DİJİTAL KÜTÜPHANE KANALI

Keyifli Okumalar Dileriz

Binlerce kategoride milyonlarca PDF e-kitap, ders kitapları, dergiler ve romanlara platformumuz üzerinden ücretsiz ulaşabilirsiniz.

RESMİ WEB SİTEMİZ

https://rantey.org

Yedek ve Duyuru Kanallarımız
Sitemize erişim engeli gelmesi veya adres değişikliği durumunda aşağıdaki kanallardan güncel giriş adresine erişebilirsiniz:

• Telegram: https://t.me/birkitapbir

• WhatsApp Kanalımız : https://whatsapp.com/channel/0029VbDHv8uE50Us4IvMoc0Y

A HISTORY OF SOVIET RUSSIA 13

E. H. CARR

FOUNDATIONS OF A PLANNED ECONOMY

1926-1929

VOLUME THREE-II

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://fantey.org

FOUNDATIONS OF A PLANNED ECONOMY
1926–1929

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

A HISTORY OF SOVIET RUSSIA

The following volumes have been published:

THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION – *1917–1923*

Volume One (1950)

Volume Two (1951)

Volume Three (1953)

THE INTERREGNUM – *1923–1924*

(1954)

SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY – *1924–1926*

Volume One (1958)

Volume Two (1959)

Volume Three (1964) (In 2 parts)

FOUNDATIONS OF A PLANNED ECONOMY – *1926–1929*

Volume One (1969) (In 2 parts)

Volume Two (1971)

Volume Three (1976) (2 parts published; third in preparation)

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

A HISTORY OF SOVIET RUSSIA

FOUNDATIONS OF A PLANNED ECONOMY 1926–1929

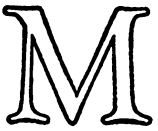
★

VOLUME THREE – II

BY

EDWARD HALLETT CARR

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE



Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

© E. H. Carr 1976

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1976 978-0-333-19270-2

All rights reserved. No part of this publication
may be reproduced or transmitted, in any
form or by any means, without permission

First published 1976 by
THE MACMILLAN PRESS LTD
London and Basingstoke
Associated companies in New York
Dublin Melbourne Johannesburg and Madras

ISBN 978-1-349-02838-2 ISBN 978-1-349-02836-8 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-1-349-02836-8

RICHARD CLAY (THE CHAUCER PRESS), LTD.,
Bungay, Suffolk

This book is sold subject
to the standard conditions
of the Net Book Agreement

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

C: *Communist Parties in the Capitalist World*

*

CHAPTER 75

THE BRITISH PARTY (CPGB)

THE British general strike proclaimed on May 3, 1926, came as a shock to the world, and not least to the Soviet leaders in Moscow. Trouble had been widely foreseen when the government subsidy to maintain miners' wages ran out on May 1. But Zinoviev's prediction at the sixth IKKI in February 1926 of "mighty struggles" ahead, and the message to the National Minority Movement (NMM) in the following month from the session of the central council of Profintern (which otherwise paid singularly little attention to British affairs), referring to "the class struggle which is developing in England",[1] did not go beyond the conventional bounds of Comintern rhetoric. Several of the leaders of the CPGB were in prison;[2] and party pronouncements, though often violent in tone, showed hardly greater awareness than those of the TUC that a major confrontation was at hand. Palme Dutt in the issue of *Labour Monthly* for April 1926, enthusiastically reviewing Trotsky's *Where is Britain Going?* as "a careful and exact estimate of the objective situation in England", reached the conclusion that "the English working class is not ready for a revolutionary mass party".[3] It was only in the last few days of April that the issue acquired larger dimensions, and a new note of urgency and alarm was sounded both in Moscow and in London. On April 23, 1926, the presidium of IKKI in a statement on the prospective miners' strike urged the necessity of a united front of miners of different countries and of unity of action between the Amsterdam International and Profintern; "in the interests of solidarity in the international action of the whole world proletariat" disagreements between revolutionary and reformist organizations

[1] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 513, 597.

[2] See *ibid.* Vol. 3, p. 345.

[3] *Labour Monthly*, No. 4, April 1926, pp. 223–241; Trotsky's pamphlet was published in an English translation in February 1926 (see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 346, note 2).

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

should be kept in the background.[4] A manifesto of IKKI declared on April 25, 1926:

> A strike by the miners would imply a general strike, and a general strike cannot remain an industrial struggle. It is bound to develop into a political struggle; the proletariat will be fighting the capitalists, that is to say, class will be fighting class.[5]

The CPGB avoided the term "general strike", and did not specifically raise the class issue. But in a statement of April 28, 1926, it urged a special TUC conference "to bring the whole force of organized workers into action to defend the miners"; and in a manifesto published in the *Sunday Worker* on May 2, 1926, it appealed to the General Council of the TUC to summon an international conference to coordinate action in defence of the miners.[6]

Whatever had been said in advance, the proclamation of a general strike on the evening of May 3 by the General Council of the TUC was disconcerting, as well as exciting, news in Moscow. Denunciation of the principal British trade union leaders as traitors to the workers' cause had long been common practice in Comintern. Lozovsky, in an article in the April issue of the Profintern journal, had confidently predicted that the trade union leaders would "sell out the workers".[7] But in the excitement of the moment such apprehensions were swept aside. This was a time when the tradition of the united front in its broadest application still prevailed in Moscow, and attacks on it, like that of Bordiga at the sixth IKKI in February 1926,[8] were branded as "ultra-Left". On May 3, 1926, when the calling of the general strike was imminent, a manifesto of Comintern hailed the event as a struggle of "the proletariat against the capitalists, therefore: *Class against Class*". The challenge to the government of the bourgeoisie raised "*the question of power*". Reference was made to "social-traitors" and "the Right wing of the Labour Party and of the General Council". But the major theme was "the solidarity

[4] Quoted from archives in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional: Kratkii Istoricheskii Ocherk* (1969), p. 254.

[5] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 64, April 27, 1926, pp. 929–930.

[6] *Workers' Weekly*, April 30, 1926; R. P. Arnot, *The General Strike* (1926), pp. 163–164.

[7] *Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoyuzov*, No. 4, 1926, pp. 467–471.

[8] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 500–501.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

of the workers of all countries against the capitalists".[9] When the general strike had already begun, IKKI in a further appeal struck more specifically the note of unity and common action:

> The bourgeoisie has established a united front against the working class. To this we must oppose the united front of the working class.... All sections of the Communist International should propose to the social-democrats the immediate establishment of joint committees of action to support the struggle of the British workers.[10]

British communists were clear that this meant acceptance of the lead of the General Council. On the eve of the strike the NMM issued a warning that councils of action were "in no circumstances to take over the work of the trade unions", and were to see to it that decisions of the General Council were carried out;[11] and the CPGB on May 5, 1926, put out a statement containing such typical united front slogans as nationalization of mines, workers' control and a Labour government.[12]

Symptoms of uneasiness, however, soon appeared in Moscow. Nobody wanted to challenge the principle of the united front. But the reluctance of anyone in Great Britain to raise the cardinal issues of the class struggle and the seizure of power was disquieting. *Pravda* on May 6, 1926, appeared with a banner headline "Class Struggle in England". Lozovsky in a leading article pointed out that a sort of "dual power" already existed in Britain; the General Council confronted the bourgeoisie, but failed to pose the question of power. On the same day Lozovsky expressed his doubts to the Moscow provincial trade union council:

> A strike of many millions, a government in embryo, class stands against class, yet at present no political slogans.

But he concluded that, "if 1905 was a dress rehearsal for 1917", the events of 1905 were eclipsed by the magnitude of present events in Great Britain.[13] On the following day a letter from IKKI urged the CPGB to make it clear that the general strike was a

[9] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 67, May 4, 1926, pp. 1009–1012.
[10] *Pravda*, May 5, 1926; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 71, May 7, 1926, pp. 1111–1112.
[11] G. Hardy, *Those Stormy Years* (1956), pp. 184–185.
[12] R. P. Arnot, *The General Strike* (1926), pp. 180–181.
[13] A. Lozovsky, *Klass protiv Klassa* (1926), pp. 25, 30.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

struggle for power, in which one side was led by the General Council and the other by the government, and proclaimed "Class against Class" as "the formula in which the struggle is comprised".[14] More doubts were felt than were publicly expressed. The cynical and intelligent Radek told a British visitor that the strike now in progress was "not a revolutionary movement, ... simply a wage dispute".[15] Lozovsky, in the postscript dated May 8, 1926, to an article in the Profintern journal, still professed optimism, praising the British proletariat, which "stands like a well-cemented wall round the General Council, the headquarters of a proletarian army of many millions".[16] But disillusionment became general with the totally unforeseen rejection by the General Council of the TUC of the financial aid offered to the strikers by the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions. On May 5, 1926, the council appealed to the unions for contributions, and remitted to the General Council in London 250,000 rubles from its own funds. The response to its appeal was so rapid and so automatic that on May 7, 1926, a further 2 million rubles were sent to London.[17] The General Council, alarmed by the odium which it might incur from the acceptance of Soviet subsidies, declined to receive the money; and the refusal was all the more galling in that the council was said to have applied simultaneously for a loan from Amsterdam. On May 10, 1926, the trade union central council in Moscow bitterly took note of the return of the money, and decided to continue the collections, the proceeds to be credited to a British Miners' Fund at the disposal either of the British General Council or of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain.[18]

Though *Pravda* continued to devote the lion's share of its space to the news from Britain, the tone of its comment grew notice-

[14] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 71, May 10, 1926, pp. 1123–1124.

[15] R. Boothby, *I Fight to Live* (1947), pp. 81–82.

[16] *Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoyuzov*, No. 5, 1926, p. 611; elsewhere he called it "one of the most important events since the October revolution" (*ibid.* No. 6, 1926, p. 731).

[17] *Red Money* (1927), pp. 16–18; this was a translation, published by the Labour Research Department, of a pamphlet issued by the trade union central council, *Angliiskaya Stachka i Rabochie SSSR*. A section of MRP was "attached to the trade union central council" and claimed to have participated jointly with the trade unions in collecting these sums (see pp. 269–270 above). The official rates of exchange at this time were approximately 10 rubles or 20 marks = £1.

[18] *Red Money* (1926), pp. 25–26.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

ably less assured. An unsigned leading article on May 11, 1926, spoke of the lack of understanding among the workers of the political character of the strike; the CPGB had done its best, but the absence of a strong mass communist party made itself felt. The strike was called off on the following day, without any settlement having been reached with the miners.

> The trade union leaders [commented Osinsky], frightened of the possibility of revolution, capitulated to the British Government, and the strike was ended in a way which nobody had thought possible.[19]

The shock of the collapse caused a reversion to earlier patterns. *Pravda* on May 13, 1926, came out with a front-page article by Radek on "the tragedy of the masses and the farce of the leaders". Lozovsky denounced the MacDonalds and other "honest brokers", and claimed that, though the strike had ended, "a fierce and ruthless class war is only now beginning".[20] The CPGB on the same day issued a manifesto denouncing the capitulation, and appealing to the workers to "stand by the miners":

> The General Council's decision to call off the strike is the greatest crime that has ever been committed, not only against the miners, but against the working class of Great Britain and the whole world.... The Right wing in the General Council bears direct responsibility for throwing away the workers' weapons, ... and most of the so-called Left wing have been no better than the Right.[21]

Lozovsky, most indefatigable of Soviet commentators, returned to the theme in a three-part article in *Pravda*. The strike had opposed two camps to each other: "class against class". The General Council had been "a brilliant organizer of defeat". In the question of relations with the Soviet trade unions, it had for some years

[19] *Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 5–6, June 1926, p. 4.

[20] The same issue of *Pravda* carried a discursive article by Zinoviev, parts of which had evidently been written before the end of the strike: he too denounced the MacDonalds and Thomases as opponents of class war, more surprisingly attacked Cook, the miners' leader, and argued that the aim of the strikers should be to overthrow the bourgeois government and seize power.

[21] R. P. Arnot, *The General Strike* (1926), pp. 214, 233–234; a further statement by the executive committee of the CPGB of May 31, 1926, put the blame on the leaders of the General Council (*Workers' Weekly*, June 4, 1926).

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

constituted an opposition within IFTU. But, where British affairs were concerned, the Left wing had melted away and capitulated to the Right. The CPGB had shown itself "a real Bolshevik party", but had at first failed to attack the Right wing, giving it the benefit of the doubt. (The same charge might have been brought against Lozovsky himself.) Lozovsky ended by posing the question: "Will the defeat of the British proletariat be the starting-point of a stabilization of British capitalism, or will the general strike prove to be a stage on the path to its downfall and destabilization?" He did not answer the question directly, but pointed to the downward trend of the Russian revolution after 1905: "there are defeats which herald a forthcoming victory".[22]

Such hope as still remained, and such assistance as could still be rendered, was now concentrated on the continuance of the miners' strike. On the outbreak of the general strike, an embargo was placed by the Soviet trade unions on the loading of cargoes for Great Britain, and ships were prevented from leaving Black Sea ports for British destinations.[23] After the general strike was called off, the embargo was maintained on shipments of coal and fuel oil.[24] Meanwhile collections for the British strikers continued; from May 10, 1926, to the beginning of June the Soviet press carried almost daily reports of resolutions of local trade unions to devote a proportion of the day's wages to this purpose.[25] On May 15, 1926, the central council transferred to the Soviet miners' union the sums so far collected, and these funds were offered to the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, which eagerly accepted them.[26] By July 8, 1926, when representatives of Soviet and British miners met in Berlin, a total of 3,970,000 rubles had been

[22] *Pravda*, May 16, 18, 19, 1926. Lozovsky harped again on the "class against class" theme in an article dated May 17, 1926, in *Planovoe Khozyaistvo*, No. 5, 1926, pp. 139–147: "for nine days we saw two opposing camps: class stood against class"; a further article dated May 18, 1926, in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 5–6 (54–55), 1926, pp. 216–227, contained nothing new. These and other articles were collected in a substantial volume, A. Lozovsky, *Angliiskii Proletariat na Rasput'i* (1926).

[23] This was the occasion of the first official British protest to the Soviet Government against its support of the general strike (see p. 18 above).

[24] *Red Money* (1926), pp. 23–25.

[25] *Ibid.* pp. 35–85.

[26] *Ibid.* pp. 26–27. According to Lozovsky (*Pravda*, June 8, 1926), the British Government on May 9, 1926 had vetoed the first payment of £100,000 sent from Moscow to the General Council; but these later payments appear to have been duly received by the Miners' Federation.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

sent to the British miners from the Soviet Union.[27] Support from other sources was less conspicuous. On May 25, 1926, IKKI issued an appeal for international solidarity with the British miners; and a similar appeal came on June 8, 1926, from the trade union central council.[28] It was later a matter of reproach that appeals for a boycott on shipments of coal and fuel oil to Great Britain fell on deaf ears.[29] But collections for the British miners were made in several countries, not apparently by the trade unions, but by the national sections of MRP, and yielded modest sums. Throughout the campaign a total of 12·5 million rubles (25 million marks) was said to have been collected, of which, however, the 10·5 million rubles contributed by the Soviet trade unions constituted the lion's share.[30] Stalin in his speech of June 8, 1926, claimed that "all the trade unions of Europe and America donated not more than one-eighth of the amount of financial aid which the trade unions of the Soviet Union found it possible to afford their British brothers".[31]

When the general strike began, Trotsky was convalescing from a minor operation in Berlin.[32] His first reaction came in a preface to the second German edition of *Where is Britain Going?*, written on May 6, 1926. His mood may be described as one of short-term pessimism and long-term optimism. Noting that a general strike as a form of class warfare is only one step short of armed insurrection, he branded as "ridiculous" the General Council's pretence that it was not a *political* struggle. This attitude showed that the efforts of many Labour Party and trade union leaders would be directed "not towards paralysing the bourgeois state

[27] *Red Money* (1926), p. 27; an article in *Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoyuzov*, No. 7, 1926, pp. 19–31, detailed the contributions of various unions to the fund. For the meeting of July 8, 1926, see p. 329 below.

[28] *Pravda*, May 27, 1926; *Red Money* (1926), p. 27.

[29] See p. 330 below.

[30] W. Münzenberg, *Solidarität* (1931), p. 302; for this campaign by MRP see p. 270 above. At the fourth congress of Profintern two years later, a Chinese woman delegate who had begun to work in a Shanghai textile factory at the age of nine recalled a collection in the factory for the British miners (*Protokoll über den Vierten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschafts-internationale* (n.d.), pp. 151–152).

[31] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, viii, 163; for this speech see pp. 324–325 below.

[32] See *Socialism in One Country 1924–1926*, Vol. 2, p. 176.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

by means of the strike, but towards paralysing the general strike with the aid of the bourgeois state". On the other hand, the strike, whatever its issue, would "be a tremendous lesson and have vast consequences". The substitution of a proletarian for a bourgeois state had been placed on the agenda; the strike "will at least greatly hasten its approach".[33] The issue of the Anglo-Russian committee,[34] not yet raised either on the Soviet or the British side, was first broached by Trotsky in an unpublished memorandum of May 18, 1926, also written in Berlin. He denied that anyone had ever disputed "the justification for the creation of the Anglo-Russian committee as an element in united front policy". But it was wrong to mix diplomatic with ideological activities, and the Soviet delegates had stultified themselves when they failed to criticize the General Council.[35]

The period immediately following Trotsky's return to Moscow towards the end of May 1926 was occupied by negotiations with Zinoviev and Kamenev for the formation of the united opposition;[36] and some delay occurred in securing Zinoviev's agreement to Trotsky's view that the Anglo-Russian committee should be dissolved.[37] Trotsky's first publication on his return to Moscow

[33] A Russian translation of the preface appeared in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 5–6 (54–55), 1926, pp. 57–75; it also appeared in the second edition of the English translation of the pamphlet. In April 1926 Trotsky had written a memorandum to the Politburo (no text of this has been found), drawing attention to the weakness of the CPGB and to the danger that, at a moment of crisis and mass activity, it might adopt too passive an attitude. This was made the subject of a charge in party circles that he had attacked the CPGB as reactionary; after his return to Moscow Trotsky attempted in a note of June 3, 1926, to refute this charge (see p. 323, note 39 below).

[34] For its beginnings see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 576–579; originally called a joint council, it was later habitually referred to as the "Anglo-Russian committee".

[35] Trotsky archives, T 2985.

[36] See Vol. 2, pp. 3–4.

[37] Zinoviev in an article in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 5–6 (54–55), 1926, pp. 27–38 (neither the date of writing nor the precise date of publication can be determined, though the issue must have appeared some time in June 1926), entitled "The August 4 of the General Council", drew a parallel between the two "betrayals" of August 4, 1914, and May 12, 1926, which should logically have led to a parallel between Lenin's break with social-democracy in 1914 and a now necessary break with the Anglo-Russian committee; but the article in fact ended with a plea to maintain the committee. Trotsky afterwards hinted that it was he who had persuaded a reluctant Zinoviev to come out against the committee (*Byulleten' Oppozitsii* (Paris), No. 1–2, July–September 1929, p. 21).

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

was an article in *Pravda* consisting of jottings from his diary or notebooks in the weeks leading up to the general strike. Without mentioning the CPGB or the NMM, they expressed the fear that a revolutionary situation might arise in Great Britain before a revolutionary party existed to exploit it. Such a party could be formed only through a systematic unmasking of pseudo-Left leaders of all groups, including the General Council of the TUC. Trotsky recorded a vague, but sweeping, conclusion in a letter of March 5, 1926, to an unnamed correspondent:

> The whole present "superstructure" of the British working class — in all its shades and groupings without exception — is an apparatus for putting the brake on revolution. This predicates for a long period the pressure of a spontaneous or semi-spontaneous movement on the framework of the old organizations and the formation, on the basis of this pressure, of new revolutionary organizations.[38]

These miscellaneous jottings made no mention of the Anglo-Russian committee. But Trotsky's criticism of it is unlikely to have been concealed from the party leaders. In the Politburo on June 3, 1926, Trotsky made a declaration denying the "new legend" that he regarded the CPGB as "a reactionary organization, an obstacle in the path of the working class"; he had merely drawn attention to certain dangers which, in fact, proved real. It may have been on this occasion that the Politburo took the ambiguous decision to step up the campaign against the British trade union leaders, including the so-called "Left", but to keep the Anglo-Russian committee in existence.[39]

The strike was now a month old, and the moment seemed to have arrived in Moscow for a considered verdict. On June 7, 1926, the central council of the Soviet trade unions addressed a vituperative manifesto "to the International Proletariat", recounting in indignant terms the rejection by the General Council of the Soviet offer of financial aid to the strikers (Hicks was alleged to have referred to "that damned Russian money"). It castigated the "treacherous tactics" of the Right Labour Party and trade union leaders (MacDonald, Thomas, etc.), as well as the capitulation of

[38] *Pravda,* May 25, 26, 1926.

[39] Trotsky's declaration is in Trotsky archives, T 2987; no other record of the session seems to be available.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

the Left (Purcell, Hicks, etc.), which had "ingloriously trailed behind the ruling servants of capital", and surrendered to the class enemy.[40] On the following day, a meeting of IKKI, having received a report from Bukharin on the international situation, unanimously adopted a resolution on the general strike. This dwelt on "the growing acuteness of class contradictions" in Great Britain, and on the obstacle created by "the hierarchy of trade union and Labour Party officials", composed partly of "conscious allies of the bourgeoisie", and partly of timid and cowardly "Leftists" who surrendered at critical moments. The turning-point had been the refusal to accept financial aid from the Soviet trade unions, which isolated the British from the international proletariat. Nevertheless, it would be a "politically inexpedient and infantile" gesture to withdraw from the Anglo-Russian committee. The General Council had agreed to it only "under mass pressure"; if it now chose to break up the committee, this would "greatly accelerate the Leftward movement of the British working masses". Meanwhile Comintern and its sections should give "vigorous and unreserved support" to the miners' struggle: "the miners' cause is our cause".[41] It was also on the same day, June 8, 1926, that Stalin and Bukharin delivered major speeches, the former in Tiflis, the latter to a party meeting in Moscow, which must have been to some extent concerted between them, the first and larger part of each being devoted to the British general strike, the remainder to the Pilsudski *coup*.[42]

Stalin's speech, if fully reported, was flat and restrained in tone. He again divided leaders of the General Council into "direct betrayers of the miners and of the British working class in general (Thomas, Henderson, MacDonald and Co.)", and "characterless

[40] It appeared on the front page of *Pravda*, June 8, 1926.

[41] *Pravda*, June 9, 1926; it was reported in *The Times*, June 9, 1924. According to an unpublished memorandum by Trotsky of September 25, 1927 (Trotsky archives, T 3093), the CPGB "long hesitated" to publish it; it appeared, undated, in *Communist Review*, No. 3, July 1926, pp. 113–136, and in *Workers' Weekly*, July 16, 1926. It included an instruction to the CPGB to establish a daily newspaper; this was not achieved till January 1, 1930.

[42] Stalin's speech was published in the Tiflis party newspaper *Zarya Vostoka* on June 10, 1926, and appeared in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 86, June 22, 1926, pp. 1377–1381, but not in *Pravda*; the version in Stalin, *Sochineniya*, viii, 155–172, omits some reminiscences of his revolutionary apprenticeship in the Caucasus. Bukharin's speech appeared in *Pravda*, June 26, 1926. For the Polish sections of the speeches see p. 566 below.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

fellow-travellers with these traitors, who fear the struggle, and still more the victory, of the working class (Purcell, Hicks, etc.)"; these, in Engels's phrase, were the "bourgeoisiefied leaders of the working class". The CPGB was "one of the best sections of Comintern", and its attitude throughout the strike had been "completely correct". But its authority among British workers was still weak, and this "could not fail to play a fatal rôle in the course of the general strike". The General Council had refused to recognize "the indissoluble link of the economic struggle with the political struggle"; without raising the question of power "neither the crisis in the mining industry nor the crisis in British industry as a whole" could be resolved. Stalin ended with more cautious remarks on the "stabilization of capitalism". The general strike had confirmed the verdict of IKKI on its temporary and unstable character. Nevertheless, "the stabilization of capitalism, temporary and unstable, but all the same stabilization, remains for the present". The counter-offensive of capitalism could not be defeated under such leaders as MacDonald and Thomas. Stalin spoke of the need to continue "the organization of a united front of workers", but apparently did not mention the Anglo-Russian committee.

Bukharin's speech was more emotional and more polemical. He too denounced the treachery of the reformist leaders. But he compared the situation which had arisen "under pressure of the masses" to the "dual power" in Petrograd after the February revolution, and praised the CPGB and the NMM for putting forward the slogans "All power to the General Council" and "All power to the councils of action". He rebutted, without mentioning Trotsky by name, Trotsky's notion that "the superstructure of the working class" (for which he substituted the word *apparat*) acted as a brake on revolution. This was a slur not only on the trade unions as a whole but on the CPGB, which was part of the "apparat". Trotsky's letter written two months before the strike was twisted into a condemnation of the party.[43] Bukharin qualified, again without mentioning Zinoviev, the comparison between the betrayal of August 4, 1914, and the termination of the general strike. The former had been the work of a party, the latter of the trade unions; it would be folly for 5000 communists to walk out

[43] For Trotsky's letter of March 5, 1926, and his declaration of June 3, 1926, rebutting the "legend" of his hostility to the CPGB, see p. 323 above.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

of the 5-million-strong trade unions. He announced that "differences" about the future of the Anglo-Russian committee had been settled by the decision of the party central committee and of IKKI not to leave it, and ended with the cryptic remark: "I here defend not my personal standpoint, but that of the central committee of our party and of IKKI".[44]

Lozovsky's article in the Profintern journal dated June 18, 1926, repeated the theme in harsher language. The General Council had called off the struggle and cooled the ardour of the masses "*because a victory of the strike does not fit within the framework of the constitution*". Both the Thomases and "the characterless, unprincipled, eternally wavering so-called Lefts, who were afraid of their own shadow", had "*acted as only agents of capital can act — that is the root of the matter*". But he defended the Anglo-Russian committee as "the organized expression of the link betwen the toilers of England and of the USSR". Lozovsky praised the NMM. He believed that the strike had served as "a fine school for the education of the masses", and had pointed the way to "*direct action* (strikes, risings, etc.)". The trade union movement had now to take sides for or against the miners' strike. Only Comintern and Profintern and organizations affiliated to them were giving help to the miners: "the miners' cause is our cause".[45] The same note was struck with equal firmness by Palme Dutt in an article in the Comintern journal entitled "The Premises of Defeat". The general strike had been 'essentially a political struggle, the first stage of the struggle of the revolutionary masses for power". What was now required was "a direct revolutionary struggle against the state"; the strike weapon must be extended to "the inevitable political revolutionary struggle". But such a struggle could be led only by a centralized and revolutionary mass communist party".[46]

[44] The concluding words could conceivably have been meant either to reinforce his authority by that of the party and of Comintern, or to dissociate him personally from the decision. The latter is the more natural interpretation of the words; Bukharin's defence of the committee against an attack by Kamenev at the fifteenth party congress eighteen months later (*Pyatnadtsatyi S"ezd VKP* (B), i (1961), 656) is not conclusive.

[45] *Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoyuzov*, No. 6, 1926, pp. 729–744.

[46] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 5–6 (54–55), 1926, pp. 140–160; the whole issue was devoted to an analysis of the general strike. Dutt's article also appeared in English as a pamphlet *The Meaning of the General Strike*; for Dutt's view in April 1926 see p. 315 above.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

The decision that the general strike and the treachery of the General Council were not to serve as an occasion for dissolving the Anglo-Russian committee had in it an element of paradox. References to the committee in the spring of 1926 in resolutions of the sixth IKKI and the fourth session of the central council of Profintern[47] had been noticeably lukewarm; and a critical article had appeared in *Trud* on April 6, 1926, on the occasion of its first anniversary. But at a time when Soviet relations with the British Government and with the TUC were precarious, the Soviet leaders were reluctant to jettison this last plank of the old united front, and to sever relations with a movement which still commanded the allegiance of a large majority of British workers. Once the party had laid down the line for the maintenance of the committee, the clash with the opposition automatically followed. The link between the issue of policy and the internecine struggle within the party was firmly forged in an unsigned editorial in the party journal at the end of June 1926, entitled "Lessons and 'Lessons' of the English May", the ironical inverted commas being intended to apply to the false lessons drawn by the opposition. Its conclusion was to uphold the Anglo-Russian committee and to leave to the British side the onus of a break. But much of it was devoted to oblique polemics, no names being mentioned, against the opposition. Zinoviev's parallel between August 4 and May 12 was once more qualified by pointing out that the earlier betrayal had occurred at the very zenith of imperialism, the later one at the moment of "*an open clash of classes*". The CPGB was praised, and Trotsky's supposed condemnation of it was associated with the ultra-Leftism of "Professor Korsch". The attack of the opposition on the Anglo-Russian committee was held to imply a demand for an exodus of workers from the British trade unions and for "new forms" of organization — another twisted reference to Trotsky's now notorious "letter".[48]

When a tense and crowded session of the party central committee opened on July 14, 1926,[49] it was confronted *inter alia*

[47] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 594, 596.

[48] *Bol'shevik*, No. 12, June 30, 1926, pp. 3–19. For Korsch see p. 406 below; for Trotsky's letter see p. 323 above.

[49] For the extensive agenda of this session see Vol. 2, pp. 6–9; its attention was absorbed by the conflict with the newly formed "united opposition".

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

by a draft resolution signed by Zinoviev, Trotsky, Kamenev, Pyatakov and Krupskaya, proposing to hasten the next meeting of the Anglo-Russian committee, due to be held in Paris, to use the occasion to "unmask the aims of the traitors", and then immediately to break up the committee, at the same time strengthening "the united front from below", and maintaining the ties with the British miners' union. The proposals were followed by a long argument denouncing the policy of the majority of the Politburo as "profoundly incorrect" and "fundamentally wrong".[50] None of the speeches in the ensuing debate were published at the time. Stalin, launching a personal attack on Trotsky's and Zinoviev's positions, refused to "break demonstratively with the British workers", and embarked on a defence of the Anglo-Russian committee, which performed two functions. The first consisted "in the establishment of a link between our trade unions and those of Great Britain" to resist "the offensive of capitalism", the second "in the organization of a broad movement of the working class against new imperialist wars in general, and against intervention in our country by the most powerful of the European imperialist Powers, by England, in particular".[51] Manuilsky observed that slamming the door on the committee meant "slamming the door on the idea of trade union unity". Togliatti argued that "a bloc with leaders" was always "an element in our united front tactics in some degree or other", and that a "united front not only from below, but from above", was a necessary means of attracting the masses. To abandon the Anglo-Russian committee would be "a liquidation of united front tactics throughout Comintern".[52]

[50] Trotsky archives, T 881.

[51] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, viii, 176–191; this was an "abbreviated" version of the speech, first published in 1928. A summary of the proceedings emanating from the Moscow party committee elaborated Stalin's second point: "The Anglo-Russian committee can and will play a powerful rôle in the struggle against any intervention directed against the USSR. It will become an organizing centre of the proletariat in the struggle against any attempt of the international bourgeoisie to conjure up a new war." This passage was quoted with indignation by both Vujovič and Kamenev at the seventh IKKI in November 1926 (*Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), ii, 182, 196); the latter described it as being "in glaring contradiction with the foundations of Leninism".

