one of conquest, so that social-democrats might have to review their support of it.

In September 1915 an international conference of socialist parties and groups opposed to the war was held in Zimmerwald (Switzerland) on the initiative of the Italian and Swiss social-democratic parties. The Bolshevik delegation included Lenin, then living in Switzerland, and the German contingent included Georg Ledebour (associated with the centrist group being developed under the leadership of Kautsky), two adherents of the International Group and two members of a small group called the International Socialists of Germany (Internationale Sozialisten Deutschlands), led by Karl Radek. The conference failed to reach agreement on the policy that should be pursued in relation to the war, Lenin's call for the war to be transformed into a civil war against "one's own" imperialists being rejected by the majority of the delegates. With centrist groups in the majority, the conference approved a compromise manifesto which called on socialists

" . . . to take up this struggle for . . . a peace without annexations or war indemnities"

and

" . . . for the sacred aims of Socialism, for the emancipation of the oppressed nations as well as of the enslaved classes, by means of the irreconcilable proletarian class struggle".

(Manifesto of the International Socialist Conference at Zimmerwald, cited in: V. I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 475).

The Zimmerwald conference set up an International Socialist Committee, with headquarters in Berne, Switzerland.

In January 1916 the International Group changed its name to the Spartacus Group (Spartakusgruppe), after the leader of a Roman slave revolt.

5.

When the sixth War Credits Bill came before the Reichstag in March 1916, 18 deputies belonging to the centre and left of the SPG voted against, and a further 14 abstained. The rightist leadership of the SPG then expelled from the parliamentary party the 18 deputies who had voted contrary to the official policy of the party. These then formed themselves into a new parliamentary grouping, the Social-Democratic Labour Group (Sozialdemokratische Arbeitsgemeinschaft). The Spartacus Group formed a left-wing group within this Labour Group.

In April 1916 a second international conference of socialist parties and groups opposed to the war was held at Kienthal (Switzerland). The German contingent consisted of four centrists and two Spartacists, together with one member of a small group called the Bremen Left (Bremer Links). Again the centrists were in a majority and the resolutions adopted were of a compromise character. Nevertheless, the Kienthal resolutions were somewhat more definite than those of Zimmerwald, and the conference sharply criticised the leadership of the Second International -- without, however, calling for a break with the right.

Following their successful military operations on the eastern front, in August 1916 Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg had been appointed Chief of Staff and General Erich von Ludendorff Quartermaster-General. Although officially subordinate to Hindenburg, Ludendorff became the dominant figure not only in the military but also in the civilian field, and for the last two years of the war was essentially military dictator of Germany.

In January 1917 the Executive of the SPG, dominated by the right-wing social-chauvinists, resolved that opposition to the war was incompatible with membership of the party. This was followed in April by a conference of centrist and left opposition members of the SPG at Gotha, at which -- against the opposition of Kautsky and other centrist leaders - a majority voted to form themselves into a new party, the Independent Social-democratic Party of Germany (ISPG) (Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) (USPD). The founding conference of the ISPG approved the manifestos adopted at Zimmerwald and Kienthal, but the leadership maintained its call for eventual reunification with the SPG:

"This party is afraid of drawing the necessary conclusions, preaches 'unity' with the social-chauvinists on an international scale, continues to deceive the masses of the workers with the hope of restoring this unity in Germany, and hinders the only correct, proletarian tactics of revolutionary struggle against 'one's own' government".

(V. I. Lenin: "The Stockholm Conference", in: V. I. Lenin & J. V. Stalin: "1917: Selected Writings and Speeches"; Moscow; 1938; p. 325).

The formation of the ISPG (in which the Spartacus Group formed a left-wing group) was followed by a considerable fall in the influence of the SPG; membership of the latter fell from 243 thousand in March 1917 to 150 thousand in September, by which time the ISPG claimed a membership of 120 thousand.

By 1917, therefore, three organised political trends were to be seen in the German working class movement, as characterised by Lenin:

"In the course of the two and half years of war the international Socialist and labour movement in every country has evolved three tendencies. . . .

The three tendencies are:

1) The social-chauvinists, i.e., Socialists in word and chauvinists in action, people who are in favour of 'national defence' in an imperialist war (and particularly in the present imperialist war).

These people are our class enemies. They have gone over to the bourgeoisie.

They include the majority of the official leaders of the official Social-Democratic parties in all countries -- . . . the Scheidemanns in Germany . . .

2) The second tendency is what is known as the 'Centre', consisting of people who vacillate between the social-chauvinists and the true internationalists.

All those who belong to the 'Centre' swear that they are Marxists and internationalists, . . . that they are for a peace without annexations, etc. -- and for peace with the social-chauvinists. The 'Centre' is for 'unity', the 'Centre' is opposed to a split

The fact of the matter is that the 'Centre' is not convinced of the necessity for a revolution against one's own government; it does not preach revolution. . . .

Historically and economically speaking, they (i.e., the centrists -- Ed.) do not represent a separate stratum but are a transition from a past phase of the labour movement . . . to a new phase, a phase that became objectively essential with the outbreak of the first imperialist World War, which inaugurated the era of social revolution.

The chief leader and representative of the 'Centre' is Karl Kautsky,

3) The third tendency, the true internationalists, is most closely represented by the 'Zimmerwald Left'.

It is characterised mainly by its complete break with both social-chauvinism and 'Centrism', and by its relentless war against its own imperialist government and against its own imperialist bourgeoisie. . . .

The most outstanding representative of this tendency in Germany is the Spartacus Group or the Group of the International, to which Karl Liebknecht belongs.

Another group of internationalists in deed in Germany is gathered around the Bremen paper 'Arbeiterpolitik'.

(V. I. Lenin: "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution", in: "Selected Works", Volume 6; London; 1946; p. 63-66,67).

The Russian bourgeois-democratic revolution of March 1917, followed by the formation of the Independent Social-Democratic Party in April, forced the German imperialists to make some token concessions to the sentiments reflected in the growth of the influence of the ISPG. These moves were led by Mattias Erzberger, leader of the liberal wing of the Centre Party, in the hope that government pledges to wage a 'defensive' war 'without annexations or indemnities' and to introduce democratic reform of the Prussian constitution would assist the right-wing SPG leaders in maintaining their support among the workers. As a result of these manoeuvres, a royal proclamation of July 12th., 1917 promised direct, secret and equal franchise in Prussia, and on July 19th. the Reichstag adopted (by 214 votes to 116) its famous demagogic "peace resolution", which declared:

"The Reichstag strives for a peace of understanding and lasting reconciliation of nations. Such a peace is not in keeping with forcible annexations of territory or forcible measures of political, economic or financial character".

(Cited in: K. A. Pinson: "Modern Germany: Its History and Civilisation"; New York; 1966; p. 334).

The German High Command was fiercely opposed to these moves. Ludendorff demanded and secured the resignation of Bethmann-Hollweg as Chancellor. The latter was replaced in July 1917 by a civil servant, Dr. Georg Michaelis, who gave way in November to Count Georg von Hertling, leader of the right-wing of the Centre Party -- both of whom were completely subservient to the High Command.

1918

The January 1918 Strike

During the winter of 1917-18, anti-war feeling among the more politically conscious workers was greatly stimulated by the socialist revolution of November 1917 in Russia, and by the appeal of the new Soviet government for a peace without annexations or indemnities.

In January 1918 a group of militant shop stewards, associated with the Independent Social-Democratic Party and headed by Richard Müller, issued a manifesto calling for a political strike of all German workers for peace, more food, the abolition of martial law and the establishment of "parliamentary democracy". The strike began on January 28th., and more than a million workers responded. After a week, however, it was called off by the leaders (against the opposition of the Spartacists) when the government merely agreed to meet a delegation from the strike committee. Müller was then called up for military service, and the leadership of the "Revolutionary Shop Stewards" (as they called themselves) passed to another leading member of the ISPG, Emil Barth.

The Formation of Prince Max's Government

During the spring and summer of 1918, the suffering, hunger and casualties resulting from the war caused anti-war feeling to spread to wide sections of the German armed forces, the working class and the petty-bourgeoisie.

By the end of September a majority of the High Command were convinced that a German victory was not possible. They demanded the formation of a "broader" government that would proceed immediately to enter into negotiations with the Allies for an armistice. On October 3rd., Prince Max of Baden, a cousin of the Emperor, was appointed Chancellor and at once initiated negotiations for an armistice.

The Kiel Revolt

On October 27th., 1918, while the armistice negotiations were in progress, the Admiralty ordered the fleet to put to sea to engage the British navy. The sailors at Kiel and Wilhelmshaven refused. The arrest of some of these sailors in Kiel was followed on November 3rd. by a mass demonstration, which was fired on by troops, who later, however, went over to the side of the mutinying sailors. The latter released their arrested comrades, hoisted the red flag and proceeded to elect Sailors' Councils, modelled on the Russian Soviets.

The Bourgeois-Democratic Revolution

The movement of revolt spread from Kiel throughout Germany. In all the major towns and cities, mass strikes and huge demonstrations demanded the abdication of the Emperor and the democratisation of the country. Everywhere informally elected Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, (Arbeiter- und Soldaten-Räte) took over the functions of local government. Troops and police either faded away or joined the revolutionary crowds. In Hamburg, Spartacists took over the SPG newspaper and renamed it "The Red Flag" (Die Rote Fahne).

The capitalists now saw the necessity of using this spontaneous movement of revolution to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Germany, hoping that by the sacrifice of the Emperor and the adoption of minor constitutional reforms they could contain the revolutionary process within the framework of "parliamentary democracy". They also hoped that these steps might mitigate the peace terms to be expected from the victorious Allied powers.

On November 7th., Prince Max had a secret meeting with the leader of the Social-Democratic Party, Friedrich Ebert, and was assured by the latter that the SPG would do all in its power to help stave off "the threat of Bolshevism".

(Prince Max of Baden: "Memoirs", Volume 2; London; 1928; p. 312)

As the Chancellor was to express it later:

"I said to myself that the Revolution was on the point of winning, that it could not be beaten down, but might perhaps be stifled. Now is the time to come out with the abdication, with Ebert's Chancellorship, with the appeal to the people to determine its own constitution in a Constituent National Assembly. If Ebert is presented to me as tribune of the people by the mob, we shall have the Republic; if Liebknecht is, we shall have Bolshevism as well. But should Ebert be appointed Imperial Chancellor by the Kaiser at the moment of abdication, . . . perhaps we should then succeed in diverting the revolutionary energy into the lawful channels of an election campaign".
(Prince Max of Baden: *ibid.*; p. 351).

Wilhelm was, however, reluctant to give up the throne, and shortly before noon on November 9th., without waiting for the Emperor's agreement, the Chancellor issued the following statement:

"The Kaiser and King has resolved to renounce the throne. The Chancellor remains in office until the questions connected with the abdication of the Kaiser, the renunciation by the Crown Prince of the German Empire and of Prussia, and the setting up of the Regency have been regulated. He intends to propose to the Regent the appointment of Herr Ebert to the Chancellorship and the bringing in of a bill to enact that election writs be issued immediately for a German Constituent National Assembly".

(Cited in: Prince Max of Baden: *ibid.*; p. 353).

The Emperor immediately departed into exile in Holland.

The time factor made it impracticable to go through the motions of appointing a Regent, who would in turn appoint Ebert as Chancellor, and the transfer of the Chancellorship from Prince Max to Ebert was the only unconstitutional act of the 1918 revolution.

Ebert immediately issued a vaguely-worded communique, signing it as "Reich Chancellor", which declared:

"The new government will be a people's government. Its goal will be to bring peace to the German people as soon as possible, and to establish firmly the freedom which it has achieved. . . .

Fellow citizens! I implore you most urgently to leave the streets and maintain calm and order!"

(Cited in: K. S. Pinson: "Modern Germany: Its History and Civilisation"; New York; 1966; p. 362).

Meanwhile Karl Liebknecht, on behalf of the Spartacists, was, at four o'clock in the afternoon, raising the red flag over the royal palace and proclaiming to an enthusiastic crowd that Germany would be a socialist republic.

On November 10th., a secret meeting took place between Ebert and General Wilhelm Groener, representing the High Command, at which Ebert obtained a pledge of the army's full support "to prevent the spread of terroristic Bolshevism".

(D. Groener-Geyer: "General Groener: Soldat und Staatsmann"; Frankfurt; 1955; p. 190-201).

The Meeting of the Berlin Workers' and Soldiers' Councils

That evening (November 10th.), some 3,000 members of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils in Berlin met at a large hall in the city, the Zirkus Busch. They carried a resolution declaring Germany to be a "socialist republic" with power in the hands of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, calling for speedy socialisation of the means of production, expressing pride in following the example of the Russian Revolution, and calling for resumption of diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia.

They elected an "Executive Council" (Vollzugsrat) modelled superficially on that of Soviet Russia and composed of 14 workers and 14 soldiers, half from the SPG and half from the ISPG. They also elected a new cabinet, called, in imitation of that in Soviet Russia, the "Council of People's Commissars" (Rat der Volksbeauftragten), composed of 3 members of the SPG and 3 members of the ISPG, headed by Ebert of the SPG.

The Foundation of the Spartacus League

At a conference in the Exzelsior in Berlin on November 11th., 1918, the Spartacus Group transformed itself into the Spartacus League (Spartakusbund).

The conference elected a Central Bureau (Zentrale) as follows: Willi Budich, Hermann Duncker, Kate Duncker, Hugo Eberlein, Leo Jogiches, Paul Lange, Paul Levi, Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring, Ernst Meyer, Wilhelm Pieck and August Thalheimer.

The First Decrees of the "Council of People's Commissars"

On November 12th., the "Council of People's Commissars" abolished martial law and censorship, together with wartime direction of labour, amnestied all political prisoners and provided for unemployment relief. On the other hand, it informed the High Command that it confirmed the officer corps in its command of the armed forces and declared that the primary function of Soldiers' Councils was the maintenance of military discipline.

On November 18th., the government set up a commission, headed by Kautsky, to examine which industries were "ripe for nationalisation".

The First National Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils

On December 16th., 1918, the First National Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils assembled in Berlin. It met for five days and was attended by 489 delegates, of which 291 (60%) were members of the SPG, 90 (20%) members of the ISPG, and only 10 (2%) Spartacists. Neither Karl Liebknecht nor Rosa Luxemburg was elected as a delegate.

The Organising Committee of the Congress had invited a Soviet delegation to attend, but this was turned back at the frontier on the instructions of the "Council of People's Commissars".

Max Cohen-Reuss, on behalf of the SPG, warned the Congress not to attempt to replace "parliamentary democracy" by government through workers' and soldiers' councils, since this would "make civil war inevitable". His resolution that the future of workers' councils lay purely in the economic not the political field, and that the councils should transfer their "power" to the "Council of People's Commissars" was carried by 400 votes to 50. The Congress went on to fix elections to the Constituent Assembly for January 19th., 1919.

On the third day of the Congress, the chairman of the Hamburg Soldiers' Council, an SPG member named Lamp'l, presented demands from the soldiers which came to be known as the Lamp'l or Hamburg Points. They included demands that the highest authority in the armed forces should be the Council of People's Commissars and not the High Command, that all badges of rank should be abolished, that soldiers' councils should be responsible for military discipline, and that officers should be elected by the men.

A new Central Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils was set up to succeed the Executive Council (which had been predominantly representative of Berlin). When it was decided that the functions of this Central Council should be merely advisory, the ISPG contingent boycotted it, so that only the SPG was represented on it.

On December 20th., a High Command deputation to the "Council of People's Commissars", consisting of General Wilhelm Groener and Major Kurt von Schleicher, strongly objected to the Hamburg Points and was given assurances that they would not be put into effect.

By the end of the congress it was clear that the aim of the German capitalists -- to save capitalist society through the instrument of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany -- had been, at least for the time being, successful.

The Shelling of the Royal Palace

On the night of December 23rd./24th., 1918, sailors belonging to the People's Naval Division, whose pay was in arrears, took prisoner Otto Wels (SPG), the commandant of Berlin, holding him as a hostage in the royal palace where they were quartered.

Ebert authorised the army to rescue Wels, and troops commanded by Lieutenant-General Arnold Lequis began to shell the palace. Later, however, the attacking troops mutinied and a truce was arranged; the sailors were given a safe conduct from the palace, together with their arrears of pay.

On the following day, Christmas Day, a crowd of 30,000 workers and soldiers, led by Spartacists, took part in a protest demonstration against the attack on the sailors, occupying the building of the principal SPG newspaper "Forward" (Vorwärts), and forcing the staff to print a front-page article condemning the Ebert government.

Resignation of the ISPG Ministers

On December 29th., 1918, under the pressure of the rank-and-file of their party, the three ISPG Ministers resigned from the government in protest at the attack on the sailors, and were replaced by members of the SPG.

The Foundation of the Communist Party

On December 29th., 1918, a closed conference of the Spartacus League in Berlin resolved to secede from the Independent Social-Democratic Party and to found a new party.

From December 30th., 1918 to January 1st., 1919, a joint conference of some 100 delegates from the Spartacus League and the International Communists of Germany (Internationale Kommunisten Deutschlands) -- a small socialist group in Bremen, known until November 1918 under the name of the Bremen Left Radicals (Linksradikalen Bremens) -- was held in the hall of the Prussian Chamber of Deputies in Berlin. The conference resolved to transform itself into the First Congress of the Communist Party of Germany (Spartacus League) (CPG) (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Spartakusbund) (KPD).

Karl Radek delivered an oration as fraternal delegate from the Russian Communist Party, and the congress sent greetings to the Soviet Republic.

The congress denounced the Ebert government as "the mortal enemy of the proletariat", condemned the policy of the Second International and called for the setting up of a new International.

Rosa Luxemburg introduced the Party programme, largely drafted by herself and previously published in "Red Flag" on December 14th., 1918, declaring:

"The immediate task of the proletariat is none other than . . . to realise Socialism and to eradicate capitalism root and brach".
(Bericht über den Gründensparteitag der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Spartakusbund); Berlin; 1919; p. 25).

The programme contained a number of Rosa Luxemburg's anti-Marxist-Leninist views -- belief in spontaneity, underestimation of the leading role of the Party, overestimation of the strike as a revolutionary weapon:

"The battle for socialism can only be carried on by the masses. . . . Socialism cannot be made, and will not be made, to order. . . . And what is the form of the struggle for socialism? It is the strike".
(Ibid.; p.33).

The most important part of the congress centred upon the question of whether the Party should participate in the forthcoming elections to the Constituent National Assembly. Against the opposition of Liebknicht and Luxemburg, the congress adopted by 62 votes to 23 a leftist resolution to boycott the elections.

As Lenin commented in April 1920:

"Contrary to the opinion of such prominent political leaders as Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknicht, the German 'Lefts' considered parliamentarism to be 'politically obsolete' as far back as January 1919. It is well known that the 'Lefts' were mistaken".
(V. I. Lenin: "'Left-wing' Communism: An Infantile Disorder", in: "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 98).

Although no vote was taken on the question, a majority at the congress also agreed with the slogan put forward by a "leftist" faction headed by Otto Rühle and Paul Fröhlich: "Out of the trade unions!"

The congress elected a Central Bureau (Zentrale) as follows:
Hermann Duncker, Käte Duncker, Hugo Eberlein, Paul Fröhlich, Leo Jogiches, Paul Lange, Paul Levi, Karl Liebknicht, Rosa Luxemburg, Ernst Meyer, Wilhelm Pieck and August Thalheimer.

The January Rising in Berlin

On January 3rd., 1919, the ISPG Ministers in the Prussian state government followed the example of their colleagues in the central government and resigned. This left only one member of the ISPG holding a key position -- Emil Eichhorn, chief of police in Berlin. Later on the same day, the Prussian Ministry of the Interior dismissed Eichhorn from his post.

On Sunday, January 5th., a huge protest demonstration against the dismissal of Eichhorn, organised jointly by the "Revolutionary Shop Stewards" and the Berlin leaderships of the ISPG and CPG, filled the streets of central Berlin. In the afternoon a section of the demonstrators occupied once more the offices of "Forward", which became until January 11th. the organ of the revolutionary workers of Berlin.

That evening representatives of the newly-formed Communist Party, of the ISPG and of the "Revolutionary Shop Stewards" met and set up a Revolutionary Council (Revolutionsausschuss) of 33 members, which declared the Ebert government deposed and called for armed struggle to establish the political power of the working class:

"Comrades! Workers!

The Ebert-Scheidemann government . . . is declared deposed by the undersigned Revolutionary Council of the representatives of the revolutionary socialist workers and soldiers. . .

The undersigned Revolutionary Council has taken over the function of government for the time being.

Comrades! Workers!

Join the action taken by the Revolutionary Council!"

(Cited in: G. Ledebour (Ed.): "Der Ledebour Prozess"; Berlin; 1919; p. 55).

However, the sailors declared their neutrality, and the mass of the workers were not prepared to engaged in armed struggle. Only a few hundred workers followed the revolutionary leaders to occupy a number of public buildings.

Meanwhile, on January 6th., the "Council of People's Commissars" met in hiding (the Chancellery being surrounded by a hostile crowd) and appointed SPG leader Gustav Noske to be commander-in-chief in Berlin, charged with the task of "restoring order". He set up his headquarters in a school in Dahlem, a Berlin suburb, and began the organisation and training of a "Free Corps" (Freikorps), composed mainly of reactionary officers and non-commissioned officers of the demobilising army.

On January 9th., Noske's Free Corps began their attack upon the Berlin workers and the Central Bureau of the CPG, the Berlin leadership of the ISPG and the "Revolutionary Shop Stewards" issued a joint call for a general strike.

The government's first success against the revolutionaries was the recapture of the "Forward" offices on the night of January 10/11th., and on January 11th. Noske led 3,000 Free Corps into central Berlin where, after bloody fighting, the systematic reconquest of the city was completed by the evening of January 12th.

The Soviet Republic in Bremen

On January 10th., 1919, a great demonstration in Bremen organised by the Communist Party demanded the transfer of political power to the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, which proceeded to set up a Council of People's Commissars composed of 3 representatives each from the CPG, the ISPG and the Soldiers' Council and declared this to be the government of the Soviet Republic of Bremen.

On February 4th., on the orders of Noske, a large force of troops made an assault upon Bremen and had, by the evening, overthrown the Soviet Republic.

The Murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg

On January 15th., Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, who had refused to leave Berlin, were captured and brutally murdered by members of the Free Corps. Captured with the two leaders was another leading member of the CPG, Wilhelm Pieck, who later "escaped" under mysterious circumstances. One of the officers involved, Captain Pabst,

" . . . stated later that he (i.e., Pieck -- Ed.) was released because he had supplied information about other Spartakus personalities which facilitated their arrest".