[52] Quoted from archives in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional: Kratkii Istoricheskii Ocherk* (1969), p. 256; speeches by Zinoviev, Trotsky and Kamenev are mentioned *ibid.* p. 255, but not quoted. Nin commented that the

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

No formal resolution on the subject was published at the end of the session; but the conclusion was reflected in the instruction given to the Soviet delegates to the forthcoming Paris meeting of the committee "to strive to the utmost to avoid a break, and at all costs to draw the British side of the Anglo-Russian committee into the work of comprehensive help to the striking miners".[53] Meanwhile two representatives of the Soviet miners' union had met Cook and another British miners' leader in Berlin on July 8, 1926, where the two sides agreed on an appeal to "the workers of the whole world" for energetic support of the British miners, condemned the General Council for having "abandoned the miners to their fate", and called for an urgent meeting of the Anglo-Russian committee.[54] The leaders of the TUC, however, sobered by the experience of the general strike, showed no alacrity to face their Soviet colleagues in the Anglo-Russian committee. Much delay occurred in fixing a convenient date;[55] and, when they finally met them in Paris on July 30, 1926, they announced that other engagements would compel them to return to London on the following day. Andreev, in the absence of Tomsky, led the Soviet delegation. The illness which ostensibly explained Tomsky's absence was certainly diplomatic. Tomsky was a popular figure in British trade union circles, and, in part no doubt under the influence of the British leaders, had toyed in the previous year with a short-lived plan to affiliate the Soviet trade unions to IFTU, by-passing Profintern.[56] A meeting between Tomsky and British trade union delegates with whom he had been on close personal terms might have been embarrassing in the changed

Anglo-Russian committee was so popular among the masses that "the representatives of the General Council *cannot*, no matter how much they wish it, break this alliance" (*Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoyuzov*, No. 8, 1926, p. 136).

[53] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional: Kratkii Istoricheskii Ocherk* (1969, p. 255.

[54] *Pravda*, July 10, 1926; the initiative in proposing the conference seems to have come from the Soviet miners' union, and was part of an abortive plan for an Anglo-Russian miners' committee. Stalin referred to it with approval in his speech of July 15, 1926, on the ground that "we have torn away these wavering reformist leaders ... from the General Council and linked them with our unions" (Stalin, *Sochineniya*, viii, 189); for a summary of the conclusions of the meeting see *ibid.* viii, 383, note 69.

[55] Agitated correspondence with Citrine, the secretary of the TUC, is reported in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 90, July 2, 1926, p. 1466, No. 91, July 6, 1926, p. 1484, No. 95, July 20, 1926, p. 1553.

[56] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 585–586.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

circumstances; and the selection of the stiff and uncompromising Andreev was a signal that the honeymoon with the TUC was over.

Tomsky's letter of excuse, read by Andreev when the meeting began, made it plain that, for the Soviet trade unions, the one important topic for discussion was aid to the British miners. The British delegates had other intentions. Pugh in his opening speech protested angrily at the Soviet trade union manifesto of June 7, 1926, and demanded an apology or retractation. It was an unfortunate move, which gave Andreev the opportunity to indict once again the treachery of the General Council, beginning with its rejection of financial aid from the Soviet Union. The formation of the Anglo-Russian committee had never been intended to limit the right of the Soviet unions to criticize, and to call a betrayal a betrayal. In the recriminations which followed, a letter was read from Hicks and Purcell denying that Hicks had ever used the words "damned Russian gold"; and Purcell, in a last effort to appear as a moderate Leftist, admited that "a slight mistake" had been made in refusing Soviet aid, but that "there were factors which explained this mistake". None of this helped. Andreev pressed the demand for the organization of financial help to the miners (of £600,000 hitherto subscribed, three-quarters had come from the Soviet trade unions; IFTU had offered a loan at 4 per cent, the German trade unions at 9 per cent) and of an international embargo on shipments of coal to Great Britain. Pugh replied that such proposals for international action would "do far more harm than good". The Soviet delegation created a diversion by suggesting a concerted protest by the committee against the growing danger of war; the British had no authority from the General Council to discuss any of these proposals. There was no time for reflexion or consultation; the British had to leave Paris next day. Neither side could take the initiative of breaking up the committee. The only possible decision was to meet again at an unspecified date in the near future.[57]

[57] For Andreev's detailed report on the session to the trade union central council on August 12, 1926, see A. Andreev, *Anglo-Russkii Komitet* (1927), pp. 7–26; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 107, August 20, 1926, pp. 1785–1792. For the council's resolution approving it see *ibid.* No. 106, August 17, 1926, pp. 1762–1763; A. Andreev, *Anglo-Russkii Komitet* (1927), pp. 55–57; for the debate in the Soviet trade union central council see *Trud*, August 13, 14, 1926. Typed stenographic records of this and the subsequent

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

When the new session opened in Berlin on August 23, 1926, Pugh had abandoned the hopeless protest against the manifesto of June 7, 1926, but found a new cause of complaint: the publication by the Soviet delegation of the proceedings of the Paris meeting. The same fruitless arguments revolved round Soviet insistence on discussing aid to the miners. The Soviet delegation now put forward a fourteen-point programme of which the most novel feature was a proposal that members of trade unions in both countries should be invited to contribute 1 per cent of their wages to the miners' fund. The British delegation had several lines of defence: that the proposals were impracticable, that it was not empowered by the General Council to discuss them, and that they represented an unwarrantable attempt by the Soviet trade unions to dictate to the General Council. At one point, Citrine and Swales (who had replaced Purcell) complained of Andreev's intransigence, and hinted that other members of the Soviet delegation might be more conciliatory — a singular misapprehension of the way in which Soviet delegations worked. The Russians challenged the British to take the initiative in breaking up the committee: "We shall see what the British worker masses will say to you, and how they will regard this step." After two days of debate, and an exchange of written declarations, the session ended with the same absence of result, and the same mutual exasperation, as its predecessor. On August 31, 1926, Andreev reported at length on these proceedings to the presidium of the trade union central council; Tomsky in the name of the presidium endorsed the stand taken by the delegation and denied any suggestion of dissent in its ranks. The presidium then passed a brief resolution approving the work of the delegation, registering the "sincere desire" of the Soviet trade unions "to maintain, strengthen and reinforce the Anglo-Russian committee as an organ of the fraternal union of the proletarians of Great Britain and of the USSR", and instructing the Soviet delegates to the forthcoming annual congress of the TUC to make clear the determination of the Soviet trade unions to "support morally and materially the heroic struggle of the British miners".[58]

meeting of the committee in Berlin are in the TUC archives, but were not published.

[58] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 111, September 3, 1926, p. 1874, No. 113, September 10, 1926, pp. 1912–1915, No. 114, September 14,

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

Between the Paris and Berlin meetings of the Anglo-Russian committee, the question was once more discussed on August 7, 1926, by the presidium of IKKI. The manifesto of the Soviet trade union central council of June 7, 1926, denouncing the treachery of the General Council of the TUC, had provoked an unexpected protest by the CPGB at what was felt to be the unwarranted intervention of the Soviet trade unions.[59] In the presidium of IKKI Murphy repeated the protest, apparently on the formal ground that any reproof of the CPGB should have come from Comintern or Profintern and not from the trade unions. Stalin heavily demolished this argument, which had also been used by Pugh and Purcell at the Paris meeting. He once more defended the Anglo-Russian committee. But it was not an end in itself, and could not exclude the right of mutual criticism: "we cannot renounce freedom of criticism in the name of respectability and the maintenance of a bloc at all costs". Petrovsky thought that the trade unions should have gone further, and attacked the TUC leaders by name. But Stalin, always eager to display his moderation, rejected this proposal.[60] Murphy, evidently overawed by the rebuke administered to him, proved himself for the next two years a faithful servant of the Comintern hierarchy. The politburo of the CPGB slavishly followed the Comintern line in a resolution of August 9, 1926, condemning Zinoviev and Trotsky, "whose attitude on the British question is almost indistinguishable from that of the liquidation of the British party", and rejecting the demand to withdraw from the Anglo-Russian committee;[61] and the *Workers' Weekly* on August 20, 1926, duly responded to the Comintern directive in a leading article "Keep the Committee".

Relations between Soviet and British trade unions continued to deteriorate. The third annual conference of the NMM on August

1926, pp. 1933–1937, No. 116, September 17, 1926, pp. 1977–1980; A. Andreev, *Anglo-Russkii Komitet* (1927), pp. 27–53, 58 (this version omits Tomsky's speech). The appointment of Tomsky and Melnichansky to attend the Bournemouth congress of the TUC as fraternal delegates had been announced in *Trud*, August 25, 1926.

[59] The manifesto was belatedly published in *Workers' Weekly*, July 16, 1926; the protest of the CPGB was not published, nor is its exact date known. For the manifesto see p. 324 above.

[60] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, viii, 194–203; the session was not reported, and Stalin's speech is the only source of information about it. Stalin referred to Petrovsky by his pseudonym Humbold.

[61] *Workers' Weekly*, August 13, 1926.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

28–29, 1926, provided additional provocation. A message addressed to it by the central council of Profintern expressed the conviction that it would "liberate the British trade union movement from traitors, renegades and capitulators". The conference blamed both the Right-wing and the Left-wing leaders of the trade unions for "the fundamental failure of the general strike"; and it adopted an "open letter" to the forthcoming annual trade union congress at Bournemouth, condemning the "disgraceful policy" of the General Council, and especially its refusal to put the miners' strike on the agenda of the congress.[62] The British Government refused visas for Tomsky and Melnichansky to attend the congress, which opened at Bournemouth on September 6, 1926; and the protest to the Home Office expressing the "profound disappointment" of the General Council at this refusal[63] did not remove the suspicion that its members were not sorry to be relieved of troublesome guests. Any such feelings must have been confirmed by Tomsky's angry and reproachful telegram to the congress on past delinquencies, which was printed in the proceedings together with a stiff reply from the General Council referring to Tomsky's "ill-instructed and presumptuous criticism".[64] The debates of the congress brought constant humiliation and defeat for the communists. Cook had feebly disclaimed

[62] *National Minority Movement: Third Annual Conference* (n.d. [1927]), pp. 14, 48–49, 60–61; the report included the following table showing the number of delegates, and of workers represented by them, at conferences of the NMM up to date:

		Delegates	Workers
First	August 1924	271	200,000
Second	August 1925	683	750,000
Special	March 1926	383	957,000
Third	August 1926	802	950,000

(*ibid.* pp. 3–4). An account of the conference appeared in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 111, September 3, 1926, pp. 1867–1868. After the conference, the executive committee of the NMM apparently took fright at its own boldness, and issued an instruction to its members to restrain their criticism of trade union leaders, where this was likely to "militate against the possibilities of bringing the miners' strike to a successful conclusion or operate against the future of Anglo-Russian unity"; but this gesture of conciliation was condemned in Moscow and rescinded by the executive committee on November 14, 1926 (*The Worker*, November 19, 1926).

[63] *The Fifty-Eighth Annual Trades Union Congress* (1926), p. 464.

[64] *Ibid.* pp. 509–511; the president ruled any debate on this correspondence out of order (*ibid.* p. 447). The CPGB accused the General Council of encouraging "a new attack on Russia" (*Workers' Weekly*, September 17, 1926).

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

any interest "in washing dirty linen in this congress" — the very thing which Profintern would have wished to see. Horner struggled manfully, but single-handed; and a motion to "refer back" (i.e. to reject) the section of the General Council's report on the miners' strike was lost by an enormous majority.[65]

Meanwhile Tomsky delivered to the Moscow trade union council the speech which he had designed for the congress. He opened with a history of the general strike. The government, in full command of the army, police, press and Parliament, had fought seriously; the General Council had been content with "empty speeches". It had refused to recognize a class struggle, or to seek solidarity with workers of other countries. "The greatest strike in the world ended ingloriously" with a conversation between Sir Herbert Samuel and Mr Pugh. Tomsky recounted the Paris and Berlin meetings of the Anglo-Russian committee, where the British delegates first rejected, and then temporized with, Soviet proposals to aid the miners. These proposals were not on the agenda of the Bournemouth congress. Pugh in his presidential address had found the convenient formula that "the interests of a part of the movement cannot be set above those of the movement as a whole". Tomsky attacked Pugh's defence of parliamentary institutions:

> All parliamentarianism, every bourgeois constitution, is an instrument of deceit, of the oppression of labour, an instrument to secure the domination and dictatorship of the capitalist class.

Finally, he defended the maintenance of the Anglo-Russian committee. Perhaps the Soviet delegates did not always observe the rules of polite manners: they called traitors "traitors", and cowards "cowards". The committee was, however, "no alliance of leaders, but an alliance of the workers of the Soviet Union with the workers of Great Britain".[66]

An article in the Comintern journal signed jointly by Arnot and Murphy tried to extract some consolation from the results of the congress, which was to have witnessed the growth "from

[65] *The Fifty-Eighth Annual Trades Union Congress* (1926), pp. 388–392.

[66] *Pravda*, September 18, 19, 1926; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 118, September 24, 1926, pp. 2010–2013, No. 120, October 1, 1926, pp. 2053–2054, No. 121, October 5, 1926, pp. 2066–2067, No. 122, October 8, 1926, pp. 2087–2090.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

below" of a truly Left wing; the masses had moved to the Left, and millions were now "more Left than Cook". On the other hand, the errors of the CPGB were for the first time openly discussed. The leaders had been guilty of "waverings to the Right"; they had been too mild in their criticism of the General Council, including the Purcell group, and had failed to criticize Cook.[67] Murphy in an article in the Russian party journal went futher in criticism of the CPGB, which he accused of adopting the standpoint of Left-wing trade unionism rather than of revolutionary communist tactics.[68] But any glimmer of hope in the sympathy of the official Labour movement was extinguished by the Labour Party conference, which met at Margate from October 11 to 16, 1926, and proved even more uncompromisingly hostile than the Bournemouth congress of the TUC. A handful of communists, including Pollitt and Horner, were grudgingly admitted as delegates of their trade unions.[69] But an attempt to challenge the ruling of the two previous conferences which made communists ineligible for Labour Party membership was rebuffed by an overwhelming majority.[70]

The eighth congress of the CPGB met at Battersea on October 16–17, 1926, immediately after the Labour Party conference. It received a message from IKKI congratulating it on its record in the general strike and on the doubling of its membership, but poiting to "the need for self-criticism"; the party must become "the true leader of the masses of the proletariat in the genuine

[67] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 2 (60), 1926, pp. 6–13; an editorial note stated that both the editors and IKKI endorsed the criticisms of the CPGB. The central committee of the CPGB issued a reply to the article, which was published in the English, but not in the Russian, edition of the journal (*Communist International*, No. 2, October 30, 1926, pp. 13–15).

[68] *Bol'shevik*, No. 18, September 30, 1926, pp. 3–10; it was a signal mark of favour for a foreign communist to be invited to write in *Bol'shevik*.

[69] It was afterwards claimed that the National Left Wing Movement (see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 348), which held its first annual conference just before the Margate conference of the Labour Party, was represented at the latter by "a strong Left wing fraction of 60 delegates" (*Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 137).

[70] *Report of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Conference of the Labour Party* (n.d.), p. 188; *Workers' Weekly*, October 22, 1926, noted bitterly that the miners voted with the majority. An article by Palme Dutt in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 127, October 22, 1926, pp. 2180–2182, concluded that the Labour Party had moved even further to the Right than the TUC. For the two previous Labour Party conferences see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 136, 345.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

Bolshevik sense of the word".[71] The congress was able to congratulate the party on an increase of membership from 5000 to 10,730 since the seventh congress in May 1925, and the *Workers' Weekly* on an increase of circulation from 48,000 to 80,000.[72] The political committee's report to the congress also found material for self-congratulation, though it admitted that, in the task of unmasking "the former 'Left wing' in the General Council", the party had "missed one or two opportunities of driving home the criticism already begun in its first manifesto at the end of the general strike", and that at the TUC Bournemouth congress "one or two technical mistakes were made owing to inexperience".[73] The congress adopted theses on the international situation and on party organization. The theses, reflecting the new currents of opinion beginning to flow in Moscow, spoke no longer of the temporary stabilization of capitalism, but of "the disintegration of the temporary 'patch' of stabilization". The building up of a socialist state in the Soviet Union was proceeding side by side with the decay of capitalism. Fear of a general strike had been "hitherto the chief obstacle in the way of an attack on Russia" by Great Britain. The NMM was praised as "the sole revolutionary mass opposition within the trade unions"; the National Left-Wing Movement in the Labour Party was more cautiously warned not to abandon the right to criticize. The CPGB announced its support for the majority against the opposition in the Russian Party.[74]

The theses of the congress on the general strike rehearsed the usual denunciation of the General Council, and praised Cook for his leadership of the miners. The Congress sought consolation in the belief that "the old aristocracy of labour", the stronghold of

[71] *Pravda*, October 27, 1926; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 127, October 22, 1926, pp. 2192–2193. The brief report in *Workers' Weekly*, October 22, 1926, omitted the passage about self-criticism, and the full text was published only a week later (*ibid.* October 29, 1926); the CPGB was criticized for the delay by Kuusinen at the seventh IKKI a month later (*Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 129).

[72] *The Eighth Congress of the CPGB* (1926), pp. 39, 49; an influx of striking miners was mainly responsible for the increase. The prediction of the sixth IKKI in February 1926 that the CPGB would double its membership in 1926 (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 614) was thus unexpectedly fulfilled; Lozovsky at the seventh IKKI in November 1926 reiterated the injunction to the CPGB to double its numbers (*Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 498).

[73] *The Eighth Congress of the CPGB* (1926), pp. 1–19.

[74] *Ibid.* pp. 20–37.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

reformism in the trade unions, was declining with modern methods of production, and that the other workers were becoming more militant. It emphasized "the political nature of mass strikes". The class struggle had entered a new phase; in many districts the strike committees (sometimes called "councils of action") were said to have been "the germ of an alternative government". The attempts of "Left" elements in Comintern to induce the Soviet trade unions to withdraw from the Anglo-Russian committee were "absolutely incorrect". Among other resolutions was one pledging continued support to the miners, citing Cook's errors as well as praising his energy and courage, and denouncing the "strike-breaking, defeatist attitude" of the Labour Party, and another welcoming the growth of the National Left-Wing Movement in the Labour Party, but insisting on the distinction between a real and a sham Left wing.[75] No hint seems to have been given throughout the proceedings of any error or shortcoming in the party. A few days later Stalin at the fifteenth party conference in Moscow spoke of the line of the CPGB as "fundamentally correct", and remarked that it "did not succeed, and could not succeed, in convincing the masses at short notice of the correctness of its line".[76] But the CPGB was not allowed to evade altogether the injunction of IKKI to embark on self-criticism. The report prepared by its central committee shortly after the congress to serve as a basis for the resolution of the forthcoming seventh IKKI in Moscow, contained an admission of temporary failure, after the strike, to criticize the "so-called Lefts" in the trade unions and the Labour Party.[77]

The CPGB congress received scant attention in Moscow. At the fifteenth party conference at the end of October 1926 Bukharin referred briefly to "a whole series of Right errors" of the CPGB, now corrected by Comintern. Tomsky defended the Anglo-Russian committee against the "revolutionary gesture"

[75] *Ibid.* pp. 55–71, 72–74, 78–79; for a brief account of the congress see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 127, October 22, 1926, pp. 2192–2193. For the National Left-Wing Movement see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 348; it received a few words of commendation and exhortation in the resolution of the eighth IKKI in May 1927 (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 734), but evidently made little impact.

[76] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, viii, 284.

[77] *Workers' Weekly*, November 12, 1926.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

demanded by the opposition. Trotsky accused the leaders of over-estimating the economic stabilization in Great Britain — trade and production were falling, the trade balance was passive — and under-estimating the political stabilization, which depended not on Baldwin, or even on Thomas, but on Purcell: "that is why we demanded the break-up of the Anglo-Russian committee".[78] The resolution of the conference contemptuously and misleadingly attributed to the opposition "a demand for a review of the tactics of the united front, for the break-up of the Anglo-Russian committee, a failure to understand the rôle of the trade unions, and the slogan of the replacement of the trade unions by new imaginary 'revolutionary' organizations of the proletariat".[79]

The challenge was not renewed at the seventh IKKI a month later — the first major Comintern occasion since the general strike — perhaps because Trotsky's speech was curtailed for lack of time.[80] Bukharin, in his written report to the session, praised the CPGB, but mildly reproached it with three faults: "an insufficiently consistent and determined criticism of the 'Lefts' ", a misunderstanding of the standpoint of the Russian trade unions which had been regarded as "too radical", and an insufficiently energetic participation in the campaign against the leaders of the General Council.[81] Murphy was chosen to introduce a debate on "The Lessons of the General Strike". The mood of his report, nothwithstanding the defeat, was one of triumph and congratulation: "the British working class has finally entered on the path leading to social revolution". The defeat of the miners had been not a defeat, but a temporary retreat; the seven months' struggle had shown the world that "the October revolution in Russia was the first October, but not the last."[82] Lozovsky emphasized with his usual vigour "the development of the class struggle in Great Britain", and the "linking of the economic with the political offensive". Having detected "a united front against the working class", and a change in "the power relations of the classes", Lozovsky triumphantly concluded:

[78] *XV Konferentsiya Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1927), pp. 43, 294, 507–508.

[79] *KPSS v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1954), ii, 334.

[80] See Vol. 2, p. 20.

[81] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 105–106; for Bukharin's written report see p. 136 above.

[82] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 467–487.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

> For the first time in the history of England we have seen how, in defiance of the will of the leaders, class stood against class.[83]

Remmele more realistically pointed to the failure of the communist parties of the other capitalist countries to organize any substantial action in support of "the heroic struggle of the British miners". This contrasted with the "brilliant solidarity" shown by the Soviet workers, which would be "one of the most important factors in revolutionizing England". He appeared to deprecate the prominence assigned to the NMM, which "would not exist at all" without the CPGB.[84]

The resolution unanimously adopted at the end of the session confirmed in its entirety the verdict pronounced in the IKKI resolution of June 8, 1926. It hailed "the growing class consciousness" of the British workers, and rather surprisingly cited as evidence of this the successes of the Labour Party in by-elections and in the municipal elections. This did not seem inconsistent with out-and-out denunciation of the Labour and trade union leaders and of "the complete and shameful capitulation of the former 'Left wing' of the General Council". Even the miners' leaders "did not live up to the situation, and finally capitulated". The attitude of the CPGB was approved with reservations. The points emphasized in conclusion were "the heroic steadfastness" of the miners, disillusionment with democratic procedures and the responsibility of distinguishing between "industrial" and "political" action. Hopes were expressed of a split between the petty bourgeoisie and the big bourgeoisie (this seemed to be derived from the analogy of current Comintern policy in China rather than from any empirical view of the British scene); and "a shift to the Left" was duly noted among British workers.[85] The resolution on the trade unions rejected in still more provocative terms the charge that the Soviet trade unions had disrupted the Anglo-Russian committee by their "illegal intervention" in the affairs of the British trade unions. "The social-democratic theory of non-intervention" was declared to be "in contradiction with

[83] *Ibid.* i, 489–499; this speech was abbreviated in the German record of the session (see p. 137, note 26 above).

[84] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 558–562.

[85] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 655–668.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

the very idea of the International and of class solidarity".[86] The general strike, which had driven the British trade union leaders to the Right, had ranged Comintern and the Soviet trade unions decisively on the Left, and widened the gap between them.

The seventh Soviet trade union congress, which met on December 6, 1926, before the seventh IKKI had completed its labours, devoted much attention to British affairs. Gallacher and Cook were among the orators at the opening session. Gallacher, bringing to the congress the greetings of Comintern, eulogized Cook and Horner, and the CPGB as a whole, for their valiant rôle in the miners' strike. Cook expressed the gratitude of "millions of miners, their wives and children, one-eighth part of the whole population of Great Britain", for aid received from the Soviet trade unions. He pointed out that he was the sole representative of the British working class at the congress: the General Council by a vote of eleven to nine had refused to send delegates. He repeated the familiar diagnosis of the failure of the general strike. A "revolutionary situation" existed in Great Britain:

> The working masses were ready to act, and acted, but the leaders failed at the moment when victory was near.[87]

Tomsky dealt with the British situation in the concluding passage of his main report. He returned to first principles:

> The economic struggle of class against class is a political struggle; and, conversely, politics without economics is nothing — empty words. The economic offensive of class against class is matched by the political offensive.

The General Council had not only betrayed the strikers. It had failed to carry out its promise, made when the Anglo-Russian committee was founded in 1925 and since repeated, to summon an international trade union conference with Soviet participation if IFTU refused to do so. Though it complained of Soviet rudeness, it had not had the "elementary courtesy" to send delegates to the congress; and it had demanded a revision of the committee's statutes which would "limit the rights of both parties to raise questions affecting the other". Nevertheless, those "Left" comrades who wanted to break up the committee were wrong. The

[86] *Ibid.* pp. 648–649; for this resolution see p. 138 above.
[87] *Sed'moi S"ezd Professional'nykh Soyuzov SSSR* (1927), pp. 17–18, 26–31.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

committee was not a "bloc of leaders", but a "bloc of the working masses".[88] Lozovsky, reiterating the themes which appeared in the trade union resolution of the seventh IKKI, asserted that the general strike had "served as an immense and most important lesson not only for the British workers' movement, but for the workers' movement of other countries".[89] Cook described at length the background of the miners' strike and its betrayal by the General Council, and concluded:

> We shall prepare our movement for the overthrow of capitalism and the building of a new social order. The USSR is our true ally, our support in this great struggle for liberation.[90]

The main resolution of the congress approved the refusal of the Soviet trade unions to break up the Anglo-Russian committee, and cited the British proposal of November 30, 1926, to revise its statute as a symptom of a desire on the part of the General Council to destroy it.[91]

The winter of 1926–1927 saw a rapid deterioration in Anglo-Soviet relations and a growing anxiety about the outcome.[92] After the turmoil of the general and the miners' strikes, interest in the CPGB shifted to China. Early in October 1926 the party central committee had passed a resolution calling on "the organized working class in Great Britain to support the Chinese struggle for national freedom", and "the Labour Party and the TUC to co-operate with it in fighting the danger of intervention". The resolution also noted that "intervention in China is only a prelude to intervention against Soviet Russia".[93] "Hands off China" committees were organized in different centres, frequently under communist auspices; and on December 3, 1926, *Workers' Weekly* proposed the formation of a "National 'Hands off China' Committee", representing the Labour Party, the TUC, the ILP and the CPGB. Thereafter appeals to protest against intervention

[88] *Ibid.* pp. 69–74.
[89] *Ibid.* p. 254.
[90] *Ibid.* pp. 275–286. Cook also delivered a valedictory address at the end of the congress (*ibid.* pp. 818–819).
[91] *Ibid.* p. 737; for the British proposal see p. 343 below.
[92] See pp. 18–27 above.
[93] *Workers' Weekly*, October 8, 1926.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

appeared almost weekly.[94] The announcement of the imminent despatch of military reinforcements to Shanghai provoked attempts at agitation among the troops and the ships assigned to this mission.[95] Young British communists were said to have worked "among the troops sent to China", and members of the Scandinavian and Baltic youth leagues "among sailors of the British fleet visiting the Baltic".[96] Alarmist reports in the British press reflected these efforts, but provided no convincing evidence of their success.[97] Most of the campaign was conducted by way of public propaganda, and was planned on united front lines. Communists participated actively and vociferously in a mass demonstration in the Albert Hall on February 5, 1927, organized by the non-communist Left, to protest against imperialist intervention in China and to demand the maintenance of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.

Throughout this time the communist-dominated NMM exhibited a strong desire to maintain contacts with the "reformists". In October 1926 its executive passed a firmly worded resolution on the general strike, declaring that "every member of the General Council, whether Left, Right or Centre, has earned the most ruthless criticism from the workers in consequence of their participation in the betrayal". But it pledged the NMM to voice this criticism "in such places and at such times as are not likely to militate against the possibilities for a successful conclusion or operate against the future welfare of Anglo-Russian unity". This lame reservation evidently seemed pusillanimous to some higher authority; and at its next meeting on November 14, 1926, the executive rescinded the resolution, and affirmed that "merciless criticism" of the trade union bureaucracy was "one of its foremost tasks in the struggle for revolutionizing the British trade union

[94] *Ibid.* January 28, February 4, February 18, 1927.

[95] See pp. 208–209, 262 above. An article by Murphy in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 21, February 22, 1927, pp. 409–410, quoted proclamations distributed by branches of the CPGB, especially among dockers; these were heady stuff, but stopped short of direct instigation to mutiny among the troops.

[96] *Ibid.* No. 30, August 9, 1927, p. 1743.

[97] The ninth congress of the CPGB in October 1927 admitted that the campaign "did not succeed in stopping a single troopship" carrying reinforcements to China (*The Ninth Congress of the CPGB* (1927), p. 42).

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

movement".[98] Nevertheless, when the TUC on March 25, 1927, issued an instruction to withdraw recognition from trade union federations affiliated to or associated with the NMM, the NMM, after publishing a strident protest against the decision, recommended the organizations affected to disaffiliate from the NMM rather than suffer the penalty of exclusion from organizations affiliated to the TUC.[99]

How readily the Soviet leaders, alarmed by the turn of events, now accepted cooperation with those whom they had so recently denounced as traitors and renegades was shown by the changed attitude towards the Anglo-Russian committee. The miners' strike being over, the General Council had shown some perhaps conscience-stricken desire to refurbish the image of the moribund committee, and on November 30, 1926, sent a letter to Tomsky proposing to add to its constitution a specific proviso excluding "any act of interference by either party in the internal affairs of the trade union movement of the other party".[100] The intransigent Lozovsky commented angrily at the seventh IKKI, then in session, that the General Council "continues its policy of sabotage":

> First, it refused to send delegates to the seventh Soviet trade union congress; secondly, it restricted the competence of its delegates to the Anglo-Russian committee; thirdly, it tries to change the constitution of the Anglo-Russian committee."[101]

Cautious counsels, however, prevailed. The main resolution of the session merely recorded the decision to keep the committee in being.[102] A sharp attack by Citrine on a collection of Lozovsky's

[98] *The Worker* (the organ of the NMM), November 19, 1926, printed the decision to rescind the previous resolution, which does not seem to have been published elsewhere.

[99] For this decision see *The Fifty-ninth Trades Union Congress, 1927* (n.d.), p. 151; the TUC instruction, the NMM protest and the subsequent recommendation were all quoted in an article in *Mezhdunarodnoe Rabochee Dvizhenie*, No. 17–18 (110–111), May 5, 1927, pp. 14–16, which called the NMM action "extremely risky", and expressed doubt whether "the desired end will be achieved in this way". For the later condemnation of this action see pp. 350–351 below.

[100] The decision approving the letter, taken by a majority of twelve to six, is in the TUC archives.

[101] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 543.

[102] For this resolution and the similar resolution of the seventh Soviet trade union congress see pp. 339–341 above.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

articles published in English by the NMM under the title *British and Russian Workers*[103] seemed to bode no good. But early in January 1927 Melnichansky at length replied to the General Council's letter expressing a somewhat grudging readiness to discuss the British amendments and suggesting a meeting; and the General Council agreed to a meeting provided the British amendments were on the agenda. Finally, on February 28, 1927, five days after an ominous note from the British Government to the Soviet Government carrying the threat of a rupture, Melnichansky telegraphed a formal proposal for a meeting of the committee on March 15, 1927, to discuss the British amendments, the question of trade union unity and the danger of war.[104] After the usual hesitations on the British side, the committee, with Tomsky now once more heading the Soviet group, met in Berlin from March 29 to April 1, 1927.

No detailed record of the proceedings has been published. But the results justify the impression that less time was devoted than on the previous occasions to mutual recrimination, and more to the drafting of resolutions. The first of the three resolutions adopted by the committee related to the well-worn theme of trade union unity. It expressed regret that all efforts to bring about a meeting between the central council of Soviet trade unions and IFTU had been unsuccessful, and proposed to revert to the question after the IFTU congress which was due to take place in Paris in August. The second, representing a substantial concession from the Soviet side, included in an otherwise unmemorable recapitulation of the aims of the committee "the unconditional recognition of the principle that the sole representative and medium of expression of the trade union movement of Great Britain is the British Trades Union Congress and its General Council", and insisted that the "fraternal alliance" between the trade union movements of the two countries did not "allow any intervention in their internal affairs". The third resolution on the work of the committee, responding to Soviet demands, proclaimed that trade

[103] *Daily Herald*, January 7, 1927. Lozovsky's pamphlet appeared with a foreword by Pollitt in the autumn of 1926 after the Bournemouth trade union congress; it accused the General Council of passivity and sabotage of the Anglo-Russian committee.

[104] The correspondence with Melnichansky is in the TUC archives; no publication has been traced. For the British note of February 23, 1927, see p. 22 above.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

union unity was "the biggest and most essential safeguard for the workers of all countries against the attacks on economic standards, against the menace of Fascism, and against the threats of new wars", and that "Anglo-Russian trade union unity is particularly necessary, as recent events have most clearly shown, to counter the danger of aggression against the Soviet Union".[105] *Pravda*, in briefly announcing complete agreement, recorded that the proceedings had been "cordial throughout"; and Tomsky, on returning to Moscow, claimed that the session had signalled "*the danger of a new world war*", and that "the enemies of the working class" who hoped for the dissolution of the committee had been completely shattered.[106] *The Times* unkindly headed the report of the meeting "Russian Unions' Surrender", and opined that only desperate need for support in the Chinese crisis could explain so abject a capitulation.[107]

The victory of the General Council was unlikely to escape the eagle eye of the opposition in Moscow. Tomsky, having easily secured the approval of the trade union central council for the Berlin resolutions,[108] submitted a report on the proceedings to a session of the party central committee on April 13–16, 1927. Trotsky at once proposed a resolution "categorically rejecting and condemning" the Berlin resolutions: the Anglo-Russian committee had betrayed every hope reposed in it, and should now be abandoned.[109] Andreev and Melnichansky as well as Tomsky defended the Berlin agreement; Bukharin did not speak. The proceedings were overshadowed by the attack on the Soviet legation in Peking a week earlier, and by the calamitous *volte-face* of Chiang Kai-shek in Shanghai, where a systematic massacre of communists and their supporters was at that very moment in progress. It would not be surprising if little attention was given

[105] The text of the resolutions was published in *Workers' Life*, May 27, 1927, and in *The Fifty-Ninth Annual Trades Union Congress, 1927* (n.d.), pp. 201–202; no publication in Russian has been traced.

[106] *Pravda*, April 2, 5, 1927.

[107] *The Times*, April 5, 1927.

[108] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 39, April 12, 1927, p. 825.

[109] The Trotsky archives contain a long memorandum of April 15, 1927, on the Anglo-Russian committee, and preliminary and final texts of the resolution submitted to the party central committee (T 3044, 3045, 3046); later Trotsky accused the Soviet delegation of "downright servility at the disgraceful Berlin session in April 1927" (L. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin* (N.Y., 1936), p. 131).

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

to the Anglo-Russian committee; and the only published record of what took place was a brief *communiqué* announcing, among other items, that the committee had heard a report on the recent session of the Anglo-Russian committee in Berlin.[110]

Meanwhile, the British Government's Trade Disputes Bill, designed to curb the powers of the trade unions and especially the right to strike, which was issued on April 5, 1927, offered a fresh target for attack. The central committee of the CPGB meeting on April 12, 1927, was in a militant mood. It adopted, apparently after "some difference of opinion", a resolution denouncing the bill as "a campaign against the working class and a stage in the preparation of new wars". The party was to organize mass street demonstrations against it, and to "strengthen propaganda in favour of the creation of detachments of workers' self-defence". A general strike was to be organized through a forthcoming conference of trade union executive committees; and an immediate meeting of the Anglo-Russian committee was demanded. The resolution was approved by the eighth IKKI in Moscow in the following month, and summarized in its own resolution.[111] But the party leaders seem on reflection to have been more anxious to revert to the well-tried tactics of the united front with other Left parties. They appealed to the impending annual conference of the ILP "for a united front of our two organizations despite our differences in face of the common peril"; the immediate objectives of a joint campaign would be a "general strike" to bring about the downfall of the "Baldwin government" and the defeat of the Trade Disputes Bill, and to stop the despatch of troops to China. To their indignation, Maxton, the president of the ILP conference, declined even to submit the proposal to it.[112] At the end of April 1927 Pollitt as general secretary of the NMM issued an appeal offering "whole-hearted cooperation" to the General

[110] *KPSS v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1954), ii, 358; Trotsky supplied some details of the proceedings and quotations from Andreev's speech in his theses of May 16, 1927 (see p. 348 below), and in a later unpublished memorandum of September 25, 1927 (Trotsky archives, T 3093).

[111] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 737–738; *The Ninth Congress of the CPGB* (1927), pp. 47–48. The politburo of the CPGB subsequently issued a statement condemning the conference of trade union committees for its failure to proclaim a general strike (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 49, May 10, 1927, pp. 1025–1026).

[112] *Workers' Life*, April 22, 1927.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

Council of the TUC in any campaign against the bill; and, when this was ignored, it was followed a month later by an equally fruitless letter to the General Council in the same sense.[113]

These rebuffs exposed the hollowness of the radical Left, and boded ill for further experiments in the united front with other Left groups. The reaction in Moscow was sharper, and less concerned with tactical manoeuvres. The manifesto of IKKI of April 15, 1927, on imperialism and the danger of war, paused to observe that "British imperialism is wishing to fetter the British workers' movement, and to deprive the trade unions of all their rights";[114] and an article in the Comintern journal denounced the bill under the title "The Strike-Breaker Legislation of the British Conservatives".[115] On May 8, 1927, Tomsky, piqued by the taunts of the opposition — and perhaps of critics in Profintern — at his tame "surrender" in Berlin, made a slashing attack on the bill in an interview apparently intended for foreign consumption. Not content with denouncing "this monstrous bill" for its "openly Fascist character", he suggested that some trade union and Labour Party officials were "at the bottom of their hearts ... in favour of the law". MacDonald and "His Majesty's Privy Councillor" Thomas were pilloried by name. The General Council had failed to "rally all the forces of the working class" against it, yet "continued to bait the communists and revolutionary miners and to exclude them from trade union organizations". This he called "a disgraceful sight" and "the greatest and the unpardonable mistake on the part of the General Council".[116] The General Council, which hoped to have secured for itself in the Berlin agreement immunity from Russian invective, was taken aback by Tomsky's interview. On May 19, 1927, Citrine wrote him a personal letter explaining that it was for the General Council to decide on the appropriate measures to combat "this iniquitous bill", and suggesting that the text which had appeared in *Workers' Life* (of which he enclosed a copy) must be a "travesty"

[113] *The Worker*, April 29, May 27, 1927.

[114] For this manifesto see p. 105, note 6 above.

[115] (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 16 (90), 1927, pp. 11–17); *Pravda*, May 13, 1927, called it "the strike-breakers' charter".

[116] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 49, May 10, 1927, pp. 1021–1023, *Workers' Life*, May 13, 1927, reprinted in *The Fifty-ninth Annual Trades Union Congress, 1927* (n.d.), pp. 207–209; no Russian text has been traced.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

of what Tomsky had really said. While he refrained from accusing Tomsky of a breach of the Berlin agreement, he slyly referred to an article in *The Times* two days earlier in which precisely that charge had been made.[117]

The eighth IKKI, which sat from May 18 to 30, 1927, approached the Anglo-Russian committee against the background of the danger of war, the Chinese catastrophe, and the imminent breach in Anglo-Soviet relations.[118] At a preliminary discussion in the presidium of IKKI on May 11, 1927, Bukharin, with untactful but characteristically engaging frankness, blurted out the embarrassing truth which everyone else tacitly ignored or concealed. He swept aside the elaborate pretence which justified the concessions made to the General Council in terms of trade union policy or maintaining contact with the British workers. On the contrary, they constituted an "exception" to the principles of normal trade union practice, and must be considered from the standpoint of a "diplomatic" counter-action to the imperialist offensive against the Soviet Union.[119] Trotsky's anxious preoccupation with the Chinese question did not prevent him from submitting to IKKI, two days before the session opened, a lengthy memorandum on "The Struggle for Power and the Anglo-Russian Committee", in which he denounced the Berlin compromise, attacked the arguments — especially those of Bukharin — raised in its defence, and concluded that the committee had become "the chief hindrance" to the campaign against war and imperialism. Indeed, the "Berlin capitulation" had "been of extraordinary help to Chamberlain for the attack on Soviet institutions in London with all the possible consequences of this act".[120] The "declaration of the 83", circulated while the session was in progress, called the Berlin conference a "capitulation", under which "we accepted the General Council as the sole representative of the British proletariat ..., and the 'principle' of non-

[117] *The Fifty-Ninth Annual Trades Union Congress, 1927* (n.d.), p. 209.

[118] For this session see pp. 143–147 above.

[119] Bukharin's argument was rehearsed at length in Trotsky's memorandum of May 16, 1927 (see following note).

[120] A draft and the final version of the memorandum are in the Trotsky archives, T 3057, 3058; it appeared in translation in *Der Kampf um die Internationale* (1927), pp. 110–125.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

intervention in the internal affairs of the British workers' movement".[121] So far as the imperfect records go, the leaders appear to have been successful in excluding this topic from the main debate on "the struggle against war and the danger of war"; it did not figure on the resolution on the subject.

A separate debate was held on "the tasks of the CPGB". Campbell was the *rapporteur*, and submitted a draft resolution; but his report was not published — probably because it was too indecisive to please the authorities in Comintern. Here too the issue of the Anglo-Russian committee, in which the CPGB had avoided direct involvement, was apparently not missed. But the omission was soon made good by the opposition. Trotsky and Vujovič jointly submitted "supplementary proposals" to the draft resolution, which renewed the demand to end the Anglo-Russian committee. "The tactics of the united front" leading to "temporary agreement with this or that Left group of reformists" were permissible "in particular cases"; and "the creation of the Anglo-Russian committee was at a given moment a perfectly correct step". But an irrevocable split had occurred when the Soviet trade unions sought to support the general strike, and the General Council broke it. The CPGB should now demand an immediate meeting of the committee, at which the Soviet delegates would put forward "a clear revolutionary programme against war and against the offensive of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat".[122] The only two speeches in the ensuing debate to be published were those of Murphy and Neumann. Both were full of unrestrained invective against Trotsky, and of little else. Murphy accused Trotsky of "assisting in the severance of relations between Great Britain and the USSR" through his desire to break up the Anglo-Russian committee. Neumann, no less vitriolic, concentrated on the arguments in Trotsky's memorandum of May 16, 1927.[123] Bukharin presumably defended the official standpoint. In his report to the Moscow party organization after the session he explained that the immediate dissolution of the committee demanded by Trotsky would have created "an unfavourable

[121] *Ibid.* p. 153; for this declaration see Vol. 2, p. 25, note 4.
[122] *Der Kampf um die Internationale* (1927), pp. 138–142.
[123] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 24 (98), 1927, pp. 8–17.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

impression", and that "the situation forced us to make a number of concessions".[124]

The resolution on the CPGB adopted at the end of the debate, largely repetitive, but both more alarmist and more pugnacious than that of the seventh IKKI five months earlier, rehearsed the "series of provocations aimed by the British Government at the Soviet Union", culminating in the breach of relations. It diagnosed "a sharpening of the struggle" and "an increased tempo of differentiation in the workers' movement", but admitted that both the Left wing in the Labour Party and the NMM were still "comparatively weak ... in face of the Labour bureaucrats". Sharp criticism of the ILP reflected its recent rejection of a united front with the CPGB; and the CPGB was praised for its active campaign of protest against British intervention in China. The party was instructed to "explain to the workers the great significance of the unity of workers of Great Britain with the proletariat of the Soviet Union, which unity becomes absolutely essential in view of the militarist policy of the British Government". This was clearly a defence of the maintenance of the Anglo-Russian committee. On the other hand, the CPGB was also to "explain the true significance of the recent Berlin conference, at which the General Council, instead of extending the functions of the Anglo-Russian committee, insisted on limiting the statute of the committee". Finally, the resolution endorsed the slogan of a general strike to enforce the withdrawal of the Trade Disputes Bill and the resignation of the Baldwin government, and favoured "the formation by workers on the spot of councils of action to prepare for the struggle against the bill and against the danger of war".[125] The future of the Anglo-Russian committee was not mentioned either in this resolution or in the resolution denouncing the factional behaviour of Trotsky and Vujovič.[126] It had been momentarily eclipsed by the Chinese disaster and by the much-trumpeted danger of war.

One awkward question was discussed behind the scenes of the eighth IKKI and not in the open session. The decisions of the NMM to allow the section to disaffiliate rather than incur expulsion by the TUC[127] had seemed pusillanimous to critics in

[124] For this report see pp. 147–148 above.
[125] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 729–741.
[126] For the latter resolution see pp. 146–147 above. [127] See p. 343 above.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

Moscow, and Murphy, the representative of the CPGB in IKKI, was commissioned to write an article in *Pravda* condemning it.[128] The British delegates to the eighth IKKI, including Campbell, were apparently not prepared to accept Murphy's rebuke; and at a meeting of the secretariat Pyatnitsky put forward the compromise that the sections should purport to disaffiliate from NMM, but should in fact continue to accept its instructions.[129] If this solution was accepted, it could hardly have been embodied in a published document; and the resolution merely noted that "the executive committee of one trade union prohibited communists and members of the NMM from being candidates for official posts".[130] But what happened remains obscure. Shortly afterwards, in the executive bureau of Profintern, which had responsibility for the NMM, Campbell defended the original decision to disaffiliate against those who blamed the NMM for having submitted to the dictates of the TUC "without a struggle". According to the record, the executive bureau sent a letter pointing out the NMM's errors and giving guidance for the future.[131] But no directives from Moscow could enable British communists to evade the dilemma confronting them. To remain within the trade union movement was incompatible with constant denunciation of its leaders and defiance of its decisions. To court expulsion was to risk the total isolation of the CPGB from the masses of workers in the unions.

The ghost of the Anglo-Russian committee was not so easily laid as Bukharin at the eighth IKKI had hoped and expected. On May 14, 1927, the Arcos raid, which had taken place two days earlier, inspired the central council of Soviet trade unions to telegraph to the General Council calling for a meeting of the committee "to consider joint action on the part of the trade union movements of the two countries". Coming at a moment when Citrine was drafting his protest against the Tomsky interview, it is not surprising that this request received no more than a temporizing reply. A further telegram on May 25, 1927, fared no better; and on June 3, 1927, the central council sent a long and pained letter, hinting at the "procrastination and passivity" shown by the Gen-

[128] *Pravda*, April 2, 1927.

[129] I. Silone, *Uscità di Sicurezza* (1965), p. 87, which relates the incident with graphic, and perhaps partly apocryphal, detail.

[130] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 732.

[131] *Mezhdunarodnoe Rabochee Dvizhenie*, No. 24, June 16, 1927, p. 19.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

eral Council in face of the imminent danger of war.[132] Three days later, Tomsky at last replied to Citrine's letter of May 19, 1927, about the notorious interview. He assured Citrine that the English text in *Workers' Life* "on the whole ... correctly renders the text and the basic thoughts of the Russian original". But he disconcertingly treated the interview as a personal affair, and expressed strong objection to any claim "to limit my personal freedom of speech"; it would be monstrous to suppose that the Berlin agreement warranted "'interference' in my *personal affairs*". He did not believe in the impeccability of anyone, "not even of the Pope of Rome", and asserted his "inalienable right to criticize any wrong action, or one which is injurious to the Labour movement, no matter what body it concerns or what *The Times* may say about it".[133] It was a jaunty answer, ill-calculated to promote agreement on an early meeting of the Anglo-Russian committee. But by this time the committee plainly served no purpose, except as a bargaining counter. Citrine had chosen to write a personal letter, and had incurred a personal snub. The official reaction of the General Council was surprisingly mild. On June 10, 1927, it at last replied to the pressing demands from Moscow with a proposal, not for a full meeting of the committee, but for a preliminary meeting between Citrine and Hicks, and Tomsky and Dogadov, on June 17–18. This apparently crossed with another angry telegram from Moscow of the same date threatening that, in default of a reply by June 14, the central council would publish the exchange of correspondence. The central council now hastened to point out that the proposed limited meeting was no substitute for a meeting of the full committee. But in the end it acquiesced; and the four men met on June 17–18, 1927, in Berlin. How little importance was attached to the occasion on the Soviet side is shown by the choice of this very moment to publish in *Pravda* the whole file of acrimonious letters and telegrams of the past month.[134]

What happened in Berlin is clear enough in outline. Tomsky harped on the imminent danger of war, and the urgent need for joint action by the committee — what action was not defined — to resist it. The British, frankly sceptical on the subject, wanted to

[132] This correspondence was eventually published in *Pravda*, June 18, 1927; for the Tomsky interview see pp. 347–348 above.

[133] *The Fifty-Ninth Annual Trades Union Congress*, 1927 (n.d.), pp. 209–210.

[134] *Pravda*, June 18, 1927.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

talk about such trivialities as the Tomsky interview and *Pravda*'s tactless publication of the correspondence; they spoke to a tight brief, and could give no assurances about the next meeting of the committee.[135] That issue was referred back to the General Council. A stormy meeting of the council on June 22, 1927, seems to have been as much preoccupied with Tomsky's rudeness as with fundamental issues. It decided to protest against the execution of twenty "white terrorists" in the Soviet Union, and postponed a final decision about the Anglo-Russian committee till its next meeting in the middle of July.[136] Tomsky, infuriated by this continued refusal to take serious things seriously, summoned a session of the trade union council for June 28, 1927, and amid a blaze of publicity offered it a detailed, if one-sided, account of the Berlin meeting of March 29–April 1, and of all that had happened since. The council duly voted a declaration "to the workers of the USSR and of Great Britain", even more belligerent in tone than Tomsky's report. The "tactics of evasion, procrastination and sabotage" pursued by the General Council must be made plain to the workers of both countries. In face of the danger of imperialist war in China and against the Soviet Union, in face of the Arcos raid and the rupture of relations, the General Council had done precisely nothing. It had blocked every effort from the Soviet side for "*the preservation of the Anglo-Russian committee*", for "*making it more active*". It had thought fit to condemn the Soviet Government for shooting "open, obstinate enemies of the working class, ... terrorists and incendiaries", while it refused to "pillory the foreign policy of Chamberlain, who is preparing the extermination of millions of people". The declaration ended with an appeal for "a united proletarian front" against capital and against the danger of war.[137] This broadside seems to have reduced the General Council to stunned silence. It was not till July 27, 1927, that it despatched to the central council in Moscow a detailed record, with supporting documents, of its delinquencies

[135] Particulars can be pieced together from Tomsky's report to the trade union central council on June 28, 1927 (see below), and from TUC archives.

[136] Minutes of the meeting are in the TUC archives.

[137] For Tomsky's report and the declaration see *Izvestiya*, July 1, 1927, *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 68, July 5, 1927, pp. 1437–1444; the declaration appeared in English in the *Sunday Worker*, July 3, 1927, in *Workers' Life*, July 8, 1927, and in *The Fifty-Ninth Annual Trades Union Congress, 1927* (n.d.), pp. 210–213.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

from the formation of the Anglo-Russian committee in April 1925 to the present day.[138]

When this missive was received in Moscow, a crucial session of the party central committee was in progress.[139] Trotsky devoted a few minutes of his limited speaking-time to a taunting critique of the Anglo-Russian committee.[140] Stalin challenged the British side to break up the committee, and ended with a complacent prognosis:

> If the British break, then the working class will know that the reactionary leaders of the British workers' movement have broken *through unwillingness to resist* their imperialist government in the organization of war. One cannot doubt that a breach in these circumstances, carried out by the British, will help the efforts of communists to discredit the General Council.[141]

The resolution adopted at the end of the session recorded that the communists in the Soviet trade union central council "refused to take responsibility for breaking and splitting the Anglo-Russian committee, thus exposing to the utmost the treacherous policy of the leaders of the General Council".[142] The trade union central council prepared at leisure its reply to the TUC's indictment of July 27, 1927. This retort, couched in the usual polemical and uncompromising language, was finally despatched on August 30, 1927, and opportunely arrived just in time for the annual trades union congress which was about to assemble in Edinburgh.[143] The congress was preceded, as it had been in the three previous years, by the annual conference of the NMM, which, among other militant resolutions, condemned the General Council for its attitude to the Anglo-Russian committee, and called on it to take a decisive stand for an unconditional world trade union conference in which both IFTU and Profintern unions would participate.[144] These brusque criticisms did nothing to mollify the behaviour of the trade union leaders at the forthcoming congress.

When the congress opened on September 6, 1927, the General Council was already in a truculent mood. At the IFTU conference

[138] *Ibid.* pp. 203–210. [139] See Vol. 2, pp. 30–33.

[140] *Stalinskaya Shkola Falsifikatsii* (Berlin, 1932), p. 168.

[141] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, x, 40–41.

[142] *KPSS v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1954), ii, 366.

[143] The text was printed in *The Fifty-Ninth Annual Trades Union Congress, 1927* (n.d.), pp. 495–501.

[144] *The Fourth Annual Conference of the NMM* (1927), *passim.*

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

in Paris in the preceding month it had done its best to pave the way for direct contact between IFTU and the Soviet trade unions, and had been ignominiously defeated. It was determined to do no more for these troublesome and ill-mannered partners. The passages in its report to the congress dealing with the Soviet trade unions or with communists at home contained a number of recommendations; and the only significant votes of the congress were taken when these were challenged from the floor by a handful of communist or sympathizing delegates.[145] A motion to "refer back" a recommendation confirming the resolution of the General Council of March 1927 to refuse recognition to trade councils affiliated to the NMM led to an acrimonious debate, and was eventually rejected by a majority of 3,746,000 to 148,000.[146] The General Council in its report to the congress had rehearsed in terms of exasperation the history of the Anglo-Russian committee. On receipt of the Soviet trade union communication of August 30, 1927, it hastily added a supplementary statement concluding that no purpose would be served by prolonging the existence of the Anglo-Russian committee and recommending that the Soviet trade union central council be so informed.[147] The motion to "refer back" this recommendation enjoyed more sympathy than that relating to the NMM. Cook confessed himself unable to make up his mind. But Citrine, Thomas and Bevin all spoke against the motion, and it was rejected by a majority of 2,551,000 to 620,000, the miners' federation abstaining.[148] Sentiment in favour of trade union unity still, however, remained strong; and a proposal to summon an international conference of all trade unions, including those affiliated to Profintern, was voted down only by the less overwhelming majority of 2,211,000 to 1,068,000.[149] But the congress as a whole represented a total and final rebuff to communist efforts to penetrate the trade union movement. The experience of defeat was repeated at the annual Labour Party conference which met from October 3 to 7, 1927. Pollitt was the most conspicuous

[145] The group consisted of 12 communists, twice as many as in the previous year, and a few non-party members of the NMM (*The Ninth Congress of the CPGB* (1927), pp. 20, 61).

[146] *The Fifty-Ninth Annual Trades Union Congress, 1927* (n.d.), pp. 151–152, 318–331, 336; for the March resolution see p. 343 above.

[147] *The Fifty-Ninth Annual Trades Union Congress, 1927* (n.d.), pp. 200–215, 403.

[148] *Ibid.* pp. 358–370.

[149] *Ibid.* pp. 373–375.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

of a handful of communists who, in an atmosphere of total hostility, kept up a running fire of criticism. The foreign policy resolution submitted by the executive condemned the Arcos raid and the breach of relations with the Soviet Government. But an amendment drawing attention to the danger of "an international capitalist attack on the Soviet Union", and calling for a campaign "in favour of a general strike in the event of a war menace arising", was rejected by "a very large majority".[150]

The demise of the Anglo-Russian committee ended an experiment which, more than any other episode of the period, showed up the ambiguities and embarrassments of united front tactics. It was easy in Moscow to find formulas to cover the two aspects of the united front, and to juggle with the concepts of the united front "from above" and "from below". It was more difficult in practice to reconcile amicable cooperation — even for limited purposes — between Soviet and British trade unions with the persistent efforts of the NMM, sponsored by Profintern, to undermine the existing leadership of the movement. The conflict between the "diplomatic" motives that lay behind the policy of cooperation and the long-term revolutionary aims fostered by the united front from below was identical with the notorious problem of reconciling the workings of Soviet diplomacy with those of Comintern. Soviet attitudes to the Anglo-Russian committee could make sense only on the assumption that the British workers felt to the cause of Anglo-Soviet trade union cooperation, and to the committee as its mouthpiece, a loyalty transcending their loyalty to their own leaders; and, though the flame of enthusiasm for the great Russian revolution was not yet entirely extinct, this assumption was not true. In Moscow, like the assumption of "the radicalization of the masses",[151] of which it was a part, it remained unshaken by the contrary evidence of facts because it provided the only way of escape from an intolerable dilemma. Six months later, at the fourth congress of Profintern, Lozovsky could still maintain that the disbandment of the committee had crystallized differences in the British working class, and helped to win fresh recruits for the class struggle and for Profintern.[152]

[150] *Report of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Conference of the Labour Party* (n.d.), pp. 235–244.

[151] See pp. 136, 160–161 above.

[152] *Protokoll über den Vierten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), p. 53.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

The official Soviet reaction was conveyed in a long press interview with Dogadov which appeared in *Pravda* on September 9, 1927; and three days later the trade union central council issued a "declaration to the British and Soviet workers".[153] The recurrent theme was the destruction by the General Council, the tool of the capitalists, of an organ constituted as a link between British and Soviet workers, and the indignation which British workers would inevitably feel at this act of treachery. *Pravda* particularly savoured the applause which had greeted the General Council's betrayal in the capitalist press. The Russian opposition was caught unawares. At the very moment when the congress in Edinburgh was celebrating the funeral rites of the Anglo-Russian committee, the opposition sent to the party central committee in Moscow a "platform", in which denunciation of the Anglo-Russian committee was one of the inflammatory items.[154] But the opportunity for the opposition to exploit the break occurred at a dramatic session of the presidium of IKKI on September 27, 1927.[155] Two days earlier Trotsky had drawn up a balance sheet of the Anglo-Russian committee in an unpublished memorandum, which explained how much greater foresight had been shown by the opposition than by the official leaders; the same points were made, briefly but pungently, in Trotsky's speech at the session.[156] Bukharin accused Trotsky of "theatrical gestures", and claimed that the General Council had been "forced" to break, and thus to demonstrate that "in the most important question of contemporary politics, the question of war, the leaders of the General Council march with Chamberlain and Baldwin". Stalin echoed the same argument.[157] But this was now a minor item in the dispute with the opposition. The subject had been drained dry.

The ninth congress of the CPGB, meeting from October 8 to 11, 1927, was, compared with the eighth congress a year earlier, a spiritless affair. Horner, who opened the proceedings as chairman, kept up a show of militancy, but admitted that the high

[153] *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, September 12, 1927.
[154] For the platform see Vol. 2, p. 34.
[155] For this session see Vol. 2, p. 36.
[156] Trotsky archives, T 3093, 3094.
[157] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 41 (115), 1927, p. 11; Stalin, *Sochineniya*, x, 157–158.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

hopes of 1926 had given place to "a certain disgust bordering on indifference" among many workers. Rothstein then presented the political report of the central committee, and Brown the report on organization; both were adopted unanimously. Party membership had fallen from 10,730 at the eighth congress to 7377 — a decline attributed to "victimization, evictions, police intimidation, unemployment and abject poverty". Circulation of *Workers' Life* (replacing *Workers' Weekly*, bankrupted by a libel action) and sales of party literature had fallen off.[158] On the following day, Murphy spoke as the British delegate to IKKI, seeking to combine assurances of the entire loyalty of the CPGB to the behests of Comintern with assertions of the complete independence of the foreign parties and the absence of dictation by the Russian party. The fact that revolution was now seen to be farther off than it had once appeared did not mean that "we have ceased to have the aim and the perspective of world revolution". Campbell introduced massive theses on "the International and National Battle-Front", which reviewed once again the temporary stabilization of capitalism, and the imperialist drive against the Soviet Union, and denounced the Labour Party leaders for turning to an alliance with the liberal middle classes. After Pollitt had reported on the Labour Party conference of the previous week, the congress went into closed session to debate the danger of war and the opposition in the Russian party; a resolution was adopted condemning the opposition in the strongest terms, and assuring IKKI and the Russian party of "our complete and whole-hearted support" for any measures they might find necessary. Horner presented a resolution on the trade unions, denouncing "the surrender of the trade union leadership to capitalism", and its "vicious" attacks on communists and on the Left, and called on the party to win recruits for the NMM. It also proposed, rather surprisingly, "to revive the Anglo-Russian committee, and to initiate Anglo-Russian committees of miners, transport workers, etc." Resolutions on imperialism, on the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti, and on the

[158] A brief report in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 99, October 11, 1927, pp. 2127–2128, summarized the proceedings, naming the principal speakers; the official report named neither chairman nor *rapporteurs*, but printed the chairman's speech and the two reports in full (*The Ninth Congress of the CPGB* (1927), pp. 2–64).

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

forthcoming tenth anniversary of the October revolution offered nothing new.[159]

An enigmatic episode of the autumn of 1927 was a telegram sent by the political secretariat of IKKI to the CPGB on October 1, urging the party to "struggle against the bourgeois leadership of the Labour Party, against parliamentary cretinism in all its forms, and to prepare to take its stand at the forthcoming elections as an independent party with its own platform and its own candidates, even in cases where so-called official candidates of the Labour Party will be put up against the candidates of the CP".[160] Like a similar telegram sent simultaneously to the French party,[161] this message failed, "owing to technical mishaps", to reach its destination in time for the ninth party congress,[162] which did not discuss electoral tactics. The demand for what amounted to "a complete review of the tactics pursued by the party in regard to the Labour Party since 1920", involving the abandonment of a tacit understanding that the CPGB would not put up candidates in constituencies where a splitting of the Labour vote might let in a Conservative, was explained for the first time to the British delegates visiting Moscow for the anniversary celebrations of November 1927.[163] The proposal, though it followed logically from the assumption, now current in Comintern, that the Labour Party, no less than the Conservatives, was the obedient servant of the capitalists, came as a shock to British communists reared in a very different tradition, and encountered strong resistance. At the fifteenth Russian party congress in December 1927 Bukharin had raised the delicate issue of electoral tactics, and dissented from those British communists who quoted Lenin's instructions of 1920 on collaboration with the Labour Party. He spoke with unwonted severity of "the flagrantly opportunist errors" of the leaders and

[159] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 99, October 11, 1927, p. 2128; the only resolution here published was, significantly, the one on the Russian opposition (*ibid.* No. 102, October 18, 1927, p. 2187). All the resolutions of the congress are in *The Ninth Congress of the CPGB* (1927), pp. 69–104.

[160] Quoted from Comintern archives, though not apparently textually, in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional: Kratkii Istoricheskii Ocherk* (1969), p. 284.

[161] See p. 498 below.

[162] *The New Line: Documents of the Tenth Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), p. 22; according to this account, "it did not reach the party until long after".

[163] *Ibid.* pp. 22–23.