(J.P. Nettle: "Rosa Luxemburg", Volume 2; London; 1966; p. 780).

Pieck later emerged as a leading exponent of revisionism within the Communist Party of Germany.

The Soviet Republic of Bavaria

In one state -- Bavaria -- revolutionary resistance to the Scheidemann government continued until May 3rd., 1919.

In November 1918 the Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Councils in Munich, under the leadership of the ISPG, had proclaimed a "Social and Democratic Republic of Bavaria", and set up a government of ISPG and SPG Ministers with Kurt Eisner (ISPG) as Prime Minister.

When elections were held to the State Parliament in January/February 1919, however, the ISPG received only 2.5% of the vote. On his way to the State Parliament to hand in his cabinet's resignation on February 21st., Eisner was murdered by a right-wing officer, Anton Graf von Arco auf Valley. A new state government was then set up, headed by Johannes Hoffmann (SPG).

The CPG, ISPG, SPG and the Executive Council of the Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Councils set up, following the murder of Eisner, an Action Council (Aktionsausschuss), which in turn set up a new Central Council of the Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Councils and called a three-day general strike throughout Bavaria. The Central Council, however, refused demands for the effective arming of the working class.

In these circumstances, on the evening of April 6th., 1919, on the initiative of the ISPG and against the opposition of the SPG, a "Council of People's Commissars" (Rat der Volksbeauftragten) was established in Munich, headed by playwright Ernst Toller and philosopher Gustav Landauer (both ISPG).

On April 7th., the "Council of People's Commissars" proclaimed a "Soviet Republic of Bavaria". The Hoffmann government fled to Bamberg, in northern Bavaria, from where it prepared, with the support of the capitalist class and part of the peasantry, the military overthrow of the "Soviet Republic".

The CPG demanded that the "Council of People's Commissars" should take urgent measures to meet the threat of armed intervention, but the "Soviet Government" refused to arm the workers or to make any serious inroads into the capitalist state machine.

On the night of April 12/13th., Free Corps forces, on the instructions of the Hoffmann government, invaded Bavaria, but were beaten back by the workers and soldiers of Munich.

The area and barracks Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Councils now declared the Central Council of their councils and the "Council of People's Commissars" deposed, and set up as legislative and executive organ of the Soviet Republic of Bavaria an Action Council of 15 members drawn from the CPG, the ISPG and the SPG. It elected an Executive Council of 4 members which functioned as the Soviet Government, headed by Communists Eugen Leviné and Max Levien.

On April 14th. the Soviet Government of Bavaria called a ten-day general strike and ordered the arming of the workers and their organisation into a Red Army. The Soviet Government also proceeded to disarm the reactionary forces, to replace the representatives of the capitalist class in the administrative organs by workers, to hand over control of production to the factory councils, and to nationalise the banks.

On April 27th., 1919, Lenin sent a message of greetings to the Soviet Republic of Bavaria.

On April 30th., 1919, some 60 thousand Free Corps troops, commanded by Colonel Ritter von Epp, launched a second attack on Munich. The Red Army fought heroically for several days until, on the night of April 3rd./4th., its last units were destroyed in bitter fighting.

Martial law was proclaimed in Munich, and in the white terror which followed hundreds of revolutionary workers, soldiers and intellectuals were brutally murdered, and more than 12,000 thrown into prison.

The Foundation of the Nazi Party

On January 5th., 1919, the fascist "German Workers' Party" (Deutsche Arbeiterpartei) was founded in Munich on the initiative of Anton Drexler. It was joined in September 1919 by Adolf Hitler.

In March 1920 the party changed its name to the "National Socialist German Workers' Party" (NSGWP) (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei) (NSDAP) and came to be known as the "Nazi Party".

The Elections to the National Assembly

The elections to the National Assembly took place on January 19th., 1919, under adult suffrage for both sexes and with proportional representation.

Most of the older political parties had changed their names in November 1918 to "people's parties" in an effort to suggest that they had a progressive character. The German Conservative Party, the Free Conservative Party and the Christian-Social Party had merged to form the German National

People's Party (GNPP) (Deutschnationale Volkspartei) (DNVP), while the National Liberal Party had become the German People's Party (GPP) (Deutsche Volkspartei) (DVP) -- both of these parties at this time still representing the interests of the landed aristocracy. The Centre (a party representing the interests of the capitalists, but with its appeal directed principally towards Catholic electors) had become (temporarily) the Christian People's Party (CPP) (Christliche Volkspartei) (CVP). The Social-Democratic Party of Germany and the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (both representing the interests of the capitalists, but with their appeal directed principally towards class-conscious working people) continued under their old names. In addition, a new party representing the interests of the capitalists but with its appeal directed principally towards "liberal" workers and petty bourgeois had been set up in November 1918 -- the German Democratic Party (GDP) (Deutsche Demokratische Partei) (DDP). The only party representing the interests of the working class, the Communist Party of Germany, boycotted the elections, as has been said.

The results of the elections to the National Assembly were as follows:

<u>Party</u>	<u>Votes</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Deputies</u>
Social-Democratic Party of Germany:	11.5 m.	38%	165
Christian People's Party:	6.0 m.	20%	91
German Democratic Party:	5.6 m.	19%	75
German National People's Party:	3.1 m.	10%	44
Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany:	2.3 m.	8%	22
German People's Party:	1.3 m.	4%	19
Other parties:	0.5 m.	1%	7
Total: 30.3 m.			423

The Election of Ebert as President

The new National Assembly met for the first time on February 6th., 1919, in Weimar. Weimar was selected for its cultural associations rather than Berlin which, as the centre of the Prussian state, symbolised Prussian aristocratic and military hegemony over Germany. Even more important, the Assembly was there able to obtain safer military protection from the militant workers and soldiers.

On February 11th., 1919, the National Assembly elected Friedrich Ebert (SPG) as first President of the Realm.

The Formation of the Scheidemann Government

The ISPG having refused to take part in a coalition government with the SPG, on February 13th., 1919, a new coalition government comprising Ministers drawn from the Social-Democratic Party of Germany, the Centre (formerly the Christian People's Party) and the German Democratic Party -- a coalition which formed the Parliamentary core of the Weimar Republic during its early years and became known as the "Weimar Coalition" -- was formed with Philipp Scheidemann (SPG) as Chancellor.

The Formation of the Arm of the Realm

On February 27th., 1919, the National Assembly approved the law for the establishment of a "provisional army", the "Arm of the Realm" (Reichswehr). Its officers and non-commissioned officers were drawn mainly from the old imperial army, the rank-and-file principally from the reactionary Free Corps.

No provision was made in the law for Soldiers' Councils, thus annulling the Hamburg Points.

The March General Strike in Berlin

On March 1st., 1919, the CPG issued a call for a political general strike to begin on March 3rd., directed against the counter-revolutionary policies of the Scheidemann government. The political demands put forward included the recognition of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils and the Hamburg Points; the abolition of courts martial; the freeing of political prisoners; the dissolution of the Free Corps; the formation of a workers' defence force; and the establishment of trade and diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia. Most of these demands, and the strike call itself, were endorsed by the Executive Council of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils of Greater Berlin, and even the SPG leaders who had voted against the strike were compelled to join it.

The strike paralysed Berlin for five days. Then, on the pretext that the extension of the strike to gas, water and electricity might be harmful to public health, the SPG leaders resigned from the strike committee on March 8th.

Minister of the Arm of the Realm Gustav Noske immediately declared martial law, and ordered Free Corps troops to march into Berlin to smash the strike. Some thousands of workers and soldiers engaged in armed resistance to the Free Corps.

On March 10th., Leo Jogiches, a member of the Central Bureau of the CPG, was murdered by Free Corps officers, and on March 11th. 29 sailors belonging to the People's Naval Division were shot.

After several days of severe fighting, in which more than 1,200 workers lost their lives, Berlin was occupied by Free Corps troops on March 12th.

The Foundation of the Communist International

The Communist (or Third) International (Comintern) (CI) was established at a conference held in Moscow from March 2nd. to 19th., 1919, attended by 35 voting delegates from 21 countries.

Of the two delegates elected by the Communist Party of Germany to attend the conference, only one, Hugo Eberlein, succeeded in reaching Moscow. He was mandated to oppose

the setting up of the International "for the time being". The leadership of the CPG felt that, with the weakness of the Communist movement as yet outside Soviet Russia, a new International would in these circumstances be dominated by the Bolsheviks.

The mandate was originally due to Rosa Luxemburg, but was confirmed after her death by Leo Jogiches, Paul Levi and Wilhelm Pieck.

("Kommunistischeski Internatsional", No. 187-88; 1929; p. 194)

According to Ernst Meyer at the Fifth Congress of the CPG in 1921, Eberlein had been instructed to walk out of the conference if the decision were taken to proceed with the founding of the new International.

(Bericht über den 5. Parteitag der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Spartakusbund); n.p.; 1921; p. 27)

Eberlein found himself, however, isolated at the conference, and on March 4th. the conference voted without opposition (Eberlein had been persuaded to abstain from voting) to transform itself into the First Congress of the Communist International.

Among the more important documents approved by the Congress were "Theses on Bourgeois Democracy and Proletarian Dictatorship" (drafted by Lenin), the "Platform of the Communist International", an "Appeal to the Workers of all Countries", "Theses on the International Situation and the Policy of the Entente", and a "Manifesto to the Proletariat of the Entire World".

The congress set up an Executive Committee to lead the work of the International, composed of members nominated by the Communist Parties of Soviet Russia, Germany, German Austria, Hungary, the Balkan Federation, Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries. The ECCI was to have its seat in Moscow and was to elect a Bureau of five persons to carry on the day-to-day work of the International. In this connection, Grigori Zinoviev (Soviet Russia) was, after the congress, elected Chairman.

The ECCI reported to the Second Congress of the Communist International in July/August 1920 that only the Soviet Russian and Hungarian Parties had been able to send permanent delegates.

(Der I Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale: Protokoll der Verhandlungen in Moskau vom 2 bis zum 19 März 1919; Hamburg; 1921)

In May 1919 the Executive Committee began publication of the organ of the C.I., "The Communist International", in several languages.

The ISPG Declares for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

From March 2nd. to 6th., 1919, an Extraordinary Congress of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany was held in Berlin, attended by delegates representing 300 thousand workers.

A draft programme by Ernst Däumig was presented to the congress and, although modified to some extent as a result of right-wing opposition led by Karl Kautsky, the programme finally adopted by the congress represented a considerable victory for the left-wing, since it came down firmly in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat:

"The . . . party takes its stand on the council system. It supports the councils in the struggle for economic and political power. It strives for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the representative of the great majority of the nation, as the essential prerequisite for the realisation of socialism".
(Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands: Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des ausserordentlichen Parteitages der USPD; Berlin; 1919; p. 3).

The Second National Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils

The second National Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils was held in Berlin from April 8th. to 14th., 1919, attended by 142 delegates belonging to the SPG and 57 belonging to the ISPG. There were no delegates belonging to the Communist Party.

Dominated by the SPG, the congress resolved to turn over its "power" to the National Assembly.

The Treaty of Versailles

On May 7th., 1919, the terms of the Versailles Peace Treaty were conveyed by representatives of the Allied Powers to the German Foreign Minister, Ulrich Graf von Brockdorff-Rantzau.

The principal aims of the victorious imperialists in imposing the Treaty of Versailles upon defeated Germany were to make Germany militarily impotent, to annex parts of her territory and all her colonies, and to drain a large proportion of her economic wealth for many years to come for their benefit.

Part I of the treaty set up the League of Nations, an "international body" to be controlled by the European Allies and Japan (the United States government refused to join).

Parts 2 and 3 defined the portions of Germany proper to be detached from her territory. Moresnet, Eupen and Malmédy were to be ceded to Belgium; Alsace-Lorraine with its iron-fields to France; northern Schleswig-Holstein to Denmark; West Prussia and most of the province of Posnan to Poland (thus establishing a "Polish corridor" to the sea separating East Prussia from the rest of Germany). The Saar basin was

placed under the control of the League of Nations, but with its coal mines under French control; a plebiscite was to be held among the population of the Saar after 15 years to determine its future. The left bank of the Rhine and part of the right were to be demilitarised. Danzig was to be a "free city" under the sovereignty of the League of Nations.

Memel and southern Silesia were also detached from Germany; the former was ceded to Lithuania in 1924, the latter to Poland in 1921.

Part 4 deprived Germany of all her overseas colonies, which were placed under the nominal sovereignty of the League of Nations, which in turn transferred them to various of the Allied powers as "mandates". In Africa, the Cameroons and Togoland were divided between France and Britain, while South-West Africa passed to the Union of South Africa. In the Pacific, the Marshall Islands went to Japan, New Guinea to Australia, West Samoa to New Zealand, Shantung to Japan (which ceded it to China in 1923), and Nauru was divided between Britain, Australia and New Zealand.

Part 5 laid down limits on the size of the German armed forces. The army was to be restricted to 100,000 men, and the formation of a General Staff was prohibited. The navy was restricted to 6 battleships, 6 light cruisers, 12 destroyers and 12 torpedo boats, with submarines prohibited; the remaining ships were taken by the Allies. No replacement ship was to exceed 10,000 tons, and naval personnel were limited to 15,000 men and 1,500 officers and warrant officers. Conscription for the armed forces was prohibited, together with any military or naval air force. Inter-Allied commissions of control were set up for each arm of the service to operate until 1925, after which this function was to be taken over by the League of Nations.

Part 7 charged some 100 Germans (including ex-Emporer Wilhelm II and Field Marshal von Hindenburg) with war crimes, but no significant action was taken under this section.

Part 8 laid down that Germany must pay reparations for "all damage done to the civilian population of the Allies by the aggression of Germany". A Reparations Commission was set up to determine, not later than May 1st., 1921, the sum to be paid. Meanwhile, Germany was to pay preliminary reparations of £1,000 million. The Allied countries were to receive "most favoured nation" treatment from Germany for five years without reciprocity, and France was to be exempted from customs duties for five years on the products of Alsace-Lorraine.

Part 12 established control of the rivers Rhine, Elbe and Oder by "international commissions". The Kiel Canal was left under German control, but made to permit free access to all vessels of countries at peace with Germany.

Part 14 established Allied control of the Rhineland for 15 years. If Germany "faithfully carried out" the terms of the treaty, the Cologne zone was to be evacuated after 5 years, the Coblenz zone after 10 years, and the Mainz zone after 15 years. If at any time the Reparations Commission decided that Germany was not fulfilling its obligations with regard to reparations, however, the whole or part of these areas could be reoccupied.

Foundation of the Association of Communist Land Workers and Small Peasants

On May 17th., 1919, the Association of Communist Land Workers and Small Peasants of Germany (Verband Kommunistischer Landarbeiter and Kleinbauern Deutschlands) was founded on the initiative of the CPG, and began to publish a weekly newspaper "The Plough" (Der Pflug).

The Retirement of Hindenburg and Groener

In June 1919 Field-Marshal Paul von Hindenburg and General Wilhelm Groener retired from active military service.

The Formation of the Bauer Government

There was at first disagreement among the German imperialists as to whether the Versailles Treaty terms should be accepted. In the cabinet 6 Ministers were for acceptance, 8 (in particular the representatives of the German Democratic Party) were for rejection.

On June 20th., as a result of these differences within the cabinet, the Scheidemann government resigned.

On June 21st., a new coalition government was formed, composed of representatives of the Social-Democratic Party and the Centre (without the participation of the German Democratic Party), with Gustav Bauer (Centre) as Chancellor.

Acceptance of the Versailles Treaty

On June 28th., 1919, the German delegation to the Peace Conference signed the Versailles Treaty on the instructions of the new government.

On July 31st., the National Assembly approved acceptance of the treaty by 237 votes to 138 -- against the opposition of the German National People's Party, the German People's Party and the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany.

The treaty came into effect on August 14th., 1919.

The Weimar Constitution

On July 31st., 1919, the National Assembly approved -- against the opposition of the German National People's Party, the German People's Party and the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany -- the new Constitution, drafted in the main by Hugo Preuss, a lawyer member of the German Democratic Party.

This constitution, known as the "Weimer Constitution", reflected the changes brought about by the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in November 1918. The remnants of formal political power remaining in the hands of the Prussian landed aristocracy were now abolished, and the capitalists became the sole ruling class of Germany under the facade of the "parliamentary democracy" of the Weimar Republic.

To emphasise the historical continuity with the former Empire, the new constitution continued the old name of "Realm" (Reich) rather than "Republic", although the Realm was described in Article 1 as a republic, in which political authority derived from "the people".

Germany remained a federal state, but the powers of the central government were greatly increased, and the special rights of Prussia (in fact, of the Prussian landed aristocracy) were abolished.

The head of state was a President (Präsident), to be in future directly elected for a period of seven years. Special emergency powers were granted to the President under Article 48, by which he could suspend "the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution" and rule by decree when he considered that "public security and order" were endangered.

A bicameral legislature was established. The principal chamber in the parliamentary facade was the "Parliament of the Realm" (Reichstag), elected by direct ballot, but there was also a federal "Council of the Realm" (Reichsrat) ostensibly to give representation to the states but, in fact, without effective powers.

The constitution incorporated factory councils into the state apparatus for the regulation of "industrial relations".

The constitution came into force on August 14th., 1919.

The "Leftist" Opposition to Work in the Trade Unions

At a National Conference of the Communist Party of Germany held in Frankfurt on August 16/17th., 1919, an attack was launched upon the policy of the Communist International, that Communists should work in mass trade unions under reformist leadership, by a "leftist" opposition headed by Heinrich Laufenberg and Fritz Wolffheim. They proposed that all Party members should withdraw from the trade unions and form a single comprehensive "left" trade union.

(O.K.Flechtheim: "Die Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands in der Weimarer Republik"; Offenbach; 1948; p. 59).

The ECCI Circular Letter on Parliament, and the Soviets

On September 1st., 1919, the Executive Committee of

the Communist International issued a circular letter on parliament and the Soviets.

This stressed that the form of the proletarian dictatorship is Soviets, not parliament; nevertheless;

"We can help to abolish an organisation by entering it, by 'exploiting' it. . . .

It is necessary: 1) that the centre of gravity of the struggle shall be outside parliament . . . ; 2) that the action inside parliament shall be bound up with this struggle; 3) that the deputies shall also do illegal work; 4) that they shall act on the instructions of the Central Committee and subordinate themselves to it; 5) that in their actions they shall disregard parliamentary forms. . . .

We cannot, on principle, renounce the utilisation of parliament".

(Manifest, Richtlinien, Beschlüsse des ersten Kongresses: Aufrufe und offene Schreiben des Exekutivkomitees bis zum zweiten Kongress; Hamburg; 1920; p. 139)

It declared that, since parliamentary activities are auxiliary activities, differences on the question of participation in parliamentary activities should not be made the pretext for splitting a Communist Party:

"Parliamentary activities and participation in the electoral campaigns are only auxiliary activities, nothing more.

If that is so, and it undoubtedly is, then it is obvious that it is not worth while splitting over differences of opinion on this subsidiary question. . . . Therefore we appeal urgently to all groups and organisations who are genuinely fighting for Soviets to proceed with the utmost unity, even if on this question they are not of one mind.

All who are for Soviets and the proletarian dictatorship will unite as quickly as possible and form a unified Communist Party".
(Ibid.; p. 139).

Lenin's "Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists"

On October 10th., 1919, Lenin sent a message of greetings to Italian, French and German Communists in which he declared that the differences among the German Communists related to the questions of participating in parliamentary activities and of working in mass trade unions under reformist leadership:

"The differences among the German Communists boil down. . . to the question of 'utilising the legal possibilities' . . . , of utilising the bourgeois parliament, the reactionary trade unions, the 'factory councils law'."

(V. I. Lenin: "Greetings to Italian, French and German Communists", in: "Against Revisionism"; Moscow; 1959; p. 521).

He declared that those who advocated the boycotting of these bodies on principle were undoubtedly mistaken:

"Both from the standpoint of Marxist theory and the experience of three revolutions. . . , I regard refusal to participate in a bourgeois parliament, in a reactionary . . . trade union, in the ultra-reactionary workers' 'councils' . . . as an undoubted mistake.

A mistake remains a mistake, and it is necessary to criticise it and fight for its rectification". (V.I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 522, 525),

and that the source of this error was lack of revolutionary experience:

"This error has its source in the lack of revolutionary experience among utterly sincere, convinced and valiant working-class revolutionaries". (V. I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 525).

The differences on these questions were, Lenin emphasised, subsidiary in character:

"These are differences between representatives of a mass movement that has grown up with incredible rapidity, differences that have a single, common, granite-like, fundamental basis: recognition of the proletarian revolution, struggle against bourgeois-democratic illusions and bourgeois-democratic parliamentarism, recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat and Soviet government". (V.I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 519).

which will disappear with the growth of the Communist movement:

"This is a matter of growing pains; it will pass with the growth of the movement which is developing in fine style". (V.I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 522).

The West European Bureau and the "West European Secretariat"

In October 1919 the Dutch Communist S. Ruttgers was charged by the Communist International with the formation of a West European Bureau of the International in Amsterdam. This came into being in the first weeks of 1920, with D. Wijnkoop as President, and Ruttgers and Henriette Roland-Holst as Secretaries. It issued a bulletin in three languages.

About the same time (the autumn of 1919) a "West European Secretariat" was set up unofficially by the leadership of the Communist Party of Germany with headquarters in Berlin, as a counter-move to the formation of the Amsterdam Bureau. Its heads were the Bavarian Communist Thomas, and M. Bronsky. At the Second Congress of the CI in July 1920, it was described as

". . . limited, narrow and to a certain extent nationalist and not international". (Der Zweite Kongress der Kommunist Internationale; Hamburg; 1921; p.590).

The Second Congress of the CPG

The Second Congress of the Communist Party of Germany was held illegally in the Heidelberg district from October 20th., to 23rd., 1919, attended by 46 delegates representing 16,000 members.

The ebb of the revolutionary tide had led to a more realistic appraisal of the process of the socialist revolution in Western Europe as a protracted process embracing several stages, and made up of advances and setbacks. This view was reflected in the "Theses on Communist Principles and Tactics" adopted by the Congress:

"The revolution, which consists not of a single line but of the long stubborn struggle of a class downtrodden for thousands of years and therefore naturally not yet fully conscious of its task and of its strength, is exposed to a process of rise and fall, of flow and ebb". (Bericht über den 2. Parteitag der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Spartakusbund); n.p.; n.d.; p.62).