Ücretsiz PDF Kitap Arsivi - https://rantey.org

some members of the CPGB. They had expressed dissatisfaction with the Soviet trade union central council for its sharp criticism of the General Council; their attack on the leaders of the trade unions and of the Labour Party at the recent trades union congress had been weak and not trenchant enough; and now they feared that the new electoral tactics would mean "too much of a 'turn' to the Left". The task of Comintern was to "correct all these errors."[164]

While the fifteenth party congress was in session, the Comintern secretariat was impressing on members of the CPGB who had come to Moscow for the anniversary celebrations the importance of the new tactics to be pursued in regard to the Labour Party. The ninth congress of the CPGB was an item on the agenda of a meeting of the presidium of IKKI on November 23, 1927;[165] if it was discussed, no record of the proceedings was published. But on December 15, 1927, an informal commission of the presidium recommended that "as a rule, no votes should be given for Labour Party candidates", or that, where "in exceptional cases" such votes were cast, they should be accompanied by "a special declaration (exposing the Labour Party, etc.)".[166] Failure to define the "exceptional cases" left the recommendation highly ambiguous. Pollitt and Arnot allowed themselves to be persuaded; but scepticism was still widespread among the party leaders when the delegates returned to London. When the party central committee met early in January 1928, the resolution presented to it in the name of the majority constituted, in effect, a defence of the traditional party line against the new proposals. It started from the assumption that a Labour Party was "not yet a social-democratic *party* in the accepted meaning of the term", but "a federation for parliamentary purposes of reformist political parties and trade unions". It relied heavily on quotations from Lenin, who in 1920, in *The Infantile Disease of "Leftism" in Communism*, had insistently urged British communists to help "the Hendersons and Snowdens", notwithstanding their "utter worthlessness" and "petty bourgeois and treacherous natures", to "vanquish Lloyd George and Churchill", and specifically to offer them "an electoral un-

[164] *Pyatnadtsatyi S"ezd VKP(B)*, i (1961), 683; for Bukharin's general reflections on electoral tactics see p. 153 above.

[165] *Pravda*, November 24, 1927; for this meeting, which was mainly concerned with the Russian opposition, see Vol. 2, p. 46.

[166] *Communist Policy in Great Britain* (1928), p. 163.

derstanding" for this purpose. At the second congress of Comintern a few weeks later he maintained that communists should remain within the Labour Party, and in this way "realize the collaboration of the advanced guard of the working class with the backward workers". The majority resolution argued that, whatever changes had occurred, "the situation in Great Britain in 1927 is not so revolutionary as in 1920", and that Lenin's advice was not therefore obsolete. The party had by its policy "extended its influence at a period when an isolationist policy would have killed it". It must continue in 1928, as in 1920, to "help to push a Henderson–Snowden government into office in order to help the workers by their own experience to convince themselves of the worthlessness of reformism"; this meant to "hasten the advent of a second reformist Labour government". The resolution ended by recognizing some past errors: the party had failed in its election campaign to make clear the distinction between a parliamentary Labour government and a true workers' government, or to raise the question of changing the leadership of the Labour Party.[167]

The proceedings of the committee are not on record. But the views of the minority were summed up in a memorandum prepared by Arnot and Dutt for the ninth IKKI in the following month. The minority attributed the decline in party membership at a time when "the Leftward advance in the working class is visibly going forward" to a decline in "the independent fighting leadership" of the party, and demanded a "direct fight for independent political leadership against the official Labour leadership". It was not the business of the CPGB to help the Labour Party into office. Finally the minority expressed its views on three difficult issues which had evidently arisen during the discussions. The first of these was ultimately to prove the most troublesome of all. Granted a determination to put forward a maximum number of communist candidates at the general election, even — or perhaps especially — where this would embarrass the Labour candidate, a large majority of constituencies would remain where this

[167] *Ibid.* pp. 132–152; confusion was frequently aggravated by the difficulty of distinguishing, in Russian or in German, between the term "Labour government" as used in British politics and the term "workers' government" as used in Comintern pronouncements. For the quotations from Lenin see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 177–179; Lenin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, xli, 238–240.

was impracticable. Were CPGB members in these constituencies to be advised to abstain from voting? Or were these to be treated as "exceptional cases" where a vote might be cast for the Labour candidate? The minority considered that in such cases the Labour candidate should be challenged "to accept our united front demands", and that in the event of refusal "we should call on the workers to give him no support, and to refuse to vote". The second issue related to the political levy, the voluntary contribution collected by the trade unions for Labour Party funds. The minority held that communist trade unionists should continue to pay the levy, but should "agitate for its being paid over to the communist election fund". The third issue was the application of the CPGB, made and rejected annually since 1920, for affiliation to the Labour Party. The minority proposed that one further such application should be made, and then abandoned after a suitable declaration.[168]

The debate was evidently sharp, but the majority carried its resolution by sixteen votes to six.[169] At the end of the session an "open letter" was issued to the party. This made some verbal concessions to the minority. It insisted that "the reformists have drifted more and more to the Right", while "*the masses are becoming ever more politically active*", dwelt on the "Right danger" and the need to move to the Left, and again admitted the errors of the past. But these generalities led up to no clear enunciation of a change of policy. Nothing had in effect been decided.[170] Murphy's vanity or ambition led him to dissociate himself from both majority and minority, and to submit a memorandum proposing "the consolidation of our party and of the revolutionary Left": this meant a coalition, for electoral and other purposes, between the CPGB and minority and Left-wing movements consisting of unions and local Labour parties disaffiliated from the General Council or from the Labour Party on the score of their admission of communists to their ranks.[171] Murphy's proposal had no success, and later exposed him to the damaging charge of seeking to "liquidate" the CPGB by merging it in a broader organization.

A representative delegation of the divided CPGB attended the

[168] *Communist Policy in Great Britain* (1928), pp. 153–165.

[169] *The New Line: Documents of the Tenth Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), p. 23.

[170] *Communist Policy in Great Britain* (1928), pp. 175–190.

[171] *Ibid.* pp. 166–174.

ninth IKKI in Moscow in February 1928, presumably in the expectation of a firm verdict on the points at issue. A British commission was set up and held five sittings, at which "practically all the delegates" of whatever nationality were present.[172] Revised theses were submitted in the names of Campbell, Gallacher and Rust, who had modified their assessment of the Labour Party in terms calculated to appeal to current Comintern orthodoxy:

> The leaders of the Labour Party have noticeably succeeded in fastening social-democratic discipline on the Labour Party, and have in consequence taken serious steps in the direction of their objects, which consist in forestalling the development of the Labour Party into a class organization and in transforming it into a bourgeois party, into a third party of the capitalist class.

And the demand for "a second reformist Labour government" was replaced by the slogan of a "revolutionary workers' government".[173] But in substance little had changed. Campbell spoke for the majority, Arnot for the minority; and Gallacher, the one experienced parliamentarian in the leadership, declared that it was "folly to say that the Labour Party is a third bourgeois party", and pointed to the anomalies which would result from this view.[174] Speeches from three other British delegates in support of existing tactics were not included in the published record.[175]

If the speeches of the British delegates threw into relief these sharp differences, the other contributions to the debate were less effective in resolving them. The weight of Comintern opinion was brought to bear against the majority; but the practical conclusions to be drawn from this judgment were ambiguous. Bukharin set the tone by proclaiming that "the British party must take a sharp turn to the Left"; it must recognize that it had not one enemy, but two — the "Baldwin government" and a "second hostile bloc" consisting of the trade unions, the Labour Party and the whole non-communist Left. Yet, "since the transformation of the Labour

[172] *Ibid.* p. 118.

[173] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 9 (135), 1928, p. 43; *Communist Policy in Great Britain* (1928), p. 78. The complete text does not appear to have been published.

[174] *Ibid.* pp. 9–27, 41–45.

[175] *Ibid.* pp. 105–106; some speeches were said to have been omitted to avoid repetition (*ibid.* p. 5).

Party into an ordinary social-democratic party has not yet been completed", it would be a mistake to abandon the demand for affiliation. Bukharin did not mention the political levy, and, by insisting on the need for a maximum number of communist candidates in the elections, avoided the slippery question of the vote in constituencies where no such candidates existed.[176] Pepper, Roy and Katayama spoke mildly, Schüller, Lozovsky and Petrovsky emphatically, for the minority against the majority. Few speakers ventured to tackle the thorny question of voting. Only Varga and Ewert, who functioned under the pseudonym of Braun as Comintern adviser to the CPGB, openly concluded that, where no communist candidate stood, workers should be encouraged to vote for the Labour candidate. Šmeral suggested that communists should spoil their voting papers by writing on them slogans such as "Self-determination for India". Lozovsky came nearest to advocating straight abstention:

> Not a single vote for those who betrayed the miners! Don't vote for those who at Blackpool and Liverpool excluded the communists from the Labour Party.

Petrovsky, on the other hand, though intransigent in his attacks on the majority, and on Campbell and Rothstein by name, reached a cautious and ambiguous conclusion on electoral tactics:

> A decision on the constituencies where we have neither our own candidates nor working class candidates we must leave open until the very last moment of the election, bearing in mind that a vote for Labour is to be considered as an evil from the point of view of our fight against the Labour Party and the Labour government.

Campbell in his concluding speech was clearly on the defensive, and admitted that he had not convinced the majority of the commission.[177]

After the debate, the British delegates, together with Petrovsky, "went into commission to consider a resolution which had been prepared during the course of the discussion";[178] and on February

[176] *Communist Policy in Great Britain* (1928), pp. 46–57.

[177] For the speeches see *ibid.* pp. 9–118; they were "very much abridged" (*ibid.* p. 8).

[178] *Ibid.* p. 118.

18, 1928, Petrovsky was able to announce in a plenary session of IKKI that unanimous agreement had been reached on the terms of a resolution. This was endorsed by both Campbell and Arnot. Gallacher, who had been put in the chair, promised "most loyal and most energetic application to the tasks that are contained in this resolution", and thanked Comintern for its "valued assistance". Several foreign delegates added their congratulations. Ewert significantly remarked that in other parties similar political differences might have been a basis for a factional fight.[179] The resolution, which was unanimously adopted, described the evolution of the Labour Party "from a special organization of a federal type" into "an ordinary social-democratic party" in league with the capitalist bourgeoisie and implacably hostile to the communists and "Left workers". On the other hand, "the working class, unequally and not without zigzags, continued in general and on the whole to move to the Left" (an uncharacteristically qualified assessment). Any parallel with the situation in 1920 was rejected; and the CPGB was instructed "to come out more boldly and more clearly as an independent political party, to change its attitude towards the Labour Party and the Labour government, and consequently to replace the slogan of the Labour government by the slogan of a revolutionary workers' government". The demand of the CPGB for affiliation to the Labour Party should, however, not yet be abandoned; and party members in the trade unions should agitate for local control of funds derived from the political levy, the implication being that they should continue for the present to pay the levy. It was essential for the party to remember that it had "not one camp of enemies, but two" — the Conservatives and "the bloc of liberals and heads of the Labour Party and the trade unions". In elections, support for Labour candidates who favoured the admission of communists to the Labour Party (such candidates probably did not, in fact, exist) was in order. Elsewhere voting for Labour candidates "must be decided concretely and finally after all possible preliminary work in putting forward our own or Left worker candidates". But the party should institute

[179] *Ibid.* pp. 119–131 (where the record is misleadingly labelled as the "sixth session" of the British commission); the same record appeared in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 20, February 28, 1928, pp. 405–409, except that Petrovsky's speech was replaced by an article in which he referred with untimely prescience to a "Baldwin–MacDonald coalition".

"a broad discussion on all problems and questions connected with these tactics". The resolution ended on this enigmatic note.[180]

It was not without reason that the ninth IKKI was often referred to later as a turning-point in the evolution of the CPGB. But decisions which seemed plausible enough in Moscow presented a series of conundrums to the baffled leaders of the CPGB at home. Some delay occurred after the return of the British delegates to London, due to "considerable doubt ... as to the significance of some of the clauses of the resolution".[181] But on March 14, 1928, the party politburo issued a statement purporting to explain the principal modifications in party policy prescribed in the IKKI resolution. It repeated the familiar denunciation of the Labour Party, which "*today seeks ... to adapt its programme wholly and completely to the needs of capitalism*". It explained that the aim at elections was no longer to help a Labour government to come to power, but to "*raise the slogan of a workers' government*". But on the crucial issue of electoral tactics, as well as on other practical questions raised by the new line, it remained silent.[182]

These questions confronted the party central committee at its session in March 1928. The committee debated whether in the light of these decisions it should (*a*) cease to demand affiliation to the Labour Party, (*b*) instruct communist members of trade unions not to pay the political levy, (*c*) discontinue its support of the National Left-Wing Movement in the Labour Party, and (*d*) come out for abstention in elections in constituencies where the CPGB had no candidate of its own. The committee rejected all four proposals, apparently by a majority vote. A further session of the committee in July 1928 recorded exactly the same result, though on this occasion the vote on affiliation to the Labour Party was a tie "owing to some absences".[183] It is not clear how far these divisions reproduced the lines on which the party had been split

[180] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 755–758.

[181] *The New Line: Documents of the Tenth Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), p. 23.

[182] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 30, March 20, 1928, pp. 578–579.

[183] *The New Line: Documents of the Tenth Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), pp. 23–24.

before the ninth IKKI. Some months later, the presidium of IKKI reproached the CPGB leaders with having published its report on the ninth IKKI "very late, and only after repeated reminders from Comintern" (it was not published until September 1928), with failing to explain or emphasize the differences between the old and new tactics, with treating the issue as primarily one of electoral policy, and with vacillating in such a way that party members and sympathizers "could not make head or tail of what was our 'new line' in practice".[184] The vacillations would appear to have been due not so much to a desire, of which the party was accused, "to interpret the resolution [of the ninth IKKI] on new tactics as a continuation and complement of the resolutions ... previously adopted",[185] as to genuine failure to understand what solutions of these practical questions were in fact implied in the guarded language of the resolution.

Not much illumination came from the fourth congress of Profintern in March 1928, which provided a further opportunity to air contested issues in Moscow. Lozovsky in his main report to the congress, which was heavily loaded against the reformist leaders,[186] said little about the British unions, noting only that the "undoubted significance" of the rupture of the Anglo-Russian committee had been to put clearly before the workers the question whom to follow, and to win recruits for Profintern and its organizations. He attacked the slogan put forward by the CPGB of a "revival of the Anglo-Russian committee" as an example of "failure to change slogans at the right time".[187] Horner, who had voted with the majority in the central committee of the CPGB in January 1928, was the leading British delegate. While purporting to accept the "main lines" of Lozovsky's report, he detected in it "an under-estimate of the strength of Amsterdam and an exaggeration of the strength of Profintern". Not all reformist trade unions were "a tool in the hands of capitalism" — this was the exception, not the rule; and it was a mistake "in every country to surrender the reformist unions to the reformist leaders". In countries like Great

[184] Closed letter of February 27, 1929 (L. Macfarlane, *The British Communist Party* (1966), p. 312).

[185] See *ibid.* p. 310.

[186] See pp. 177–188 above.

[187] *Protokoll über den Vierten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), pp. 53, 87; the slogan appeared in the trade union resolution of the ninth congress of the CPGB in October 1927 and in the open letter of January 1928 (see pp. 358, 362 above).

Britain, the main task of the revolutionary workers was to work within reformist unions in order to win the leadership.[188] The resolution of the congress on "The Tasks of the British Minority Movement", drafted in a commission and unanimously adopted without discussion, was eclectic and straddled both points of view. It declared that "all official trade union leaders, the Rights as well as the so-called 'Lefts', have taken the road of unconditional and unreserved support of capitalism"; and the Minority Movement was "the only revolutionary opposition to the reformists in the trade unions". But, "as a transitional measure, the Minority Movement must also organize its forces within the existing trade union organizations", and seek leading posts at every level. Attempts by the trade unions to exclude or boycott members of the NMM should be strenuously resisted. Its action in advising twenty-two of its sections to disaffiliate from the movement in compliance with a demand of the General Council was "a political capitulation" and "a grave error".[189] The NMM was not shown how to avoid either horn of the dilemma, but was instructed to embrace both.

While the CPGB, persistently prodded by Comintern, was digging deeper the rift which divided it from Labour Party and the TUC, the trade unions were contributing quite as effectively to the same process by action which amply justified the communist charges against them. The unexpectedly conciliatory tone of the proceedings of the trades union congress at Edinburgh in September 1927 had prompted Mond (later Lord Melchett) to make an approach to the General Council in the name of twelve leading industrialists, suggesting a conference to further the cause of industrial peace and cooperation. The response was favourable. The first meeting took place on January 12, 1928; and on January 24, 1928, the General Council by a majority vote gave its blessing to a continuation of the discussion in the form of a joint standing committee.[190] These proceedings did not go unchallenged by the

[188] *Ibid.* pp. 99–103.

[189] *Ibid.* pp. 589–594; for the report by the president of the commission which drafted the resolution see pp. 480–481.

[190] For a review of these events see *The Sixtieth Annual Trades Union Congress, 1928* (n.d.), pp. 219–230; Petrovsky in an optimistic overstatement at the sixth congress of Comintern in July 1928 referred to "a split in the General Council on the question of Mondism" (*Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 513).

Left. After the ninth party congress in October 1927 the central committee of the CPGB came out with a statement denouncing the policy of "industrial peace".[191] Cook threw himself with his usual impulsive vigour into the campaign against what came to be dubbed "Mondism". In an article in *Workers' Life* on January 6, 1928, he protested against misrepresentations of his position, and declared himself for "the overthrow of the capitalist system" and for "a new social order". He published a pamphlet entitled *Mond Moonshine*, which earned him the censure of the General Council and is said to have sold 10,000 copies.[192]

The campaign soon ran into the hazards and embarrassments which at this time attended all attempts at cooperation between the CPGB and the non-communist Left. Gallacher, according to his own account, introduced Cook to Wheatley and Maxton, both ILP stalwarts (Maxton was its current chairman), and between them they drafted a document which appeared in the ILP weekly *New Leader* on June 22, 1928, in the form of a letter or manifesto signed jointly by Cook and Maxton.[193] It was disappointingly brief and vague. The writers had been "seriously disturbed as to where the British labour movement is being led", rejected "the new conception that socialism and capitalism should sink their differences", and proposed "a series of conferences and meetings in various parts of the country" to sound out the opinion of the rank and file. The publication of the letter in the *New Leader* was accompanied by an editorial note: "We are authorized to state that the above letter is a purely personal communication and in no way commits anyone but the two signatories". Opinions in the ILP were divided. On June 30, 1928, Maxton faced criticisms in the national committee for having acted without consulting the party;[194] and a few days later the national council, by a majority of seven to six, adopted a resolution which, "while endorsing the spirit and aim of the document, disapproves of holding unofficial conferences, especially as the ILP provides adequate facilities for exchange of opinion".[195]

[191] *Workers' Life*, October 28, 1927.

[192] *Ibid.* April 1, 1928.

[193] W. Gallacher, *The Rolling of the Thunder* (1947), p. 98; for the text of the letter see Note D, p. 644 below.

[194] Minutes quoted in L. Macfarlane, *The British Communist Party* (1966), p. 211.

[195] *New Leader*, July 6, 1928.

If the Cook–Maxton "manifesto" (now commonly dignified by that name) disconcerted the ILP, it also provided a puzzle for the CPGB. The party newspaper at first blush hailed it as a sign of success in the campaign against Mondism and against the Labour Party programme, and a justification of the new line of the CPGB. It praised Cook. But it expressed doubts about Maxton, recalling the unhappy precedent of 1922, when the ILP backed the abortive Two-and-a-half International.[196] The ostensibly independent *Sunday Worker* learned that the ILP had approved the manifesto on the understanding that it was not "intended to disrupt the Labour movement" — an understanding not shared by the CPGB, or perhaps by Cook himself. The same issue carried a letter to Cook and Maxton from the National Left-Wing Movement, enquiring whether they were to be taken seriously. The manifesto contained no programme, and looked like a repetition of the futile Lansbury group in the Labour Party. Why not cooperate with the movement on its own programme?[197] A week later the *Sunday Worker* published a further statement by Cook and Maxton denouncing Mondism as Fascism, and condemning "the disfranchisement of communists and many other militants". But it also, referring to projected Cook–Maxton public meetings, expressed anxious doubt "whether arrangements have been made for a communist to be present on the platform".[198] The first such meeting to launch the campaign was held in Glasgow on July 8, 1928. Cook made a fighting speech; but Maxton indulged in wordy generalities which, according to Gallacher and Wheatley, who were present, bitterly disappointed the audience. "The great socialist revival", reported Gallacher, ended as "a funeral dirge".[199] It was noted with disappointment that Cook and Maxton had not replied to an invitation to take part in conferences of the National Left-Wing Movement.[200]

A large British delegation, which included Murphy, Bell, Arnot, Rothstein and Petrovsky, attended the sixth congress of

[196] *Workers' Life*, June 29, 1928; for the Two-and-a-half International see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 408–412.

[197] *Sunday Worker*, July 1, 1928; for this journal see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 342–343.

[198] *Sunday Worker*, July 8, 1928.

[199] *Workers' Life*, July 13, 1928; W. Gallacher, *The Rolling of the Thunder* (1947), pp. 98–99.

[200] *Sunday Worker*, July 15, 1928.

Comintern in July 1928. The attitude of the Comintern secretariat was summarily revealed in its report to the congress:

> The pseudo-Left wing under the leadership of Lansbury, Purcell and the rest, which made its appearance before the great strike movements, has sunk back into the bosom of the Right wing, and been completely dissolved in it.[201]

The affairs of the CPGB were not seriously debated in open sessions of the congress; Bukharin in his main report spoke briefly, but incisively of its relations to the Labour Party:

> If we stuck to our former slogan and maintained our former mutual relations in order not to disrupt the common front of the organized proletariat, we should perish; we should lose our political image, and thereby our right to an independent existence. We must say: a turn-round in the British party is conditioned by the change in the objective situation.[202]

But this did no more than repeat the injunctions of the ninth IKKI.[203] In the debate, Hannington reproached Bukharin for "not saying a single word about the work of the party among the unemployed". He spoke of the National Unemployed Workers' Committee Movement (NUWCM), which had existed since the early nineteen-twenties, and "in whose ranks outstanding members of our party work"; a march of miners from South Wales to London in the autumn of 1927 had been "the biggest mass demonstration in Great Britain in 1927". Hannington suggested that Comintern should instruct other parties "to create mass organizations of unemployed" on the British pattern.[204] Another British delegate criticized Mondism, repeated the familiar claim that "the British workers are moving to the Left while their reformist leaders turn ever more to the Right", and proclaimed that, though the party was not numerous, it was "ready to fight more stubbornly than

[201] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 130.

[202] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 45.

[203] See pp. 365–366 above.

[204] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 186–192; the trade union General Council had set up a joint council with the NUWCM in 1923 to deal with the problem of unemployment, but withdrew from it in 1928, and issued a statement that the NUWCM was not recognized by the General Council, which was "not satisfied as to the *bona fides* of the organization in question" (*The Sixtieth Annual Trades Union Congress, 1928* (n.d.), p. 113).

ever against the reformist leadership".[205] Petrovsky, in his dual rôle as a member of the CPGB and an official of Comintern, admitted that it was too early to speak of the results of the new tactics, which required "a change in the organization of our *whole* party"; such a change could not be brought about in one day. The resolution of the party central committee had not cleared up the question whether to continue the demand for admission of communists to the Labour Party, or the payment of the political levy in the trade unions. He attacked the party response to the Cook–Maxton declaration on the cryptic ground that, "instead of helping the movement by criticism of Maxton, Hicks etc.", it had attempted to "take the lead over Cook and Maxton". But he ended with the assurance that the party "from top to bottom" had accepted the new line.[206] Bukharin in his reply to the debate declared that "the tradition of the unity of 'organized labour' ", the strongest tradition in the British working class, was "a powerful trump in the hand of the reformists". It had been difficult to convince "some of our best comrades" that it was necessary to come out "both against the *Baldwin government* and against the *Labour Party*". These comrades had, however, now executed "a sharp turn, not without the influence of IKKI"; this change of tactics had been "the most important event in the history of the British workers' movement".[207] The brief passage on the CPGB in the main resolution of the congress cited Mondism as a symptom of "the conversion of the Labour Party into a social-liberal party on the continental social-democratic model", and demanded "a more distinctive class policy and more decisive struggle against the Labour Party". The party needed "to initiate a broad discussion on the tactical change in the policy of the party and on methods of applying the new tactics".[208]

Bell acted as *rapporteur* in the debate on the danger of war, but said nothing controversial and raised no specifically British issue. Rose Cohen, another British delegate, objected to a reservation in the draft theses that the slogan of soldiers' Soviets did not apply to paid armies, such as that of Great Britain. But, since it was agreed that the slogan would become applicable only in an

[205] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), pp. 362–366.
[206] *Ibid.* i, 512–513.
[207] *Ibid.* i, 610–611.
[208] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 785–786.

immediately revolutionary situation, the question remained academic.[209] It was in the debate on colonial questions that the British delegation made itself conspicuous, a large majority supporting the theory of "decolonization" in India to which the Comintern hierarchy and every other delegation strenuously objected. The division in the British delegation did not follow the recent split in the party on the "new line", both Arnot and Rothstein speaking and voting with the majority; Murphy was the only leading British delegate to take the official Comintern view. The debate was bitter; and the British delegates carried their dissent from the official theses to the point of a vote.[210] Kuusinen in his concluding speech apologized for his "somewhat one-sided" remarks about the British delegates in his reply to the debate on the colonial question (he had expressed surprise to find them speaking like "imperialists and their lackeys"). He knew that the CPGB was "making great efforts to adopt the new line"; and he believed that it was "in a position to set for all capitalist countries ... a model of communist work".[211] It was a rare example in Comintern records of an attempt to soothe the ruffled susceptibilities of a refractory member party.

The delegation did not depart without other directives. Discussions took place behind the scenes with the Anglo-American secretariat of Comintern, which, however, in the view of the party leaders "led to the same results as the April meeting of the central committee".[212] This view was evidently not shared by Murphy, who wrote that the discussions had resulted "in those of us who had stood for voting [in parliamentary elections] for the Labour candidate, where there was no communist, recognizing we were wrong".[213] The only brief excerpt which has ever been published from the statement issued to the British delegates by the Anglo-American secretariat lends some support to Murphy's interpretation:

[209] For this debate see pp. 209–213 above; a pamphlet by Petrovsky (A. J. Bennett, *The Soldiers' Programme*) published by the CPGB in 1928 was concerned with pay and conditions of service, and was not ostensibly subversive.

[210] The debate on India will be discussed in a later section of this volume.

[211] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), v, 134; for Kuusinen's previous remarks see *ibid.* iv, 509.

[212] *The New Line: Documents of the Tenth Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), p. 24.

[213] *Communist Review*, No. 11, November 1928, p. 620.

> If the most strenuous efforts to secure a candidate against the Labour candidate has [*sic*] failed, and the party has not been able to secure a united front campaign with the Labour Party candidate on a programme of minimum demands, then in such a case ... it is impossible to advocate voting for the representative of MacDonaldism.[214]

Without knowledge of the context or of other passages in the statement judgment may be hazardous. But, had the secretariat wished to put a firm general ban on support for Labour candidates, and to define clearly and narrowly the exceptional conditions which might justify departure from the rule, it could have found very different language. "A united front campaign with the Labour Party candidate on a programme of minimum demands" was a phrase patently open to equivocation. The conclusion cannot be resisted either that the secretariat itself was divided and hesitant, or that it deliberately sought to incite a Left wing in the CPGB to revolt against the existing leaders and their policy, while itself maintaining a semblance of aloofness from the struggle.

The leaders of the CPGB returned from Moscow in a chastened and somewhat bewildered mood. Never again would they venture to defy the united authority of the Comintern. But to reconcile its behests with the realities of the British situation as they saw it was a baffling task. The British Labour Party, unlike the French socialist party, was an emanation of the trade unions, and drew its strength, in spite of the infusion of a good many intellectuals, from this solid proletarian base. Not only was a far higher proportion of British than of French workers organized in trade unions, but the British trade union movement, unlike the French movement, had not split, and retained the loyalty of the masses of workers. To flout these time-honoured traditions was a thankless project. Before the Comintern congress ended in Moscow, the fifth annual conference of the NMM had met in London on August 25–26, 1928. It mustered a record number of delegates, 844, but the number of workers represented was not, as on previous occasions, stated.[215] A warm message of fraternal greetings was received from Cook and Maxton condemning Mondism and "industrial peace". Mann in his presidential address denounced imperialism and once more called for the withdrawal of troops from China, defended

[214] *Ibid.* No. 10, October 1929, p. 577.

[215] For earlier figures see p. 333, note 62 above.

the right to "sympathetic" strikes, and ended with the slogan "Not industrial peace — but class against class". Mondism was a favourite target in the debates, and resolutions were passed on industrial peace and the danger of war.[216] But how little the NMM now served its original purpose as a revolutionary pressure group within the trade union movement was demonstrated at the sixtieth trade union congress meeting a few days later in Swansea. The proceedings marked a fresh stage in the exclusion and outlawing of communists and their sympathizers, which grew more intense and ruthless, and was more readily accepted by the rank and file, with each successive annual congress. The decision to exclude trade councils affiliated to the NMM was endorsed by an overwhelming majority.[217] After a powerful appeal by Bevin, a resolution to suspend the Mond negotiations was decisively rejected; and the same fate befell a resolution calling on the General Council to summon a world conference of trade unions affiliated to IFTU and to Profintern, and to work for the reconstruction of the Anglo-Russian committee.[218] *Pravda* described this and the congress of the ADGB simultaneously taking place in Hamburg as "*a front against communism*, against the NMM, against the trade union opposition, against all honourable and revolutionary workers".[219] During the congress a demonstration of unemployed workers paraded outside the hall; the police were called to prevent the demonstrators from entering the building.[220] The atmosphere at the ensuing Labour Party conference in Birmingham was still more chilly. Gossip, an elderly communist and one of the few to

[216] *Report of the Fifth Annual Conference of the NMM* (1928); *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 97, September 4, 1928, p. 1849 (a brief account signed W[*sic*]. Jackson).

[217] *The Sixtieth Annual Trade Union Congress, 1928* (n.d.), pp. 143, 352–353; for this decision see p. 355 above.

[218] *The Sixtieth Annual Trade Union Congress, 1928* (n.d.), pp. 445–450, 468–471. For an account of the congress by Horner, the only leading communist among the delegates, see *Labour Monthly*, No. 10, 1928, pp. 594–601; the "revolutionary fraction" at the congress numbered 14, more than half of them party members (*The New Line: Documents of the Tenth Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), p. 17).

[219] *Pravda*, September 12, 1928.

[220] *Labour Monthly*, No. 10, 1928, pp. 600–601; about the same time Scottish unemployed workers organized a march to Edinburgh (*The New Line: Documents of the Tenth Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), p. 11). These seem to have been spontaneous demonstrations not organized by the CPGB or the NUWCM.

attend the conference, was met with jeers when he moved to "refer back" the provision for the exclusion of communists from the party, and his resolution was voted down amid laughter.[221]

Thus, in the autumn of 1928, the CPGB was under irresistible pressure from two sides to face the issue which it had long sought to evade. The dilemma could be traced back to the origins of the party. By far the largest of the groups which coalesced to found the CPGB in August 1920, the British Socialist Party (BSP), believed in parliamentary action and aimed at working as a Left group within the loose structure of the Labour Party. Fyodor Rothstein, the leading Bolshevik *émigré* in London before 1917, had ties with the BSP, which organized the first "Hands off Russia" campaign in 1919; the BSP seems to have applied for affiliation to Comintern before the CPGB was constituted. Inkpin, the secretary of the CPGB down to 1929, came from this party; and Campbell, Hannington and Andrew Rothstein, though never BSP members, were imbued with this tradition. The second largest group, the Socialist Labour Party (SLP), was associated with the shop stewards' movement, stood outside the Labour Party, and mistrusted parliamentary action; many active figures in the CPGB in its early years, including Bell, MacManus and Murphy came from this group.[222] For the first few years cooperation with the Labour Party and trade union leaders presented no problems. So long as the policy of working within the Labour Party and the trade unions in order to win over or, if necessary, replace the existing leaders by constitutional means seemed to offer prospects of success, the alternative policy of a direct revolutionary offensive against these leaders did not arise. But the dubious experience of the first Labour government of 1924, the traumatic shock of the general strike and its sequel, the ludicrous fiasco of the Anglo-Russian committee, and finally the anomaly of the Mond conferences between trade unions and capitalists, successively showed up the hollowness of this compromise. From 1927 onwards Profintern and Comintern began more and more insistently to preach to a reluctant CPGB the bankruptcy of policies of cooperation,

[221] *Report of the Twenty-eighth Annual Conference of the Labour Party, 1928* (n.d.), pp. 162–167.