The congress also considered "Theses on the Trade Union Question", drafted by Paul Levi, which not only made it obligatory for Communists to work in the reformist trade unions, but debarred from further participation in the congress those who voted against the theses.

(Ibid.; p. 46).

After a bitter debate, the theses were carried by 31 votes to 18, and the minority were then excluded from the congress.

(Ibid.; p. 42).

The expelled minority immediately began preparations for the formation of a new party (which came into being in April 1920), and succeeded in drawing away from the CPG nearly half its total membership, including the majority of its members in Berlin and North Germany.

Lenin disagreed strongly with the expulsion of the minority. On October 28th., 1919, he wrote to the Central Bureau of the CPG;

"The only thing that seems incredible is this radio report that . . . you expelled the minority which, they tell us, then set up a party of its own. . . . Given agreement on this basic issue (for Soviet rule, against parliamentarism) unity, in my opinion, is possible and necessary. . . .

Restoration of unity in the Communist Party of Germany is both possible and necessary from the international standpoint".

(V.I. Lenin: Letter to the CB of the CPG regarding the Split, in: "Collected Works", Volume 30; Moscow; 1965; p. 87-88).

The congress elected a Central Bureau as follows: Heinrich Brandler, Hugo Eberlein, Paul Levi, Ernst Meyer, Wilhelm Pieck, August Thalheimer and Clara Zetkin.

The Foundation of the Communist Youth International

The Foundation Congress of the Communist Youth International (CYL) was held illegally in Berlin from November 20th., to 26th., 1919, attended by 25 delegates from 14 youth organisations with a total membership of 200 thousand.

The congress declared the organisation a section of the Communist International and adopted a "Manifesto to Working Youth" and "Statutes of the Communist Youth International". It elected an Executive Committee of five members, including Leopold Flieg and Wilhelm Münzenberg from the CPG.

The December Congress of the ISPG

From November 30th., to December 6th., 1919, an Extraordinary Congress of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany was held in Leipzig.

A resolution that the Party should withdraw from the Second International was carried by 170 votes to 111, and a resolution to enter into negotiations with parties inside and outside the Communist International with a view to forming "an effective International" was carried by 227 votes to 54.

("Kommunistisches Internatsional", No. 7-8; November-December, 1919; Col. 1113).

Following the congress, the Central Council of the ISPG wrote to the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party along these lines, but received no reply.

1920.

The Separation of the Bavarian People's Party

The Bavarian People's Party (BPP) (Bayrische Volkspartei) (BVP) had been formed on November 12th., 1918 as a working group within the Centre. It represented the interests of the landed aristocracy in Bavaria, and its appeal was directed particularly towards Catholic voters in that state.

On January 9th., 1920, the Bavarian People's Party broke away from the Centre to form an independent political party.

The Demonstration against the Factory Councils Bill

In January 1920 the government introduced into the National Assembly the Factory Councils Bill, designed to transform factory councils into mere negotiating bodies.

The CPG and the ISPG called on workers to stage a mass protest demonstration against the Bill on January 13th. in

front of the Parliament Building. During the demonstration troops guarding the building fired machine-guns into the demonstrators, killing 42 and wounding 10.

The government immediately declared martial law (abolished only in December 1920) and under cover of this the Free Corps bloodily suppressed protest strikes all over the country and occupied the offices of the CPG and ISPG newspapers, while several hundred leading members of the two parties were arrested.

The ECCI Letters of February

On February 5th., 1920, the Executive Committee of the Communist International issued a general appeal

" . . . to all German workers, to the Central Bureau of the Communist Party of Germany and to the presidium of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany",

in which, after drawing attention to past mistakes on the part of the ISPG, it invited this party to send delegates to Moscow for negotiations. At the same time, it rejected in advance all collaboration with the

" . . . right-wing leaders . . . who are dragging back the movement into the bourgeois swamp of the yellow Second International".
("Kommunistisches Internatsional", March 22nd., 1920; cols. 1381-92).

Two days later the ECCI sent a letter to the Central Committee of the newly-formed "leftist" Communist Workers' Party of Germany, formed by the split in the CPG following its Second Congress, expressing disapproval of the party's opposition to working in the mass trade unions and to participating in parliamentary elections, but inviting it to send delegates to Moscow for oral discussions.

(Bericht über den 3. Parteitag der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Spartakusbund); n.p.; n.d.; p. 14)

The Third Congress of the CPG

The Third Congress of the Communist Party of Germany was held illegally in Karlsruhe on February 25/26th., 1920, attended by 43 voting delegates.

Clara Zetkin delivered a report on the international situation, and on the work of the "West European Secretariat". She claimed that it had now developed "beyond its functions of information" and had become "a central point of communication and union for Communists in Western Europe"

(Ibid.; p. 77).

Following her report, strong criticism was expressed concerning the dealings of the ECCI with the "leftist" Communist Workers' Party of Germany, and a resolution was passed calling for the retention of the "West European Secretariat" and for a

World Congress of the CI in the near future to discuss the issues between the ECCI and the CPG.

(Ibid.p p. 84-85).

The congress expelled from the Party five entire districts -- Greater Berlin, North, North-West, Lower Saxony and Dresden -- for supporting the stand of their delegates on the trade union issue at the Second Party Congress in October 1919.

A Central Bureau was elected as follows: Heinrich Brandler, Hugo Eberlein, Paul Fröhlich, Ernst Meyer, Wilhelm Pieck, August Thalheimer and Clara Zetkin. After the congress, Paul Levi was coopted to the Central Bureau.

The Kapp Putsch

At the beginning of March, 1920, the government, in pursuance of demands issued by the Inter-Allied Military Control Commission, ordered the disbandment of two brigades of marines stationed near Berlin under the command of Captain Hermann Ehrhardt.

General Walter Freiherr von Lüttwitz refused to comply with the order, and the government formally removed the brigades from his command.

On the night of March 12/13th., 5,000 members of the two brigades, led by Ehrhardt, marched into the centre of Berlin.

The government immediately sought the use of troops to crush the putsch, but General Hans von Seeckt, Chief of the Office of Troops at the Ministry of the Arm of the Realm, replied:

"Obviously there can be no talk of letting Reichswehr fight against Reichswehr".

The brigades occupied without opposition all the principal government buildings in the centre of Berlin. The leaders of the putsch declared the government desposed, the Weimar Constitution null and void and the National Assembly dissolved; they proclaimed a new government headed by Wolfgang Kapp, an East Prussian landowner. The Ministers of the legal government fled to Stuttgart, but before leaving issued a call for a general strike.

The leadership of the Communist Party at first adopted a "leftist" line towards the putsch, advising workers not to participate in the strike. On March 14th. "The Red Flag" declared:

"The revolutionary proletariat . . . will not lift a finger to save the murderers of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg from disgraceful defeat. We shall not lift a finger for the democratic republic".

The workers, however, responded to the strike call, which was endorsed by the trade union leaders belonging to the SPG,

headed by Carl Legien (chairman of the largest trade union federation, the General German Trade Union League) and 12 million workers, including the lower grades of the civil service, ceased work. In these circumstances on March 15th., the leadership of the CPG changed its line and advised support of the strike, but under the "leftist" slogan of "For a Soviet Government!"

In the Ruhr, under the leadership of the CPG, a Red Army of 100,000 men came into being and fought the counter-revolutionary troops.

In Berlin the strike was almost 100% effective and, after a few days in which Berlin was completely paralysed, on March 17th. the leaders of the putsch fled. The putsch had been defeated.

The right wing of the ISPG leadership now demanded a new government headed by Legien as Chancellor and including a majority of ISPG Ministers.

On March 21st., 1920, the Central Bureau of the CPG declared that, in the event of such a "workers' government" being formed, they would adopt an attitude of "loyal opposition" towards it, i.e., they would refrain from attempting to overthrow it by force.

("Die Rote Fahne", March 26th., 1920).

Lenin declared that these tactics were correct in principle:

"The conclusion: the promise to be a 'loyal opposition' (i.e., the renunciation of preparations for a 'violent overthrow') to a 'Socialist government if it excludes bourgeois-capitalist parties'. Undoubtedly these tactics, in the main, are correct".
(V.I. Lenin: "'Left-wing' Communism: An Infantile Disorder", Appendix 2, in: "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 150).

However, he strongly criticised the formulation of the statement:

"We cannot (in an official statement of the Communist Party) describe a government of social-traitors as a 'Socialist' government. . . . It is impermissible to speak of the exclusion of 'bourgeois-capitalist parties' when the parties of both Scheidemann and Messrs. Kautsky and Crispian are petty-bourgeois democratic parties".
(V.I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 150).

and declared that the reasons given for these tactics were

". . . wrong in principle and politically harmful".

He suggested that a more correct formulation of these reasons would have been:

"As long as the majority of the urban workers follow the Independents, we Communists must place no obstacles in the way of these workers overcoming their past

philistine-democratic (consequently also 'bourgeois-capitalist') illusions, by going through the experience of having 'their own government'. This . . . means that for a certain period all attempts at a violent overthrow of a government which enjoys the confidence of a majority of the urban workers must be abandoned". (V.I. Lenin; *ibid.*; p. 151)

In an "Open Letter" to members of the "leftist" Communist Workers' Party of Germany dated June 2nd., 1920., the ECCI confirmed Lenin's objections to the statement of the CPG:

"The ECCI . . . is completely out of agreement with the reasons given by the Spartacus League Central Bureau in its well-known statement of 21 March 1920 about the possibility of forming a so-called 'purely socialist' government. It was incorrect to state that such a 'purely socialist' government will ensure a situation in which 'bourgeois democracy need not appear as capitalist dictatorship'". (Cited in: Manifest, Richtlinien, Beschlüsse des Ersten Kongresses: Aufrufe und offene Schreiben des Exekutivkomitees bis zum zweiten Kongress; Hamburg; 1920; p. 292)

The project for an ISPG-dominated government fell through -- the left-wing of the ISPG leadership refusing to join a government which would include the SPG.

Lenin described the period of the Kapp putsch as

". . . the German Kornilov period"
(V.I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 151-2),

because it represented an attempt at counter-revolution on the part of the landed aristocracy.

In Bavaria a parallel putsch on behalf of the landed aristocracy was more successful. The SPG government headed by Johannes Hoffmann was ousted, and a new government representing the big landowners, headed by Gustav von Kahr was placed in office. From this time Bavaria became a stamping ground for any right-wing forces opposed to the "parliamentary democracy" at the centre.

Of the 705 persons charged with involvement in the Kapp putsch, only one received a prison sentence. Lüttwitz found refuge in Hungary, Ehrhardt in Bavaria, and a general amnesty was granted to the great majority of Kapp's accomplices.

The Formation of the Müller Government

As a result of public indignation at their conduct during the Kapp putsch, Gustav Bauer (Centre) and Gustav Noske (SPG) resigned as Chancellor and Minister of Defence respectively.

On March 27th., 1920, a new government was formed, composed of Ministers from the SPG, the Centre and the German Democratic Party, with Hermann Müller (SPG) as Chancellor.

General Hans von Seeckt was promoted head of the Army Leadership (Heeresleitung), the successor to the forbidden High Command.

The Foundation Congress of the "Communist Workers' Party of Germany"

On April 3rd./4th., 1920, the foundation congress of the Communist Workers' Party of Germany (CWPG) (Kommunistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands) (KAPD) -- formed on the initiative of "leftist" elements who had broken with the Communist Party of Germany over the issue of working in the reformist mass trade unions -- was held in Berlin, attended by 35 delegates representing 38 thousand members.

A resolution that the CWPG should apply for membership of the Communist International was carried unanimously, while another resolution adopted directed all members to join the "leftist" General Workers' Union (GWU) (Allgemeine Arbeiter-Union) (AAU).

On November 28th., 1920, the CWPG was admitted by the ECCI to the Communist International as a "sympathising party".

The Dissolution of the West European Bureau of the CI

In April 1920 the ECCI dissolved the West European Bureau of the CI in Amsterdam, on the grounds that its leaders had adopted the "leftist" line of opposition to work in the reformist mass trade unions and to parliamentary activity. Its functions were transferred to the West European Secretariat set up by the CPG in Berlin, which now assumed an official status.

("Kommunistisches Internatsional", No. 1; May 11th., 1920; Cols. 1659-60).

"Left-wing' Communism"

In April 1920 Lenin's last major work, "Left-wing' Communism: An Infantile Disorder" appeared -- directed against "leftist" deviations from Marxist strategy and tactics in the European communist movement, particularly in Germany.

In speaking of these "leftist" trends, Lenin pointed out that they were international in character:

"Some of the fundamental features of our revolution have a significance which is . . . international . . . By international significance I mean the international validity, or the historical inevitability of a repetition on an international scale of what has taken place here".
(V.I. Lenin: "Left-wing' Communism: An Infantile Disorder", in: "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 57).

A considerable part of the book was devoted to a critique of the "leftist" group which had just formed itself into the "Communist Workers' Party of Germany". Lenin opposed the policy of these "Left" Communists in repudiating work in the mass trade unions under reformist leadership:

"We wage the struggle against the opportunist and social-chauvinist leaders in order to attract the working class to our side. To forget this most elementary and self-evident truth would be stupid. But the German 'Left' Communists are guilty of just this stupidity when because of the reactionary and counter-revolutionary character of the heads of the trade unions, they jump to the conclusion that . . . it is necessary to leave the trade unions!! to refuse to work in them!! to create new, artificial forms of labour organisations!! This is an unpardonable blunder equivalent to the greatest service the Communists could render the bourgeoisie. . . To refuse to work in the reactionary trade unions means leaving the insufficiently developed or backward masses of the workers under the influence of the reactionary leaders, the agents of the bourgeoisie. . . .

It is just this absurd 'theory' that Communists must not belong to reactionary trade unions that demonstrates most clearly how frivolously the 'Left' Communists regard the question of influencing 'the masses', how they misuse their outcries about 'the masses'. . . .

Greater stupidity and greater damage to the revolution than that caused by the 'Left' revolutionaries cannot be imagined! . . . For the whole task of the Communists is to be able to convince the backward elements, to be able to work among them, and not to fence themselves off from them by artificial and childishly 'Left' slogans".
(V.I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 93, 95).

Lenin also criticised the policy of the German "Left" Communists of repudiating parliamentary activity:

"How can one say that 'parliamentarism is politically obsolete' when 'millions' and 'legions' of proletarians are not only still in favour of parliamentarism in general, but are downright 'counter-revolutionary'!? Clearly, parliamentarism in Germany is not yet politically obsolete. Clearly, the 'Lefts' in Germany have mistaken their desire . . . for objective reality. This is the most dangerous mistake revolutionaries can make. . . . We must not regard what is obsolete for us as being obsolete for the class, as being obsolete for the masses! . . . You must not sink to the level of the masses, to the level of the backward strata of the class. That is incontestable. You must tell them the bitter truth. You must call their bourgeois-democratic and parliamentary prejudice -- prejudices. But, at the same time, . . .

it undoubtedly follows that parliamentarism in Germany is not yet politically obsolete, that participation in parliamentary elections and in the struggle in parliament is obligatory for the party of the revolutionary proletariat precisely for the purpose of educating the backward strata of its own class. . . . As long as you are unable to disperse the bourgeois parliament and every other type of reactionary institution, you must work inside them".
(V.I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 99-100).

Lenin further criticised the German "Left" Communists for repudiating all manoeuvres and compromises:

"To carry on a war for the overthrow of the international bourgeoisie, a war which is a hundred times more difficult, prolonged and complicated than the most stubborn of ordinary wars between states, and to refuse beforehand to manoeuvre, to utilise the conflict of interests (even though temporary) among one's enemies, to refuse to temporise and compromise with possible (even though transient, unstable, vacillating and conditional) allies -- is this not ridiculous in the extreme? . . .

Capitalism would not be capitalism if the 'pure' proletariat were not surrounded by a large number of very mixed transitional types . . . And all this makes it necessary -- absolutely necessary -- for the vanguard of the proletariat . . . to resort to manoeuvres and compromises. . . . The whole point lies in knowing how to apply these tactics in such a way as to raise and not lower the general level of proletarian class consciousness, revolutionary spirit, and ability to fight and to conquer. . . .

The hasty 'decision', 'no compromises, no manoeuvres', can only hinder the strengthening of the influence of the revolutionary proletariat and the growth of its forces". (V.I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 111, 115-16, 117).

Lenin finally criticised the "Leftist" attitude to be found not only in the "Communist Workers' Party of Germany" but also in the Communist Party of Germany itself which opposed working for unity with the left-wing of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany:

"The German 'Independent Social-Democratic Party' is obviously not homogeneous. Alongside the old opportunist leaders . . . there has arisen in this party a Left proletarian wing which is growing with remarkable rapidity. . . . This proletarian wing has already proposed -- at the Leipzig (1919) Congress of the Independents -- immediate unconditional affiliation with the Third International. . . . It is the duty of the Communists to seek and to find an appropriate form of compromise with them, such a compromise as, on the one hand, will facilitate and accelerate the necessary complete fusion with this wing, and on the other, will not in any way hamper the Communists in their ideological-political struggle against the opportunist Right-wing of the 'Independents'". (V.I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 115).

The Fourth Congress of the CPG

The Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Germany was held illegally in Berlin on April 14/15th., 1920, attended by 49 voting delegates.

The Congress endorsed by 37 votes to 6 a resolution criticising the Central Bureau's "loyal opposition" statement following the Kapp putsch.

(Bericht über den 4. Parteitag der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Spartakusbund); n.p.; n.d.; p. 39, 53).

A new Central Bureau was elected as follows: Heinrich Brandler, Hugo Eberlein, Paul Levi, Ernst Meyer, Wilhelm Pieck, August Thalheimer and Clara Zetkin.

The ECCI Open Letter to Members of the CWPG

On June 2nd., 1920, the ECCI issued an open letter addressed to members of the "leftist" "Communist Workers' Party of Germany", expressing strong disapproval of the party's attitude of opposition to membership of the mass trade unions. It added that the CWPG could not be considered a serious revolutionary party while it retained within its ranks such people as Heinrich Laufenberg and Fritz Wolffheim (who, under the slogan of 'National Bolshevism', were advocating that the working class should ally itself with the German imperialists on an anti-Versailles Treaty programme).

(Manifest, Richtlinien, Beschlüsse des ersten Kongresses; Aufrufe und offene Schreiben des Exekutivkomitees bis zum zweiten Kongress; Hamburg; 1920; p. 292f.)

At a congress at the beginning of August 1920, the party expelled the Laufenberg/Wolffheim group.

The 1920 Parliamentary Elections

On June 6th., 1920, elections were held for the German Parliament. The results were as follows:

<u>Party</u>	<u>Vote</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Deputies</u>
Social-Democratic Party of Germany:	6.1 m.	22%	102
Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany:	5.0 m.	18%	84
German National People's Party:	4.2 m.	15%	71
German People's Party:	3.9 m.	14%	65
Centre:	3.9 m.	14%	64
German Democratic Party:	2.4 m.	8%	39
Bavarian People's Party:	1.2 m.	4%	21
Communist Party of Germany:	0.6 m.	2%	2
Other parties:	0.9 m.	3%	9
<hr/>			
Total: 28.2 m.			457

The main changes in the election results from those of the election for the National Assembly in January 1919 were: a fall in the SPG vote from 38% to 22% and in the number of its deputies from 165 to 102; a rise in the ISPG vote from 8% to 18% and in the number of its deputies from 22 to 84; and the entry into the parliamentary arena for the first time of the Communist Party.

The Formation of the Fehrenbach Government

Following the elections, the Müller cabinet resigned, and was replaced on June 25th. by a new coalition government of the German People's Party, the German Democratic Party and the Centre (i.e., without the Social-Democratic Party), headed by Konstantin Fehrenbach (Centre). It was a minority government kept in office

by the supporting vote of the SPG.

The entry of the German People's Party, led by Gustav Stresemann, into the government reflected the decline of the power of the landed aristocracy as a separate class, its growing merger with monopoly capital, and the transformation of this party from one representing the political interests of the landed aristocracy to one representing the interests of monopoly capital linked with the landed aristocracy.

This process was completed in 1925 with the entry into the government of the German National People's Party.

The Second Congress of the Communist International

The Second Congress of the Communist International was held in Petrograd and Moscow from July 19th., to August 7th., 1920, attended by 217 delegates from 37 countries. The delegation of the CPG was led by Paul Levi and included Willi Budich, Ernst Meyer, Jacob Walcher and Rosi Wolfstein. Non-voting delegates attended from the ISPG and the CWPG.

The "Manifesto" adopted by the congress had a brief but penetrating reference to Germany:

"Germany's belated parliamentarism, an abortion of the bourgeois revolution, which is itself an abortion of history, suffers in its infancy from every disease peculiar to cretins in their senility. The-most-democratic-in-the-world Reichstag of Ebert's republic is impotent, not only before the Marshal's baton of Foch, but even before the stock market manipulations of its own Stinneses, and the military plots of its officer clique. German parliamentary democracy is a void between two dictatorships". (Manifesto of 2nd World Congress CI, in: J. Degras (Ed): "The Communist International: 1919-1943: Documents", Volume 1; London; 1971; p. 175).

The "Theses on the Trade Union Movement, Factory Councils and the Communist International" stressed that it was essential for Communists to work in the trade union movement:

"Communists in all countries must join the trade unions, in order to turn them into conscious fighting organs for the overthrow of capitalism and for Communism. They must take the initiative in forming trade unions where these do not exist.

All-voluntary abstention from the unions, all artificial attempts to create separate trade unions unless compelled thereto... are extremely dangerous for the Communist movement. They involve the danger that the masses, who are on the road to Communism, will be separated from the most advanced and class-conscious workers and surrendered to the opportunist leaders who work hand in glove with the bourgeoisie. . . .

If... a split should prove to be necessary, it should be effected only if the Communists succeed in convincing the broad working masses . . . that the split is to be made not for the sake of distant revolutionary

aims which they do not yet understand, but for the sake of the most immediate practical interests of the working class in the development of their economic struggle".

(Theses on the Trade Union Movement, Factory Councils and the Communist International, 2nd World Congress CI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 146-147)

The "Theses on Communist Parties and Parliament" characterised parliament in the era of imperialism as

"... an instrument of falsehood, deception and violence, an enervating talking-shop".

(Theses on Communist Parties and Parliament, 2nd World Congress CI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 151).

The theses contrasted parliament as an organ of the capitalist state with Soviets as the organ of the dictatorship of the working class and dealt with the role of parliamentary activity in the revolutionary struggle:

"In this mass struggle which develops into civil war, the leading party of the proletariat must as a rule secure all legal positions, using them as auxiliary centres of its revolutionary activity and incorporating them in its main plan of campaign, the campaign of mass struggle.