[222] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 141–142, 226.

and the urgent necessity of a break with the past. But the same lesson was also being persistently driven home by the increasingly implacable hostility of the TUC and the Labour Party to everything that smacked of communism. Dutt in November 1928 was able to depict the "new line" proclaimed by Comintern as a necessary response to the "new course" completed and ratified by the TUC at Swansea and by the Labour Party at Birmingham — "the official transformation of the Labour movement into a machine of coalition with capitalism".[223] A writer in the party journal denied that "we have arrived at the new policy by our own choice"; it had "*been forced upon us* by the reformist Labour leadership".[224]

The tenth congress of the CPGB, which would normally have been held in the autumn of 1928, was delayed till January 1929 — probably owing to difficulties in rallying the unanimous support of the party for the resolutions of the sixth congress of Comintern.[225] Both the ninth IKKI and the sixth congress of Comintern had called for a "broad discussion" of policy and tactics within the CPGB — a veiled invitation to the minority to challenge the existing leadership.[226] *Workers' Life* on October 12, 1928, announced a full discussion of policy in preparation for the forthcoming party congress; and the party journal devoted its issues for November and December 1928 to this theme. The party secretariat, still controlled by the old party majority, published a long draft thesis for submission to the congress on "The Present Situation and the Tasks of the Party", together with a subsidiary

[223] *Labour Monthly*, No. 11, 1928, pp. 643–645; a year earlier Dutt had already used the term "new course" for the policy of class collaboration which the Baldwin government was seeking "to impose on the Labour movement" with the complicity of the Labour Party and trade union leaders (*ibid.* No. 12, 1927, pp. 707–708).

[224] *Communist*, No. 12, 1928, p. 653.

[225] According to a statement of Skrypnik at the tenth IKKI in July 1929 (*Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistichen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 180), the politburo of the CPGB decided, as late as November 1928, to circulate to the party the original draft theses on the colonial question submitted to the sixth congress, together with the British amendments; this would have been a gesture of defiance, since Comintern had not printed these texts, and obviously did not wish to publicize the dissent of almost the whole British delegation.

[226] See pp. 366, 372 above; Petrovsky later reproached the party with failure to carry out these directives (*Die Internationale*, xii, No. 5, March 1, 1929, p. 163).

resolution on the specific problem of relations to the Labour Party.[227] These documents rehearsed the analysis of the "third period", the condemnation of the Labour Party, and the directives for the CPGB, as enunciated by the ninth IKKI and the sixth Comintern congress. Following these directives, it was proposed to abandon the annual application for affiliation to the Labour Party, but to continue the payment of the political levy. Work in the NMM was to be maintained, and work in the National Left-Wing Movement (NLWM) made more effective.[228] The issue of electoral tactics was passed over in silence. But the drafts laid no particular emphasis on any sharp change in policy implied in these decisions, and made no admission of past party errors.

The outcome of the "discussion" thus initiated was to reopen the controversy between majority and minority groups in the party which had ostensibly been composed at the ninth IKKI. Even before the publication of the secretariat's drafts, Murphy, anxious to retrieve his false start at the ninth IKKI, had made himself the spokesman of the party Left and of the Comintern line in a slashing article on the Right danger in the CPGB. He maintained that a decision not to support Labour candidates in elections, even where no communist was standing, had been taken at the sixth Comintern congress. He rejected both affiliation to the Labour Party, and the payment of the political levy, and proposed to abandon the NLWM: "it ought to be liquidated, and would die in a fortnight if the party ceased to support it". It was urgent "to clear from our minds and from our policy those tactics which hinder the party's development".[229]

How much party support Murphy enjoyed is uncertain; Pollitt came out with a cautious defence of the political levy.[230] But what Murphy evidently counted on was support from Moscow, and this did not fail. The political secretariat of IKKI, having studied the draft thesis and resolution, felt itself obliged "to take steps in order to bring about radical alterations in these resolutions".[231]

[227] *Communist*, No. 12, 1928, pp. 684–724; from January 1929 the journal reverted to its old title of *Communist Review*. A draft thesis on trade union policy was also published (*ibid.* No. 11, 1928, pp. 602–618).

[228] For the NLWM see p. 336, note 75 above.

[229] *Communist*, No. 11, 1928, pp. 619–627.

[230] *Ibid.* No. 12, 1928, pp. 664–671.

[231] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 234; according to Pollitt "leading comrades in Comintern" warned the British that "we had not only to make preparations for a

Whether these steps were taken before, or during, the congress, remains uncertain. But, whatever its readiness to submit to Comintern directives, the majority had not yet learned its lesson. The January issue of the party journal contained a cautiously balanced article by Dutt, who concluded that "the only finally clear line" in elections was to vote "only for those candidates, apart from our own, who are prepared to support our united front demands", and, without actually advocating the liquidation of the NLWM, condemned a passage in the majority draft resolution which treated it as offering to members of the Labour Party "a revolutionary alternative to the policy of the reformist leadership".[232] The same issue also contained a far more violent article by Murphy ("There *Is* a Right Danger"), who reiterated the arguments of his November article and spoke of himself and supporters of the new line as an "opposition" within the party.[233] Not content with a long article by Campbell in the same issue defending the majority view, the party secretariat on the eve of the congress published a "statement" over Campbell's signature replying to Dutt's and Murphy's criticisms, and firmly asserting that the line of the party leadership did not "constitute a 'Right' danger or a liquidationist tendency", but was in fact the loyal application of the resolution of the ninth IKKI.[234] What had by now clearly emerged was that the quarrel was not really about certain concrete tactical questions, on which the Comintern line was still blurred and uncertain, but turned on the determination of the party minority, with encouragement and backing from Moscow, to evict the existing party leaders.

At the same moment a delegate or delegates of Comintern arrived in London to attend the congress with instructions to insist on the inclusion in the resolution of the congress of a condemnation of the party's errors, and in particular of its neglect of the Right danger and of a conciliatory attitude towards it.[235] Campbell opened the congress on January 19, 1929, with a non-

struggle against three parties, but that we had to overcome the traditional prejudice against splitting the votes of the working class" (*ibid.* p. 237).

[232] *Communist Review*, No. 1, 1929, pp. 21–35; simultaneously, in his "Notes of the Month" in *Labour Monthly*, No. 1, 1929, Dutt referred to "the new line of the revolutionary working class", but entered into no details.

[233] *Communist Review*, No. 1, 1929, pp. 55–56.

[234] *Workers' Life*, January 18, 1929.

[235] See closed letter of February 27, 1929, in L. Macfarlane, *The British Communist Party* (1966), p. 311; the identity of the delegate has not been established.

committal speech. He ended with a reference to the "fundamental, emphatic and by and large comradely discussion" which had taken place, and which the congress would have to bring to a conclusion. After Gallacher had presented the draft thesis on the present situation, Wintringham, a young party intellectual, launched a fierce diatribe against the errors of the party during the past year, mentioning Campbell by name. These errors pointed to "a seriously growing Right tendency in the party leadership". He proposed the setting up of a commission to investigate the errors committed by the leaders. Other delegates joined in the fray, one of them comparing Campbell's opening speech to a Salvation Army sermon. Pollitt, conscious of the hand of Comintern guiding the debate, sagely suggested that the new tactics must be regarded not merely as "tactics for this year's elections in Great Britain", but as general tactics not designed for Great Britain alone.[236] On the following day, Pollitt submitted a resolution approving the payment of the political levy by communist members of trade unions. Murphy, as co-*rapporteur*, resisted the proposal. But Arnot and the youth leader Tapsell, both stalwart members of the former minority, supported Pollitt, who won a handsome victory by 100 votes to 22.[237]

The most hectic debate of the congress came rather unexpectedly on the issue of the National Left-Wing Movement (NLWM). Since 1926 the movement, which stood to the Labour Party in the same ambiguous relation as the NMM to the TUC, had held annual conferences in advance of the annual Labour Party conference.[238] Its conference in September 1927 claimed to have mustered sixty delegates representing 150,000 members, and to have formed a "Left-wing faction" to operate at the forthcoming Margate conference of the Labour Party.[239] Interest in it in party

[236] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 7, January 22, 1929, pp. 128–129; the imperfect and sometimes confused account in this news-sheet is the only available record of the proceedings. The English edition printed two reports, which are identical, subject to some omissions, with the German version (*International Press Correspondence*, No. 5, January 25, 1929, pp. 80–81, No. 6, February 1, 1929, pp. 96–180); only the debate on the miners introduced by Horner (see p. 382 below) was more fully reported in the English version.

[237] *International Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 2, January 22, 1929, p. 130, No. 8, January 25, 1929, p. 143.

[238] See p. 336, note 75 above.

[239] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), pp. 136–137.

circles was perfunctory; and the much quoted resolution of the ninth IKKI in February 1928 on "the British question" did not mention it at all. When the pressure grew for the new line of uncompromising hostility to the Labour Party, this seemed to some bolder spirits in the CPGB incompatible with the maintenance of an organization under communist sponsorship which remained formally within the Labour Party. Murphy in his articles of November 1928 and January 1929 called loudly for its liquidation.[240] The thesis and resolution prepared in advance of the tenth congress by the party secretariat admitted that the movement "had difficulty in finding the correct policy for rallying Left-wing workers in the changed conditions", but had no doubt that the solution was not to liquidate it, but to make it more effective.[241] This confidence in the future of the movement was apparently unacceptable in Moscow; and on the eve of the congress the party secretariat issued a fresh statement less remarkable for clarity than for a desire to conciliate diverse opinions. It argued that the main task of the movement should be to fight for practical demands of the workers at local level, but that it should cease to work for the reform of the Labour Party or for the return of a Labour government. It rejected, however, the proposal that the CPGB should withdraw altogether from the movement.[242] At the congress on January 20, 1929, Brown in the name of the central committee introduced a resolution providing for the continuance of the movement, though not as "an alternative to the CP" or "to act as a screen in hiding the identity and independent rôle of the CP"; its task was to "encourage, develop and organize local elements" for the fight against the Labour Party. The proposal encountered fierce opposition from champions of the new line. Among the opponents was Tapsell, who spoke on behalf of a majority of the central committee of the Young Communist League. But here too a split had occurred; Rust spoke in his own name in favour of the resolution. After a hot debate in which fifteen delegates took part the resolution was rejected by fifty-five votes to fifty-two, with some twenty delegates absent or abstaining. Brown pointed out that the vote left the party without any

[240] See pp. 378–379 above.

[241] *Communist*, No. 12, 1928, pp. 710, 722–723; for these documents see pp. 377–378 above.

[242] *Workers' Life*, January 11, 1929.

policy in regard to the NLWM; and the drafting of a fresh resolution was handed over to a political commission.[243]

The vote was not only a rejection of the central committee's proposal on the NLWM, but a vote of no confidence in the leadership and in its policies, and was treated as such. What went on behind the scenes, the imperfect records fail to reveal. In open session Bell presented a report on the sixth congress of Comintern, Horner on the miners and Arnot on the Comintern theses on the colonial question: all these were unanimously adopted.[244] More important was a "Thesis on Party Trade Union Policy" introduced by Wilson, which, after "an extraordinarily interesting discussion" briefly summarized in the record, was unanimously adopted.[245] The thesis differed considerably, in part in substance, but still more in style and tone, from the draft published in the party journal in November 1928. Mild references in the original draft to "increasing pressure of the banks and of the progressive capitalists" for rationalization, and to "developments of state capitalist tendency" observable in Great Britain, disappeared altogether. The reference to a "*rapprochement*" between trade unions and employers was replaced in the final version by a liberal use of the vituperative vocabulary of "treachery" and "betrayal". Cook, not mentioned in the original draft, was now condemned for his "vacillations and concessions to the bureaucracy". What had been merely "the new situation" became "the renewed capitalist offensive". A reference to "mass apathy" was retained, but was now qualified as "beginning to give way to a renewal of activity"; and new emphasis was placed on strikes and on "the sharpening of the class struggle". Both versions called for a struggle against Mondism, for support for the NMM and the NUWCM, and for the formation of factory committees. But the final version, in terms which went far beyond either the letter or the spirit of the draft, instructed communists in the factories to "organize and lead strikes that break through all the constitutional barriers that prevent the working class exerting their full strength against their

[243] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 7, January 22, 1929, p. 130, No. 8, January 25, 1929, pp. 143–144.

[244] *Ibid.* No. 8, January 25, 1929, pp. 144–145, No. 9, January 29, 1929, pp. 160–162, No. 10, February 1, 1929, p. 188.

[245] *Ibid.* No. 10, February 1, 1929, pp. 187–188.

enemies, the capitalists and the reformists".[246] Broadly speaking, the draft had been couched in the cool and matter-of-fact language of the old British leadership. The final version was imbued with the heated rhetoric of current Comintern phraseology.

The question of the NLWM, following the adverse vote, had been referred to a political commission. Some unspecified proposals of Murphy about the party programme and an election platform were also referred to a commission.[247] It was evidently this commission which was responsible for transforming the draft thesis and the resolution published a month earlier in the party journal into the "Thesis on the Present Situation and the Tasks of the Party", which became the major policy pronouncement of the congress.[248] The relation of the final text to the earlier draft was similar to that of the trade union resolution. Much of the substance of the draft remained, but the tone was everywhere sharper and more aggressive. The party was pointedly reminded of the mistakes made by it since the ninth IKKI, and was warned not only against "hesitations and vacillations in carrying out the new policy", but against "a too scrupulous regard for constitutionalism and legalism in its methods of struggle". The denunciation of the Labour Party as "the third party of the capitalist class" and of "treacherous leaders aiding and abetting imperialism" was pitched in a shriller key. A warning in the draft against "sectarian moods ... in relation to trade union work (talk about new unions and inevitability of a split) and in the rejection of united front tactics in relation to local Labour Party workers and organization" disappeared altogether. But on concrete issues the final resolution remained inconclusive. The continuance of the political levy was still defended, though with increased emphasis on the demand for local control of the fund. On electoral tactics, it was laid down that "the party will enter the general election against all other

[246] *The New Line: Documents of the Tenth Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), pp. 87–101; for the draft of November 1928 see p. 378, note 227 above.

[247] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 8, January 25, 1929, p. 145.

[248] For the drafts of December 1928 see pp. 377–378 above; the final text is in *The New Line: Documents of the Tenth Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), pp. 57–86. The "closed letter" (see p. 385 below) referred to an "exchange of opinion in IKKI", which led the central committee to realize "the necessity to amend a number of propositions in the resolutions" (L. Macfarlane, *The British Communist Party* (1966), p. 311); this must have preceded the congress. But Campbell specifically mentioned amendments made by "the political commission" (*Communist Review*, No. 3, 1929, pp. 153–154).

parties as an independent party, with its own programme, linking up the immediate issues of struggle with the formal view of a revolutionary workers' government", and would declare an "electoral battle against the Labour Party". But, on the specific and much contested question of how communists should act in constituencies having no communist candidate, the final text was as silent as the original draft. On the NLWM, the proposed retention of which had just been rejected by a narrow majority of the congress, the thesis was even more elusive. It admitted that the movement had "suffered a loss of membership and influence during the year", and considered that the failure of the party to "explain our new party policy" had "contributed to this decline".[249] But the diagnosis was followed by no prescription; and the NLWM was not mentioned again. If any debate took place in the congress on the final text, no record was published. It may be conjectured that its silences and evasions were the price of its unanimous acceptance. Finally the congress had the task of electing a central committee to remain in office till the next congress. On this occasion the outgoing central committee apparently refused to submit a prepared list on which the congress could vote, preferring to rely on "free elections". But the majority seems to have suggested that Arnot and Rust should be dropped from the committee to make room for fresh blood. The congress voted accordingly. Since Arnot and Rust had been ardent campaigners for the new line and critics of the majority, it would have been naive not to see a political motive for the decision.[250]

The inconclusive proceedings and results of the congress gave little satisfaction to the directors of policy in Comintern. Bell, Pollitt and Rust were summoned to Moscow, and, after what must have been an animated and sometimes painful discussion, agree-

[249] The report of the party central committee to the congress had stated that "uncertainty amongst party members as to whether they should or should not take an active part in developing the Left Wing" had "undoubtedly seriously hampered this work" (*The New Line: Documents of the Tenth Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), pp. 25–26).

[250] Exactly what occurred is obscure; the party central committee, according to the "closed letter" of February 27, 1929 (see p. 385 below), refused to "recommend a list" and made "a negative reservation on comrades Rust and Arnot". Rust at the tenth IKKI six months later referred to "the proposal made at the time of the party congress to remove Arnot and myself" (*Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 235); Bell on the same occasion unconvincingly maintained that their exclusion was not due to their "critical attitude" (*ibid.* p. 403).

ment was reached on the terms of a so-called "closed letter" addressed by the presidium of IKKI to the CPGB. The letter, dated February 27, 1929, differed from the "open letters" of exhortation and reproach recently addressed to the French and German parties mainly in the fact that it was not published, though it was to be circulated to local party committees; some restraint was still felt to be necessary in dealing with the British party. The letter was plainly intended as an attack on the leadership. It began with the remark that "the congress delegates manifested a much keener critical mood in discussing the situation in the party than did the central committee". The committee had over-estimated the prospects of capitalist stabilization and underestimated the process of differentiation in the working class since the general strike. Two decisions of the congress in particular were condemned as erroneous — the decision to abandon the National Left-Wing Movement (it was not mentioned that this decision had been voted by a majority of delegates against the opinion of the central committee), and the decision to demand "the withdrawal of the trade unions from the Labour Party". Finally, the central committee had refused to offer to the congress a list of recommended candidates for the new central committee, and had left its composition to be decided by "free elections". The refusal was interpreted as a demonstration against Arnot and Rust, both strong supporters of the new Comintern line, who were in consequence not re-elected to the committee. This was "a certain demonstration against Comintern" which had caused "great consternation" in Moscow. The conclusion that "we cannot accept the present composition of the central committee as satisfactory" spoke for itself.[251]

The session of the central committee which followed the receipt of the closed letter must have been an embarrassing occasion. Campbell, in an article in the party journal, "Our Tenth Party Congress and After", while purporting to hold the balance between opposite heresies which had "appeared in embryo in the discussion in the political commission", had referred to the "mis-

[251] For the text of this unpublished letter, see L. Macfarlane, *The British Communist Party* (1966), pp. 308–319; for the open letters to the German and French parties see pp. 451–454, 499 below. Pollitt cannot have been in Moscow when the letter was signed, since he arrived in New York in time for the congress of the American party on March 1, 1929 (see p. 608 below).

take" which "sees only the sharpening of the contradictions, ... treats stabilization as already decayed, and talks about immediate revolutionary prospects".[252] This was patently not the view which the closed letter sought to inculcate. The committee unanimously approved the letter, but passed a resolution which, according to Rust, "displayed a serious confusion", and cast a veil over the differences of opinion in the committee. The tactics to be adopted at the forthcoming general election were evidently the burning topic. Five members of the committee, including Campbell and Rothstein, put forward the proposal that, in constituencies where the CPGB had no candidate, its members should be advised to support the Labour candidates.[253] In view of the persistent injunctions from Moscow the proposal was rejected; but it indisputably enjoyed widespread sympathy in the committee and in the party.[254] Doubts also remained in some Comintern circles in Moscow. Ewert is said to have expressed the opinion that "*the decision of the political secretariat to give no vote to the Labour Party* means a revision of the resolutions of the ninth IKKI".[255] Humbert-Droz, passing through London en route for Buenos Aires, learned that the CPGB had instructed party members to abstain from voting in constituencies where there was no communist candidate. He wrote to Moscow on April 18, 1929, protesting against this "anti-Bolshevik" policy, and proposing that communists in these constituencies should vote for the Labour candidates while continuing to condemn Labour Party policy; the tactics recommended by Lenin in 1920 were, he argued, still valid.[256]

[252] *Communist Review*, No. 3, 1929, pp. 154–155; a bitter attack on Campbell's article by Tapsell appeared in the next issue of the journal (*ibid.* No. 4, 1929, pp. 227–231).

[253] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 234; *Resolutions of the 11th Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), p. 13.

[254] Manuilsky at the tenth IKKI in July 1929 noted that many British comrades had "accepted [the Comintern rulings] out of discipline, not out of conviction", and had "paid tribute to the prejudices of the masses" (*Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 65). Tasca recalled that Manuilsky in December 1928 asked Bell, who was about to return to London, whether he had signed the letters to the KPD and the PCF "by conviction or by discipline", and that Bell had replied: "by discipline" (*Annali, 1966* (Milan, 1966), p. 667).

[255] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 362.

[256] J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), p. 381.

The state of confusion now prevailing in the party was illustrated by the fate of the NLWM. The leaders of that movement had interpreted the decision of the tenth congress of the CPGB to mean that the party itself was withdrawing from the movement, but that individual communists would continue to work in local Left-wing groups or united front committees.[257] Meeting at the beginning of March 1929, the committee of the NLWM drew the logical conclusion, and by a majority of ten to one voted to dissolve the movement as a national organization. This drastic decision was, however, immediately followed by the receipt in London of the Comintern closed letter of February 27, 1929, which emphatically repudiated "the proposal made to the 'Left' leaders to dissolve the national organization, and to work under the control of the local party organizations". Nobody knew what to do next. The corpse could not be resuscitated. The national movement, as its journal the *Sunday Worker* explained, had "disappeared".[258] The protests against its dissolution which the *Sunday Worker* continued to print came mainly from non-communist members who had taken seriously the claim that the NLWM was an independent movement of the Left not under communist control. Finally on May 19, 1929, a statement was published on behalf of the politburo of the CPGB expressing agreement with the views of the protesters "as to the part in the future struggles of the workers that a Left wing movement can play", and promising to reconsider after the general election the resolution on the NLWM passed by the tenth party congress in the previous January.[259] Meanwhile Cook finally ended his long flirtation with the CPGB when early in 1929 he signed a report of the Miners' Federation denouncing the intervention of the NMM, and calling on trade unionists to "resist this interference and the abuse of individuals which goes with it".[260] Pollitt acidly commented that Cook had placed himself at the head of the movement "in order effectively to betray it when the decisive moment came".[261]

In this atmosphere of discord and disarray the CPGB issued its programme for the general election, fixed for May 30, 1929,

[257] *Sunday Worker*, January 27, 1929.
[258] *Ibid.* March 31, 1929.
[259] *Ibid.* May 19, 1929.
[260] *Proceedings of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, 1929–1930* (1930), p. 51.
[261] *The Sunday Worker*, May 5, 1929.

under the title *Class Against Class*.[262] In its opening words, it proclaimed itself "the party of the working class in fundamental opposition to all other parties". The Labour Party was "the third capitalist party", and all three parties fell under the same condemnation:

> They are waging a perpetual civil war against the workers and call it "industrial peace". They wage war abroad and call it "international pacification".

This made the situation entirely different from that of 1924, when the CPGB "advised the workers to push the Labour Party into power".[263] Now the CPGB "puts forward its candidates against the Labour Party, and selects its leaders for especial challenge". The call for the establishment of a "revolutionary workers' government" ran through the whole programme. But it concluded with a detailed "immediate programme of action" the main items of which differed in degree, but rarely or never in principle, from similar demands in the Labour Party programme. Any discussion of electoral tactics in constituencies — the vast majority — where no communist candidate would stand was conspicuously absent. This omission was, however, remedied in a manifesto issued a fortnight before the election, which, after summarizing the party programme ended with a direct, though not quite unqualified, pronouncement:

> In constituencies where no communist candidate is in the field, and where the Labour candidate refuses to pledge himself to a programme of fighting for working class demands, the Communist Party advises the workers not to cast a vote for any of the capitalist candidates, Tory, Liberal or Labour.[264]

[262] According to *Workers' Life*, June 7, 1929, 80,000 copies were sold at a penny each.

[263] For the attitude of the CPGB in 1924 see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 126–127; the animosity which distinguished the situation of 1929 from that of 1924 was mutual. The Labour government which came to power in 1924 was deeply sympathetic to the USSR. The Labour government of 1929 was pledged to renew diplomatic relations; but the trade union wing of the Labour Party had been antagonized by years of recrimination with the Soviet trade unions, and this coloured the attitude of the party as a whole.

[264] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 39, May 7, 1929, pp. 935–936; the English text is in *International Press Correspondence*, No. 22, May 10, 1929, pp. 474–475. On the other hand, articles by Dutt and Pollitt on the

The election was a fiasco for the CPGB. Only 25 communist candidates stood; and the total of votes cast for them did not exceed 50,000. No communist was elected. How many electors who were disposed to vote communist voted Labour in default of a communist candidate, and how many abstained, cannot be guessed. Dutt reassured his readers by pointing out that the Labour Party, at its first electoral venture in 1900, had won only 62,000 votes;[265] and the party newspaper made a mysterious calculation to prove that, if communist candidates had contested every constituency, the total communist vote would have reached a million.[266] In June 1929, after the general election, and apparently after a meeting between representatives of Comintern and of the CPGB in Berlin, a further session of the party central committee was held. It may be presumed to have conducted a *post mortem* on the election. But its only recorded decision was to reduce the size of the politburo from nine to five; among those excluded were Gallacher and Murphy.[267] Since both had recently been, on different grounds, sharp critics of the party leadership, their removal was not welcomed in Moscow.

The tenth IKKI of July 1929, which witnessed the public disgrace of Bukharin and ratified his exclusion from Comintern affairs,[268] was the occasion of a major onslaught on the leadership of the CPGB. The miserable showing of the party in the general election left it wide open to attack. Manuilsky in his main report

eve of the election in *Labour Monthly*, No. 5, 1929, pp. 259–277, while denouncing the Labour Party as the ally of capitalism, did not raise the question how workers should vote in the absence of a communist candidate.

[265] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 43, June 4, 1929, pp. 1149–1150. Dutt's later claim that the rise in the Labour vote "represents an advance of the mass movement which will ultimately destroy the condition of reformism and lead to revolution" (*Labour Monthly*, No. 7, 1929, p. 393) was even less impressive; but Lozovsky had already taken a similar view in December 1928 (A. Lozovsky, *Na Novom Etape* (1929), p. 7).

[266] *Workers' Life*, June 7, 1929.

[267] *Resolutions of the 11th Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), p. 14; for comments on this move at the tenth IKKI in July 1929 see pp. 390–393 below. According to an article by Tapsell in *International Press Correspondence*, No. 63, November 8, 1929, pp. 1363–1364, it was contrary to the "decisions" taken at a "conference abroad" between representatives of Comintern and of the Politburo of the CPGB.

[268] See p. 256 above.

observed that the party had secured only 50,000 votes, not because it had applied "class against class" tactics, but because it had wavered and not applied them energetically and firmly. He called on the session "to subject the leadership of the CPGB to serious criticism".[269] Campbell was profuse in confessions of error, but pleaded that the party had had to "swim against the stream", and that, even after the change of line, "our party leaders still appeared to be dominated by the impression of the great strength of the Labour Party". His proposals for reform sounded vague and anything but radical.[270] Khitarov, the spokesman of KIM, true to the current fashion which made the communist youth leagues the spearhead of the Left in Comintern, made a slashing attack on Campbell and the leadership of the CPGB, which "did not sufficiently understand the new line, and even today shows little understanding of it". Rust, also speaking as a delegate of KIM, filled in the details. The differences within the leadership revealed at the time of the ninth IKKI in February 1928 had never been properly discussed and clarified. Rust attacked Campbell and Rothstein by name, and spoke bitterly of his own and Arnot's exclusion from the central committee and of the removal of Gallacher and Murphy from the politburo. He ended by calling for the appointment of a Comintern commission to review the situation in the party, and for a party conference which would "take account of the decisions of the Comintern commission and elect a new leadership".[271] Pollitt tried to moderate the fury of Rust's assault, insisting that "from the foundation of our party down to January 1928 our policy was the policy of Comintern". But he conceded that "the difference between 1924 and 1929 is enormous", and that it was now necessary to call for "a revolutionary workers' government" which would take up the struggle against the Labour government and the Labour Party. He indulged in no personalities, and expressed confidence that the party "with the help of Comintern" could find "new ways and means" to carry out the resolutions of the congress.[272]

The rest of the proceedings were punctuated by spasmodic outbursts on the British question. Ulbricht, in a fierce denunciation

[269] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 65.
[270] *Ibid.* pp. 195–197.
[271] *Ibid.* pp. 212–213, 232–236.
[272] *Ibid.* pp. 236–241.

of the "wavering" of the CPGB, demanded that "*not only should the two comrades* [Gallacher and Murphy] *be taken back into the politburo, but also other revolutionary workers who would provide certain guarantees that they would consistently carry out the Comintern line*".[273] Bell feebly tried to argue that the party in reshaping the central committee and the politburo had been acting in accordance with the Comintern directives, and claimed, correctly but irrelevantly, that the CPGB contained a higher percentage of proletarians than any other communist party outside the USSR. Horner angrily exclaimed that the party could not agree to regard Gallacher, whom he branded as a defeatist, or Murphy, who represented the "Right danger" and "liquidationist tendencies", as exponents of the Comintern line.[274] Lozovsky's paradoxical assurance that "an extraordinarily favourable situation has now been created for the CPGB, a possibility for its transformation into a mass party",[275] was a sly attack on leaders who had failed to seize this opportunity.

At the end of the debate Manuilsky summed up with a studied air of moderation, which clearly brought out one of the embarrassing problems presented by the CPGB to the Comintern leaders. He attributed to Campbell some remarks which do not figure in the published record of the session, and may have been uttered on some other occasion:

> He said that it did not belong to the traditions of the British party to divide the party into sheep and goats, into those who defend the line and the others who do not defend it, since all were united in the warm wish to carry out the general line in a united front. He took the view that such a division put some comrades in a presumptuous situation and insulted others. I do not know English customs: perhaps this is correct. But I ask our English friends: English comrades, you will during the revolution find yourselves in the position of cutting off heads. Do you really think that we ought today to spare your self-complacency?

Manuilsky touched lightly on the familiar topics. To say that the party had to "swim against the stream" was to ignore the "radicalization of the masses". The slogan "class against class" had not been sincerely applied; only "the correct articles" of Dutt and Arnot earned commendation. Manuilsky returned to his main

[273] *Ibid.* pp. 362–364. [274] *Ibid.* pp. 403–404, 452. [275] *Ibid.* p. 392.

point. Bell had complained (in words not found in the official record of his speech) that Comintern employed "bad second-rank specialists in the business of detecting deviations". To hunt down deviations was precisely what was required. The CPGB had never had serious discussions of principle such as had taken place, for example, in the German and Polish parties:

> In the British party a better system exists, which one can perhaps characterize as follows: The party is a company of great friends.[276]

The stubborn resistance of the CPGB to the current Comintern practice — to split the party by rewarding the faithful and excluding the dissidents — had never been so frankly exposed. But this resistance had now reached its limit. The tenth IKKI — or what happened behind the scenes during the session — was decisive for the future of the party. No special resolution was adopted on its affairs. But the main resolution of the session pronounced a trenchant verdict:

> The more decisively the CPGB roots out all survivals of Right opportunist deviations in its ranks, and carries out a correct Bolshevik policy, sharpening the struggle of the workers against the so-called "Labour" government, the more quickly will the masses of British workers see that the policy of the CPGB — "class against class" — at the time of the recent elections was the only correct policy, that only this policy can aid the liberation of the broad worker masses from parliamentary-pacifist illusions, and point the true way to the victory of the working class.[277]

The presence of "survivals of Right opportunist deviations", already denounced in the German and French parties, was now brought home to the CPGB.

Before this verdict had been delivered — indeed, while the tenth IKKI was actually in session — an open revolt against the leadership had raised its head within the party. No evidence exists to prove that it was prompted from outside sources. But a statement approved by the Tyneside district party committee drew heavily on current Comintern vocabulary, and especially on the closed letter of February 27, 1929, which was mentioned in it. It

[276] *Ibid.* pp. 586–594.

[277] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 882.

noted the decline in party membership, though not — strangely — the puny results of the election campaign. Worse still:

> We are more and more being isolated from the masses. We have no organized roots in the factories. Our influence in the trade unions is rapidly waning, and militant united front organizations such as the NMM and the NUWCM eke out a meagre existence.

The ninth IKKI, the sixth Comintern congress, and the tenth party congress in January 1929 "have taught our leaders nothing". Pollitt was criticized for his lukewarm attitude to a miners' strike in Durham, where he was alleged to have resisted the foundation of a break-away union on the lines of the recently established Mineworkers of Scotland. Both the *Sunday Worker* and *Workers' Life* were castigated for their tolerant treatment of Cook and Maxton. Nothing but the new line would retrieve the situation; "but the new line demands a new leadership". The statement ended with an ultimatum: if the party central committee and the politburo refused to call a national conference "to elect a new leadership in keeping with the new line", then "we shall appeal direct to the International". A few days later, in response to enquiry from the party centre about the declining circulation of *Workers' Life*, the secretary of the Tyneside organization made another statement indicting Campbell and Rothstein by name, and declaring that "the party centre has only formally accepted the closed letter, as it formally accepts the new line".[278]

On July 20, 1929, when the delegates had presumably returned from Moscow, a meeting of the London district party discussed a motion censuring the party leadership for its failure to counteract the Right danger in the party, and calling for a party congress in October to elect a new central committee. Rothstein spoke against the motion which was, however, carried after a six-hour debate by a majority of 206 to 13, with 15 abstentions.[279] This was followed by the sixth congress of the Young Communist League in Manchester, the importance of which was marked by the attendance of a delegate of KIM. Campbell, who addressed the congress on behalf of the party, admitted that errors had been

[278] Both statements were published belatedly in *Communist Review*, No. 10, 1929, pp. 568–578.

[279] *Workers' Life*, July 26, 1929; for another account, apparently of the same meeting, see *ibid.* August 16, 1929.

made and that changes were required, but also pointed to errors of the league itself. Tapsell attacked Campbell, and insisted that the mistakes which had been committed were "Right" mistakes. The congress adopted a resolution calling for changes in the party leadership, an early party congress, and full discussion of the Right danger.[280] The party central committee, meeting in the middle of August 1929, bowed to the inevitable. In a long and obsequious resolution it accepted whole-heartedly the decisions of the tenth IKKI, and pledged itself "to organize a wide discussion in the party in order that they will be thoroughly understood". It reiterated the current Comintern slogans — the danger of an imperialist attack on the Soviet Union, "the new wave of mass struggles", and "the constant radicalization of the working class". It once more dodged the thorny question of the NLWM by proposing "to encourage the co-ordination of Left-wing groups within the Labour Party on a district and national scale, care being taken to avoid the opportunist mistakes committed by the NLWM in the past". It attributed "the present critical situation of the party" to "the Right mistakes committed by the leadership", which were an obsessive theme of the whole resolution. The local branches and the Young Communist League which had denounced the leadership was praised for a "strong and healthy spirit of self-criticism" and for "mobilizing the party and the league for the struggle against the Right danger". A passage rather inconspicuously placed in the middle of the resolution recorded the decision of the committee "to remove three members of the politburo and the secretariat, and to strengthen these organs, especially by drawing in proletarian comrades from the factories".[281] The three delinquents not named in the resolution were Inkpin, secretary of the party since its inception, Rothstein, who as a party intellectual had little following in the rank and file, and Wilson, a trade unionist.[282] Campbell presumably enjoyed too much prestige to be touched for the moment.

While acute controversy centred round the obsequies of the NLWM, not much attention had been given to the NMM, whose

[280] *Ibid.* August 9, 16, 1929; *Young Worker*, August 10, 1929.

[281] *Communist Review*, No. 9, 1929, pp. 520–538.

[282] Inkpin and Rothstein were named and pilloried in a statement by the London district party committee in *Communist Review*, No. 11, 1929, pp. 610–618; all three were named in the resolution of the eleventh party congress in December 1929 (see p. 397 below).

sixth annual conference met at the end of August 1929, a few days after the stormy session of the party central committee. Delegates numbered 710. Horner presented the main resolution on the tasks of the NMM, Pollitt a resolution on the war danger. Representatives of the Soviet trade union central council and of Profintern addressed the conference. The distinctive feature of the main resolution was a long section entitled "Our Mistakes". This called for "open, frank and thorough self-criticism" of the failure of the movement to understand and apply the decisions of the fourth congress of Profintern, and promised to "base its future policy on those decisions".[283] But, since these decisions were differently interpreted by those who regarded the unity of the trade union movement as paramount and those who aimed at the creation of independent Red unions, the resolution provided no escape from the dilemma confronting communists who were active in the trade unions. The eleventh congress of the CPGB three months later continued to insist both on the independent rôle of the NMM and on the need for its strict subordination to the party.[284] But the climate was now totally unpropitious to organizations founded on the basis of old united front traditions of cooperation with other Left parties and groups. The sixth annual conference of the NMM was also its last, and proved to be a decisive step in its decline into impotence and insignificance, though it continued formally to exist for another three years.

The eleventh party congress which met in Leeds from November 30 to December 3, 1929 (it was noted as an omen that Leeds had been the scene of the congress of January 1921 which approved the party constitution and accepted the twenty-one conditions[285]) had little to do but record what were now foregone conclusions. On the eve of the congress the party secretariat explained that the new central committee should consist of "new, politically active comrades with good mass connexions whose enthusiasm for the 'new line' is beyond a doubt", together with those existing members of the committee who "while making mistakes, have shown their faith in the 'new line', and have seriously tried to secure its operation".[286] The letter addressed to

[283] *Now for Action: Report of the Sixth Annual Conference of the NMM* (1929), *passim*.

[284] See p. 397 below.

[285] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 226.

[286] *Workers' Life*, November 29, 1929.

the congress by the presidium of IKKI over the signatures of Sémard, Garlandi and Thälmann (the absence of a Russian signature was perhaps a tactful gesture) left nothing to the imagination. With inextinguishable optimism it hailed the moment as opening a "new chapter in the history of the British working class". It dwelt heavily on past deficiencies:

> The failure of the party to become the mass leader of the workers and the failure of the Minority Movement to become a mass independent workers' movement are due primarily to the Right-wing mistakes committed by the party and its leadership.

The CPGB would never become "a mass Bolshevik party ... unless it systematically, day in and day out, exposes the treacherous social-Fascist rôle of the 'Labour' government and its henchmen". The party must establish a daily newspaper. Above all:

> Your congress must elect a new central committee composed of the best elements of the present leadership, who are fighting for the correct revolutionary line of Comintern, and of new proletariat elements ... who correctly expressed the revolutionary determination of the party.[287]

The congress adopted three resolutions — on the tasks of the party in the light of the tenth IKKI and of the international situation, on the "economic struggles", and on the campaign against the war danger. The first of these, introduced by Pollitt in a two-and-a-half hour report[288] and evidently designed as the major pronouncement of the congress, "whole-heartedly" embraced the decisions of the tenth IKKI, and accused Bukharin of having provided an ideological justification for an opportunist interpretation of the "third period" by playing down the increasing contradictions of capitalism. The term "social-Fascist" was repeatedly used to brand social-democrats: "the Labour government has already begun to show clearly its social-Fascist character". Unbridled denunciation of the past errors of the party was a feature of the resolution; and the attack was extended to individuals. It was recalled that in March 1928 five members of the central committee had still advocated support for Labour candidates in constituencies without a communist candidate — a policy which

[287] *Resolutions of the 11th Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), pp. 37–43.
[288] *Workers' Life*, December 6, 1929.

would have "destroyed the party's independent electoral campaign". In June 1928 the central committee had altered the composition of the politburo in a way which strengthened "Right opportunist tendencies". The resolution endorsed the decision of the central committee in August 1929 to remove Inkpin, Rothstein and Wilson from the politburo and the secretariat, but pointed out that these were only "the first preliminary steps in the changing of the leadership". It ended with a further recital of the errors and shortcomings of the party, and with a call for "a ruthless self-criticism and a daily struggle for the cleansing of the party from opportunism".[289]

The other resolutions said little that was new, and were remarkable only for an increased shrillness of tone. The economic resolution once more denounced "the social-Fascist policy of the trade union leaders" and "the Fascization of the trade union apparatus". The party "must not stop before splitting the social-Fascist trade union organizations"; this meant support for the two recent break-away organizations, the United Mineworkers of Scotland and the United Clothing Workers' Union. The party must work more actively through the NMM and the NUWCM; and the foundation of a daily party newspaper, the *Daily Worker*, was an urgent priority.[290] The resolution on the danger of war, more strident than ever before, noted that "the principal antagonism between the imperialist Powers is between Great Britain and America", but had no doubt that "the fundamental world contradiction is that of the forces of proletarian revolution ... and those of imperialism"; "under the heel of semi-military dictatorship and Fascist terror against the communist parties, the capitalists prosecute the opening stages of their war plan against the USSR". The anti-military work of the party had been neglected. It should engage in "regular propaganda and agitation ... particularly in naval and garrison towns", and stimulate the "establishment of factory groups in most important war industries".[291]

Of the injunctions received from Moscow the most embarrassing, as well as the most insistent, were those relating to personal changes in the leadership; and the steps taken to comply with them received a minimum of publicity. A list of candidates for

[289] *Resolutions of the 11th Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), pp. 5–18.
[290] *Ibid.* pp. 19–28.
[291] *Ibid.* pp. 29–36.

election to the party central committee, which included none of the old majority leaders, was submitted to the congress and unanimously voted — apparently the first occasion in the history of the party when a bloc vote had replaced individual election. Only one of those omitted from the list ventured to put himself forward as a candidate — Hannington, who still enjoyed respect and prestige as the successful organizer of the NUWM. He was elected.[292] The resolutions of the congress were published with a brief foreword by Tapsell, whose appearance in this capacity was a tribute to the part played by the Young Communist League in engineering the change. The foreword criticized "the old leadership", which had "shown itself unable to lead the party and the masses" in the new situation, and had been "decisively rejected" by the congress, but said nothing of the new leaders.[293]

The greatest obscurity surrounded the selection of a party leader. The CPGB, unlike any other important communist party, had never had a clearly designated leader; Inkpin, the party secretary, had never played an outstanding rôle. This state of affairs did not appeal to Comintern officials in Moscow, who may well have seen in it one more reason for the weakness of the party. When, at the sixth NMM conference in August 1929, Horner instead of Pollitt presented the main resolution, Pollitt explained that, as a member of the CPGB, he had been "asked to undertake certain work for that party";[294] and, when the party news-sheet announced that Pollitt had resigned his post as secretary of the NMM in order to take up work "of the utmost importance" for the party,[295] the implication was clear, not only that he was Inkpin's successor-designate, but that the new secretary would be expected to exercise functions of leadership to which Inkpin had never aspired. The choice may have been a compromise, since Pollitt, though never tainted by resistance to the new line, had recently come under fire from the Left for his handling of the Durham miners' strike.[296] The way was prepared by a carefully drafted article in the party journal over Pollitt's signature in which he

[292] *Workers' Life*, November 29, December 6, 1929; T. Bell, *History of the British Communist Party* (1937), p. 137.

[293] *Resolutions of the 11th Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), p. 4.

[294] *The Worker*, August 30, 1929; for this conference see pp. 394–395 above.

[295] *Workers' Life*, August 30, 1929; *The Times*, August 28, 1929, also reported that Pollitt would henceforth be "employed full time" by the CPGB.

[296] See p. 393 above.

referred to the mistakes of "leading comrades", including himself, demonstrated his enthusiastic endorsement of the conclusions of the tenth IKKI (he even quoted Molotov), and declared that the forthcoming party congress "will have as one of its most important tasks a real political discussion on the composition of the central committee".[297] At the congress itself, though no formal announcement of his appointment as secretary appears to have been made, Pollitt assumed the functions of leadership. Pollitt displayed many of the virtues which Comintern had found in Thälmann — proletarian origin, capacity to appeal to mass audiences, a certain shrewdness combined with a total absence of intellectual pretension, and an unswerving loyalty to directives from Moscow. But the success of his tenure of office rested on an apparently ill-assorted partnership between Pollitt and Dutt, each of whom supplied qualities conspicuously lacking in the other.

[297] *Communist Review*, No. 10, 1929, pp. 560–567.

CHAPTER 76

THE GERMAN PARTY (KPD)

THE middle nineteen-twenties in the KPD were the golden age of the united front. The phenomena of mass unemployment and pressure on wages, which followed the rehabilitation of the German economy and the stabilization of the mark,[1] encouraged the sense of solidarity among workers, irrespective of ideological commitment, and favoured policies which Comintern, ever since the removal of Ruth Fischer from the leadership of the KPD, had assiduously promoted. The open letter of August 1925 reproached the Maslow–Fischer group with its failure to win "the masses, and particularly the social-democratic masses", called for "pressure on the workers for trade union unity", and held up "the English workers' movement" as a model.[2] The sending of the letter coincided with the highly successful visit to Moscow of a large delegation of German workers, of whom more than two-thirds were SPD or non-party.[3] This was followed by the establishment in the KPD of a "unity committee", and early in 1926 an ostensibly non-party monthly journal *Einheit*, in which social-democratic as well as communist workers were invited to participate, was launched to promote a united front for specific objectives.[4] Lozovsky at the sixth IKKI in February 1926 made fun of ultra-Left communists

[1] An analysis of the crisis in the KPD journal led up to the conclusion that "the liquidation of the mass unemployment is totally impossible in the framework of the capitalist economy" (*Die Internationale*, ix, No. 11–12, June 20, pp. 350–354, No. 13, July 5, 1926, pp. 396–401).

[2] For the open letter see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 328; for the embarrassments of trade union policy under the Maslow–Fischer régime see *ibid.* Vol. 3, pp. 113–115.

[3] See *ibid.* Vol. 3, pp. 579–580; the visit was mentioned in the open letter itself (see *ibid.* Vol. 3, p. 328).

[4] According to a later statement, made after it had been thoroughly discredited, the *Einheit* movement was organized, and presumably financed, "through the central council of the Russian trade unions", and used this connection to stave off communist criticism (*Die Internationale*, xii, No. 1–2, January 1929, p. 30); for the resistance of the Russian trade unions to the policies of Profintern see pp. 167, 177 above.

who refused to greet social-democrats or shake hands with them, and concluded:

> The old leadership of the KPD not only did not understand how to win the social-democratic workers, but still further deepened the rift between social-democratic and communist workers.[5]

The high-water mark of collaboration between KPD and SPD was reached when the two parties campaigned jointly against a bill to pay compensation to the former royal houses for their expropriated property. In March 1926 12 million signatures were obtained for a petition to hold a referendum on the question. When the referendum took place on June 20, 1926, the vote had swelled to 14·5 millions; and this, though still too small to defeat the bill, was an impressive demonstration of the power and solidarity of the workers. It also showed, like the Reichstag elections, that the KPD enjoyed an electoral support far in excess of the number of its members. It was widely asserted that the SPD leaders had been opposed to this collaboration and that the party had been drawn into it by pressure from the rank and file against their volition.[6] The "unity committees" set up for this campaign were from the outset regarded by the KPD as organs to be kept in being after their immediate purpose had been served, and as a happy augury for the future cooperation of social-democratic and communist workers, and even perhaps of some petty-bourgeois elements, in the struggle against capitalist domination.[7] A second, and even larger, German workers' delegation visited the Soviet Union from July 27 to October 15, 1926, and repeated the success of the previous year.[8] The united front was still in high favour at the seventh IKKI in Moscow in November 1926. Kuusinen quoted with disapproval a slogan put forward in the *Rote Fahne*: "Leave the SPD, enter the KPD"; this, he declared,

[5] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internationala* (1927) 420–421; for Zetkin's criticism on the same occasion see Note C: "Social Fascism", pp. 638–644 below.

[6] *Die Internationale*, ix, No. 13, July 5, 1926, pp. 385–386; this was admitted many years later by one of the SPD leaders (O. Braun, *Von Weimar zu Hitler* (N.Y., 1940), p. 215).

[7] *Die Internationale*, ix, No. 6, March 15, 1926, pp. 181–184.

[8] *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, iv (1956), No. 2, p. 348; it consisted of sixty-five workers, forty-five belonging to the SPD, eight to the KPD and twelve to other parties or none.

"does not yet correspond to the situation".[9] The invocation of the united front was, however, always equivocal. A party conference on August 26–27, 1926, called for the application of the united front "only 'from below'", independently of, and if necessary against, the social-democratic leaders.[10] While cooperation in provincial and local elections continued during 1926,[11] relations between the parties at a higher level soon faded. The social-democrat leaders mistrusted the united front; the communist leaders preached it, but on the unspoken condition of communist predominance.

In December 1926 the KPD organized two gatherings in Berlin which were said to have "extraordinary importance for the development of the united front in Germany".[12] The first, a national conference of unemployed, was dominated by the KPD, which contributed 255 delegates, as against 33 social-democrats and 114 non-party. It sought to "eradicate all anti-trade union tendencies", but proclaimed its revolutionary character. It set up a central committee and local committees for the unemployed.[13] The second, a workers' congress, was conceived as the culmination of a campaign for the united front of all workers which had been inaugurated in the referendum of June 1926, its aim being to overcome the divisions in the working class and to strengthen it for self-defence against the oppressions of capitalism.[14] It was presided over by Ledebour, the former USPD leader; Heckert spoke for the KPD. The congress came out in favour of the nationalization of banks, trusts and land, and of a forty-two hour week for workers, and "took the vow to create a united front of workers".[15] The reality behind the rhetoric was less impressive.

[9] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 127.

[10] *Die Rote Fahne*, August 29, 1926.

[11] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 336.

[12] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 146, November 30, 1926, pp. 2546–2548.

[13] *Ibid.* No. 150, December 7, 1926, pp. 2647–2648. Thälmann significantly noted that "a large number of members of our communist party are unemployed" (*Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 266). In 1926, according to the Comintern journal, one in every three members of the KPD was unemployed, and one in fifteen in prison (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 6–7 (132–133), 1928, p. 76); the proportion of unemployed in the SPD and the ADGB was much lower.

[14] *Die Internationale*, ix, November 15, 1926, pp. 676–677.

[15] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 151, December 10, 1926, pp. 2663–2665.

Dengel, at the eleventh congress of the KPD three months later, frankly admitted that an estimate of 10 million workers represented at the December congress was an "enormous exaggeration", that "extremely few of the big factories" participated, and that no impact had been made on the "important trade unions", where the social-democratic strength lay. On the same occasion Rosenberg drew graphic attention to the weaknesses in the KPD which the congress had shown up:

> We are terribly weak in the big industries, and therefore in trade union work. The greater part of our adherents are unemployed or in small concerns. And so we stand on the periphery and not at the heart of the working class.[16]

The two occasions were saluted in a resolution of the politburo of the KPD of December 10, 1926, as an index both of the turn in the workers' movement to the Left and of the progress of the united front.[17] But these somewhat dubious achievements did not remove anxieties about the strength of the party itself. Its membership remained throughout this period at the not very impressive figure of about 125,000. Turnover was large, and the total persistently failed to grow.[18]

While the KPD was struggling desperately to increase its appeal to the German worker, its leadership, owing partly to its own fissiparous tendencies, and partly to Comintern pressures,

[16] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des XI Parteitags der KPD* (1927), pp. 36, 202. Of the 163 delegates at the workers' congress, 29 came from factories employing more than 1000 workers, 56 from smaller factories, 41 were unemployed, and 46 were party officials (*ibid.* pp. 172–173); it was also noted that the party was better represented proportionally in small than in large cities (*ibid.* p. 94). The complaint that the "reformists" dominated the large factories was still heard a year later (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 17 (143), 1928, pp. 25–29). The SPD delegates who attended the workers' congress were afterwards threatened by their leaders with expulsion from the party for their unauthorized participation (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 154, December 17, 1926, p. 2760).

[17] *Die Internationale*, ix, No. 24, December 15, 1926, pp. 740–746; the resolution also noted the low proportion of communists in the larger factories.

[18] The total on January 1, 1927, was 128,339 (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondez*, No. 104, October 25, 1927, p. 2233); at the sixth congress of Comintern in July 1928 it was returned at 124,000 (A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *Desyat' Let Kominterna v Tsifrakh* (1929), p. 350); Pyatnitsky at the tenth IKKI a year later repeated this figure and remarked on the large turnover (*Protokoll: 10 Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 260).

was in a state of disintegration. The open letter of August 1925 dethroned Ruth Fischer without putting anyone in her place. The ensuing uncertainty led to a split in the Left group itself, out of which Thälmann slowly emerged as the new leader, with the direct and powerful support of Comintern, and personally of Stalin.[19] Much play was made with the fact that Thälmann was a worker; his rise was accompanied by a campaign against intellectuals. Zinoviev, eager to discredit Ruth Fischer, had asked in August 1925 why the Berlin workers could "find no *worker* to lead the party", and denounced the "shameless and insolent bureaucracy of intellectuals [*Intellektuellen-Bonzentum*]".[20] In the German commission of the sixth IKKI in March 1926, Bukharin accused the ultra-Left in the KPD of lacking "deep faith in the power of the working class", and was accused in turn by Urbahns of starting "a persecution of the intellectuals".[21] Stalin spelt out the message in cruder, more forceful terms:

> Among certain intellectuals voices are heard saying that the central committee of the KPD is weak, that its leadership is weak, that the absence of intellectual resources in the central committee has an adverse effect on its work, that the central committee does not exist. All this is untrue, comrades. Such talk I regard as an outburst of intellectuals, unworthy of communists.... It is said that the central committee does not shine in theoretical qualifications. Well, what? If the policy is right, theoretical qualifications will not matter. Knowledge comes from experience, if it is not there today, it will come tomorrow. But it is not easy for some conceited intellectuals to accommodate themselves to the correct policy which is being carried out by the central committee of the KPD.
>
> Comrade Thälmann! Take these intellectuals into the service, if they are really willing to serve the workers' cause, or you can send them to the devil, if they want at all costs to be in command.[22]

[19] For these events see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926,* Vol. 3, pp. 100–117, 311–340, 509–513.

[20] *Der Neue Kurs* (1925), pp. 22, 26; for earlier symptoms of this trend see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926,* Vol. 3, pp. 305, 327.

[21] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional,* No. 3 (52), March 1926, pp. 54, 102.

[22] Stalin, *Sochineniya,* viii, 110–111; for this session see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926,* Vol. 3, pp. 509–511. Molotov took up the theme at the fifteenth Russian party conference in October 1926, hailing Kalinin, Smirnov, Voroshilov, Tomsky, Ugarov and Shmidt as 'all workers, the very flower of

The report of the secretariat to the seventh IKKI in November 1926, true to the theory that Thälmann's leadership represented the workers, congratulated the KPD on having "rid the workers of these renegades".[23]

But the chief significance of Thälmann's promotion lay elsewhere. Ruth Fischer's victory at the ninth party congress in April 1924 had been achieved in face of some rather half-hearted opposition from Manuilsky, the Comintern representative;[24] both the tradition and the instruments of control from Moscow were still weak. An undercurrent of anti-Russian feeling had coloured Ruth Fischer's leadership, and was fostered by her close association with Maslow, the renegade Russian. The elevation of Thälmann marked a sharp reaction in all ways against these tendencies. It was the first time that a leader of the KPD had been plainly chosen by the grace of Moscow. It might be argued that such an intervention was necessary to prevent the KPD from being torn asunder by rival factions — as happened shortly afterwards to the Polish party.[25] But it could also be said that repeated interventions by Comintern in the past had created the conditions which made this action necessary. The essence of the change was marked by Stalin's comment in the German commission of the sixth IKKI in March 1926 that the new central committee of the KPD was "neither Right nor 'ultra-Left' ", but "a Leninist central committee",[26] Leninism being party doctrine as interpreted in Moscow. "In our inner-party struggle," observed Thälmann at the seventh IKKI in November 1926, "nothing less is at stake than the relations of our party to the Soviet Union."[27] Loyalty to Moscow became the decisive criterion.

While Thälmann had always counted as a member of the Left, and the former Right Wing of the KPD was thoroughly dis-

our party" (*XV Konferentsiya Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1927), p. 669). Bukharin at the fifteenth party congress in December 1927 remarked with a hint of contempt that "our communist parties contain ... a tiny handful [*dva s polovinoi*] of intellectuals" (*Pyatnadtsatyi S"ezd VKP(B)*, i (1960), 680).

[23] *Tätigkeitsbericht der Exekutiv der Kommunistischen Internationale, Februar bis November 1926* (1926), p. 57.

[24] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 100–117.

[25] See pp. 573–575 below. [26] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, viii, 110.

[27] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 262.

credited, the fortunes of the Russian and German parties were now indissolubly linked. Throughout 1926, moving in step with Stalin's campaign against the united opposition in Moscow, the majority in the KPD under Thälmann's leadership concentrated its fire on the Left and ultra-Left groups in the party; and it was these groups which claimed to defend the pure doctrine of Marx and Lenin against the degeneracy of the Comintern line, and vigorously denounced the growing domination of Moscow. The ultra-Left extremists, Karl Katz and his immediate followers, had already been expelled from the party.[28] Rosenberg at the sixth IKKI in March 1926 had reluctantly rallied to the Comintern line; his old comrade Scholem dissociated himself from Ruth Fischer, but was attacked by Lominadze, Thälmann and Ewert as an ultra-Leftist and a sympathizer with Katz.[29] Korsch, a learned Marxist and outstanding party intellectual, long known for his critical attitude to the Soviet Government and to Comintern,[30] who had not been present at the sixth IKKI, defiantly launched an independent ultra-Left journal, *Die Kommunistische Politik*, which engaged in uncompromising opposition to the official line. In a speech to the Reichstag, in which he was a communist deputy, on June 10, 1926, he opposed the ratification of the Soviet–German treaty of April 24, 1926, as being incompatible with the principles of Marxism. Marxists held that peace could be secured not by compromises with capitalist states, but by international proletarian revolution; the treaty rested on the assumption of a community of interest between bourgeoisie and proletariat "on an international scale".[31] On July 1, 1926, he was expelled from the party.[32] But the Korsch group had more intellectual distinction than political cohesion or support from the rank and file. Greater

[28] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 339.

[29] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 62–69; Rosenberg afterwards gravitated towards the Right.

[30] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 78 n., 110; he was branded as a renegade in the resolution of the sixth IKKI (*ibid.* Vol. 3, p. 511).

[31] *Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, cccxc, 7443–7445.

[32] *Pravda*, July 1, 1926; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 91, July 6, 1926, p. 1487. One of the charges against him was that of cooperating with Hansen, the Norwegian dissident (*ibid.* No. 54, April 9, 1926, p. 795). For Hansen see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 519; he was apparently responsible for smuggling opposition documents from Moscow to Berlin (R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 570).

apprehension was excited in official KPD circles and in Moscow by another ultra-Left group, the so-called "Wedding opposition". Its leader, Hans Weber, was a member of the party central committee. It had fewer leaders and intellectuals, but a far larger following among workers, than the other opposition groups, from which it remained somewhat aloof. Its main strength lay in the Wedding district (a working-class district) of Berlin, in Leipzig and in the Palatinate; elsewhere it was weak. Throughout the first months of 1926, it had protested against the current régime in both the Russian and German parties, and in a resolution passed in April 1926 after the sixth IKKI had denounced "the violation of party democracy".[33]

Meanwhile the old leaders of the official Left were still fighting a rearguard action against the new party line. In June 1926 Ruth Fischer, apparently with some help from Zinoviev and Bukharin, but without the formal approval of IKKI, left Moscow for Berlin.[34] On July 10, 1926, Maslow was released from prison on grounds of health. But he refused a summons to Moscow to defend himself in the international control commission of IKKI against charges of "unworthy" behaviour before the German court; and the commission condemned his behaviour as "erroneous and non-communist".[35] For these breaches of discipline both Fischer and Maslow were expelled from the KPD by decision of its central committee of August 19, 1926; the expulsions were confirmed by IKKI a week later.[36] The Fischer–Maslow

[33] *Die Rote Fahne*, April 22, 1926.

[34] The account in R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 565, like much else in that work, must be accepted with caution. The quoted resolution of the presidium of IKKI of July 4, 1926, is not, as stated, in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, and has not been traced; but *Tätigkeitsbericht der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale, Februar bis November 1926* (1926), p. 57, states that she returned to Germany "without the permission of IKKI".

[35] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 97; for the charges see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 334, notes 3, 4. Maslow's premature release led to rumours that he had become an *agent provocateur* or had supplied information to the police; these were aired in *Pravda*, July 1, 1926.

[36] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 107, August 20, 1926, p. 1798, No. 110, August 31, 1926, p. 1855. Bukharin, who visited Berlin at this time (see p. 411 below for his meeting with Meyer on August 18, 1926), may have been concerned in the decision; R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 568, misdates his arrival "August 20" after the decision to expel her had been taken.

group, having been so recently in power, enjoyed more support among party officials at all levels than the ultra-Left groups. Urbahns, now one of its leading members, still retained his seat in the party central committee; and it was a longer and more troublesome business to weed out its adherents in important positions.

The party struggle in Moscow, and the formation of the united opposition in the summer of 1926, stimulated all these groups into action. Korsch declared that the Leningrad opposition had been right in its rejection of socialism in one country, and in its "disillusioned characterization of Russian state industry as state-capitalist".[37] Weber, the leader of the Wedding opposition, inspired perhaps by Korsch's broadside, indulged in the defiant gesture of submitting to the party central committee a comprehensive draft resolution endorsing in detail the policies and pronouncements of Zinoviev and the Leningrad opposition, and pledging the "Wedding Left" to "support every movement which, on the basis of the opposition at the fourteenth party congress of the VKP(B), carries on the struggle against Stalinism".[38] Denunciation by the party leadership produced an inclination in the Left groups to combine against it. A memorandum entitled "Materials on the Russian Question", accusing the Russian party of degeneration and of a betrayal of Leninism in theory and in practice, was said to have been a joint production of the Urbahns and Wedding groups.[39] Discussions went on throughout August 1926; and on September 11, 1926, a printed "declaration of the 700" was delivered to the party central committee with the signatures of 700 party officials from all three groups who were still party members. The signatories proclaimed their complete solidarity with the Leningrad opposition in the Russian party, which "has represented the correct Leninist line, and ... alone really continues the tradition of Lenin", and had set itself against "openly Right tendencies". It appealed to all party members "to adhere

[37] The statement was printed in the *Rote Fahne*, Beilage, August 17, 1926.

[38] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 106, August 17, 1926, pp. 1768–1769, where it was followed by an indignant retort which had appeared in the *Rote Fahne*, August 14, 1926, and by a long theoretical article in defence of the party line signed "Marxist".