One such auxiliary centre is the rostrum of the bourgeois parliament. . . .

This activity inside parliament, which consists chiefly in revolutionary agitation from the parliamentary tribune, in exposing enemies, in the ideological mobilisation of the masses who, particularly in the backward areas, are still encumbered with democratic illusions and look to the parliamentary rostrum, must be wholly and completely subordinate to the aims and tasks of the mass struggle outside parliament".

(*Ibid.*; p. 153).

The theses condemned "anti-parliamentarism on principle" as

"... a naive and childish doctrine which is beneath criticism".

(*Ibid.*; p. 154)

The boycotting of elections or of parliament, as well as walkouts from parliament:

"... are permissible primarily when the conditions for the immediate transition to armed struggle for power are at hand".

(*Ibid.*; p. 154).

However, in view of the fact that parliamentary struggle occupies a position of "comparative unimportance,

"The Communist International emphasises most strongly that it considers any split or any attempt at a split within the Communist Party solely on this issue a serious error".
(Ibid.; p. 154).

The most important document adopted by the congress was the twenty-one "Conditions of Affiliation to the Communist International" (19 of which were drafted by Lenin). In introducing the conditions, Lenin made it clear that they were designed "to prevent the organisation from being diluted by wavering and half-hearted groups" who had not yet genuinely abandoned the outlook of social-democracy and embraced Marxism:

"More and more frequently parties and groups which only recently were affiliated to the Second International, but which have not yet really become Communist, are applying for affiliation to the Third International. The Second International is completely smashed. The intermediate parties and groups of the 'Centre', realising that the Second International is hopeless, are trying to lean on the Communist International, which is becoming stronger, hoping, however, to retain such 'autonomy' as will enable them to pursue their former opportunist or 'Centrist' policy. . . .

The desire of certain leading groups of the 'Centre' to join the Third International at the present time is indirect confirmation of the fact that the Communist International has won the sympathy of the overwhelming majority of the class-conscious workers all over the world and day by day is more and more becoming a force.

Under certain circumstances, the Communist International may be faced with the danger of being diluted with wavering and half-hearted groups which have not yet abandoned the ideology of the Second International. . . .

In view of this, the Second World Congress deems it necessary to lay down very definite conditions of affiliation for new parties and also to point out to those parties which have already been received into the Communist International the obligations that rest upon them".

(V.I. Lenin: "The Conditions of Affiliation to the Communist International", in: "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 200, 201).

The congress also endorsed "Theses on the Basic Tasks of the Communist International" (drafted by Lenin), "Theses on the Role of the Communist Party in the Proletarian Revolution" (drafted by Zinoviev), "Theses on the National and Colonial Question" (drafted by Lenin), "Theses on the Agrarian Question" (drafted by Lenin), and the "Statutes of the Communist International" (drafted by the ECCI).

The congress formed an Executive Committee of 26 members drawn from 20 national Parties. After the congress, this elected a "Narrow Bureau" to administer the day-to-day tasks of the Communist International, composed as follows:

Grigori Zinoviev (Soviet Russia) (Chairman),
Nikolai Bukharin (Soviet Russia) (Deputy Chairman);
Mikhail Kobetsky (Soviet Russia) (Secretary),
Ernst Meyer (Germany), and
A. Rudnianski (Hungary).

In the period between the Second Congress and the Third Congress (June/July 1921), the Narrow Bureau was enlarged to include:

Wilhelm Koenen (Germany),
Bela Kun (Hungary),
Karl Radek (Soviet Russia) and
Alfred Rosmer (France).

Lenin's Letter to the German and French Workers

On September 24th., 1920, Lenin wrote a "Letter to the German and French Workers" concerning the discussion proceeding in the centrist parties about the question of affiliating to the Communist International. He declared that the right-wing leaders of the ISPG were

" . . . opportunist, petty-bourgeois elements

By their constant vacillations in the direction of reformism and Menshevism, by their inability to think and act in a revolutionary manner, Dittmann, Crispian and the others, without realising it, . . . subordinate the proletariat to bourgeois reformism.

It is time to abandon completely all these harmful illusions about the possibility of 'unity' or 'peace' with the Dittmanns and Crispiens, with the Right wing of the German Independent Social-Democratic Party It is time all the revolutionary workers purged their parties of these and formed really united Communist Parties of the proletariat".

(V.I. Lenin: "A Letter to the German and French Workers", in: "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p.250-51).

The Halle Congress of the ISPG

From October 12th., to 17th., 1920, an Extraordinary Congress of the Independent Social-democratic Party of Germany took place in Halle, attended by 395 delegates representing 893 thousand members.

After a speech by Grigori Zinoviev on behalf of the Communist International, the congress voted by 237 votes to 156 that the party should apply for affiliation to the Communist International under the 21 conditions. The right wing then walked out of the congress, which proceeded to adopt a resolution to negotiate for fusion of the ISPG with the Communist Party of Germany.

(USPD: Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Ausserordentlichen Parteitags zu Halle; n.p.; n.d.)

The Fifth Congress of the CPG

The Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Germany was held in Berlin from November 1st. to 3rd., 1920 attended by 101 voting delegates representing 79 thousand members. The congress endorsed a resolution to the effect that the CPG should unite with the left-wing of the ISPG. It left the elections of a new Central Bureau to the forthcoming Unification Congress.

(Bericht über den 5. Parteitag der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands (Spartakusbund); n.p.; 1921).

The Sixth (Unification) Congress of the CPG

The Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Germany -- the Unification Congress at which the CPG merged with the left-wing of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany -- was held in Berlin from December 4th. to 7th. 1920, attended by 136 delegates from the CPG and 349 from the ISPG, representing between them 300,000 members.

The party adopted for a time the new name of the United Communist Party of Germany (UCPG) (Vereinigte Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands) (VKPD). The word 'United' was dropped in 1922.

A new Central Bureau was elected with Ernst Däumig (ISPG) and Paul Levi (CPG) as Chairmen; Heinrich Brandler (CPG), Otto Brass (ISPG), Wilhelm Koenen (ISPG), Wilhelm Pieck (CPG), Hermann Remmele (ISPG), Walter Stoecker (ISPG) and Clara Zetkin (CPG) as Secretaries; and the following as members: Otto Gäbel (ISPG), Curt Geyer (ISPG), Fritz Heckert (CPG), Adolph Hoffmann (ISPG) and August Thalheimer (CPG).

(Bericht über die Verhandlungen des Vereinigungsparteitags der USPD (Linke) and der KPD (Spartakusbund); n.p.; 1921).

1921

The "Open Letter" of the CPG

On January 7th., 1921, a conference of the Central Bureau with district secretaries of the Communist Party of Germany approved an "Open Letter" addressed to the General German Trade Union League (Allgemeiner Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund) (ADGB), the General Free Employees League (Allgemeiner freier Angestelltenbund) (AFA-Bund), the General Workers' Union (Allgemeiner Arbeiter-Union) (AAU), the Free Workers' Union (Freie Arbeiterunion) (FAU), the Social-Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), the rump of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany (USPD) and the leftist Communist Workers' Party of Germany (KAPD).

The "Open Letter", drafted by Karl Radek and Paul Levi, proposed a joint campaign for the raising of wages, unemployment assistance and pensions; for a reduction in the cost of living; for the dissolution of anti-republican para-military organisations;

for the creation of "organs of proletarian self-defence"; and for the establishment of trade and diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia.

The "Open Letter" met with no response from the organisations to which it was addressed, and was criticised as "opportunist" by a "leftist" group developing within the Party under the leadership of Ruth Fischer and Arkadi Maslow.

At the Third World Congress of the Communist International in July 1921, Lenin defended the tactics of the "Open Letter" against the attacks of the "leftists":

"I think it is a shame and a disgrace to hear it said at the congress . . . that the 'Open Letter' was opportunistic! . . . The 'Open Letter' was an exemplary political step. This is what we say in our theses. And this is what we must absolutely insist upon. It was an exemplary step, for it was the first practical step in the direction of winning over the majority of the working class". (V.I. Lenin: "In Support of the Tactics of the Communist International", in: "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 281).

The "Theses on Tactics" adopted by the Third World Congress of the CI declared:

"Thanks to the tactics of the Communist International (. . . the Open Letter, etc.), Communism in Germany from being the mere political tendency which it represented in the January and March struggles of 1919, has become a great revolutionary mass party". (Theses on Tactics, 3rd. World Congress CI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): "The Communist International: 1919-1943: Documents", Volume 1; London; 1956; p. 244).

The Resignations from the Central Bureau of the CPG

In January 1921 the Congress of the Italian Socialist Party was held at Leghorn, with Matyas Rakosi and Christo Kabakchiev representing the Communist International.

The party had declared its adherence to the Communist International shortly after the latter's foundation, but this congress had to decide whether to continue adherence under the 21 conditions adopted by the Second World Congress of the CI in July 1920. While the right wing of the Congress was opposed to continued affiliation on any terms, a large centrist wing headed by Giacinto Serrati opposed, in the name of "tolerance", acceptance of the last condition (which called for expulsion of the right wing of the party). In this opposition Serrati received the open support of Paul Levi, who attended the congress as a fraternal delegate from the Communist Party of Germany.

At a meeting of the Central Council of the CPG on February 22nd./24th., 1927, a resolution moved by Paul Levi denouncing the attitude of the Communist International in relation to the Italian Socialist Party was lost by 28 votes to 23, and a resolution moved by August Thalheimer approving it was carried by the same vote.

Following this, Otto Brass, Ernst Däumig, Adolph Hoffmann, Paul Levi and Clara Zetkin resigned from the Central Bureau and were replaced by Paul Böttcher, Paul Fröhlich, Ernst Meyer, Max Sievers and Paul Wegmann. Heinrich Brandler and Walter Stoecker were elected Chairmen of the Party.

From this time until October 1922 the leading role in the CPG was played by Ernst Meyer.

In March the Executive Committee of the Communist International issued a statement on the incident:

"Five members of the Central Bureau of the CPG have resigned from the Central Bureau because of their dissatisfaction with the attitude of the Executive Committee towards the split in the Italian Socialist Party.

For any thinking Communist it is enough that the centrist group of leaders, faced with the necessity of choosing between the reformists and the Communists, broke with the 60,000 Communist proletarians of Italy in favour of Serrati and 12,000 reformists. This fact is of greater weight than all the long-winded speeches about the tactless conduct of one or another representative of the Communist International. That should have been clear to all members of the German Central Bureau. In a Communist Party the leaders, placed there by the workers, have as little right to leave their posts without permission of the Party as a soldier in the Red Army has to leave his sentry box. . . .

The ECCI regrets the departure of these comrades and sees in it:

1. Inadequate discipline among the leading elements of the CPG;

2. Proof of the fact that among the leaders of the CPG there are signs of the formation of a right wing.

The Executive Committee adheres to the opinion that the reason why Comrade Levi and his group left the Central Bureau of the CPG was not the Italian Question, but opportunist vacillations concerning German and International policy. . . .

The ECCI directs the attention of all German Communists to the fact that in the past few months there have been signs of an attempt to form a Communist right wing. Therefore Communists should close their ranks and nip these tendencies in the bud. Comrade Levi's statement of 23 March shows that he has already reached a complete break with the Communist International. This should show the comrades who formerly declared their solidarity with Levi where his road leads, and help them to recognise their error".

(ECCI Resolution on the Resignation of Five Members from the Central Bureau of the German Communist Party, in: "Kommunistisches Internatsional", No. 17; June 1921; col. 4071).

The Foundation of the "Two-and-a-Half" International

From February 22nd. to 27th., 1921, representatives of the centrist social-democratic parties which had broken with the

Second International but which rejected the 21 conditions of affiliation to the Third International, met in Vienna and set up the short-lived International Union of Socialist Parties, (known as the "Vienna International" or, less respectfully, as the "Two-and-a-Half International").

The Third World Congress of the Communist International in June/July 1921 characterised the "Two-and-a-Half" International as follows:

"The parties of the centre and of social-democracy differ only in the words they use. . . . On paper the Two-and-a-Half International is trying to hover between democracy and proletarian dictatorship. In fact it is helping the capitalist class in every country by encouraging a spirit of irresolution among the working class. . . . The basic similarity in the political character of the reformists and centrists is shown in their common defence of the Amsterdam trade union International, the last stronghold of the world bourgeoisie. . . . Wherever they have influence in the unions, the centrists unite with the reformists and the trade union bureaucracy to fight the Communists, to reply to the attempts to revolutionise the unions by expelling Communists and splitting the unions, so proving that just like the social-democrats they are opponents of the proletarian struggle and pace-makers of the counter-revolution".
(Theses on Tactics, 3rd. World Congress CI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 256).

The March Action

On February 3rd., 1921, a strike of copper workers began in the district of Mansfeld in central Germany.

On March 16th. the Governor of Saxony, Otto Hörsing (SPG) ordered security police (Schutzpolizei) (Schupo), and troops of the Arm of the Realm to prepare an action "to restore the authority of the state" in the Mansfeld district.

Taking advantage of the resignation of the rightists from the Central Bureau of the Communist Party of Germany, "leftist" elements led by Arkadi Maslow had succeeded in getting the Central Bureau to accept the "theory of the general revolutionary offensive" -- the theory that the time had now come for the Party to undertake revolutionary offensive actions which would arouse the working class to active support. On the basis of this "leftist" theory, the Central Bureau put forward a resolution to the meeting of the Central Council of the CPG on March 17th. that the Party should organise an armed insurrection to overthrow the government, the action to commence in Mansfeld. The action was supported by the "leftist" representative of the Communist International in Germany at this time, Bela Kun. As Clara Zetkin said at the Third World Congress of the CI in June/July 1921:

44.

"Representatives of the Executive (i.e., of the Comintern -- Ed.) bear at any rate a great share of responsibility for the fact that the March action was conducted in the way that it was . . . and for the false slogans and false political attitude of the Party or, rather, of its Central Council".
(Protokoll des III. Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale; Hamburg; 1921; p. 297).

On March 19th, security police and troops marched into the Mansfeld district and bloody clashes took place with armed Communists and sympathisers. On March 23rd, President Ebert declared a state of emergency (i.e., martial law) in Saxony, and appointed Otto Horing (SPG) as Martial Law Administrator.

The mass of the workers, however, failed to respond to the call to armed insurrection issued by the CPG, and on March 24th, the Central Bureau of the Party changed its policy to call for a general strike in protest against the events in Mansfeld. This was 100% effective in the Mansfeld district, but not on a nation-wide scale.

On April 1st., after the armed uprising had been brutally crushed with many casualties, the Central Bureau cancelled the call for a general strike. A white terror followed in Saxony, in which more than 6,000 workers were thrown into prison.

The "March action", as it came to be called, was followed by a serious decline in the support for and membership of the CPG; membership declined within three months from some 350,000 to 180,000.

(Bericht über den III (8) Parteitag der VKPD; Berlin; 1923; p. 63).

The first CI statement on the March action, issued by the Little Bureau of the ECCI on April 6th., defended the action and attributed its defeat solely to the treachery of the social-democratic leaders:

"For the first time since the January and March days of 1919 the revolutionary proletarians of Germany have entered into battle against the capitalist government . . . in an attempt to bring to an end the rule of the German exploiters. . . .

The proletariat suffered defeat thanks to the unconscionable treachery of the German Socialist Party. . . . Further, thanks to the open going over of the Independent Socialist Party of Germany to the camp of the counter-revolution, the proletariat could not establish a united front against the united bourgeoisie. . . .
The Communist International says to you: You acted rightly!"

(ECCI Statement on the March Action in Germany, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 217, 218).

45.

The Central Bureau's "Theses on the March Action", presented to the meeting of the Central Council of the Communist Party of Germany on April 7/8th., 1921, were based on the ECCI's initial uncritical assessment of the March action, and were adopted by the Council by 26 votes to 14, after a resolution moved by Clara Zetkin condemning the Central Bureau's policy in connection with the March action had been lost by 43 votes to 6, with 3 abstentions.

At a full meeting of the ECCI on April 29th., however, Lenin strongly criticised the conduct of the March Action, and its assessment was referred to the Third World Congress of the CI -- scheduled for June/July:

"In regard to the tactical differences arising in connection with the March action, the ECCI thinks it necessary, because of the great international importance of the question, to submit the question to the Third Congress of the Communist International and asks the German comrades to see that all the material shall be made available to the Third World Congress".
(ECCI Statement on the Expulsion of Paul Levi, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 219).

At the Third World Congress of the CI in June/July 1921, Lenin spoke in opposition to the "theory of the general revolutionary offensive", which was still being defended by "leftist" delegates:

"Terracini advocated the theory of offensive struggle. . . . Offensive action ought to be taken against the views advocated by Terracini and these three delegations. If the Congress does not launch a determined offensive against such mistakes, against such 'Left' absurdities, the whole movement will be doomed. This is my profound conviction.

. . . .
Have we in our theses developed the revolutionary offensive theory in general? Has Radek or anybody else among us committed such folly? We speak about the offensive theory in relation to a very definite country and to a very definite period".
(V.I. Lenin: "In Support of the Tactics of the Communist International", in: "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 283, 279, 283).

In October 1921, Grigori Zinoviev, Chairman of the Communist International, summed up the attitude taken by the Third World Congress of the CI to the "theory of the general revolutionary offensive", and gave a warning to the group within the CPG, headed by Arkadi Maslow, which still adhered to the theory:

"The Congress refused to accept the erroneous theory stating that we have already entered into a period of permanent attacks. It could not accept the idea of an obvious minority being able at any time, and especially at such a time as we are at present experiencing, to do away with the passivity of the masses by driving it to a bold revolutionary stroke, to overcome all other difficulties and to win in an armed conflict. . . ."

In as much as there may be in Germany (Comrade Maslow's group) . . . individual comrades and groups of comrades who choose to erect their mistake into a theory, . . . and persist in their 'left wing policy' . . . the Comintern will have to strike the most decisive blows".

(G. Zinoviev: "On the Tasks of the Communist International", in: "Communist International", No. 18; October 8th., 1921; p. 161, 162).

Speaking at the Third World Congress on the March action itself, Lenin said:

"The March action was a big step forward in spite of the mistakes committed by its leaders. . . . When hundreds of thousands fight against the despicable acts of provocation of the social-traitors and the bourgeoisie, it is a real step forward. . . .

But from this we must learn a lesson. Did we prepare for the offensive? (Radek: We did not even prepare for defence). Yes, there was talk about an offensive only in newspaper articles. It was wrong to apply this theory (i.e., the theory of the revolutionary offensive -- Ed.) to the action in Germany in March 1921; we must admit this". (V.I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 284).

The "Theses on Tactics" adopted by the Third World Congress gave a fuller analysis of the March action, declaring that the major mistake made was to attempt to initiate an offensive struggle when the circumstances only permitted a defensive struggle to be waged with any prospect of success:

"The March action was a struggle forced on the CPG by the Government's attack on the proletariat of central Germany. . . .

The CPG made a number of mistakes, of which the most important was that it did not clearly emphasise the defensive character of the struggle, but by the call to an offensive gave the unscrupulous enemies of the proletariat, the bourgeoisie, the SPG and ISPG, the opportunity to denounce the CPG to the proletariat as a plotter of putsches. This mistake was aggravated by a number of Party comrades who represented this offensive as the primary method of struggle for the CPG in the present situation. . . .

The Congress is of the opinion that the CPG will in the future be in a position to carry through its mass actions more successfully the better it adapts its fighting slogans to the real situation, the more thoroughly it studies the situation, and the greater the extent of the agreement to carry the action through".

(Theses on Tactics, 3rd. World Congress CI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 252).

In a manifesto issued on July 17th., 1921, at the conclusion of the Third World Congress, the Executive Committee of the Communist International drew as conclusions from the March action in Germany, not only that the "theory of the general revolutionary offensive" must be repudiated, but that the Party, as the vanguard of the working class, must strive never to allow itself to be drawn into armed struggle in isolation from the working class, before the masses of the working class have been won to the Party by ceaseless activity on daily partial questions:

"The March events in Germany showed the great danger that the front ranks of the working class, the Communist vanguard of the proletariat, may be forced by the enemy into battle before the great proletarian masses have begun to move. . . . It is the duty of the Communist International to say clearly and openly to the workers of all countries: even if the vanguard is not able to avoid struggles, and although these struggles are capable of accelerating the mobilisation of the entire working class, the vanguard must never forget that it should not let itself be forced into decisive struggles alone and isolated, that if forced isolated into the struggle the vanguard of the proletariat must avoid armed encounter with the enemy, for it is the mass weight of the proletariat which is the source of its victory over the armed white guards. . . . The March struggles taught another lesson which the Communist International brings to the attention of the proletarians of all countries. The broadest working masses must be prepared for the coming struggles by unceasing daily agitation on an ever broadening and more intense scale, and the battle must be entered under slogans which are clear and intelligible to the broadest masses of the proletariat".
(Manifesto on the Conclusion of the Third Comintern Congress. in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 284-5).

The Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of Germany in August 1921 endorsed the assessment of the March action made by the Third World Congress of the Communist International.

The Expulsion of Paul Levi

On April 12th., 1921, Paul Levi published a pamphlet entitled "Our Course: Against Putschism", which denounced the policy of the Communist Party of Germany in the March action as "putschism" and described the action itself as

" . . . war by the Communist Party against the working class".

(P. Levi: "Unser Weg: Wider den Putschismus", cited in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 218).

On April 15th. Levi was expelled from the Communist Party of Germany for a serious violation of Party discipline. His expulsion was ratified by the ECCI on April 29th., 1921 and by the Third World Congress of the CI in June/July 1921.

At its meeting from May 3rd. to 5th., 1921, the Central Council of the CPG adopted a motion of censure on Otto Brass, Ernst Däumig, Paul Eckert, Curt Geyer, Adolph Hoffmann, Heinrich Malzahn, Paul Neumann and Clara Zetkin for continuing to express solidarity with Paul Levi after his expulsion. Curt Geyer, Max Sievers and Paul Wegmann were removed from the Central Bureau and replaced by Hugo Eberlein, Emil Höllein and Jacob Walcher.