[39] *XV Konferentsiya Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1927), p. 703.

individually or in local groups to this our declaration".[40] Some evidence exists that the party leaders thought of the Wedding opposition as less incorrigible, or in need of more delicate handling, than the other groups, and perhaps still hoped to drive a wedge between them. A conference of the party central committee and party workers towards the end of August 1926 named Korsch and Maslow, who had been expelled from the party, as guilty of fractionalism, but not Weber, who was still in the party;[41] and a long resolution of the central committee of September 16, 1926, while condemning Korsch's declaration as "a criminal attempt at splitting" the party, merely reproved Weber for an association with Maslow and Fischer which he had hitherto declined. It called, however, for the dismissal from their posts of all who had signed the declaration of the 700.[42] In the chaotic state of the party, the eleventh party congress, originally planned for the end of November 1926 was postponed till the spring of 1927.[43]

Throughout these proceedings the inter-action between disputes in the Russian party and in foreign communist parties was increasingly apparent. If dissident groups in other parties rallied to the platform of the Russian opposition, it was natural for the leaders of the opposition to welcome, and indeed to woo, their support, and in return to support them within their own parties. It was equally natural for the Soviet leaders to resent these tactics, and to brand the opposition for seeking to compound its own disloyalty by encouraging disloyalty elsewhere. Nowhere was this issue so acute as in relation to the KPD. The closeness of the ties between the two countries and the two parties lent to the

[40] Its first publication was in *Vorwärts*, September 13, 1926; this was treated as an additional provocation (*Tätigkeitsbericht der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale, Februar bis November 1926* (1926) p. 57). It led to splits both in the Korsch group and in the Wedding opposition, some members of which refused to be associated with the Maslow–Fischer group; at one moment two ultra-Left journals were being published (*ibid.* pp. 57–59).

[41] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 110, August 31, 1926, pp. 1855–1857.

[42] *Tätigkeitsbericht der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale, Februar bis November 1926* (1926), p. 59; *Die Rote Fahne*, September 17, 1926.

[43] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 170, note 220.

controversy a peculiar note of bitterness. Much of the platform of the ultra-Left in the KPD was borrowed from the Russian opposition, and consisted of attacks on the policies of the Russian party. The KPD was more directly involved than any other party in the struggle against the opposition in Moscow. To defeat the opposition in the KPD was an important stage towards the defeat of the opposition at home. When the ultimatum of the party central committee of October 11, 1926, called on the opposition to dissociate itself from its supporters, and opponents of the Comintern line, in foreign parties, the only names cited were those of Fischer, Urbahns and Maslow.[44] Corresponding instructions reached the KPD from Comintern. On October 23, 1926, Neumann, now the KPD delegate at Comintern headquarters,[45] wrote to Berlin that the authorities in Moscow desired to see the expulsion of Urbahns and Scholem from the party before the session of IKKI fixed for mid-November; the KPD delegates to the session should consist not of "a collection of different trends", but of "a closed delegation of the central committee". Neumann admitted, however, that in view of past events "the ultra-Left cannot be liquidated in a few days", and that "so long as they still hold Neukölln and Wedding, there is no question of their final defeat".[46]

When the fifteenth conference of the Russian party met on October 26, 1926, a message of greeting was read from the German party protesting against "the unprincipled bloc of comrades Zinoviev and Trotsky with the opposition in the KPD", and naming "the renegades Korsch and Schwarz, Ruth Fischer and Maslow, who have been expelled from the party", as well as Urbahns and Scholem. It referred with particular indignation to a speech of October 21, 1926, in which Urbahns had quoted the leaders of the Russian opposition in support of his attack on "the unprincipled international line" of the Russian party central

[44] See Vol. 2, p. 15; the opposition was continually taunted with its link with the Maslow–Fischer group (see Vol. 2, p. 50). Urbahns momentarily saved himself by signing a declaration dissociating himself from the Russian opposition, which appeared in the *Rote Fahne*, October 22, 1926.

[45] Neumann, at this time a rising star in Comintern, had ingratiated himself in Moscow by a series of articles attacking the "ultra-Left Mensheviks" in the KPD, which appeared in *Pravda*, July 28, 29, 30, 31, August 4, 1926.

[46] Letter printed from police archives in H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 418–419.

committee.[47] On the following day the conference adopted a brief resolution on work in Comintern, and sent a reply to the central committee of the KPD, which declared that the campaign being waged by Scholem, Weber and Urbahns put them on the same footing as "the renegades and worst enemies of communism". Later in the conference, Zetkin delivered a fiery attack on the dissidents in the KPD, distinguishing between the "resolute Lefts", like Korsch, Katz and Schwarz, and the "irresolute Lefts" such as Maslow, Scholem and Urbahns, who united on the common platform of "the Russian question".[48] On November 5, 1926, two days after the Moscow conference ended, the central committee of the KPD expelled Urbahns and Scholem from the party.[49]

The final rout of the Left opposition in the KPD was widely interpreted as a reaction towards the Right. Since the removal of Brandler and Thalheimer in 1924, Ernst Meyer had led a Centre group which incorporated much of what remained of a Right group in the party. At first he made little impact, and had been politely elbowed aside at the sixth IKKI in February–March 1926.[50] But the group had a substantial following, especially in the rank and file of the party and among lower party officials; and in the bitter struggle against the ultra-Left, their support could not be rejected. When Bukharin came to Berlin in August 1926, Meyer had more than one conversation with him, and found him, "in contrast to March, very amiable". Bukharin appeared to share his views, was critical of Thälmann, Neumann and the existing central committee, and held out hope that Meyer would regain his seat on it.[51] Tentative discussions between Thälmann and Meyer in the autumn of 1926 were said to have revealed a basis of agreement in the final dissolution of the Meyer group and the cooperation of its members with the central committee.[52] No decisive moves had, however, been made, and the situation in the

[47] *XV Konferentsiya Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1927), pp. 45–48.

[48] *Ibid.* pp. 101–103, 702–704; *KPSS v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1954), ii, 293.

[49] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 164.

[50] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 510–511.

[51] The conversations were reported by Meyer in letters to his wife (H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 448); it is possible that Meyer read more into Bukharin's amiability than was intended.

[52] *Tätigkeitsbericht der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale, Februar bis November 1926* (1926), p. 60.

KPD was still confused and obscure, when the seventh IKKI met in Moscow at the end of November 1926.

The seventh IKKI, which sat from November 22 to December 16, 1926, was primarily concerned with the opposition in the Russian party and with the Chinese and British questions;[53] and, in so far as the affairs of the KPD engaged its attention, the Russian leaders showed no desire to alter course. Both Bukharin and Kuusinen referred in enthusiastic terms to the joint action by parties of the Left in the referendum of June 1926 on the expropriation of the German ruling houses, which, though it had fallen short of success, had been a landmark in cooperation between KPD and SPD, and to the forthcoming congresses of workers and of unemployed under KPD auspices in Berlin, which were hailed as useful examples of united front tactics.[54] On the other hand, Bukharin, in an incidental passage in his report, observed that, while in 1923 the KPD was prepared to support German resistance to French imperialism, the situation had now fundamentally changed with Germany's economic and political recovery. Germany had become economically a "leading Power", had turned from an eastern to a western orientation, and was beginning to demand a return of her colonies under the guise of mandates. Even a socialist journal was quoted as canvassing Germany's need for raw materials.[55] The implication that the KPD had lost a solid base of collaboration with the SPD and with other German parties was not, however, brought out; and nobody pursued the theme. Thälmann followed the official line, but condemned the Left opposition in the KPD rather for its disloyalty to the Soviet Union than for any other reason, and contrived to give a radical twist to his peroration.[56] The KPD delegation to the seventh IKKI included two supporters of the Wedding opposition. One of them, Riese by name, submitted on behalf of the group an extensive programme calling for more specifically revolutionary tactics, and alleging that the campaign for "the masses at all costs" had led to a situation in the party in which "its com-

[53] See pp. 131–142 above.

[54] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 108, 127; for Kuusinen's remarks on work in the trade unions see p. 128 above.

[55] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 77.

[56] *Ibid.* i, 260–270; for the peroration see pp. 135–136 above.

munist face is more and more veiled, and inactivity inculcated". Under the slogan "The enemy is on the Left", the attack had been directed on "all Left elements which ... take their stand against the ever increasing wave of opportunism in the party and against any new edition of Brandlerism". The party central committee had engaged in "*an intensified continuation*" of the campaign of "the Fischer–Maslow Zentrale" against the then ultra-Left opposition, and let loose on it "a hail of exclusions and other mechanical measures".[57] Riese, speaking amid interruptions, denied the reality of capitalist stabilization and denounced Right dangers in the KPD.[58] His intervention received short shrift from other speakers. At the end of the debate a commission was appointed to prepare a draft resolution on the affairs of the KPD; Bukharin was its president with Kuusinen as his deputy.[59] Meanwhile Thälmann, on behalf of the presidium, announced that Maslow, Ruth Fischer, Urbahns, Scholem, Schwarz and Schwan had appealed to IKKI, the highest instance in Comintern, against their expulsion, and that the presidium had telegraphed requesting their immediate appearance in Moscow.[60] The invitation was accepted by all the appellants except Maslow, who, not being a German national, could not rely on German diplomatic intervention if the Soviet authorities detained him. They were heard not in a plenary session of IKKI, but by a commission presided over by Kuusinen. The commission listened to them for "many hours", and cross-examined them with predictable results. Defiant answers by Ruth Fischer, Scholem and Urbahns were included in Kuusinen's report to the plenary session; and some play was made with Maslow's trust in the protection of the German police. The plenary session approved without discussion the recommendation of the commission to reject the appeal.[61]

Thälmann then explained on behalf of the presidium that the

[57] *Die Internationale*, ix, No. 23, December 1, 1926, pp. 723–729, No. 24, December 15, 1926, pp. 756–760; for a reply headed "Radical Words — Opportunist Spirit" see *ibid.* ix, No. 25, January 10, 1927, pp. 789–794.

[58] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 280–287; later Riese proposed that a specific invitation should be given to Zinoviev and other leaders of the Russian opposition to speak — a proposal rejected on the ground that they were already entitled to speak if they so desired (*ibid.* i, 512–513; for the position of the opposition leaders see Vol. 2, pp. 19–20).

[59] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 488.

[60] *Ibid.* i, 511.

[61] *Ibid.* ii, 372–380.

resolution on the affairs of the KPD, which was being prepared by the German commission, had been referred to a sub-commission, and was not yet ready. He asked that the final decision on it should be left to the presidium; this was agreed.[62] The resolution when completed received the formal assent of the presidium of IKKI on January 7, 1927, and was published with the records of the session. The sweeping condemnation of the various Left groups was qualified only in respect of the Wedding opposition, which was admittedly different from "party enemies and renegades" like Ruth Fischer, Urbahns, Korsch and Schwarz. It maintained some degree of party discipline, and included "a considerable number of sincerely revolutionary workers (even though they found themselves on wrong paths)". Nevertheless, its leaders were under an obligation to break off all relations with those expelled from the party and to bow to decisions of the party and Comintern; if they failed to do this, they would be responsible for the consequences. The last two sections did, however, maintain a careful balance between Left and Right, and were probably the bone of contention which delayed its final appearance. The strengthening of the KPD was said to require "a struggle against the bourgeoisie and the SPD, including the 'Left' leaders of the SPD". The party "must not forget for a moment, in the struggle against ultra-Left deviations, the Right tendencies which have been by no means liquidated"; it must choose "between the opportunist deviations and errors of Brandler–Thalheimer and the policy of the central committee and the Communist International". On the other hand, the party, while continuing to fight against the opportunist errors of the Brandler–Thalheimer group, must "work with those former Rightist comrades who unequivocally renounce their earlier errors and unreservedly support the leadership".[63]

Besides the campaign against the ultra-Left, the main preoccupation of Comintern in German affairs at the seventh IKKI was the building up of the new KPD leadership. Thälmann was invited to preside at the opening of the session — an honour usually reserved for the chief Russian party representative. His

[62] *Ibid.* ii, 380.

[63] The resolution first appeared in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 16, February 5, 1927, pp. 343–344, and is in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 690–694.

appearances were greeted with rapturous applause; and at a later stage of the session a strange scene was enacted. Two delegates of a Red Army training unit attended to proclaim Thälmann an "honorary soldier" of the battalion and to present him with a uniform, which he put on amid loud cheers; and in reply he pledged the KPD and the Roter Frontkämpferbund, of which he was the leader, to learn from the revolutionary spirit and fraternal solidarity of the Russian workers and peasants.[64] As an authentic worker, Thälmann made a good figure-head, and enjoyed personal popularity. His other gifts were not outstanding. His closest coadjutor Dengel, who like him had left the Maslow–Fischer group after the open letter of August 1925, was undistinguished. But the leadership was soon reinforced by some senior members of the party not recently associated with either Right or Left — notably Remmele, Eberlin and Geschke: these brought with them a mass of younger party officials, Ulbricht being the most prominent of them, whose loyal support was necessary to the smooth working of the party.

It was Bukharin and the other leaders of Comintern rather than the German leaders themselves who, in their anxiety to build up a solid and united leadership for an important party, showed themselves eager for reconciliation with usable elements of the former Right. For more than two years Brandler had lived in Moscow, a forgotten man, and had played no part in the recent controversies of the KPD. Zetkin had referred with sympathy to him and Thalheimer at the sixth IKKI in March 1926.[65] This stirred no echo at the time. But on October 20, 1926, some weeks before the seventh IKKI, presumably not without official encouragement, Brandler and Thalheimer submitted to the international control commission a petition to be relieved of the ban placed by IKKI in April 1925 on their participation in Comintern. This move was not discussed in the debates of the seventh IKKI, and Brandler's name was scarcely mentioned. But at the end of the last sitting on

[64] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 280–283; Kuusinen on the same occasion called the Roter Frontkämpferbund a "model" of "non-party organizations of sympathizers with us" (*ibid.* i, 123), and the party journal later described it as "a bridge to the sympathizing strata which the party cannot yet reach, cannot yet set in motion" (*Die Internationale*, xii, No. 8–9, May 1, 1929, p. 350). For the foundation of this organization see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 107.

[65] See *ibid.* Vol. 3, p. 508.

December 16, 1926, Stuchka on behalf of the international control commission submitted a draft resolution which, noting that Brandler and Thalheimer had honoured their undertaking to refrain from fractional activity, withdrew the ban, but left the practical question of their employment on German party work to the central committee of the KPD.[66] Adopted without discussion, it was a somewhat meaningless decision, since it was clear that Thälmann and his supporters would never welcome back so controversial a figure as Brandler to their ranks. But it indicated the more indulgent attitude in Moscow towards the former Right.

Of more practical significance was a determined attempt to strengthen the KPD leadership by the incorporation in it of the moderate Centre group led by Meyer. A number of members of this group who had lost their posts or been expelled from the party in 1924 were reinstated.[67] In the plenary session, Meyer devoted his speech to conventional attacks on Zinoviev and Trotsky and on Maslow and Ruth Fischer.[68] Thälmann's response was not encouraging. In the second of two major speeches, both received with rapturous applause, he defiantly declared that the leadership was now strong enough, "side by side with the struggle against the ultra-Left, also to take up seriously the struggle against Right deviations that were showing themselves, and against any Right groupings that might arise".[69] But the Comintern leaders persisted in their design; and, after the adoption of the resolution on Brandler, a document was drawn up embodying the terms on which Meyer would be admitted to participate in the leadership at the forthcoming KPD congress. It was evidently the subject of stiff and prolonged bargaining, which probably accounted for the postponement of the main resolution on the situation in the KPD beyond the end of the session; and it was not till December 24, 1926, that agreement was finally reached on the text of a declaration. Meyer undertook to accept unconditionally the decisions of IKKI and to subordinate himself to the leadership of the party and to its principal organs; he dissociated himself em-

[66] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), ii, 385; for the decision of the fifth IKKI see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 316–317.

[67] K. Tjaden, *Struktur und Funktion der "KPD — Opposition" (KPO)* (1964), pp. 57–58.

[68] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), ii, 208–213.

[69] *Ibid.* ii, 253.

phatically from Brandler and Thalheimer, and undertook to fight against all groupings within the party (including, by implication, members of his own former group); and in return he received from the central committee a promise of cooperation before, during, and after the forthcoming congress.[70] Further trouble awaited Meyer after his return to Berlin. Several leading members of his group, including Walcher, Frölich and Enderle, all party members of long standing, refused to accept the agreement.[71] But through these tactics Comintern had achieved its main purposes — to strengthen the leadership of the KPD and to break up groups of potential dissenters, both Left and Right.

It was at this moment that the disclosure of the arms traffic between Germany and the Soviet Union, and of the secret agreements between the Red Army and the Reichswehr, and the exploitation of the disclosure by SPD deputies in debates of the Reichstag, administered a fresh shock to the much-tried KPD.[72] While the party leaders endeavoured to disclaim any concern in the affair, the KPD deputies were quickly and inevitably involved in acrimonious controversy with their SPD colleagues, whose taunts could not be evaded. It had never been quite apparent whether the primary function of the KPD fraction in the Reichstag was to promote and support by parliamentary action, if necessary in cooperation with the SPD, the day-to-day demands and interests of the workers, or to expose the hypocritical attitudes of other parties, including — and perhaps especially — the attitude of the SPD, and to proclaim that the long-term interests of

[70] The Meyer archives contain two undated versions of the original draft, the second rather milder than the first, a counter-draft of Meyer couched in vaguer terms dated December 24, 1926, and the final agreed text bearing the same date (H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 420–422). Meyer attached great importance to the terms of the declaration; when at the fifteenth party congress in Moscow a year later Bukharin remarked that Meyer "signed a declaration that he renounces his former errors", Meyer wrote to him on February 6, 1928, pointing out that the declaration said nothing of former errors (*Vierteljahrschrift für Zeitgeschichte*, xvi, No. 2, April 1968, pp. 206–207); for Bukharin's statement see *Pyatnadtsatyi S"ezd VKP(B)*, i (1961), 835. An abbreviated version of the final text was published in the *Rote Fahne*, January 20, 1927.

[71] See extracts from Meyer's letter of January 1927 in H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 450–455.

[72] For this affair and for the debates in the Reichstag on December 16, 1926, and in its foreign affairs commission on February 23, 1927, see pp. 40–41, 44 above.

the workers would be served, not by using parliamentary procedures, but by taking revolutionary action to destroy them. This episode completed the transition from the first concept to the second, and helps to explain why reaction against the old united front tactics came earlier and more sharply in the KPD than in other parties or in Moscow. Whatever relations may have been maintained between rank-and-file members of the two parties, or between officials at lower levels, who were not directly affected by the scandal, mutual animosity and embitterment between the leaders of the KPD and SPD at top levels was so exacerbated by this episode as virtually to rule out any further possibility of fruitful collaboration.

Preparations now went forward for the eleventh congress of the KPD, due to open in Essen on March 1, 1927. In the preliminary district congresses, at which delegates were elected, the central committee had overwhelming majorities almost everywhere; the exceptions were the congresses of the Harz region at Chemnitz, where it won only a bare majority, and of the Palatinate, where the Wedding opposition still maintained its majority. The Wedding group in general did less well than another ultra-Left group led by Kötter which had broken away from it. Of 183 voting delegates to the party congress, ten represented a Left opposition — five from the Kötter group, three from the Urbahns group and two from the Wedding group.[73] The Wedding group, undeterred by its previous rebuff, issued a manifesto on "The New Orientation of Comintern". This accused Bukharin of having toyed at the seventh IKKI with the old theory of "national Bolshevism", and of having encouraged the attempt of the KPD Right to reopen "the discussion on October 1923", this being a hit at the rehabilitation of Brandler. It dismissed altogether the thesis of the stabilization of capitalism, and concluded that "in such *an objectively revolutionary situation* Comintern must organize the active struggle of all oppressed and exploited peoples against the capitalist offensive on the basis of the class struggle". On "the Russian question", it reaffirmed its solidarity with the declaration

[73] H. Weber. *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 170–172; for a "platform" of the Kötter group see *Die Internationale,* x, No. 4, February 15, 1927, pp. 114–119.

of the 700 of September 1926, adding that "the inner-party course pursued under Stalin fully confirms the complaint made by Lenin in his testament against Comrade Stalin, and the demand contained in it for Stalin's immediate removal from the post of secretary-general is thus thoroughly justified". Finally, it noted that "the Rightist development in the KPD has now gone so far that one already now believes in the necessity of securing the cooperation of the opportunist leaders Brandler and Thalheimer".[74] The Kötter group issued a statement in somewhat similar terms, which further emphasized the demoralizing effect of Comintern on foreign communist parties.[75] The prospect of the appearance at the congress of these small but vocal groups, as well as the knowledge that the expelled leaders of the major Left group — Maslow, Fischer, Urbahns and Scholem — were organizing a powerful opposition movement outside the party and were in touch with members of the opposition in Moscow, inspired an active campaign of denunciation in the party press. Two articles in the party journal in advance of the congress concentrated respectively on the Wedding opposition and on the past errors of the Fischer–Maslow leadership.[76]

Behind this noisy campaign against the Left, however, rifts began to appear in the party on the attitude to be adopted to the former Right. Party members active in the trade unions or in the "unity committee" took a broader view of united front tactics, and leaned further to the Right, than the leaders, who, especially since the seventh IKKI of November 1926, showed increasing eagerness to denounce the social-democratic leaders as renegades, and the worst enemies of communism; the incompatibility of these denunciations with attempts to woo the masses of social-democratic workers was more evident in Germany than in Moscow. Further still to the Right, the congress was uneasily conscious of the dominant and controversial figure of Brandler. Brandler had taken advantage of the reprieve granted to him by the seventh IKKI by publishing a two-part article on "Ways of Capitalist

[74] *Ibid.* x, No. 2–3, February 1, 1927, pp. 83–86, No. 4, February 15, 1927, pp. 119–120. For national Bolshevism, and the discussion on October 1923, see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 183–186, 226–238; for the declaration of the 700 see p. 408 above.

[75] *Die Internationale*, x, No. 4, February 15, 1927, pp. 114–119.

[76] *Ibid.* x, No. 2–3, February 1, 1927, pp. 45–56, No. 4, February 15, 1927, pp. 97–102; for the contacts of the Fischer–Maslow group see p. 427 below.

Development" in the Profintern journal.[77] The article was carefully framed to conform to Comintern orthodoxy as enunciated at the seventh IKKI. But it exhibited a predilection for united front tactics which could scarcely escape notice in the light of Brandler's fatal involvement in the autumn of 1923.[78] Brandler now took a further step to rehabilitate his fortunes. He drafted what he called a "programme of action" for the KPD. Once more clinging to the framework of current Comintern orthodoxy, he repeated that the stabilization of capitalism contained inherent contradictions, and itself "paves the way for a new revolution and creates new and broader foundations for it". He sharply condemned the SPD, from whose programme the words "class struggle" and "socialism" had disappeared, and described the trade unions and the cooperatives as "proletarian mass organizations" under the leadership of the SPD bureaucracy, which worked in the interests of the bourgeoisie. Communists, on the other hand, while pressing their final revolutionary aims, must "press on with the day-to-day struggle which forms the link between the demands of the day and the final goal", and have "a programme of action which brings together as a systematic whole the particular demands put forward by it"; this programme "cannot be a mere collection of final slogans". As "a general political slogan" it advocated "a workers' and peasants' government", and as an economic demand "workers' control of production". These items were clearly designed to rally the support of social-democratic workers inclined to the Left. The programme was not published, and received no formal consideration in Moscow. But its existence, and perhaps its contents, were known to many of the delegates at the congress of the KPD, and helped to explain the highly sensitive attitude of the leaders towards the Right. Nothing in the programme, or in its endorsement of united front tactics, differed radically from the policies pursued by the KPD, under Comintern guidance, since the removal of Ruth Fischer and the ultra-Left. But this was what made Brandler's initiative, immediately after the withdrawal of the ban on his activities, so embarrassing. It suggested that the current policy of the KPD was in essence a

[77] *Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoyuzov*, No. 12, 1926, pp. 550–562, No. 2, 1927, pp. 148–155; in the German edition, *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, the second article appeared with an editorial reservation.

[78] For this episode and Brandler's subsequent condemnation see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 220–223, 235–238.

return to the old policy denounced by its ninth congress in March 1924, and that Brandler's reinstatement in the leadership would be the logical sequel. These conclusions the present KPD leaders vehemently rejected.[79]

The opening session of the congress on March 1, 1927, heard a message from IKKI which clearly indicated the main preoccupations of Comintern. It dealt with the "extremely acute" international situation created throughout Europe by Chamberlain's threatening note to the Soviet Union, denounced the "renegades" in the KPD as abetters of Chamberlain, and exhorted the party to close its ranks and adopt "a correct Leninist platform";[80] unity in the party and loyalty to the Soviet cause were the overriding demands.[81] Dengel made the customary report on the work of the central committee, rebutting the charge that "Stalinism" had been substituted for Leninism, and that the KPD leaders were "agents of Moscow". Thälmann reported discursively on the international situation ("the relative stabilization of capitalism, the USSR, China, and the danger of war") and on the tasks of the party. Among other items in his indictment of the social-democrats, he accused them of attacking the Soviet Union as a "capitalist country"; this was the background of "the shameless shell campaign".[82] Kötter, Weber and Bartels made brief statements on behalf of the three Left factions, but were received with mocking interruptions.[83] Thälmann intervened to report that Maslow, Fischer, Urbahns and Scholem, all expelled from the party, were organizing a conference in Essen during the congress, and warned opposition delegates of the consequences of participating in it.[84]

But it was dissent from the Right which provided the most embarrassing topics of the congress. Böttcher sharply distinguished

[79] For the fate of the programme and its eventual publication see pp. 429, 432, note 125 below.

[80] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des XI Parteitags der KPD* (1927), pp. 13–15; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 25, March 4, 1927, p. 511. For the British note of February 23, 1927, see p. 22 above.

[81] The preface to the official record of the congress described "the struggle against imperialism and the danger of war" as its "most important task" (*Bericht über die Verhandlungen des XI Parteitags der KPD* (1927), p. iii).

[82] *Ibid.* pp. 26–42, 42–43, 49.

[83] *Ibid.* pp. 76–87.

[84] *Ibid.* pp. 88–89.

the Left wing of the SPD from the majority, and implicitly condemned Meyer's compromise. Meyer dissociated himself from Böttcher, and defended the Moscow agreement of December 24, 1926, as "necessary and right".[85] Beck, the secretary of the unity committee, which for the past year had been busy implementing the policy of the united front with SPD workers, attributed the weakness of party work in the trade unions to misuse of the slogans "Bolshevization" and "politicization". It was not true that social-democratic unions never organized strikes; and it made no sense to enter a struggle with the cry: "The reformists will betray us". It was also useless to "carry on every strike to the point of being bled white". These compromising utterances provoked angry interruptions, to which Beck retorted that "the style of the *Rote Fahne*" was "not calculated to win broad masses of the workers".[86] Ewert, Meyer's chief coadjutor, criticized Beck, and called for "a struggle against reformism in the trade unions".[87] Thälmann aptly remarked, in winding up the debate on his report, that, while the main opposition had come from the Left, "a whole lot of Right deviations have cropped up in the discussion";[88] and the vote on the lengthy theses submitted by him was postponed till they had been examined in a drafting commission. Meanwhile ten opposition delegates voted against the resolution on Dengel's motion approving the report of the central committee, and twelve abstained;[89] this was the largest volume of dissent mustered by the Left minority at the congress.

The main lines of debate having been thus laid down, Ewert made a skilfully balanced report on the situation in the party. He denounced Zinoviev, Ruth Fischer and the other Left groups. He praised the plebiscite campaign and the workers' congress as shining examples of united front tactics. He rebutted attacks on Meyer's Moscow agreement, and pleaded eloquently for "consolidation" in the party.[90] It proved, however, impossible to evade the embarrassment presented by the personality and programme of Brandler. Riese, the delegate of the Wedding opposition who had already been a trouble-maker at the seventh IKKI in Mos-

[85] *Ibid.* pp. 97–99, 102–103; Meyer repeated his disavowal of Böttcher (*ibid.* pp. 203–205).

[86] *Ibid.* pp. 112–114; for the unity committee see p. 400 above.

[87] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des XI Parteitags der KPD* (1927), pp. 133–135.

[88] *Ibid.* pp. 160–168. [89] *Ibid.* p. 171. [90] *Ibid.* pp. 174–190.

cow, proposed that Brandler and Thalheimer should be allowed to return to Germany and work in party journals, in accordance with the IKKI resolution, and without requiring from them a formal renunciation of the errors of 1923. Ewert, on behalf of the Meyer group, demonstrated his fidelity to the party line by insisting that there could be no question of their return to party work so long as they had not "recognized their former errors".[91] Schneller then made a long rambling report on the importance of work in non-party organizations (trade unions, MRP, MOPR, youth and sport organizations, etc.), bolstering himself with quotations from Lenin on *The Infantile Disease of "Leftism" in Communism*; and Münzenberg sagely commented that "work in mass organizations is the most complicated part of the tactics of the united front".[92] Heckert in a report on the trade unions probed the depths of the problem. He accused the social-democratic leaders of abandoning the Marxist doctrine of class war and of rejecting any form of international action. On the other hand, he argued that the strength of the reformists derived from the army of lower trade union officials who really struggled to improve the lot of the workers; and he pointed to the danger of a fatal rift between the KPD and the masses of workers.[93] But the most carefully constructed formulas could not reconcile the requirements of an effective united front policy with the increasing pressure to denounce social-democratic trade union leaders as enemies and renegades. Kuusinen, who appeared as delegate of IKKI under the pseudonym of Jansen, called for an endorsement of the decisions of the seventh IKKI, speaking guardedly of the Russian opposition, and denouncing Stresemann's complicity in British imperialist designs against the Soviet Union.[94] An embarrassing interlude in the ensuing debate was the demand by delegates from Danzig and the Saar for the return to the Reich of their homelands, severed from it by the iniquitous Versailles treaty. This was

[91] *Ibid.* pp. 194, 226; for Riese's appearance at the seventh IKKI see pp. 412–413 above. Brandler was afterwards reported as saying that he had been offered a seat in the central committee if he would confess his error of 1923 (H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 186, note 2).

[92] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des XI Parteitags der KPD* (1927), pp. 232–248; for the quotations from Lenin see pp. 360–361, note 167 above.

[93] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des XI Parteitags der KPD* (1927), pp. 347–366.

[94] *Ibid.* pp. 268–281.

met by a firm declaration from Dengel that "a campaign for the so-called reunion of Danzig and the Saar territory ... with the now existing imperialist German Reich" would "weaken our struggle against German imperialism".[95] But it was an unpopular topic, and nobody attempted to revert to it.

Such tensions were doubtless reflected in the debates in the drafting commission on Thälmann's theses. These covered the international situation, the rise of a new "German imperialism" exhibited in the campaign for the return of the former German colonies, the offensive of capitalism and capitalist rationalization, the united front and the treacherous rôle of social-democracy, and the tasks of the party. Only the expelled leaders of the Left were denounced by name. On the other flank, a warning was issued against "the tendency to an opportunist interpretation of united front tactics"; and "the Left SPD" was denounced as "the chief enemy which the communists must strike down and annihilate".[96] The most stubborn dispute appears to have occurred over the slogan of workers' control of production, on which, as Thälmann admitted in his speech, party opinion was divided.[97] At a late stage of the congress formal amendments were proposed by adherents of the Right to include in Thälmann's theses demands for "economic democracy", "workers' control of production", and a "programme of action". These were duly rejected.[98] But it would be difficult to say whether they were rejected because they im-

[95] *Ibid.* pp. 296–297, 304; the speech of the Danzig delegate did not appear in the record.

[96] For the final text of the theses see *Thesen und Resolutionen des XI Parteitags der KPD* (1927), pp. 5–35. Occasional attacks on the colonial demands of the German Government appeared in the party press: "The new colonial policy of the German bourgeoisie is nothing else than a part of the general offensive against the worker masses, which finds its expression at home in rationalization, in attacks on the right of combination, on plans for a general strike etc., and abroad in the adoption of an imperialist policy of adventure" (*Die Internationale*, ix, No. 14, July 20, 1926, p. 431).

[97] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des XI Parteitags der KPD* (1927), p. 165. When, at the fifteenth Russian party congress in December 1927, Lozovsky described workers' control as "a pre-revolutionary slogan", which should be used only in an immediately revolutionary situation, Lominadze interrupted to say that it appeared "in all resolutions of Profintern"; Lozovsky replied that this mistake should be corrected, and added specifically that it was a mistake to use it in Germany in present conditions (*Pyatnadtsatyi S"ezd VKP(B)*, i, (1961), 699–700).