At the Third World Congress of the Communist International in June/July 1921, Lenin made an error in defending Paul Levi to a certain extent. He explained later that this error was due to the

fact of Levi's early association with the Communist movement, to the fact that Levi's criticism of the policy of the CPG in relation to the March action as "leftist" was basically correct, and to the fact that it was then necessary to be "on the right" to the extent of resisting the "leftists" who based themselves on the "theory of the general revolutionary offensive":

"I must confess to a mistake I made at the Third Congress of the Communist International . . . as a result of excessive caution. At that congress I was on the extreme Right flank. I am convinced that this was the only correct position, for a very large (and 'influential') group of delegates headed by many German, Hungarian and Italian comrades, occupied an immoderately 'Left' and incorrectly 'Left' position. . . . Out of caution and a desire to prevent this undoubtedly wrong deviation towards Leftism from giving a false direction to the whole of the tactics of the Communist International, I did all I could to defend Levi and expressed the assumption that perhaps he had lost his head. . . .

I was proved to have been wrong about Levi, because he managed to prove that he had stepped on to the Menshevik path . . . permanently".
(V.I. Lenin: "Notes of a Publicist", in "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 310, 311).

"I must explain to the German comrades why I defended Paul Levi for so long at the Third Congress. Firstly, . . . in 1915 or 1916 . . . Levi was already a Bolshevik. . . . Incomparably more important was the second reason, viz., in essence much of Levi's criticism of the March uprising in Germany in 1921 was right (not, of course, when he said that the uprising was a 'putsch'; that assertion was absurd). . . .

I defended and had to defend Levi, in so far as I saw before me opponents of his who merely shouted about 'Menshevism' and 'Centrism' and who refused to see the mistakes committed during the March uprising and the necessity of explaining and rectifying them".
(V.I. Lenin: "A Letter to the German Communists", in: *ibid.*; p. 293, 294).

The Formation of the Wirth Government

At a conference in London from April 29th. to May 5th., 1921, representatives of the Allied Powers fixed the total sum of reparations to be demanded from Germany at 132 thousand million gold marks, to be accompanied by a duty on German exports of 26%. On May 5th. the Allied Powers presented the German government with a six-day ultimatum to accept these terms.

The Fehrenbach government resigned in face of these demands, and was replaced on May 10th. by a new government based on the "Weimar Coalition" (i.e., drawing Ministers from the Social-Democratic Party, the Centre and the German Democratic Party), with Joseph Wirth (Centre) as Chancellor.

The new government represented a new dominant section of the German monopoly capitalists which felt bound to accept the fact that Germany's weakness made it necessary to accept, for the time being, the harsh peace terms imposed by the Allied powers. The new government, therefore, adopted a "policy

of fulfilment" (Erfüllungspolitik) of the Allied demands. The German imperialists hoped by this policy to win the co-operation of the Allied imperialists in the reconstruction of the German economy, while seeking at the same time a rapprochement with Soviet Russia in order to increase their bargaining strength vis-a-vis the Allied powers.

Internally, the new government -- and its successor, headed by Wilhelm Cuno -- adopted the policy of meeting its expenditure primarily by the printing of new currency. This produced a massive inflation which created huge super-profits for the monopoly capitalists at the expense of the greatest impoverishment of the working class and petty bourgeoisie (a policy which came to be associated particularly with the name of finance capitalist Hugo Stinnes).

The main factor in the German inflation of 1921-23 was the very large issue of emergency currency (Notgeld), first introduced in relatively small quantities during the First World War and issued by local authorities and larger firms. The issue of this emergency currency developed most rapidly in 1923: at the end of 1922 there were 20 thousand million marks of emergency currency in circulation against 1,280 thousand million marks of Bank of the Realm currency; by November 1923 there were some 500 million million marks of each currency in circulation.

As a result of this inflation, the foreign exchange rate of the mark fell catastrophically, especially in 1923:

Marks to the US dollar

1919:	8.9
April 1923:	23 thousand
June 1923:	109 thousand
October 18th., 1923:	4 thousand million
October 22nd., 1923:	46 thousand million
October 23rd., 1923:	75 thousand million

This was of great benefit to German monopoly capital in the export markets, enabling them to sell their goods abroad at relatively cheap prices, in spite of the high export duty, and invest a large part of the proceeds abroad in more stable currencies.

On October 26th., 1921, the GDP Ministers withdrew from the government and were replaced, with Wirth remaining Chancellor, by non-party "experts".

The Third World Congress of the CI

The Third World Congress of the Communist International was held in Moscow from June 22nd., to July 12th., 1921, attended by 291 voting delegates from 57 countries. 5 non-voting delegates attended from the "leftist" Communist Workers' Party of Germany.

The "Theses on the World Situation and the Tasks of the Comintern" adopted by the congress declared that the immediate post-war revolutionary situation in Europe had come to an end and a period had begun in which capitalism had become more stable and in which the position of the capitalist classes vis-a-vis the working classes had become strengthened:

"The first period of the post-war revolutionary movement, distinguished by the spontaneous character of its assault, by the marked imprecision of its aims and methods, and by the extreme panic which it aroused among the ruling classes, seems in essentials to be over. The self-confidence of the bourgeoisie as a class, and the outward stability of their state organs, have undeniably been strengthened".

(Theses on the World Situation and the Tasks of the Comintern, 3rd. World Congress CI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): "The Communist International: 1919-1943: Documents", Volume 1; London; 1956; p. 230).

This did not mean that world capitalism had entered a period of stable equilibrium:

"Whether we examine production, trade, or credit, and not only in Europe but on all world markets, we find no reason to affirm that any stable equilibrium is being restored".
(Ibid.; p. 232).

but it meant that the world socialist revolutionary movement had slackened and had entered a predominantly defensive phase in preparation for the next offensive phase:

"It cannot be denied that the open revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for power is at the present moment slackening and slowing down in many countries. . . . If the proletarian attack is not crowned with success, the bourgeoisie pass at the first chance to the counter-attack. . . .

The chief task of the Communist Party in the present crisis is to direct the defensive struggles of the proletariat, to broaden and deepen them, to link them together and, in harmony with the march of events, to transform them into decisive political struggles for the final goal".
(Ibid.; p. 238).

On the basis of this analysis, the fundamental slogan adopted by the congress was:

"To the Masses!"

(Manifesto of ECCI on the Conclusion of the Third Comintern Congress, in: J. Degras (Ed.):- ibid.; p. 283).

The most important document adopted by the congress was the "Theses on Tactics", drafted by the Russian delegation in collaboration with the German delegation. These theses declared that the most important task of the Communists was to win the support of the majority of the working class:

"The most important question before the Communists International today is to win predominating influence over the majority of the working class and to bring its decisive strata into the struggle".
(Theses on Tactics, 3rd. World Congress CI, in: J. Dogras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 243).

This task could only be accomplished by the Communist Parties taking the leading role in the day-to-day struggles of the workers around partial demands (i.e., around demands falling short of that of the abolition of capitalist society);

"Even the smallest Communist Parties should not restrict themselves to mere propaganda and agitation. They must form the spearhead of all proletarian mass organisations, showing the backward vaililating masses, by putting forward practical proposals for struggle, by urging on the struggle for the daily needs of the proletariat, how the struggle should be waged, and thus exposing to the masses the treacherous character of all non-Communist parties. . . .

These partial demands, anchored in the needs of the broadest masses, must be put forward by the Communist Parties in a way which not only leads the masses to struggle, but by its very nature also organises them. . . .

It is not a question of proclaiming the final goal to the proletariat, but of intensifying the practical struggle which is the only way of leading the proletariat to the struggle for the final goal".
(*Ibid.*; p. 248, 249, 250).

The most important field of such partial action is that of the trade unions:

"Strengthening the Party's contact with the masses means, above all, closer links with the trade unions. In this field the task of the Party . . . means that the truly revolutionary elements inside the unions, brought together and directed by the Communist Party, themselves give union work a direction in conformity with the general interests of the proletariat in its fight to capture power".
(*Ibid.*; p. 246).

Special attention must also be paid, in existing circumstances, to work among the unemployed:

"Communists must realise that in present circumstances the army of the unemployed is a revolutionary factor of immense significance, and they must assume the leadership of this army".
(*Ibid.*; p. 250).

The Communists, declared the theses, must initiate workers' defence detachments to resist the violence organised by the capitalist class:

"In the proletarian struggle against the capitalist offensive, it is the duty of Communists not only to occupy the front rank and to instil an understanding of the basic revolutionary tasks, but to create their own workers' detachments and defence organisations, relying on the best and most active elements in the factories and trade unions". (Ibid.; p. 253).

Individual terrorism is, however, harmful to the working class:

"Individual acts of terrorism . . . are in no way fitted to strengthen proletarian discipline and militancy, for they arouse among the masses the illusion that individual acts of terrorism can take the place of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat". (Ibid.; p. 254).

The Communist Parties must also give constant attention to winning over to the side of the working class the poorer strata of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie and the middle strata generally:

"The conditions of life of parts of the peasantry, large parts of the urban petty-bourgeoisie, and the broad strata of the so-called new middle class, white-collar workers, etc., are becoming more and more intolerable. . . . The Communist Party must give constant attention to these strata". (Ibid.; p. 254).

Finally, the theses emphasised that a key factor in the development of working class struggle was international working class solidarity:

"The Communist International imposes on all Communist Parties the duty of rendering one another the most vigorous support in the struggle. Whenever possible, the proletariat of other countries should immediately intervene when economic struggles are developing in one country. Communists must try to get the trade unions to prevent the despatch of strike-breakers, and also to prevent exports to countries where large sections of the proletariat are engaged in struggle". (Ibid.; p. 255).

The congress dealt with the trade union question more fully in its "Theses on the Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions", which stressed the necessity of winning the trade unions to support the Communist Parties by working within them and forming Communist cells within them:

"The trade unions must support the proletarian vanguard, the Communist Party. . . . To achieve this aim Communists and elements sympathetic to the Communists must organise their Communist cells within the trade unions; these cells are subordinate in all respects to the Communist Party as a whole. . . . Communists must explain to the proletarians that salvation is to be found not in

leaving the old trade unions and remaining unorganised, but in revolutionising the trade unions, ridding them of the spirit of reformism and of the treacherous reformist leaders, and so transforming the unions into real mainstays of the revolutionary proletariat".

(Theses on the Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions, 3rd. World Congress CI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 277).

The theses emphasised the key importance to the working class of direct action:

"All achievements of the workers are in direct proportion to direct action and to the exercise of revolutionary pressure by the masses. Direct action covers all forms of the exercise of direct pressure by the workers on the employers and the state, including boycotts, strikes, street actions, demonstrations, occupation of factories, forcible resistance to the despatch of goods from factories, armed insurrection and other revolutionary actions calculated to unite the working class for the fight for socialism. It is therefore the task of the revolutionary trade unions to make direct action into an instrument for training and preparing the working masses for the struggle for the social revolution and the proletarian dictatorship".
(*Ibid.*; p. 279).

Every effort should be made to unite the workers within the same enterprise into a single trade union:

"The fact that workers in a single undertaking are divided among several unions weakens them in their struggle. . . . The amalgamation of related unions into a single union must be effected".
(*Ibid.*; p. 279).

and to organise factory committees embracing all the workers in an enterprise:

"Factory committees must be elected by all the workers in the undertaking irrespective of their political allegiance. . . . The revolutionary section of the workers must exercise their influence on the general meeting and on the factory committee it elects through their cell".
(*Ibid.*; p. 279).

With regard to the situation in Germany, the "Theses on Tactics" critically analysed the March action (as has been said) and emphasised that the main task of the CPG was to win the support of the majority of the working class by fighting consistently for their day-to-day interests.

"The . . . Communist Party of Germany . . . , although it is already a mass party, has the great task of increasing and consolidating its influence on the broad masses, of winning the proletarian mass organisations and the trade unions, of destroying the influence of the Social-Democratic Party and trade union bureaucracy, and of becoming the leader of the mass movement in the coming struggles of the

proletariat. This, its main task, means that all the work of agitation and organisation must be directed to winning the sympathy of the majority of the working class, without which, in view of the strength of German capital, no victory for Communism in Germany is possible. Neither in the extent nor in the content of its agitation has the Party up to now been equal to this task. Nor did it consistently pursue the policy indicated in the 'Open Letter' of putting forward the practical interests of the proletariat in opposition to the treacherous policy of the social-democratic parties and trade union bureaucracy". (Theses on Tactics, 3rd. World Congress CI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 247).

The congress also adopted a "Resolution on the Situation in the German Communist Party", which noted with satisfaction that the congress resolutions, including the critical analysis of the March action, had been adopted unanimously; it called for toleration on the part of the Party leadership towards the "former opposition" and for an end to factional activity on the part of the latter:

"The Third World Congress notes with satisfaction that all the most important resolutions, and particularly the section of the resolution on tactics dealing with the hotly-debated March action, were passed unanimously, and that the representatives of the German opposition themselves, in the resolutions they put forward on the March action, adopted by and large the same position as the Congress. In this the Congress sees proof that united and concentrated work within the CPG on the basis of the decisions of the Third Congress is not only desirable but practicable. The Congress considers any further disintegration of forces within the CPG, any factionalism -- not to speak of a split -- as the greatest danger for the entire movement.

The Congress expects the Central Bureau and the majority in the CPG to deal tolerantly with the former opposition, and expects the opposition to carry out loyally the decisions of the Third Congress. . . . The Congress demands of the former opposition the immediate dissolution of any factional organisations, . . . immediate cessation of any political collaboration with persons expelled from the Party and the Communist International".

(Resolution on the Situation in the German Communist Party, 3rd. World Congress CI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 240-41).

The congress presented an ultimatum to the "leftist" Communist Workers' Party of Germany that it should immediately take steps to merge with the Communist Party of Germany and submit to the discipline of the Communist International, or be expelled from the CI:

"The admission of the CWPG to the CI as a sympathising party was intended to test whether the CWPG would develop in the direction of the CI. The waiting period has been long enough. Now the CWPG must be asked for its hitherto delayed adherence to the CPG; otherwise it will

be expelled as a sympathising party from the CI".
(Resolution on the Report of the Executive Committee,
3rd. World Congress CI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*;
p. 228-29).

An extraordinary congress of the Communist Workers' Party of Germany held in Berlin from September 11th. to 13th., 1921, resolved that the party should leave the Communist International, which it described as "a tool of the international bourgeoisie". A number of its members left and joined the CPG.

In a letter to the members of the Communist Party of Germany in August 1921, Lenin commented:

"Until sufficiently strong, experienced and influential Communist Parties have been built, at least in the principal countries, we shall have to tolerate semi-anarchist elements at our international congresses, and to a certain extent it is even useful to do so. It is useful in so far as the elements serve as a 'bad example' for inexperienced Communists, and also in so far as they themselves are still capable of learning something. . . .

If now they (i.e., the CWPG -- Ed.) have voluntarily resigned from the Communist International, all the better. Firstly, they have saved us the trouble of expelling them. Secondly, it has now been most strikingly demonstrated and proved with precise facts to all the vacillating workers, to all those who were inclined towards anarchism because of their hatred for the opportunism of the old Social-Democracy, that the Communist International was patient, that it did not immediately and unconditionally expel the anarchists, that it listened to them attentively and helped them to learn".

(V.I. Lenin: "A Letter to the German Communists", in: "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 291).

The congress also adopted "Theses on the Structure of Communist Parties and on the Methods and Content of their Work" and a "Resolution on the Organisation of the Executive Committee of the Communist International".

The new delegated Executive Committee of the Communist International of 29 members elected after the congress a Bureau (renamed the Presidium in August 1921), as follows: Grigori Zinoviev (Soviet Russia) (Chairman); Nikolai Bukharin (Soviet Russia); Egidio Gennari (Italy); Fritz Heckert (Germany); Jules Humbert-Droz (Switzerland); Karl Radok (Soviet Russia); Bela Kun (Hungary); and Boris Souvarine (France). Stalin was not elected even to the ECCE.

In December 1921 the post of General Secretary of the ECCE was introduced, to which Otto Kuusinen (Finland) was elected.

The Foundation of the Red International of Labour Unions

From July 3rd. to 17th., 1921, the First Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU)-- the Profintern-- was held in Moscow, attended by 336 voting delegates from 41

countries, including 50 from Germany.

It was claimed that the delegates represented altogether 17 million trade unionists.

("Kommunistischeski Internatsionalo", No. 18; October 8th., 1921; col. 4508).

It united internationally trade union federations and trade unions under revolutionary leadership (known as "Red Federations" and "Red Trade Unions"), and groups of revolutionary trade unionists within reformist unions (known as "Revolutionary Trade Union Oppositions").

The declared aim of the new international organisation was:

"... to oppose to the equivocal bourgeois programme of the Amsterdam International ... a clear revolutionary platform of action".
(Resolution, Statuten, Manifesto and Aufrufe der Ersten Internationalen Kongresses der Roten Fach- und Industrie-Verbände; Bremen; 1921; p. 64-65).

A resolution adopted by the Congress provided for

"... the closest possible link with the Third International".
(Ibid.; p. 17-18).

The Congress elected an Executive Council and an Executive Bureau, with Salomon Lozovsky (Soviet Russia) as General Secretary.

The Foundation of International Workers' Relief

On August 12th., 1921, there was set up in Berlin the Foreign Committee for the Organisation of Workers' Relief for the Starving in Russia -- later renamed International Workers' Relief (IWR). Its first Chairman was Clara Zetkin (Germany), its first Secretary Wilhelm Münzenberg (Germany), and its Committee included Albert Einstein, Martin Andersen Nexø, George Bernard Shaw, Anatole France and Henri Barbusse.

It launched a campaign for famine relief in Russia, national bodies being set up in many countries.

"Under the pressure of the masses the Amsterdam International of Trade Unions joined the campaign. . . .

By the summer of 1923 the Relief Committee had collected and sent to Russia food supplies, commodities and monetary donations to the sum of over five million dollars. About a million dollars was collected by the Amsterdam International of Trade Unions".

("Outline History of the Communist International"; Moscow; 1971; p. 142).

Lenin's "Letter to the German Communists"

On August 14th., 1921, on the eve of the Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of Germany, Lenin wrote a letter addressed "to the German Communists".

Most of its contents -- the analysis of the March action, of the Third Congress of the CI, of the role of Paul Levi and of the "leftist" Communist Workers' Party of Germany -- have been dealt with in earlier sections.

The letter also proposed, however, that Arkadi Maslow and other leading "leftists" in the CPG should be sent to Moscow for a time for political re-education:

"Maslow . . . is playing at Leftism. . . Maslow displayed his unwise (to put it mildly) conduct here in Moscow. It would be a good thing if the German Party sent Maslow, and two or three of his over-zealous supporters and comrades-in-arms who obviously do not wish to observe the 'peace treaty', to Soviet Russia for a year or two. We would find useful work for them. We would make men of them. And the international and German movement would gain a great deal by it".

(V.I. Lenin: "A Letter to the German Communists", in: "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 296).)

The Seventh Congress of the CPG

The Seventh Congress of the Communist Party of Germany was held at Jena from August 22nd. to 26th., 1921, attended by 274 delegates representing 180,000 members.

The congress endorsed the decisions of the Third World Congress of the CI, but took no action on the question of the reorganisation of the party on the basis of factory cells.

It approved a "Manifesto of the Congress to the Working People of Town and Country", containing a list of partial demands around which action should be initiated in accordance with the "Theses on Tactics" adopted by the Third World Congress. It also approved "Guiding Principles for the Organisation of Communist Work in the Trade Unions", and, dropping the word "United", adopted a new name for the party, namely: the Communist Party of Germany (Section of the Communist International) (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Sektion der Kommunistischen Internationale)).

The congress elected a Central Bureau, as follows: Paul Böttcher, Bertha Braunthal, Hugo Eberlein, Ernst Friesland, Fritz Heckert, Edwin Hoernle, Ernst Meyer, Wilhelm Pieck, Hermann Remmole, Felix Schmidt, August Thalheimer, Jacob Walcher, Rosi Wolfstein and Clara Zetkin. The new Central Bureau in turn set up a Political Bureau (Politbüro) (Politisches Büro) (Politbüro) and an Organisation Bureau (Orgbüro) (Organisatorisches Büro) (Orgbüro).

(Bericht über die Verhandlungen des 2 Parteitags der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschlands"; n.p.; 1922)..

(Note: at this time the congresses were being numbered from the Unification Congress in 1920).

The Assassination of Erzberger

On August 26th., 1921, Matthias Erzberger, a leading member

of the Centre and a former Minister of Finance, was murdered at Griesbach in the Black Forest by a member of the right-wing terrorist organisation, the "Consul Organisation" (CO) (Organisation Consul) (OC), in protest at the government's "policy of fulfilment".

On August 29th., on the pretext of taking measures against such right-wing terrorists, President Ebert issued a "Decree for the Defence of the Republic under Article 48 of the Constitution, giving the Minister of the interior emergency powers to prohibit publications, organisations, meetings and demonstrations when "considered necessary for the defence of the Republic". These powers continued (with a brief interval between September 24th. and 28th.) until abolished by resolution of Parliament on December 17th., but were used only against the Communist Party of Germany, whose organ "The Red Flag" was prohibited from September 15th. to 17th.

The Foundation of the Communist Labour Group

On September 26th., 1921, Ernst Däumig and Adolph Hoffmann (who had resigned from the Central Bureau of the CPG in February) resigned from the Party and, along with Paul Levi (expelled from the Party in April) and Curt Geyer (expelled in August) formed the so-called Communist Labour Group (CWG) (Kommunistische Arbeitsgemeinschaft) (KAG).

In April 1922 the Communist Labour Group joined the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany and, as part of the latter, became part of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany in September 1922.

The ECCI Directive on the United Front

On December 18th., 1921, united front tactics came formally into being in a directive of the ECCI "On the United Front of the Workers and on the Attitude to Workers belonging to the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals, and to those who Support Anarcho-syndicalist Organisations".

The directive declared that, under the influence of the mounting offensive of capital, a spontaneous desire for working class unity was developing among the workers:

"Under the influence of the mounting capitalist attack, there has awakened among the workers a spontaneous striving towards unity which literally cannot be restrained, and which goes hand in hand with a gradual growth of confidence placed by the broad working masses in the Communists".

(ECCI Directive on the United Front of the Workers and on the Attitude to Workers belonging to the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals, and to those who Support Anarcho-syndicalist Organisations", in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 310).

Communist Parties must take advantage of this movement by putting forward the slogan of "the united front of the workers":

"Confronted by this situation, the ECCI is of the opinion that the slogan of the Third World Congress of the Communist International 'To the Masses!' and the interests of the Communist movement generally, require the Communist Parties and the Communist International as a whole to support the slogan of the united front of the workers and to take the initiative in this matter". (Ibid.; p. 311).

The united front of the workers means the organised united action of all workers, irrespective of which party they belong to or support, against capital:

"The united front of the workers means the united front of all workers who want to fight against capitalism". (Ibid.; p. 316).

Since the rank-and-file workers have an objective interest in uniting against capital, while the leaders of the social-democratic parties and reformist trade unions have an objective interest, in the era of imperialism, in collaborating with capital, united front tactics must be directed primarily towards building a united front from below:

"As a counterweight to the diplomatic game of the Menshevik leaders, the Russian Bolshevik leaders put forward the slogan of 'unity from below', that is, unity of the working masses in the practical struggle . . . against the capitalists. Events showed that this was the only correct answer". (Ibid.; p. 314).

The formation of united fronts around partial demands raises the political consciousness of the workers taking part and assists in the building of a revolutionary united front:

"Any serious mass action, even if it proceeds only from partial demands, inevitably brings to the forefront more general and fundamental questions of the revolution. The Communist vanguard can only gain if new sections of workers are convinced by their own experience of the illusory character of reformism and compromise". (Ibid.; p. 310).

Although the leaders of the social-democratic parties and the reformist trade unions have an objective interest in collaborating with capital and opposing the united front of the workers, the pressure of the rank-and-file forces these leaders from time to time hypocritically to declare their support for such a united front of the workers:

"Profound internal processes are, however, forcing the diplomats and leaders of the Second, Two-and-a-Half, and Amsterdam Internationals to push the question of unity into the foreground. . . . But . . . the leaders and diplomats of these Internationals advance that slogan only in a new attempt to deceive the workers and to entice them by new means on to the old road of class collaboration. . . . This phenomenon is inevitable because the solidarity

of the reformist 'socialists' with the bourgeoisie of their 'own' countries is the cornerstone of reformism". (Ibid.; p. 311).

In order to expose the role of these leaders of the social-democratic parties and of the reformist trade unions to the working masses, Communist Parties must propose united fronts around partial demands to these organisations:

"The Communist International . . . permits agreements between the various sections of the International and the parties and unions of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals. . . .

Whenever the offer of a joint struggle is rejected by our opponents, the masses must be informed of this and thus learn who are the real destroyers of the workers' united front. Whenever an offer is accepted by our opponents, every effort must be made gradually to intensify the struggle and to develop it to its highest power. In either case it is essential to capture the attention of the broad working masses, to interest them in all stages of the struggle for the revolutionary united front. . . .

The methods noted above . . . are designed to provide a prop for Communist agitation in the united mass actions of the proletariat". (Ibid.; p. 314, 315).

'Such united front tactics must also be adopted internationally by the Communist International:

"The Communist International . . . can itself obviously not reject similar understandings at the international level". (Ibid.; p. 314).

In all such united front actions, the Communist Parties must retain their political independence, including the right to criticise the leaders of the associated organisations:

"The principal conditions which are equally categorical for Communist Parties in all countries are . . . the absolute independence of every Communist Party which enters into an agreement with the parties of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, its complete freedom to put forward its own views and to criticise the opponents of Communism. While accepting a basis for action, Communists must retain the unconditional right and the possibility of expressing their opinion of the policy of all working-class organisations without exception, not only before and after action has been taken but also, if necessary, during its course. In no circumstances can these rights be surrendered. While supporting the slogan of the greatest possible unity of all workers' organisations in every practical action against the capitalist front, Communists may in no circumstances desist from putting forward their views, which are the only consistent expression of the defence of working-class interests as a whole". (Ibid.; p. 313-14).

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The directive concluded by warning Communist Parties that there could be a danger of rightist deviations in the application of united front tactics unless these parties were united around leaders with a high Marxist-Leninist political level:

"In putting forward the present plan, the ECCI directs the attention of all brother-parties to the dangers which it may in certain circumstances entail. Not all Communist Parties are sufficiently strong and firm, not all have broken completely with the centrist and semi-centrist ideology. Some may overstep the mark; there may be tendencies which would amount in fact to the dissolution of Communist Parties and groups into the united but formless bloc. To carry out the new tactics successfully for the Communist cause, it is necessary for the Communist Parties who put them into operation to be strong and firmly welded together, and for their leaders to possess great theoretical clarity".

Lenin and Stalin strongly supported the adoption of united front tactics by the Communist International:

"We adopted the united front tactics in order to help these masses to fight against capital. . . ; and we shall pursue these tactics to the end".
(V.I. Lenin: "We Have Paid Too Much", in: "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 305).

"The question of united front tactics in the world working-class movement.

The sin of the opposition here is that it has abandoned the Leninist tactics on the question of gradually winning the vast masses of the working class to the side of communism. . . .

Lenin put the united front tactics into operation precisely for the purpose of helping the vast masses of the working class in the capitalist countries, who are infected with the prejudices of the Social-Democratic policy of compromise, to learn from their own experience that the Communists' policy is correct, and to pass to the side of communism.

The sin of the opposition is that it utterly repudiates these tactics".

(J.V. Stalin: Political Report of the Central Committee to the 15th. Congress of the CPSU, in: "Works", Volume 10; Moscow; 1954; p. 354-5).

The Revisionist Concept of a "Workers' Government"

On October 9th., 1921, the Executive Committee of the Communist International sent to the Central Bureau of the Communist Party of Germany a circular letter containing "Theses on the Tax Question" drafted by a commission of the ECCI, the leading members of which were Fritz Heckert, Wilhelm Pieck, Karl Radek and Eugen Varga. One of the recommendations made in the theses was that the CPG should

". . . offer support to a workers' government".
("Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung: Chronik", Volume 2; Berlin; 1966; p. 119).

On November 16th/17th., 1921, the Central Council of the CPG, following a report by Ernst Meyer on "The Political Situation and the Party", adopted a resolution, by 31 votes to 15, that the Party would support a "workers' government" (defined as one composed of representatives of the SPG, the ISPG and the trade unions) if this promised to act in the interests of the masses:

"The CPG declared its readiness to support a workers' government if this set itself the aim of executing the demands of the masses. . . . (By a workers' government was understood one composed of representatives of the SPG, the ISPG and the trade unions)".
(Ibid.; p. 121).

The ECCI expressed its approval of the CPG's line in "Directives on the United Front of the Workers . . .", issued on December 18th., 1921:

"In Germany the Communist Party at its last national conference . . . declared its readiness to support a workers' government which was willing to take up with some seriousness the struggle against the power of the capitalists. The ECCI considers this decision completely right".

(ECCI Directives on the United Front of the Workers and on the Attitude to Workers belonging to the Second, Two-and-a Half, and Amsterdam Internationals, and to those who support Anarcho-syndicalist Organisations", in J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 311-312).

Meanwhile, with the support of the revisionists on the ECCI (headed on this question by Karl Radok), the revisionists in the leadership of the CPG had developed the "workers' government" formula further. In a circular letter to all Party organisations dated December 8th., 1921, the Central Bureau declared that the Party was ready:

". . . even to participate in such a government, if it showed that it would represent the interests and needs of the working class in struggle against the bourgeoisie" ("Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung: Chronik", Volume 2; Berlin; 1966; p. 121).

In late December, Karl Radok -- writing in the "Communist International" under the pseudonym of "Karl Bremer" -- endorsed the need to adapt the CPG to this line of entering a coalition government with the Social-Democratic Party as "one of our most immediate tasks":

"The working class may proceed further and further along the lines of democracy; it may in this way gain a majority in parliament and form a workers' government. . . .
Communists . . . must fight together with the proletariat for a workers' government and must teach the proletariat the means by which to stabilise this government, support it in the struggle against capital, and strengthen it. . . .

Provided the workers' government pledges itself to do all that is necessary under the given conditions to fight capital, the Communist Party must take part in it. . . .

Our most immediate tasks are to adapt the Party to the revolutionary policy we have outlined above and which is the only policy possible . . . : to fight for a general election, to fight in a united front under the slogan of a workers' government".

("K. Bremer": "The Impending Bankruptcy of the German Bourgeoisie and the CPG", in: "Communist International", No. 19; December 21st., 1921; p. 349, 350).

Radok wrote this article under a pseudonym, no doubt, because it put forward an ultra-right revisionist concept: that the "workers' government" should institute a programme of building state capitalism, in which workers and capitalists would collaborate in the management of industry in such a way as to maximise production:

"How to make these (i.e., reparations -- Ed.) payments without throwing a noose over the neck of the working class? The only way is to develop Germany's productive forces to the utmost, . . . All this makes it imperative that control over production be introduced . . . by giving the state a large share in and wide control of industry. The state would trustify industry under its control without taking over the management. Production would be managed by representatives of the former private industry, of the workers' organs and of the state conjointly. . . .

There is no other way. . . .

It is not Communism but state capitalism. . . .

Under present-day conditions in Germany, . . . the road to 'state capitalism' is the road of revolutionary struggle".

("K. Bremer": *ibid.*; p. 348, 349).

This ultra-right revisionist line was not taken up, it being regarded as impossible at this time to persuade Communist Parties to accept it under the cloak of "creative Marxism-Leninism".

Nevertheless, BY DECEMBER 1921 REVISIONISTS IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, IN COLLABORATION WITH REVISIONISTS IN THE LEADERSHIP OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GERMANY, HAD SUCCEEDED, ON THE BASIS OF A DISTORTION OF THE CORRECT PRINCIPLE OF UNITED FRONT TACTICS, IN FOISTING ON THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL THE COMPLETELY ANTI-MARKIST-LENINIST CONCEPT THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE, WITHOUT PRELIMINARY SMASHING OF THE CAPITALIST STATE IN A SOCIALIST REVOLUTION, TO SECURE THE INSTALLATION, THROUGH THE MACHINERY OF "PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY", OF A GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD REPRESENT THE CLASS INTERESTS OF THE WORKING CLASS.

This revisionist concept was endorsed, under the leadership of Leon Trotsky and Karl Radok, by the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International in December 1922. It was repudiated by the Fifth World Congress in June/July 1924, under the leadership of Stalin and was reimposed on the international communist movement at the Seventh (and last) World Congress in 1935, under the leadership of Georgi Dimitrov.

1922

The CI-RILU Manifesto on the United Front

On January 1st., 1922, the Executive Committee of the Communist International and of the Red International of Labour Unions issued a joint "Manifesto on the United Front" to the "proletarians of all countries".

The manifesto called on the workers to unite, irrespective of political affiliation, for struggle around partial demands:

"You do not yet dare to take up the fight for the new, the struggle for power, for the dictatorship, with arms in hand. . . . But at least rally to the fight for bare life, for bread, for peace. Rally for these; struggle in one fighting front, rally as the proletarian class against the class of exploiters. Tear down the barriers erected between you and come into the ranks, whether Communist or social-democrat, anarchist or syndicalist, to fight for the needs of the hour. . . ."

The Communist International calls on Communist workers, and on all honest workers throughout the world, to come together in their workshops and in their meetings into one family of the working people who stand by each other against capital".

(ECCI-ECRIU Manifesto on the United Front, in: J. Degras (Ed.): "The Communist International: 1919-1943; Documents", Volume 1; London; 1956; p. 318, 319).

Only by the formation of such a "united front from below" may it be possible to compel the leaders of the social-democratic parties and of the reformist trade unions to join the workers' united front:

"Only in this way will all the parties which rely on the proletariat and want the proletariat to follow them be compelled to come together for the common defensive struggle against capital. Only then will they be compelled to sever their alliance with capitalist parties".

(Ibid.; p. 319).

The Expulsion of the Friesland Group from the CPG

In November 1921 the principal SPG newspaper "Forward" published an attack on the Communist Party of Germany in connection with the March action of 1921, on the basis of material supplied to it by the police. The Communist Working Group, and a group of leading members of the CPG-headed by Ernst Friesland, joined in publicly supporting the SPG attack.

At its meeting on January 22nd./23rd., 1922, the Central Council of the CPG expelled from the Party Otto Brass, Paul Frankon, Ernst Friesland, Heinrich Malzahn and Paul Wegmann for violation of Party discipline; the expelled group immediately joined the Communist Labour Group.

The same meeting elected Wilhelm Koonen to membership of the Central Bureau of the Party.

The First Plenum of the ECCI

From February 21st. to March 1st., 1922, the First Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was held in Moscow, attended by 100 delegates from 36 countries.

By a majority, the plenum endorsed the "Directive on the United Front . . ." issued by the ECCI on December 18th., 1921.

A resolution "On the Tasks of Communists in the Trade Unions" endorsed the decisions of the Third World Congress of the CI on this question, but clarified certain practical points of policy:

When an individual union is won over to the Red International of Labour Unions, it should remain affiliated to the reformist national and international trade union organisations in order to influence them:

"Communists are obliged to work in favour of the individual unions affiliated to the RILU remaining inside the international trade unions and industrial secretariats. If such unions have not already entered those bodies, they must do so. . . . To remain inside the national trade union associations".
(Resolution on the Tasks of Communists in Trade Unions, 1st. Plenum ECCI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 321).

The resolution condemned rightist tendencies within certain Communist Parties favouring the liquidation of the RILU:

"The liquidationist tendencies to be noted in some Parties in regard to the RILU . . . must be sharply and categorically condemned".
(*Ibid.*; p. 321).

The plenum elected a Presidium of the ECCI as follows: Grigori Zinoviev (Soviet Russia) (Chairman); Heinrich Brandler (Germany); Nikolai Bukharin (Soviet Russia); L.E. Katterfeld (United States); Kroibich (Czechoslovakia); Karl Radok (Soviet Russia); Boris Souvarine (France); Umberto Terracini (Italy).

The Meeting of Representatives of the Three Internationals

At the beginning of 1922 the International Union of Socialist Parties (the "Two-and-a-Half International"), proposed a world conference of all "workers' parties".

The Executive Committee of the Communist International immediately accepted the proposal, adding the recommendation that trade union organisations should also be represented. The Executive Committee of the Second International, however, declared that it was prepared to agree only to a preliminary conference of representatives of the three executives.

This preliminary conference was held in the Parliament Building in Berlin from April 2nd. to 5th., 1922, the delegation of the CI being led by Karl Radek, Nikolai Bukharin and Clara Zetkin.

At the opening session of the conference Clara Zetkin, on behalf of the CI, proposed the following agenda for the world conference:

1. Defence against the capitalist offensive;
2. The fight against reaction;
3. Preparation of the struggle against imperialist wars;
4. Assistance in rebuilding the Russian Soviet Republic;
5. The Versailles Treaty and the reconstruction of the devastated areas".

(ECCI Statement on the Meeting of the Representatives of the Second, Two-and-a-Half and Third Internationals, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 337).

The representatives of the Second International rejected the inclusion of any discussion on the Versailles Treaty in the agenda, and demanded certain guarantees from the Communist International before agreeing to participate in any world conference.

The revisionist leaders of the CI delegation, instead of using these demands to expose the leadership of the Second International, agreed to certain of them unilaterally. In an article entitled "We Have Paid Too Much", Lenin sharply criticised this opportunist action:

"Our representatives were wrong in agreeing to the following two conditions: first, that the Soviet government does not apply the death penalty in the case of the forty-seven Socialist-Revolutionaries; second, that the Soviet government permits representatives of the three Internationals to be present at the trial.

These two conditions are nothing more nor less than a political concession on the part of the revolutionary proletariat to the reactionary bourgeoisie. . . .

By the agreement signed in Berlin by the representatives of the Third International, we have already made two political concessions to the international bourgeoisie. . . . We obtained no concessions whatever in return. . . .

Comrades Radek, Bukharin and the others who represented the Communist International acted wrongly". (V.I. Lenin: "We Have Paid Too Much", in: "Selected Works", Volume 10; London; 1946; p. 301, 302, 303).

These unilateral concessions on the part of the representatives of the CI were duly noted in the joint statement issued by the preliminary conference:

"The Conference notes the declaration of the representatives of the Communist International that the forty-seven Socialist-Revolutionaries who are to be tried will be allowed any defenders they wish; that . . . no death sentence will be inflicted in this trial; that . . . representatives of all three Executives will be allowed to take shorthand reports for the information of their affiliated parties".

(Statement Issued by the Conference of Representatives of the Executives of the Second and Third Internationals and the Vienna Union, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 338).

The preliminary conference agreed

" . . . in principle upon the necessity for calling a general conference as soon as possible".
(*Ibid.*; p. 338).

and on

" . . . the setting up of an Organisation Committee of Nine, which shall undertake preparations for further conferences of the three Executives, as well as conferences on a wider basis".
(*Ibid.*; p. 338).

The conference also agreed on the holding of united demonstrations on the basis of a programme of progressive demands:

"The Conference . . . calls upon the workers of every country to organise great mass demonstrations, with as much unity as possible, during the Genoa Conference, either on the 20th. of April or, where this is technically impossible, on the first of May:

For the eight-hour day;

For the struggle against unemployment . . .;

For the united action of the proletariat against the capitalist offensive;

For the Russian revolution, for starving Russia, for the resumption by all countries of political and economic relations with Russia;

For the re-establishment of the proletarian united front in every country and in the International".
(*Ibid.*; p. 339).

After the Berlin conference, the ECCI issued a statement stressing that the course of the conference emphasised the necessity of building the united front of the workers from below:

"The united front which is just beginning to be formed is in great danger. The leaders of the Second International want to crush it at birth and will leave nothing undone to reach their objective. The course of the Berlin conference proved that up to the hilt. . . .

The united front will not be created by agreements with those 'socialists' who until recently were members of bourgeois governments. The united front means the association of all workers, whether Communist, anarchist, social-democrat, independent or non-party or even Christian workers, against the bourgeoisie, with the leaders if they want it so, without the leaders if they remain indifferently aside, and against the leaders if they sabotage the workers' united front. . . .

Work together with us to organise the united front against the capitalists. . . .

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Build the united front locally too, without waiting for the permission of the leaders of the Second International. . . . In every factory, in every mine, in every district, in every town, the Communist workers should arm together with the socialist and non-party workers for the common fight against the bourgeoisie. . . .

Demand the immediate convening of a world congress of the working class. That is the next step towards the united front of all proletarians".
(ECCI Statement on the Results of the Berlin Conference, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 341, 342).

The Organisation Committee met on May 23rd., 1922, when the representatives of the Second International declared that they would agree to participate in the calling of a world workers' congress.

". . . only if the Communist Parties renounced criticism of the policy of the social-democratic leaders and the trade union bureaucracy and if at the same time the Soviet Government gave the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries the opportunity to organise revolts with impunity".
(ECCI Statement on the Meeting of the Committee of Nine, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 349-50).

In these circumstances, the representatives of the Communist International presented the Committee of Nine with an ultimatum: either the committee went ahead with plans to call a world workers' congress, or they would withdraw from the committee:

"The Communist International could not allow the social-democrats of all countries and the trade union bureaucracy to prevent any united proletarian front and at the same time shield themselves from responsibility for this criminal policy. For these reasons the Communist International presented the two Internationals with an ultimatum -- either cease sabotaging the world workers' congress or the Communist International will withdraw its representatives from the commission of nine".
(*Ibid.*; p. 350).

When this ultimatum was rejected,

". . . there was nothing for the representatives of the Communist International to do but leave the commission of nine, . . . in which the Communists were to be assigned the part of a screen. . . .

The proletariat, without distinction of party, has had the opportunity of convincing itself who is for the united front and who is against. . . .

Fight the leaders of the Second International who are splitting the working class.

Build the united front from below".
(*Ibid.*; p. 350-351).

A conference of the Second International held in London on June 18/19th., 1922, rejected all further discussions or joint action with the Communist International.

The Conference of Genoa and the Treaty of Rapallo

At the Conference of Cannes from January 6th. to 13th., 1922, the Allied Supreme Council, together with representatives of the German government, had agreed to convene a conference "for the economic reconstruction of Europe".

The conference met in Genoa from April 10th. to May 19th., 1922, and was attended by representatives of Britain, the British Dominions and 29 continental European countries, including Germany and Soviet Russia. The United States government declined to attend.

The conference set up a commission to examine the "conditions under which foreign enterprise and capital could be enlisted for the restoration of Russia as well as the settlement of past obligations", and it quickly became clear that the conference was in reality an attempt by the Allied imperialist powers to enlist the support of the German imperialists in securing the consent of the Soviet government, by a combination of pressure and attempted bribery, to compensate foreign capitalist owners of enterprises nationalised by the Soviet government, to pay the foreign debts of the tsarist regime, and to accord extra-territorial status to foreign residents in Soviet Russia.

To break this developing imperialist front, the Soviet government made approaches to the German government, which also had an interest in resisting the inferior status which the Allied imperialist powers wished to impose on it.

On April 16th., 1922, the German and Soviet Russian delegations to the Genoa Conference signed a "Treaty of Friendship at nearby Rapallo (the "Rapallo Treaty")". By this treaty Germany and Soviet Russia reciprocally renounced all claims to war indemnities, and Germany renounced all claims for losses incurred by German citizens in consequence of Soviet nationalisation of German enterprises "provided that the Soviet government does not satisfy similar claims of other states". The two states also agreed to resume diplomatic relations (Nikolai Krestinsky was appointed Soviet Ambassador to Germany, and Ulrich Graf von Brockdorff-Rantzau German Ambassador to Soviet Russia), to apply mutually the principle of "the most favoured nation", and to set up mixed companies through which to conduct trade.

(RSFSR: Sbornik Deistvuyushchikh Dogovorov, Volume 3, No. 85; 1922; p. 36-38).

This effectively brought the Genoa Conference to an end. Although the agenda was referred to a commission of experts, which met at The Hague from June 26th. to July 20th., 1922, this produced no results.

"As a result of the Treaty of Rapallo (and an earlier provisional trade agreement between the two countries signed on May 6th., 1921) Germany's share of Soviet Russian imports rose from 25% in 1921 to 33% in 1922.

On May 19th., 1922, the Executive Committee of the Communist International issued a statement on the Genoa Conference and the treaty of Rapallo:

"At Genoa . . . the petty skirmishes and quarrels of the victor states among themselves have shown the entire world how deep are the contradictions between England and France, between Japan and the United States, between Italy and France, and between the victor states and Germany. . . .

When the attempt was made in Genoa to despoil Soviet Russia, the first proletarian republic, the bourgeoisie formed a 'united front! -- Restitution, that was the battle-cry of the bourgeoisie at Genoa. . . .

Soviet Russia concluded a treaty with the bourgeois German Republic. . . . Only the merciless greed which characterised the attitude of the victor states at Genoa to defeated Germany induced the present German government to sign a treaty with Soviet Russia. The treaty between Russia and Germany signed at Rapallo is of enormous historical importance. Russia with its 150 million population and its predominantly agrarian character, in alliance with Germany with its first-class industry, represents such powerful economic cooperation that it will break through all obstacles. . . .

Workers of Germany, you must seize power in your country as quickly as possible. . . .

Then, when the German-Russian treaty brings together two great Soviet republics, it will provide such unshakable foundations for real Communist construction that the old and outworn Europe will not be able to withstand it for even a few years".

(ECCI Statement on the Genoa Conference, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 345, 346, 347, 348, 349).

On the conclusion of the Hague conference of economic experts, the ECCI issued a further statement:

"The latest effort of the capitalist world to establish 'peace' with Soviet Russia and to initiate the economic 'reconstruction' of Russia has been exposed as a cynical attempt to make the Russian workers and peasants into slaves of world capital. This attempt has foundered against the resolute resistance of the Soviet Government. . . .

The representatives of the capitalist states demanded unconditional recognition of all the debts of the tsars and the Russian bourgeoisie and their immediate repayment. They demanded the unconditional return of the factories and mines. . . .

The Soviet government's fight against the demands of the capitalist world . . . is a fight for the development of European socialism: it is your fight".

(ECCI Manifesto on the Conclusion of The Hague Conference, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 359, 361).

Meanwhile, secret negotiations had begun in September 1921 between the Soviet government and the German Arm of the Realm. The discussions took place on the initiative of the Commander-in-Chief of the Arm of the Realm, General Hans von Seeckt, mainly in the Berlin apartment of Major Kurt von Schleicher.

(F. von Rabenau: "Seeckt: Aus Seinem Leben"; Leipzig; 1940; p. 308-9).

These negotiations resulted in a secret agreement signed in Berlin on July 29th., 1922.

(General von Hasse: Unpublished diary, cited in: "Journal of Modern History", Volume 21, No. 1; 1949; p. 31-32).

This provided for the operation by German firms in Soviet Russia of factories for the production of military planes, tanks and munitions, (the output being shared between both states) and the training on Russian soil of both German and Russian soldiers in the use of these weapons, mainly by German technical experts.

(F. Tschunke: Memorandum of February 13th., 1939, cited in: "Der Monat", No. 2; November 1948).
(Verhandlungen des Reichstages, Volume 391; 1926; 8584-8597).

It was during these secret, but official, negotiations that Nikolai Krestinsky and Arkadi Rosengoltz, who were engaged in them on the Soviet side, reached a conspiratorial agreement with Seeckt for the financing of the revisionist opposition in Soviet Russia in return for the supply of military information:

"KRESTINSKY: In 1921 Trotsky told me to take advantage of a meeting with Seeckt during official negotiations to propose to him, to Seeckt, that he grant Trotsky a regular subsidy for the development of illegal Trotskyite activities; at the same time he told me that if Seeckt put up a counter-demand that we render him services in the sphere of espionage, we should and may accept it. . . . I put the question before Seeckt and named the sum of 250,000 gold marks, that is \$60,000, a year. General Seeckt, after consulting his assistant, the chief of staff, agreed in principle and put up the counter-demand that certain confidential and important information of a military nature should be transmitted to him. . . . In addition he was to receive assistance in obtaining visas for some persons whom they needed and whom they would send to the Soviet Union as spies. This counter-demand of General Seeckt was accepted and in 1923 this agreement had been put into effect. . . .

The connection of a criminal nature was established in 1922. . . .

VYSHINSKY: So you, Rosengoltz, established connection with the German intelligence service already in 1923?

ROSENGOLTZ: With Seeckt directly".

(Report of the Court proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet 'Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites',; Moscow; 1938; p. 259-60, 261).

The Second Plenum of the ECCI

The Second Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International was held in Moscow from June 7th. to 11th., 1922, attended by 41 voting delegates from 17 countries. It discussed the Berlin conference of representatives of the three Internationals, but was mainly concerned with the situation in the Communist Party of France.

The plenum elected a Presidium of the ECCI, as follows: Grigori Zinoviev (Soviet Russia) (Chairman); Heinrich Brandler (Germany); Nikolai Bukharin (Soviet Russia); Antonio Gramsci (Italy); Jordanov (Bulgaria); Karl Radek (Soviet Russia); Bohumir Smoral (Czechoslovakia); Boris Souvarine (France).

The Assassination of Rathenau and the Berlin Agreement

On June 4th., 1922, Philipp Scheidemann (SPG) was wounded by a terrorist belonging to the Consul Organisation.

On June 16th., the Central Bureau of the Communist Party of Germany issued an appeal "to the German proletariat", and to the Social-Democratic Party, the Independent Social-Democratic Party and the General German Trade Union League, calling for collective action against the increasing activity of anti-republican terrorist organisations. The appeal was rejected by the organisations addressed.

On June 24th., 1922 Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau, the architect of the Treaty of Rapallo with Soviet Russia, was murdered by a member of the Consul Organisation. The Central Bureau of the CPG immediately reiterated its appeal of June 16th.

On June 27th. the "Berlin Agreement" was signed between representatives of the CPG, SPG, ISPG, GGTUL and AFA-Bund demanding that government and Parliament adopt a law for the defence of the Republic which would prohibit anti-republican terrorist organisations and purge the Arm of the Realm and the state apparatus of anti-republican elements.

On July 4th. mass demonstrations and strikes took place all over Germany in support of the demands put forward in the Berlin Agreement.

On July 8th. the representatives of the SPG, ISPG, and the trade union organisations broke off relations with the Communist Party, and on July 18th. a "Law for the Defence of the Republic" was passed by Parliament with the support of the SPG and ISPG deputies. The CPG deputies voted against it, since it did not provide for the measures demanded by the Berlin Agreement.

The Merger of the ISPG and the SPG

On September 24th., 1922, the rump of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Germany merged with the Social-Democratic Party of Germany at a Unification Congress in Nuremberg to form the United Social-Democratic Party of Germany (USPG) (Vereinigte Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) (VSPD).

The Communist Labour Group, headed by Paul Levi, which had joined the ISPG in April 1922, participated in the merger.

Brandler Becomes Leader of the CPG

In October 1922, on the initiative of the revisionist Comintern representatives Karl Radek, the leading role in the Party was taken over by Heinrich Brandler.

"Radek chose Heinrich Brandler. . . . At Brandler's side Radek put his old friend . . . August Thalheimer. . . . Zetkin was to be the galloon figure of the group, and Fritz Heckert and Jacob Walcher, two energetic unionists, Brandler's adjutants. With such a combination, Radek hoped to get solid support for Trotsky as Lenin's successor". R. Fischer: "Stalin and German Communism"; Harvard; 1948; p. 215-16).

The Fourth World Congress of the CI

The Fourth World Congress of the Communist International was held in Moscow from November 5th. to December 5th., 1922, attended by 340 delegates from 57 countries.

Lenin, now seriously ill, delivered only a brief report on November 13th. on "Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution" (it was his next to the last public appearance), and the leading role at the congress was taken by Leon Trotsky.

"At the . . . fourth congress Lenin, already ill, spoke only briefly and with great difficulty; and Trotsky came to the fore as the chief expounder of the International's strategy and tactics". (I. Deutscher: "The Prophet Unarmed: Trotsky: 1921-1929"; London; 1960; p. 65).

The principal debates at the congress centred upon united front tactics and the slogan of a "workers' government".

In his opening address, Grigori Zinoviev admitted that

"Much confusion still prevails among comrades as to the precise meaning of the united-front". (Bulletin of the 4th. Congress of the Communist International, No. 3; November 12th., 1922; p. 7).

The congress endorsed the slogan of the Third World Congress of the CI -- "To the Masses!", together with the ECCI directive on united front tactics of December 18th., 1921.

In the "Theses on Tactics" the congress repudiated the rightist view that united front tactics could involve the fusion of a Communist Party with a social-democratic party:

"The attempts of the Second International to represent the united front as the organisational fusion of all 'workers' parties' must of course be decisively rebutted. . . . The existence of independent Communist Parties and their complete freedom of action in regard to the bourgeoisie and counter-revolutionary social-democracy is the most significant historical achievement of the proletariat, which Communists will in no circumstances whatever renounce". (Theses on Tactics, 4th. World Congress CI, in: J. Dogras (Ed.): "The Communist International: 1919-1943: Documents", Volume 1; London; 1956; p. 424-425).

and also implied the repudiation of the concept that united front tactics could embrace a parliamentary coalition with a social-democratic party:

"Nor does the united front tactic mean so-called upper level 'electoral alliances' which pursue some parliamentary purpose or other" (Ibid.; p. 425).

The theses presented a generally correct account of united front tactics: the primary importance of seeking to bring about a united front from below by supporting and leading the day-to-day struggles of the working class around partial demands, so winning the unity in action and organisationally of workers belonging to or supporting other parties:

"The Comintern requires all Communist Parties and groups to carry out the united front tactic strictly, because in the present period that alone can give the Communists a sure road to winning the majority of the workers.

The reformists need a split. The Communists are interested in rallying all the forces of the working class against capitalism.

The united front tactic means that the Communist vanguard must take the lead in the day-to-day struggles of the broad working masses for their most vital interests. . . .

The united front tactic is the offer of joint struggle of Communists with all workers who belong to other parties or groups, and with all non-party workers, in defence of the basic interests of the working class against the bourgeoisie. . . .

In executing the united front policy it is especially important to achieve not only agitational, but also organisational results. No single opportunity should be missed of creating organisational footholds among the working masses themselves (factory councils, supervisory commissions of workers of all parties and of non-party workers, committees of action, etc.).

The most important thing in the united front tactic is and remains the agitational and organisational rallying of the working masses. Its true realisation can come only 'from below' -- from the depths of the working masses themselves". (Ibid.; p. 424, 425).

On this basis, negotiations with leaders of social-democratic parties and reformist trade unions were characterised as permissible -- and in certain circumstances necessary -- provided they were fully publicised to the working class and the Party did not surrender its freedom to agitate (including its freedom to criticise the leaders with whom the negotiations were being pursued):

"In these struggles the Communists are even ready to negotiate with the treacherous social-democratic and Amsterdam leaders. . . .

Communists . . . must not refuse in certain circumstances to negotiate with the leaders of the hostile workers' parties, but the masses must be kept fully and

constantly informed of the course of these negotiations. Nor must the Communist Parties' freedom to agitate be circumscribed in any way during these negotiations with the leaders".
(Ibid.; p. 424, 425).

In contrast to the section of the "Theses on Tactics" dealing with united front tactics, that dealing with the slogan of a "workers' government" was thoroughly revisionist.

In formulating this section, the revisionists in the ECCI were aided by the revisionists in the leadership of the Communist Party of Germany:

"The delegation of the Communist Party of Germany placed before the Congress for discussion a draft programme of the CPG in which considerable attention was given to the question of transitional measures prior to the conquest of political power, among them the slogan of a workers' government. . . .

On behalf of the delegation of the CPG, Ernst Meyer, Edwin Hoernle and Walter Ulbricht submitted to the Drafting Committee amendments to the draft theses on tactics containing a more clear-out definition of the slogan of a workers' government and characterising different types of such governments. These amendments were accepted by the Committee and adopted by the Congress". ("Outline History of the Communist International"; Moscow; 1971; p. 162, 163).

In contradiction to the section of the "Theses on Tactics" dealing with united front tactics, in which it was implied that parliamentary coalitions with social-democratic parties were impermissible, here the theses advocated that in countries where capitalist society was "particularly unstable", the Communist Parties should seek to form coalition governments with such parties, these being described as "workers' governments":

"Where bourgeois society is particularly unstable, . . . the slogan of a workers' government follows inevitably from the entire united front tactic.

The parties of the Second International are trying to 'save' the situation in these countries by advocating and forming coalition governments of bourgeois and social-democratic parties. . . . To this open or concealed bourgeois/social-democratic coalition the Communists oppose the united front of all workers and a coalition of all workers' parties in the economic and the political field".
(Ibid.; p. 425).

Such a "workers' government" can be formed through the machinery of "parliamentary democracy" if it has the militant support of the working masses:

"Such a workers' government is only possible if it is born out of the struggle of the masses, is supported by workers' bodies which are capable of fighting. . . .

Even a workers' government which is created by the turn of events in parliament, which is therefore purely parliamentary in origin, may provide the occasion for invigorating the revolutionary labour government". (Ibid.; p. 426).

Such a "workers' government" can "take over" and transform the capitalist state into one which serves the interests of and arms the working class, takes control of production and disarms the capitalist class:

"The entire state apparatus must be taken over by the workers' government. . . .

The overriding tasks of the workers' government must be to arm the proletariat, to disarm bourgeois counter-revolutionary organisations, to introduce the control of production, to transfer the main burden of taxation to the rich, and to break the resistance of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie". (Ibid.; p. 426).

At this stage the revisionists felt it premature -- as they still did in 1935 at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, which reaffirmed these concepts of 1921-22 -- to repudiate the Marxist-Leninist principle of the inevitability of armed struggle between the working class and the capitalist class. They declared, however, that the formation of such a "workers' government" could postpone this civil war until, as a result of the action of the "workers' government", the counter-revolutionary forces had for the most part been disarmed:

"The entire state apparatus must be taken over by the workers' government, and thus the working class's positions of power strengthened. . . .

The formation of a real workers' government, and the continued existence of a government which pursues a revolutionary policy, must lead to a bitter struggle, and eventually to a civil war with the bourgeoisie". (Ibid.; p. 426).

In his report on the Fourth World Congress to the Meeting of the Communist fraction of the Tenth All-Union Congress of Soviets on December 28th., 1922, Leon Trotsky defended these revisionist formulae on the slogan of a "workers' government":

"From the united front flows the slogan of a workers' government. The Fourth Congress submitted it to a thorough discussion and once again confirmed it as the central slogan for the next period. . . .

Under certain conditions the slogan of a workers' government can become a reality in Europe. That is to say, a moment may arrive when the Communists together with the left elements of Social Democracy will set up a workers' government. . . . Such a phase would constitute a transition to the proletarian dictatorship, the full and completed one. . . .

If you, our German Communist comrades, are of the opinion that a revolution is possible in the next few months in Germany, then we would advise you to participate

in Saxony in a coalition government (i.e., with the Social-Democratic Party -- Ed.)"

(L. Trotsky: Report on the Fourth World Congress, Meeting of the Communist Fraction of the Tenth All-Union Congress of Soviets, in: "The First Five Years of the Communist International", Volume 2; New York; 1953; p. 324, 325).

The fascist coup d'état in Italy (October 28th., 1922) took place only a week before the opening of the congress, and the "Theses on Tactics" included a brief, but correct, analysis of fascism, warned of its danger in other countries (including Germany), and stressed the need for the Communist Parties to organise resistance to fascism, utilising united front tactics:

"The legal methods at their command no longer satisfy the bourgeoisie. They are therefore resorting everywhere to the creation of special white guards for use particularly against all the revolutionary efforts of the proletariat and to a growing degree for the defeat by brutal means of every attempt by the workers to improve their lot."

The characteristic feature of Italian fascism -- 'classic' fascism . . . -- consists in this: that the fascists not only form strictly counter-revolutionary fighting organisations, armed to the teeth, but also try by social-demagogy to gain a footing among the masses, among the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie, and even among some sections of the working class, cleverly using the inevitable disappointment in so-called democracy for their own reactionary purposes. There is a danger of fascism now in many countries, in . . . Germany. . . .

It is one of the most important tasks of the Communist Parties to organise resistance to international fascism, to lead the entire working class in the struggle against the fascist gangs, and to make vigorous use in this field also of united front tactics: in this struggle methods of illegal organisation are absolutely essential". (Ibid.; p. 421, 422).

The congress also adopted "Directives for Communist Action in the Trade Unions", which emphasised the importance of fighting for the unity of the trade union movement, and against both the enforced and voluntary withdrawal of Communists from the trade unions:

"The slogan of the Communist International against the splitting of the unions must still be applied with undiminished energy. . . . The reformists resort to expulsions in order to provoke splits. By systematically driving the best elements out of the unions, they hope that the Communists will lose their heads, leave the unions, and so give up the deeply considered plan to win the trade unions from within. . . .

The splitting of the trade union movement, particularly in present conditions, is the greatest danger to the entire workers' movement. . . .

The more obvious the splitting tendencies of our enemies become, the more vigorously must we raise the question of trade union unity. . . . The question of splitting the trade unions must be put before every trade unionist, not merely at the moment when a split is imminent, but when it is being prepared. The question of the exclusion of Communists from the trade union movement must be placed before the entire trade union movement of all countries. . . . The working class must know who is for splitting and who is for unity. . . .

The fight against expulsions is in fact a fight for the unity of the trade union movement. . . . The expelled groups should at once attach themselves closely to the opposition in the unions and to the revolutionary organisations in the country concerned in order to wage a joint struggle against expulsions and ensure community of action in the struggle against capital"
(Directives for Communist Action in the Trade Unions, 4th. World Congress CI, in: J. Degras (Ed.): 413, 414, 415).

The congress also adopted "Decisions on the Reorganisation of the ECCI and on its Future Activities".

It was decided that national Party congresses should in future be held after World Congresses of the CI and that the mandating of delegates to World Congresses would be prohibited. The Executive Committee of the CI was in future to be elected by the World Congress, instead of being composed of representatives nominated by the various Parties, while Party organs would in future be obliged to publish Comintern documents if requested to do so by the ECCI. The purpose of these measures was to eliminate the remnants of federalism from the Communist International and to transform it into a "world Communist Party" based on the principles of democratic centralism. The ECCI would thus function as a kind of "Central Committee" of this "world Party", and the Presidium of the ECCI as a kind of "Political Bureau".

(Decisions on the Reorganisation of the ECCI and on its Future Activities, 4th. World Congress of the CI, in: J. Degras: (Ed.): ibid.; p. 438-442).

Believing that the Comintern apparatus was now safely in the hands of revisionists, the revisionist leadership of the Communist Party of Germany strongly supported these measures. Hugo Eberlein of the CPG (who had opposed the formation of the Communist International at its First Congress) acted as a reporter for the ECCI on this question, and said:

"We need international discipline if we really wish to be a tight world Party, a fighting organisation of the proletariat, and in this fighting organisation individual comrades must in all circumstances subordinate their personal wishes to the common interests of the International".
(Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale; Hamburg; 1923; p. 805).

On November 30th., 1922, the congress set up by resolution International Red Aid, whose aim was defined as:

"... to help our imprisoned comrades, not only materially but also morally".
(Bulletin of the 4th. Congress of the Communist International, No. 27; December 7th.. 1922; p. 16).

Among other documents of international importance adopted by the congress were: "Theses on the Eastern Question", "Agrarian Action Programme", "Theses on the Negro Question", "Resolution on the Versailles Peace Treaty", "Resolution on Proletarian Help for Soviet Russia", and "Resolution on the Programme of the Communist International".

The congress elected an Executive Committee of the Communist International which, after the congress elected a Presidium of the ECCI as follows: Grigori Zinoviev (Soviet Russia) (Chairman); Nikolai Bukharin (Soviet Russia); Egidio Gennari (Italy); Sen Katayama (Japan); Vassil Kolarov (Bulgaria); Otto Kuusinen (Finland); Arthur McManus (Britain); Karl Radek (Soviet Russia); Lazar Shatskin (Soviet Russia); Bohumir Smeral (Czechoslovakia); Boris Souvarine (France); and Clara Zetkin (Germany). Vassil Kolarov (Bulgaria) replaced Otto Kuusinen (Finland) as General Secretary of the ECCI.

Stalin was not even elected to the ECCI.

The Second Congress of the RILU

The Second Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions was held in Moscow from November 19th. to December 2nd., 1922.

At the demand of the French General Confederation of Unified Labour (Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire) (CGTU), the resolution adopted at the First Congress linking the RILU with the Communist International was rescinded.

(A. Lozovsky: "Desyat Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh"; Moscow, 1930; p. 109-10).

The congress re-elected Salomon Lozovsky as General Secretary.

The Formation of the Cuno Government

On November 14th., the Ministers of the Social-Democratic Party withdrew from the government in protest against moves to bring back the German People's Party into the government.

On November 22nd., a new coalition government was installed, with Ministers drawn from the German People's Party, the German Democratic Party, the Centre, and the Bavarian People's Party, with Wilhelm Cuno (non-party), managing director of the Hamburg-Amerika Shipping line, as Chancellor.

The "World Peace Conference"

From December 10th. to 15th., 1922, a "World Peace Conference", convened jointly by the Amsterdam trade union

International, the Second International and the Two-and-a-Half International, was held in The Hague.

The trade unions of Soviet Russia were invited to send a delegation to the conference, and this was composed of Salomon Lozovsky, Kárl Radek and Theodor Rothstein.

While various bourgeois pacifist organisations had been invited to send delegates to the conference, the Communist International and the Red International of Labour Unions had not. This was the subject of a proposal and a protest by the Russian delegates:

~~"The representatives of the Russian trade unions immediately proposed the admission of all Communist Parties and red trade unions. . . . The Amsterdammers replied with insults against the Communists. . . .~~

~~At the same moment as they were preventing the formation of the proletarian united front against imperialism, they concluded an alliance with the bourgeois pacifists. For the first time in the history of the modern workers' movement there was a joint congress of trade unions and political workers' organisations with the representatives of a part of the bourgeoisie, who were thus given the opportunity of helping to decide the most important question of the workers' movement. . . .~~

~~In rejecting the proletarian united front and concluding an alliance with the bourgeois groups, the three Internationals passed sentence on the Hague conference. . . . Imperialist war serves the interests of the bourgeoisie and whoever allies himself with the bourgeoisie unnerves and debilitates the working class and makes it impossible for them to fight against the war danger".~~

~~(ECCI/ECRIU Manifesto on The Hague Peace Congress, in: J. Degras (Ed.): *ibid.*; p. 451-452).~~

Nevertheless, the Soviet Russian delegation put forward a proposal for the formation, nationally and internationally, of committees of action directed against war. This proposal was rejected:

"The Russian trade union representatives thereupon replied: . . . We propose the formation of a committee of action. . . . The Amsterdammers rejected this proposal with scorn".
(*Ibid.*; p. 451).

The congress adopted a resolution calling for a general international strike in the event of war. The Russian delegation opposed the resolution on the grounds that this was a revolutionary act that would require militant preparation, which was being rejected in the policy of class collaboration put forward by the majority at the conference:

"Instead of organising the fight against the war danger now, the Amsterdammers threatened the bourgeoisie with an international strike in the event of war. The Russian trade union delegates replied that an international strike against war involves a trial of strength which

requires thorough preparation. When war breaks out, nationalist passions are unleashed, emergency legislation is introduced, and the proletariat will be able to defend itself only if it has been equipped and trained by years of unbroken class struggle. How can they be armed for revolutionary struggle against war if they have for years been hitched to the wagon of the bourgeoisie by a coalition policy . . . , if they have no illegal organisations, if all the weapons are left in the hands of the bourgeoisie?"
(Ibid.; p. 452).

In a manifesto issued after the "World Peace Conference", the Executive Committees of the Communist International and of the Red International of Labour Unions declared that the congress showed that the leaders of international social-democracy were concerned, not to fight the war danger, but to hinder the fight against war:

"The Hague congress has shown that the leaders of the Amsterdam and Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals have no desire to fight against the growing war danger but on the contrary are doing everything to make the fight impossible".
(Ibid.; p. 452).

The manifesto concluded by saying that the fight against war could only be successfully developed by building a united front of the workers against the opposition of the reformist leaders in solidarity with Soviet Russia:

"If you do not want to be dragged helpless on to the battlefield once more and be annihilated in your millions, you must come together into a common fighting front, in opposition to the will of your leaders, in factory and mine, in town and in country. . . . You must reject the crippling influence of the reformist leaders who are splitting your ranks in order to join the bourgeoisie. . . .

The entire international proletariat must rally round Soviet Russia, the only proletarian state which opposes to the robber policy of international imperialism the organised strength of one hundred and fifty million people".
(Ibid.; p. 452).

The December Central Council Meeting of the CPG

At its meeting on December 13/14th., 1922, the Central Council of the Communist Party of Germany endorsed the decisions of the 4th. World Congress of the CI and declared

" . . . its readiness, under certain conditions, to participate in a workers' government".
("Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung: Chronik", Volume 2; Berlin; 1966; p. 137).

APPENDIX:

The Influence of Rosa Luxemburg on the CPG

The dominant theoretical influence on the Communist Party of Germany in its early years was that of Polish-born Rosa Luxemburg, who moved to Germany in 1897:

"Rosa Luxemburg has left behind deep traces in the German and Polish Communist movement. One can say without exaggeration that for a considerable number of years, both parties grew up under the influence of her ideas and guidance".
(D. Manuilsky: "The Bolshevisation of the Parties", in: "Communist International", No. 10; 1925; p. 59).

"All the new leaders fully subscribed the guiding lines of policy laid down by Rosa Luxemburg in the foundation document of the CPG and subsequent policy statements in 'Rote Fahne'. On nearly all subjects her word was law. . . . And even after the personal element of tribute had gradually died away, her work was still the fount of all orthodoxy in Germany".
(J.P. Nettel: "Rosa Luxemburg", Volume 2; London; 1966; p. 787-8).

In her work "The Accumulation of Capital", published in 1913, Rosa Luxemburg put forward the view that a capitalist society could solve the problem of capital accumulation only by expanding into pre-capitalist economies, and that when these areas had been absorbed, capitalism would "break down":

"The day-to-day history of capital . . . becomes a string of political and social disasters and convulsions, and under these conditions, punctuated by persistent economic catastrophes or crisis, accumulation can go on no longer. . . .

Capitalism . . . strives to become universal, and, indeed, on account of this, it must break down".
(R. Luxemburg: "The Accumulation of Capital"; London; 1951; p. 467).

Lenin's marginal notes to "The Accumulation of Capital" are full of comments such as "False!" and "Nonsense!", and he described her main thesis as a "fundamental error".

(V.I. Lenin: Notes on R. Luxemburg's Book "The Accumulation of Capital", in: "Leniniski Sbornik", Volume 22; Moscow; 1933; p. 343-6).

In accordance with this thesis, Rosa Luxemburg saw no revolutionary potential in the peoples of the colonial-type countries and denied the possibility of genuine wars of national liberation under imperialism. In her pamphlet "The Crisis of German Social Democracy", written in 1915 under the pseudonym of "Junius" and published in 1916, she declares:

"In the present imperialistic milieu there can be no wars of national self-defence".
(R. Luxemburg: "The Crisis of German Social-Democracy", in: "Rosa Luxemburg Speaks"; New York; 1970; p. 305).

Commenting on her opposition to the Polish national-liberation movement against the domination of tsarist Russia, Lenin said:

"In her anxiety not to 'assist' the nationalistic bourgeoisie of Poland, Rosa Luxemburg by her denial of the right of secession in the programme of the Russian Marxists, is, in fact, assisting the Great Russian Black Hundreds (i.e., fascist-type organisations of the Russian landed aristocracy -- Ed.)" (V.I. Lenin: "On the Right of Nations to Self-Determination", in: "Selected Works", Volume 4; London; 1943; p. 266).

After the socialist revolution in Russia in November 1917, Rosa Luxemburg condemned the national policy of the Bolsheviks as "counter-revolutionary":

"The Bolsheviks are in part responsible for the fact that the military defeat was transformed into the collapse and a breakdown of Russia. Moreover, the Bolsheviks themselves have, to a great extent, sharpened the objective difficulties of this situation by a slogan which they placed in the foreground of their policies: the so-called right of self-determination of peoples, or -- something which was really implicit in this slogan -- the disintegration of Russia. . . .

One after another, these 'nations' used the freshly-granted freedom to ally themselves with German imperialism against the Russian Revolution as its mortal enemy and, under German protection, to carry the banner of counter-revolution into Russia itself. . . .

The Bolsheviks, by their hollow nationalistic phraseology concerning the 'right of self-determination to the point of separation' . . . did nothing but confuse the masses in all the border countries by their slogan and delivered them up to the demagogy of the bourgeois classes. By this nationalistic demand they brought on the disintegration of Russia itself, pressed into the enemy's hand the knife which it was to thrust into the heart of the Russian Revolution. . . .

The Bolsheviks provided the ideology which masked this campaign of counter-revolution; they strengthened the position of the bourgeoisie and weakened that of the proletariat".

(R. Luxemburg: "The Russian Revolution", in: Rosa Luxemburg Speaks"; New York; 1970; p. 378, 380, 382).

Similarly, Rosa Luxemburg failed to see, even in a country where the bourgeois-democratic revolution had not been carried through, the revolutionary potential of the peasantry, regarding it as, in the long run, a reactionary force -- a view which became a cornerstone of the trotskyite theory of "permanent revolution":

"Rosa Luxemburg . . . declared that Lenin . . . overlooked the . . . fact that it (i.e., the peasantry -- Ed.) would certainly, and probably very soon, go over again into the camp of reaction". (P. Fröhlich: "Rosa Luxemburg: Her Life and Work"; London; 1940; p. 113).

On the basis of this view, after the socialist revolution in Russia in November 1917 she condemned the Bolshevik policy of redistributing the land among the peasantry as "counter-revolutionary":

"The slogan launched by the Bolsheviks, immediate seizure and distribution of the land by the peasants, . . . piles up insurmountable obstacles to the socialist transformation of agrarian relations. . . .

Now, after the 'seizure', . . . there is an enormous, newly developed and powerful mass of owning peasants who will defend their newly won property with tooth and nail against every socialist attack. The question of the future socialisation of agrarian economy . . . has now become a question of opposition and struggle between the urban proletariat and the mass of the peasantry. . . .

Now that the Russian peasant has seized the land with his own fist, he does not even dream of defending Russia and the revolution to which he owes the land. . . .

The Leninist agrarian reform has created a new and powerful layer of popular enemies of socialism in the countryside, enemies whose resistance will be much more dangerous and stubborn than that of the noble large landowners".

(R. Luxemburg: "The Russian Revolution", in: "Rosa Luxemburg Speaks"; New York; 1970; p. 376, 377, 378).

Rosa Luxemburg saw the mass strike with economic aims as the decisive form of the revolutionary struggle of the working class:

"The mass strike is merely the form of the revolutionary struggle. . . . Strike action . . . is the living pulse-beat of the revolution and at the same time its most powerful driving wheel. . . . The mass strike . . . is . . . the method of motion of the proletarian mass, the phenomenal form of the proletarian struggle in the revolution. . . .

In this general picture the purely political demonstration strike plays quite a subordinate role. . . . The demonstration strikes which, in contradistinction to the fighting strikes, exhibit the greatest mass of party discipline, conscious direction and political thought, and therefore must appear as the highest and most mature form of the mass strike, play in reality the greatest part in the beginnings of the movement. . . .

The pedantic representation in which the pure political mass strike is logically derived from the trade-union general strike as the ripest and highest stage . . . is shown to be absolutely false. . . .

The movement on the whole does not proceed from the

economic to the political struggle. . . . Every great political mass action, after it has attained its political highest point, breaks up into a mass of economic strikes. And that applies not only to each of the great mass strikes, but also to the revolution as a whole".

(R. Luxemburg: "The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions", in: "Rosa Luxemburg Speaks"; New York; 1970; p. 182, 183, 184, 185).

But the economic strike, which to Rosa Luxemburg was the decisive form of the revolutionary struggle of the working class, is predominantly spontaneous in character:

"The mass strike cannot be called at will, even when the decision to do so may come from the highest committee of the strongest social-democratic party.

The element of spontaneity . . . plays a great part in all Russian mass strikes without exception. . . .

The element of spontaneity plays such a predominant part . . . because revolutions do not allow anyone to play the schoolmaster with them".

(R. Luxemburg: *ibid.*; p. 187, 188).

On the basis of the view of the predominantly spontaneous character of "the decisive form of the revolutionary struggle" of the working class, Rosa Luxemburg opposed as "dangerous" and "Blanquist" Lenin's concept of the necessity for a disciplined vanguard party based on firm democratic centralism. In her article "Organisational Questions of Social Democracy", first published in 1904 as a review of Lenin's "What is to be Done?", she writes:

"Lenin's centralism . . . is a mechanical transposition of the organisational principles of Blanquism into the mass movement of the socialist working class. . . .

His conception of socialist organisation is quite mechanistic. . . .

The tendency is for the directing organs of the socialist party to play a conservative role. . . .

Granting, as Lenin wants, such absolute powers of a negative character to the top organ of the party, we strengthen, to a dangerous extent, the conservatism inherent in such an organ. . . .

The ultra-centralism asked by Lenin is full of the sterile spirit of the overseer. It is not a positive and creative spirit. Lenin's concern is not so much to make the activity of the party more fruitful as to control the party -- to narrow the movement rather than to develop it, to bind rather than to unify it.

In the present situation, such an experiment would be doubly dangerous to Russian social democracy. . . .

We can conceive of no greater danger to the Russian party than Lenin's plan of organisation. Nothing will more surely enslave a young labour movement to an intellectual elite hungry for power than this bureaucratic straitjacket, which will immobilise the

movement and turn it into an automaton manipulated by a Central Committee".

(R. Luxemburg: "Organisational Questions of Social Democracy", in: Rosa Luxemburg Speaks"; New York; 1970; p. 118, 119, 121, 122, 126-7).

Rosa Luxemburg shared with Leon Trotsky anti-Leninist views not only on the question of the role of the peasantry and on the question of the organisation of the party of the working class, but also on the question of the possibility of building socialism in a single country:

"Of course, even with the greatest heroism the proletariat of one single country cannot loosen this noose".

(R. Luxemburg: "The Old Mole", in: "Selected Political Writings"; London; 1972; p. 227).

"The awkward position that the Bolsheviks are in today, however, is, together with most of their mistakes, a consequence of the basic insolubility of the problem posed to them by the international, above all the German, proletariat. To carry out the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist revolution in a single country surrounded by reactionary imperialist rule and in the fury of the bloodiest world war in human history -- that is squaring the circle. Any socialist party would have to fail in this task and perish".

(R. Luxemburg: "The Russian Tragedy", in: *ibid.*; p. 241-2).

And, like Trotsky, she strived during the years before the First World War to bring about a reunification of the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks, i.e., to obliterate the dividing line between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism:

"The other plan was proposed by Rosa Luxemburg . . .; according to that plan, a 'unity conference' (Einingungskonferenz) was proposed "in order to restore a united party'

This last plan . . . was only an attempt on the part of Rosa Luxemburg to smuggle in the 'restoration' of the sadly notorious 'Tyszko circle' ('Tyszko' was the pseudonym of Leo Jogiches -- Ed.)"

(V.I. Lenin: "A Good Resolution and a Bad Speech", in: "Selected Works", Volume 4; London; 1943; p. 209).

Holding these views, Rosa Luxemburg could not but be hostile to the Soviet regime established in Russia under the leadership of the Bolsheviks in November 1917:

"Freedom of the press, the rights of association and assembly . . . have been outlawed for all opponents of the Soviet regime Without a free and untrammelled press, without the unlimited right of association and assemblage, the rule of the broad mass of the people is entirely unthinkable. . . .

Freedom only for the supporters of the government . . . is no freedom at all. . . . Lenin . . . is completely mistaken in the means

he employs. Decree, dictatorial force of the factory overseer, draconic penalties, rule by terror -- all these things are but palliatives. . . . It is rule by terror which demoralises. . . .

With the repression of political life in the land as a whole, life in the Soviets must also become more and more crippled. Without general elections, without unrestricted freedom of press and assembly, without a free struggle of opinion, life dies out in every public institution, becomes a mere semblance of life, in which the bureaucracy remains as the active element. Public life gradually falls asleep, a few dozen party leaders of inexhaustible energy and boundless experience direct and rule. . . . At bottom, then, a clique affair -- a dictatorship to be sure; not the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, but only the dictatorship of a handful of politicians. . . . Such conditions must inevitably cause a brutalisation of public life."

(R. Luxemburg: "The Russian Revolution", in: "Rosa Luxemburg Speaks"; New York; 1970; p. 389, 391).

Following Stalin's statement that many of the serious political mistakes committed by the Communist Party of Germany were the result of Social-Democratic survivals which must be eliminated (September 1924), the "Theses on the Bolshevisation of the Parties of the Comintern", adopted by the Fifth Plenum of the ECCI in March/April 1925, drew special attention to the harmfulness of Luxemburgism:

"The genuine assimilation of Leninism and its practical application in the construction of Communist Parties throughout the world is impossible without taking into consideration the errors of very prominent Marxists who strove to apply Marxism to the conditions of a new epoch, without being wholly successful in so doing.

Among these errors must be included those of . . . Rosa Luxemburg. The nearer these political leaders are to Leninism, the more dangerous are those of their views which, being erroneous, do not coincide with Leninism".

(Theses on the Bolshevisation of the Parties of the Comintern, 5th. Plenum ECCI, in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 5, No. 47, June 4th., 1925; p. 616).

The theses described the most important errors of Luxemburgism as follows:

"a). the non-Bolshevik method of presenting the question of 'spontaneity' 'consciousness', 'organisation' and the 'mass' . . . which frequently hampered the revolutionary development of the class struggle, prevented proper understanding of the role of the Party in the revolution;

b) the under-estimation of the technical side of preparing for revolt hampered, and in some cases even now hamper, the proper presentation of the question of 'organising revolution';

c) the error in the question of the attitude towards the peasantry;

d) equally serious were the errors committed by Rosa Luxemburg in the national question. The repudiation of the slogan of self-determination (to support the formation of independent states) on the ground that under imperialism it is 'impossible' to solve the national question, led in fact to a sort of nihilism on the national question which extremely hampered Communist work in a number of countries;

e) the propagation of the party-political character of trade unions . . . was a great mistake which evidenced the failure to understand the role of the trade unions as organs embracing all the workers. This mistake seriously hampered, and still hampers, the proper approach of the vanguard to the working class as a whole;

f) while paying just tribute to the greatness of Rosa Luxemburg, one of the founders of the Communist International, the Comintern believes that it will be acting in the spirit of Rosa Luxemburg herself if it will now help the Parties of the Comintern to draw the lessons from the errors made by this great revolutionary.

Without overcoming the errors of Luxemburgism, genuine Bolshevism is impossible".
(Ibid.; p. 616).

In November 1931, Stalin's letter to the journal "Proletarian Revolution" was published, under the title of "Some Questions concerning the History of Bolshevism". This reiterated in stronger terms the criticism made of the theory and practice of Luxemburgism:

"Organisational and ideological weakness was a characteristic feature of the Left Social-Democrats not only in the period prior to the war. As is well known, the Lefts retained this negative feature in the post-war period as well. Everyone knows the appraisal of the German Left Social-Democrats given by Lenin in his famous article 'On Junius's (i.e., Rosa Luxemburg's -- Ed.) Pamphlet', written in October 1916, . . . in which Lenin, criticising a number of very serious political mistakes committed by the Left Social-Democrats in Germany, speaks of 'the weakness of ALL German Lefts, who are entangled on all sides in the vile net of Kautskyan hypocrisy, pedantry, 'friendship' for the opportunists; in which he says that 'Junius has not yet freed herself completely from the 'environment' of the German, even Left Social-Democrats, who are afraid of a split, are afraid to express revolutionary slogans to the full' . . .

The Lefts in Germany . . . time and again wavered between Bolshevism and Menshevism. . . .

In 1903 . . . the Left Social-Democrats in Germany, Parvus and Rosa Luxemburg, . . . came out against the Bolsheviks. They accused the Bolsheviks of ultra-centralist and Blanquist tendencies. Subsequently, these vulgar and philistine epithets were caught up by the Mensheviks and spread far and wide.

In 1905 . . . Parvus and Rosa Luxemburg . . . invented the utopian and semi-Menshevik scheme of permanent revolution (a distorted representation of the Marxian scheme of revolution) which was permeated through and through with the Menshevik repudiation of the policy of alliance between the working class and the peasantry, and opposed this scheme to the Bolshevik scheme of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. Subsequently, this semi-Menshevik scheme of permanent revolution was caught up by Trotsky . . . and transformed into a weapon of struggle against Leninism.

The Left Social-Democrats in the West . . . developed the semi-Menshevik theory of imperialism, rejected the principle of self-determination of nations in its Marxian sense (including secession and formation of independent states), rejected the theses that the liberation movement in the colonies and oppressed countries was of great revolutionary importance, rejected the theses that a united front between the proletarian revolution and the movement for national emancipation was possible, and opposed this semi-Menshevik hodge-podge, which was nothing but an underestimation of the national and colonial question, to the Marxian scheme of the Bolsheviks. It is well known that this semi-Menshevik hodge-podge was subsequently caught up by Trotsky who used it as a weapon in the struggle against Leninism.

Such were the universally known mistakes committed by the Left Social-Democrats in Germany.

I need not speak . . . of the mistakes they committed in appraising the policy of the Bolsheviks in the period of the October Revolution. . . .

Of course, . . . they also have great and . . . important revolutionary deeds to their credit. . . .

But this does not and cannot remove the fact that the Left Social-Democrats in Germany did commit a number of very serious political and theoretical mistakes; that they had not yet rid themselves of their Menshevik burden".

(J.V. Stalin: "Some Questions concerning the History or Bolshevism", in: "Leninism"; London; 1924; p. 390, 391-2, 393-4).

The letter was attacked immediately by the open revisionists, such as Leon Trotsky:

"There is included in it a vile and barefaced calumny about Rosa Luxemburg. This great revolutionist is enrolled by Stalin into the camp of centrism! . . .

Stalin should proceed with caution before expending his vicious mediocrity when the matter touches figures of such stature as Rosa Luxemburg".

(L. Trotsky: "Hands off Rosa Luxemburg", in: R. Luxemburg: "Rosa Luxemburg Speaks"; New York; 1970; p. 441, 446).

When the concealed revisionists threw off their mask in 1956, they too strongly denounced Stalin's Letter:

"Through it, sectarian views, especially on Social-Democracy and its left wing, were fostered in the 'CPG'".
("Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung: Chronik", Volume 2; Berlin; 1966; p. 278).

Trotsky, in the article mentioned above, was also indignant that in his letter Stalin had "credited" Rosa Luxemburg and Parvus (i.e., Alexander Helphand) with having invented the theory of "permanent revolution", and pointed out that in "On the Problems of Leninism", published in 1926, Stalin had "credited" Parvus and Trotsky with having first put the theory forward. Stalin clarified his position in January 1932:

"It was not Trotsky but Rosa Luxemburg and Parvus who invented the theory of 'permanent' revolution. It was not Rosa Luxemburg but Parvus and Trotsky who in 1905 advanced the theory of 'permanent' revolution and actively fought for it against Lenin.

Subsequently Rosa Luxemburg, too, began to fight actively against the Leninist plan of revolution. But that was after 1905".

(J.V. Stalin: Reply to Olekhnovich and Aristov, in: "Works", Volume 13; Moscow; 1955; p. 133, 134).

On January 8th., 1932, the organ of the Communist Party of Germany "Rote Fahne" carried an article endorsing Stalin's letter and declaring that the influence of Luxemburgism had been "the greatest obstacle" to the development of a Marxist-Leninist Party in Germany:

"The Communist Party of Germany welcomes Comrade Stalin's letter as a document which calls upon the German Communists to wage a fierce struggle against all social-democratic influences within the revolutionary movement, against the remnants of Centrism and Luxemburgism within the Party. . . .

The failure on the part of the German Left Radicals in regard to the question of a complete break with opportunism and Centrism had an adverse effect upon the whole course of the Spartacus League during the war. Its after-effects were to be seen in the vacillations and the actions of the various liquidatory and oppositionist tendencies in the CP of Germany and rendered difficult a clear fulfilment of the role of the Party. Thus this failure of the German Lefts became the greatest obstacle to the development and victory of the revolutionary movement of the German proletariat".

("Comrade Stalin's Letter and the CP of Germany", in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 12, No. 4; January 28th., 1932; p. 73).

An article written by Fritz Heckert and published later in January 1932 to commemorate the anniversary of Rosa Luxemburg's murder, followed the same lines:

"Under the ideological leadership of Rosa Luxemburg there arose the fundamentally false idea regarding the nature of imperialism, which led to the theory of the mechanical collapse of capitalism. From this again there followed the theory of the spontaneity of the masses, who would wrest themselves from the errors and crimes of the social-democratic leaders in order to rally round the revolutionary leadership. This also was the reason why no steps were taken to found an independent revolutionary party. It was not recognised that the party can be only the advance-guard of the proletariat, its most progressive, energetic and clearest part. These false ideas are connected with other errors of equally great importance, such as the failure to recognise the role of revolutionary violence and the errors regarding the national and the peasant questions.

It is thanks to the after-effects of the social-democratic trends in the Communist Party of Germany that such big mistakes were committed in 1921 in the March action and in 1923 in the October movement, and that the Party was long prevented from developing into a real Bolshevik Party owing to the actions of a large number of renegades in its ranks. The eradication of all false ideas is indispensably necessary for every Bolshevik Party. Only recently, Comrade Stalin again urgently called attention to this. . . .

It would be a profanation of the two great Dead if we sought to vie with the renegades in conserving their errors".

(F. Heckert: "January 15, 1919", in: "International Press Correspondence", Volume 12, No. 2; January 14th., 1932; p. 29).