[98] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des XI Parteitags der KPD* (1927), pp. 387–390, 418.

plied too close an involvement with social-democrats in support of current demands, or because they were too nearly identical with Brandler's policies. The two motives were intertwined and could scarcely be distinguished.[99] Both Thälmann's theses and Ewert's resolution on the discussion in the party were then adopted, eight dissidents voting against each.[100] Ewert's resolution was devoted mainly to denunciation of the Left. But in its last paragraph it also condemned Böttcher and other unnamed party members who "come out against comrade Meyer's declaration, and seek to minimize the political errors of Brandler and Thalheimer." It concluded:

> *Without overcoming the fractions no united leadership of the working class;*
> *Without a strong integrated party no victorious revolution.*[101]

The congress ended on a rather forced note of unity and consolidation. Elections to the large party central committee took place — for police reasons — in closed session; representatives of all three Left minority groups remaining in the party were included. A small politburo was elected, and Thälmann, Dengel, Meyer and Ewert were appointed to the political secretariat.[102] An article in the party journal, summing up the results of the congress, spoke of "the concentration of the party on the basis of a real ideological unity", and of "the hegemony of Comintern in the world revolution through a close community of ideas between the world party and its German section".[103]

While the KPD leaders were united in the campaign against

[99] Ulbricht in his speech in the German commission of IKKI in November 1928 (see p. 449 below) identified the proposals of the Right at the eleventh congress of the KPD in March 1927 with Brandler's programme (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 140, December 18, 1928, p. 2782).

[100] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des XI Parteitags der KPD* (1927), p. 390.

[101] *Thesen und Resolutionen des XI Parteitags der KPD* (1927), pp. 36–41.

[102] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des XI Parteitags der KPD* (1927), p. 423; H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 177, ii, 13.

[103] *Die Internationale*, x, No. 6 (March 15, 1927), p. 164; the preface to the official record of the congress dated "August 1927" celebrated the defeat of the Left groups, but gave no hint of other dissent in the party (*Bericht über die Verhandlungen des XI Parteitags der KPD* (1927), p. iv).

the Left and ultra-Left, the fusion effected at the Essen congress under Comintern pressure between the Thälmann leadership and Meyer's Centre group led to an uneasy relation. In the political secretariat Thälmann and Dengel were balanced by Meyer and Ewert. A few vocal members of the former Right who rejected Meyer's compromise were still active in the party.[104] The experience of the plebiscite campaign and of the Berlin congresses of unemployed and of workers in the previous year convinced many members of the KPD of the usefulness of united front tactics. The celebrations organized by the KPD for May 1, 1927, stressed the need for common action by the workers to resist Fascism, and an invitation was sent to the SPD leaders for a joint demonstration against the Stahlhelm.[105] It was in the trade unions that the issue was most acute; and the decisions of the congress were openly challenged in two articles in the party journal by Walcher, a party member long active in trade union work. Walcher recalled the uncompromising policies of the "ultra-Left era" of Fischer and Maslow, which had "cost the KPD dear", and had been ended by the open letter of August 1925. He urged that it was useless "to woo [*poussieren*] the Left social-democrat workers, and simultaneously to denounce the Left leaders with book and candle as the worst and most dangerous enemies".[106] Day-to-day policy continually demanded cooperation with social-democrats. The year 1927, with the anti-imperialist congress in Brussels and the campaign against war and for the defence of the Soviet Union, offered many such opportunities. On July 16, 1927, the central committee of the KPD unanimously passed a resolution recommending that a clearer distinction should be drawn between Right and Left wings of the SPD, and between SPD leaders and their "class-conscious proletarian followers". Thälmann himself was not present; but none of his supporters appears to have dis-

[104] According to a later statement by one of its members, the Right opposition in the KPD which subsequently broke with the party "developed after the Essen congress" (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 140, December 18, 1928, p. 2789).

[105] *Die Rote Fahne*, May 2, 3, 4, 1927; the overture was coldly received by the SPD leaders, and the SPD congress in Kiel on May 22–27, 1927, adopted a hostile attitude to the KPD.

[106] *Die Internationale*, x, No. 7, April 1, 1927, pp. 208–213, No. 11, June 1, 1927, pp. 325–334; both articles were followed by rebuttals signed M. (or L.) Osten — the pseudonym of Lominadze, who spent some months in 1927 in Germany as Comintern representative.

sented.[107] The decision was challenged in Left party circles as a relapse into the Rightist errors of the past, and led to renewed friction between the two groups.

During the summer of 1927 Comintern, preoccupied by the British and Chinese crises, by the campaign against the danger of war, and above all by the struggle against the united opposition, paid little attention to the problems of the KPD. It was, however, feared that the harassing tactics of the expelled groups, of which the Fischer–Urbahns group was the most active and persistent, might have an awkward impact on Soviet policy, and might lend aid and comfort to the Russian opposition. The scandal of the secret military agreements between the Soviet Union and Germany, though ignored or denied in party circles, was exploited by the Left opposition in the KPD, sometimes with demoralizing effects on the rank and file. In January 1927 the group began to publish a news-sheet modestly entitled *Mitteilungsblatt (Linke Opposition der KPD)*; and this was transformed in June 1927 into a journal entitled *Die Fahne des Kommunismus: Zeitschrift der Orthodoxen Marxisten-Leninisten*, which served as a medium for the publication of banned documents of the Russian opposition. The opposition conference which met in Essen in March 1927 during the session of the eleventh party congress was followed by an opposition "conference of party workers", which passed resolutions condemning the policy of Comintern in China and in regard to the Anglo-Russian committee.[108] When Kamenev passed through Berlin early in 1927 to take up his appointment as *polpred* in Rome, he apparently discussed with the Fischer–Urbahns group arrangements for an international opposition conference in Berlin in which Zinoviev was also concerned. Communications with Moscow were said to have been maintained through an official of the Soviet trade delegation in Berlin; and contacts were established with opposition leaders in foreign communist parties — Treint in Paris, Neurath in Prague, and Frey in

[107] The authority for this decision is a speech by Meyer in the presidium of IKKI in December 1928 quoted from the protocol of the session preserved in the Meyer archives (H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 187); Ulbricht was present at the session of the presidium and did not contest Meyer's account.

[108] *Der Kampf um die Kommunistische Internationale* (1927), pp. 171–173.

Vienna.[109] These manoeuvres, known or suspected in Moscow, were a flagrant breach of the undertaking extracted from the Russian opposition on October 16, 1926, to sever relations with its sympathizers abroad, especially with Maslow and Ruth Fischer,[110] and aroused apprehensions that it might still be able to muster serious support from dissidents in foreign parties. The resolution of the eighth IKKI in May 1927 condemning Trotsky and Vujovič accused the opposition of forming "a complete political and organizational alliance with renegades excluded from the KPD", and of supplying them with material for publication.[111]

The Soviet press in the summer of 1927 was eloquent in denunciations of the outlawed KPD Left.[112] When the Russian party central committee was in the throes of battle with the opposition in July–August 1927, Remmele, Eberlein and Neumann, on behalf of the central committee of the KPD, presented to it a declaration condemning "the alliance of Trotsky and Zinoviev with the renegades Maslow and Fischer".[113] After the end of the session, fifteen expelled members of the KPD, headed by Maslow, Fischer, Urbahns and Scholem, indulged in the somewhat meaningless gesture of petitioning IKKI for readmission to Comintern; they proposed a "compromise", and undertook to defend "the USSR, the first country of the proletarian dictatorship". The reply of September 17, 1927, couched in predictably harsh terms, accused the group of "a policy of duplicity" and rejected the appeal.[114] The first large organized conference of the opposition, attended by 120 delegates, was held on October 23, 1927. Shortly afterwards a set of theses adopted by the conference "On the

[109] R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), pp. 586–588, where a meeting with Kollontai and contacts with the dissident KIM leader Michaleč (for whom see p. 260 above) are also recorded.

[110] See Vol. 2, pp. 15–16.

[111] For this resolution see pp. 146–147 above.

[112] See, for example, a controversy between Slepkov and Vujovič in *Pravda*, June 30, July 17, 1927, and an article by Remmele *ibid.* July 23, 1927.

[113] *Pravda*, August 7, 1927; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 80, August 9, 1927, pp. 1732–1733; the signatories were probably in Moscow. For this session see Vol. 2, pp. 30–33; see also a leading article in *Pravda*, September 2, 1927, where Trotsky's allegations of a "thermidor" in the Russian party were traced back to the promptings of the KPD Left.

[114] *Die Rote Fahne*, August 24, 28, 1927; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 96, September 30, 1927, pp. 2073–2074 (where the number 17 is a misprint for 15).

Situation in the German Party", together with a "Platform of the Left Opposition in the KPD", were issued and obtained wide publicity. "The official policy of Comintern" had "run into a dead end"; the "mechanical means" used to bring to an end the discussion in the Russian party had produced no solution. Socialism in one country, a "theory of 'national limitation' ", had led to "a renunciation of the proletarian revolution in the advanced industrial countries". Turning to the KPD, the platform attacked Levi, Brandler and Thalheimer; after 1923 the only successful period in the party's history had been from the Frankfurt congress of March 1924 to the "open letter" of August 1925 (the period of the Maslow–Fischer leadership). Since then the party had adopted a policy in the trade unions of "running after the reformists" and a policy of "support for bourgeois and social-democratic governments ... on the 'Left' social-democratic pattern".[115] Finally, on March 4, 1928, the group reconstituted itself under the name of the Leninbund, and published on April 13, 1928, in *Die Fahne des Kommunismus* an open letter to Comintern requesting to be accepted as a member, or sympathizing, organization; the presidium of IKKI issued a statement denouncing this "*demagogic manoeuvre*" and the pursuit by the Leninbund of "counter-revolutionary activity under the name of Lenin".[116] The only point shared by the Left opposition with the party leaders was the growing hostility of the latter to the Right.

The position of Brandler continued to cause trouble. The contents of Brandler's "programme of action" were by this time probably common knowledge in the party,[117] and served as a rallying point for the party Right. It was therefore embarrassing when Ewert, returning from a visit to Moscow in August 1927,

[115] *Der Kampf um die Kommunistische Partei* (1927), pp. 8–14.

[116] *Pravda*, May 6, 1928; letters from Radek and Zinoviev disavowing any association with the Leninbund were also published with sarcastic comments *ibid.* May 4, 13, 1928.

[117] For the programme see p. 420 above. According to a speech by Meyer in a speech to the presidium of IKKI in November–December 1928 (see extract from protocol of session in the Meyer archives, quoted in H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 187, note 7), Lominadze, who came to Berlin shortly before the eleventh congress in March 1927, brought the document with him, but, his own sympathies being with the Left, kept it "in his pocket" and showed it to nobody; when he finally left Germany in June 1927, he transferred it to Dengel, who passed it on to Thälmann, but failed to divulge it to his other colleagues.

reported that Comintern favoured the return of Brandler and Thalheimer to work in the KPD. Nobody in Moscow seriously thought of substituting Brandler, with his record of defeat and after more than three years of persistent denigration, for the more docile and serviceable Thälmann. But Comintern was always disposed to keep alternative options open; and, so long as Bukharin wielded authority in Comintern, his personal sympathy for the two German exiles counted for something. The proposal enjoyed some support among the KPD leaders. When Thälmann vigorously opposed it in the politburo of the KPD, a battle ensued as a result of which it was agreed to remove the ban on Thalheimer, but not on Brandler. On September 9, 1927, the party central committee voted to invite Thalheimer to return to Berlin and work in the party journals.[118] It was the last occasion on which the Meyer group, with such support as it could find from the Right, inflicted a partial defeat on Thälmann. Before the end of the year the tide was setting strongly against it.[119] In the autumn of 1927 Ewert was sent by Comintern on a mission to the United States, and for the next eighteen months was intermittently employed on work in the American and British parties.[120] These absences served, and were no doubt designed, to remove a thorn in the side of Thälmann's leadership and an obstacle to the enforcement of new trends in Comintern policy.

In the last weeks of 1927 a tenuous and rapidly narrowing place could still be found for the original conception of the united front, which allowed and encouraged a measure of cooperation with parties of the Left. A third German workers' delegation, similar in composition and purpose to those of 1925 and 1926, visited the Soviet Union from October 15 to November 18, 1927; it comprised seventy-seven workers, of whom thirty-four were members

[118] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 188; K. Tjaden, *Struktur und Funktion der "KPD — Opposition" (KPO)* (1964), p. 67, and sources there quoted. Thalheimer did not in fact return till May 1928; according to *Die Fahne des Kommunismus*, No. 32, October 21, 1927, p. 170, Stalin, Bukharin and Kuusinen put pressure on Thalheimer to make a confession of his past errors as a condition of his return.

[119] For a clash between Meyer and Dengel in November 1927 see H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 425–426.

[120] See pp. 597 below and 364–365 above.

of the SPD and only seven of the KPD.[121] The delegation participated in the celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the October revolution, organized under the aegis of the Friends of the Soviet Union as a massive demonstration of world-wide support for the Soviet Union from all Left parties and groups.[122] But those who fostered these enterprises were soon made aware of the changing climate in Moscow. The fifteenth Russian party congress in December 1927 stood at the parting of the ways. It revealed an ambivalent attitude on the relative importance of ultra-Left and Right deviations in Comintern. Bukharin, whose influence had protected Meyer, and even Brandler and Thalheimer, during the past year, was now criticized from positions on the Left by Shatskin and Lominadze.[123] Both spoke of the KPD. Shatskin observed that "since the time of the last Essen congress we have an organized Right group, which ... demands a revision of our attitude to Left social-democracy", and concluded that, "with the liquidation of the ultra-Left danger in the German party, this group will inevitably go over to the offensive against its central committee". Lominadze's remark that "if communist parties have committed mistakes in the past two years, they have always committed Right mistakes", reflected his German, as well as his Chinese, experience.[124] Both in the Russian and in the German parties the elimination of the Left opposition signalled the opening of a new offensive against the Right.

These events in Moscow determined the final consolidation of Thälmann's leadership, and the crushing of all opposition or dissent from the Right, which marked the year 1928 in the KPD. Brandler was the first and most obvious target. Soon after the fifteenth congress in Moscow, it was decided to publish in the journal of Comintern Brandler's "programme", now nearly a year old, together with a statement by the politburo of the KPD rebutting it, which was explicitly said to have the approval of IKKI. The statement criticized Brandler for concentrating on partial economic demands at the expense of fundamental revolutionary aims, and particularly attacked the slogan of "control of production"; in the sphere of foreign policy, Brandler had put first the

[121] *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, iv, No. 2, 1956, p. 348.
[122] See pp. 308–309 above.
[123] See Vol. 2, pp. 56–57 and 420–421 above.
[124] *Pyatnadtsatyi S"ezd VKP(B)* i (1961), 728, 730.

slogan of the annulment of the Versailles treaty, which smacked of German imperialism, rather than the slogan of defence of the USSR.[125] This ended the attempts persistently made in Moscow since the seventh IKKI of December 1926 to secure Brandler's rehabilitation. A proposal of the Right group in the KPD to include Brandler and Thalheimer in the list of party candidates for the forthcoming Reichstag elections was indignantly rejected by Thälmann, who filled the list with his own nominees.[126] *Pravda* boldly asserted that the phase of "apathy and pessimism" which had overtaken the KPD after the defeat of 1923 was now being overcome.[127] Early in 1928 Meyer fell ill, and was replaced in the political secretariat by Schneller, a supporter of Thälmann; Ewert remained as the only representative of the Meyer group.[128]

The ninth IKKI of February 1928 brought to Moscow a representative KPD delegation which was headed by Thälmann, and included, in Meyer's continued absence, two members of the Meyer group — Ewert and Eisler, a brother of Ruth Fischer. The German question, unlike the Chinese, British and French questions, was not on the agenda. When Thälmann spoke, immediately after Bukharin, in the initial debate on the Russian opposition and its links with dissidents in other communist parties, he followed Bukharin's example in training his attack exclusively on the Left.[129] But, when Bukharin in his speech winding up the debate broached the theme of Right deviations,[130] inhibitions were removed. Thälmann, in the commission on trade union affairs, attributed to Bukharin the statement (more definite than anything found in the published record) that "Right deviations are showing themselves in the German party, and already begin

[125] The first part of the programme and the first part of the KPD reply were published in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 52 (126), 1927, pp. 34–49, 50–57; the second parts *ibid.* No. 1 (127), 1928, pp. 21–36, 37–47; the first part was preceded by the statement that the programme had been written "several months ago". For the programme see p. 420 above.

[126] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 120; the indignation of the leaders was increased by the discovery of a letter from Brandler to a supporter in Germany, in which he bracketed Thälmann and Dengel with Maslow and Ruth Fischer, and expressed the desire to return to party work in accordance with the resolution of the seventh IKKI.

[127] *Pravda*, January 28, 1928.

[128] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 189.

[129] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 18, February 23, 1928, pp. 375–377.

[130] For Bukharin's two speeches see pp. 163–164 above.

to develop into a system", and volubly attacked the Right wing, and especially Enderle, for its tolerant attitude to social-democrats in the trade unions.[131]

The proceedings of the ninth IKKI were not published in full; and no speeches by other members of the German delegation were reported. Ample discussions, however, evidently proceeded behind the scenes, the results of which were recorded in the novel form of a "secret agreement" between representatives of the Russian party and of the KPD. The tactics of the open letter of August 1925 were followed. Pressure was put on the minority in the KPD to maintain the appearance of unanimity, and to subscribe to a verdict which was in essence given against them. Bukharin was among the Russian signatories, and was probably instrumental in persuading Ewert and Eisler to accept. The agreement was signed on February 29, 1928, by Bukharin, Stalin, Tomsky, Molotov, Lozovsky, Mikoyan and Pyatnitsky, and by the whole German delegation. It reiterated several times that the Right danger in the party was now the chief danger; to overcome the ultra-Left danger had become merely "one of the necessary pre-conditions of the successful struggle against the Right danger". Indulgence towards those who represented the Right danger in the party was henceforth excluded. This rule should govern the choice of members for all spheres of party work, including the Reichstag and especially the trade unions; the candidature of Brandler and Thalheimer was declared to be "undesirable".[132] Clara Zetkin, who was in Moscow for the conference of the women's secretariat, refused an invitation to sign the secret agreement, and in an unpublished letter expressed the view that the agreement was "not calculated to establish the unity, consolidation and effectiveness of the leadership or of the party as a whole", and that it represented "a fundamental change in the course hitherto pursued"; and Thalheimer wrote that it betokened "in organization and policy an out-and-out Left course", the impulse to which derived from "the new disputes and new

[131] For this speech, and the debate and resolution on the trade unions, see pp. 173–177 above.

[132] *Vierteljahrschrift für Zeitgeschichte*, xvi, No. 2, April 1968, pp. 207–208; this appears to have been the first publication of the complete text. Ewert at the sixth congress of Comintern in July 1928 admitted that his group had opposed the ban on Brandler and Thalheimer, but had given way (*Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 387–388).

constellations forming themselves in the VKP(B)".[133] It was later quoted as a landmark in the development of an active Right opposition in the KPD.[134] The secret agreement had the ultimate effect of opening wider the rift in the leadership of the KPD by encouraging attacks on the moderates — notably on Meyer, Ewert and Eisler — as tacit allies of the Right. For the moment it helped to plaster over the cracks. On March 14, 1928, the central committee of the KPD unanimously approved the decisions of the ninth IKKI. The secret agreement of February 29, 1928, does not seem to have been mentioned. Some members expressed the fear that the campaign against opportunist errors might lead to "an unjustified campaign against individual comrades". But Thälmann, Dengel and Ewert joined forces to explain the necessity of "a campaign against Right dangers, which of course must not degenerate into a general agitation 'against the Right' ".[135]

Controversy in the trade unions, where the main strength of the party Right lay, was brought to a head by an extensive and protracted strike in the Ruhr mines in the autumn of 1927. Constant feuding took place between the SPD and KPD union leaders over the conduct and the goals of the strike; and communists were expelled from reformist unions for breaches of discipline. Feelings became increasingly bitter when the strike was called off at the end of the year, at the very moment when the KPD was attempting to organize a sympathetic strike of metal workers,[136] which proved a total failure. An embarrassed *post-mortem* in the KPD journal, while denouncing the betrayal of the reformists, admitted that a forlorn attempt to form "action committees" in support of a general strike had been a mistake. But it ended with the conclusion that the fight must be carried on, not only against the employers, but against "the dictatorship of the bourgeois bloc".[137] This did nothing to silence the doubts of the Right. Walcher seized the occasion to re-open the whole

[133] Quoted in K. Tjaden, *Struktur und Funktion der "KPD — Opposition"* (KPO) (1964), pp. 75–76.

[134] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 140, December 18, 1928, p. 2789.

[135] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 31, March 23, 1928, pp. 590–591; according to the *Rote Fahne*, March 18, 1928, the central committee proclaimed the Right danger in the party as "the chief danger".

[136] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 12 (138), 1928, p. 38.

[137] *Die Internationale*, ix, No. 3, February 1, 1928, pp. 65–70.

problem of the united front. It was right to point out that SPD slogans such as expropriation and workers' control were futile and hypocritical in the absence of a programme for the take-over of state power. But it was wrong to refuse to support these demands. The movement could not do without "transitional" demands:

> *We can in the present period move the masses, and bring them finally to revolutionary struggles, only through such slogans as arise out of the needs of these masses in a given situation.*

To call for independent action by communist workers at a time when no revolutionary situation existed was "false demagogy".[138] The arguments on both sides were often scholastic. The question of the relations of KPD workers to SPD workers in mine or factory could not be evaded, or settled simply by party or Comintern resolutions.

The fourth congress of Profintern in Moscow in March 1928 marked a further stage in the steady pressure against the KPD Right. Lozovsky, in a long section devoted to Germany in his own report, accused "a number of comrades" of "capitulation before the social-democrats", of hoping to compel the social-democratic leaders to fight for the workers, and of seeking to win over the trade union officials instead of the masses. He then quoted, not without malice, an article by Maslow, who alleged that "Lozovsky subjects to a devastating criticism the present defeatist tactics of the leaders of the KPD, both of the Brandler and of the Thälmann wing", and that "the roots of this social-democratic infection" were to be found not only in the KPD but in Comintern. He showed surprising restraint and courtesy in criticizing an article by "that excellent comrade, my personal friend", Walcher, who had expressed regret that the Russian trade unions did not apply for membership of IFTU in 1925, and had claimed that "*the Amsterdam International plays a predominant rôle in capitalist countries*"; these utterances were proof of "extreme lack of faith in what is happening among the working

[138] *Ibid.* xi, No. 4, February 15, 1928, pp. 113–122; Walcher's article was immediately followed (*ibid.* pp. 122–126) by a reply from Ewert, who had already written in defence of the official line (*ibid.* x, No. 24, December 20, 1927, pp. 766–770).

class".[139] But Lozovsky seems to have been conscious that he was speaking to a critical audience. Walcher was not in Moscow; but Heckert echoed the same sceptical note:

> *We do not have a majority of the unorganized workers,* or of the workers organized in trade unions, behind us.

Without subscribing to all Walcher's views, Heckert agreed with him that the Amsterdam unions "hold the power in the decisive imperialist countries".[140] Another German delegate said that Lozovsky's assertion of the growing strength of Profintern, though true in general, was not true in Germany, where the question of relations with social-democratic workers was crucial, and that it was necessary to win over the trade union organizations as well as the rank and file.[141] Brandler reverted to his recently published "programme of action", spoke of "Right deviations" and of the errors of "my friend Walcher", but urged the need for "economic demands" and defended his own slogan of workers' control of production.[142] But this attempt to maintain an old united front position while dissociating himself from the Right, was heard with impatience. Merker, a rising German trade union leader, sought to attenuate the differences between Lozovsky and Heckert. He explained that the amendments desired by the German delegation did not touch on principles, and expressed tactful agreement with Lozovsky's criticism and proposals.[143]

What went on in the drafting commission which prepared the special resolution on "The Tasks of Adherents of Profintern in Germany" is not recorded. But, except in the vigour of its denunciation of the reformists, and of the expulsions of communists from reformist unions, the resolution struck a confused and uncertain note. It recognized the need for a "programme of action", comprising current workers' demands as well as improvements in organization, but proposed the inclusion in the programme of a struggle "against the reformist bogus slogan of economic democracy" (an allusion to Brandler's control of production), as well as against state arbitration in disputes.[144] The

[139] *Protokoll über den Vierten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), pp. 61–63, 74–75.
[140] *Ibid.* pp. 98, 121.
[141] *Ibid.* pp. 156–158.
[142] *Ibid.* pp. 209–212.
[143] *Ibid.* pp. 250–254.
[144] *Ibid.* pp. 594–603.

congress is said to have been followed in Germany by a more intensive campaign to split the reformist unions; and expulsions of communists from the unions occurred on a mass scale.[145] When the communists made a further abortive call to resume the miners' strike on May 1, 1928, Ulbricht admitted in the party journal that their strength in the trade unions "*does not yet go far enough to lead the workers for the organization of the struggle against the will of the social-democratic trade union bureaucracy*".[146] In the ensuing spate of recriminations Heckert also argued that the German communists were too weak to lead the working class against the reformist unions; the German worker had been weakened by long periods of unemployment. He protested that the revolutionary unions put forward "radical, often plainly exaggerated demands" and "schematic proposals not corresponding to the concrete situation".[147] Bukharin, on the other hand, maintained at the sixth congress of Comintern that KPD members working in the trade unions had become "too much at home with social-democratic methods".[148] Dengel on the same occasion observed pessimistically that "the growing together of the trade union bureaucracy with the capitalist state" had spread to "the lower administrative and executive organs", and that the splitting of "the trade unions and all workers' mass organizations" by the exclusion of communists had taken the party unawares.[149]

The Reichstag elections of May 20, 1928, were a key event in German politics, and provided an acid test of relations between KPD and SPD. Appeals for a common electoral front between the two parties were made at local levels;[150] and the Comintern journal reported that more than a million workers, evidently of both parties, had participated in the May 1 demonstration.[151] But the KPD leaders were in no mood to temporize. The theme of the election address of the KPD to "working men and women" was the betrayal of their cause by the bourgeoisie and by social-

[145] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 223, note 190.

[146] *Die Internationale*, xi, No. 10, May 15, 1928, p. 302.

[147] *Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoyuzov*, No. 6, 1928, pp. 555–556.

[148] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 52–53.

[149] *Ibid.* iii, 44–45.

[150] Some of these were published in the journal *Einheit*, No. 6, 1928, pp. 123–124.

[151] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 20 (146), 1928, p. 7.

democracy; leading social-democrats were pilloried by name.[152] The results of the vote were mildly encouraging. The KPD increased its voting strength from 2,674,000 in 1924 to 3,238,000, and the number of its deputies from forty-five to fifty-four — a rise of 20 per cent; the SPD scored a 16 per cent increase. The parties of the Centre and Right declined. Not much attention was paid to the success of the National-Socialist Party, which, campaigning independently for the first time in a Reichstag election, had secured 800,000 votes and twelve deputies. The Leninbund group of "Left communists" had 80,000 votes and no deputies.[153] A cautious assessment of the results by a member of the KPD in the Comintern journal claimed that they represented a striking victory for the "workers", i.e. the KPD and SPD, at the expense of the bourgeoisie, and admitted that this encouraged a "united front" outlook, but pointed out that the KPD had outvoted the SPD in the large industrial centres, and that the SPD drew some of its strength from "petty bourgeois elements".[154] When, after the usual period of bargaining, the formation was announced on June 28, 1928, of a "great coalition" government of Social-Democrats, National-Democrats, Centre and People's Party under a Social-Democratic chancellor, the attitude of the KPD leaders seemed to have been vindicated. The SPD had revealed itself in its true colours; it had betrayed the cause of the workers and gone over to the bourgeoisie.

Meanwhile Thälmann was busy consolidating his position. In May 1928, Thalheimer at length returned to Germany, having reached an understanding with Kuusinen that his activities there would be conducted "in agreement with the central committee of the KPD". The politburo of the KPD, however, resisted this proposal, and formally objected to the reinstatement of Thalheimer as a member of the KPD (during his stay in Moscow he, like Brandler, had been admitted to membership of the VKP(B)).[155]

[152] The address is reprinted in O. Flenchtheim, *Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik* (1948), pp. 273–280; a leading article on the elections in *Pravda*, April 27, 1928, denounced "the bourgeoisie and its social-democrat lackeys".

[153] The results were hailed with triumph in an article in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 49, May 22, 1928, pp. 887–888; *Pravda*, May 22, 1928, drew the moral of an intensification of the class struggle.

[154] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 23–24 (149–150), 1928, pp. 14–26.

[155] See sources quoted in K. Tjaden, *Struktur und Funktion der "KPD — Opposition" (KPO)* (1964), p. 139, note 149; in October 1928 Thalheimer

The replacement of Rightist officials by reliable nominees of Thälmann went apace in the lower party organizations. Attention was drawn to it only when it extended to higher appointments. In the summer of 1928 Thälmann began a campaign to remove Süsskind, the editor of the *Rote Fahne*, and to transfer to other posts the head of the party press bureau and the editor of the Hamburg party newspaper, all suspected of leanings towards the Right. On June 5, 1928, Meyer wrote to the politburo of the party protesting against these plans.[156] The party central committee at its session on June 25–27, 1928, heard reports by Merker on trade union affairs and by Thälmann on the situation in the party. The session was stormy. Thälmann's report brought into the open "the differences of opinion in the political secretariat of the party which existed, and in part still exist, between Thälmann, Dengel and Schneller on one side and Ewert on the other. Ewert saw in the proposed changes in the press "the introduction of a change of course in the party". A compromise was reached: Süsskind was reprieved, and the other two changes were approved. Ewert and Thälmann both expressed the pious belief that the airing of different points of view would further successful collaboration in future.[157]

The battle was now transferred to Moscow, where the ground was even less favourable for the Right. All the principal leaders of the KPD were included in the delegation to the sixth congress of Comintern which met on July 17, 1928. It may be significant that Thälmann was chosen to make a formal speech of welcome to the congress at the first sitting on behalf of all the European

was summoned back to Moscow by the secretariat of Comintern — an invitation which he refused.

[156] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 428. This was the moment of Stalin's take-over of *Pravda* and *Bol'shevik* (see Vol. 2, pp. 61–63), and some connection must be suspected between the moves; Neumann, designated to succeed Süsskind (H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 194, note 39), may have been the intermediary.

[157] *Ibid.* i, 429–434; this report prepared by the secretariat, though carefully drafted, betrayed sympathy with Ewert rather than with Thälmann. According to Ulbricht, the session was "utilized to introduce amendments into the decision of the Essen party congress on the question of Left social-democrats" (*Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 458) — a hint that the compromise had been too favourable to Ewert.

parties, and that among the addresses read was one from Thälmann's own organization, the Roter Frontkämpferbund.[158] Thälmann spoke later in the debate on Bukharin's main report, which had avoided any discussion of the crisis in the KPD.[159] Much of Thälmann's speech was on conventional lines. But towards the end he referred to the agreement between the Russian and German delegates to the ninth IKKI signed in Moscow on February 29, 1928, and indicted "some leading comrades" who "minimize and slur over the importance of the theoretical deviation of the Right group and of its opportunist errors in practice". He read a statement drawn up by the Russian delegation to the congress calling for "a consistent struggle against Right deviations" in the KPD (the slogan of workers' control, resistance to the decisions of the fourth congress of Profintern and "a conciliatory attitude to Left social-democracy" were specifically named), the consolidation of the party and "the unconditional subordination of the minority to the majority". The conclusion of the speech was received with enthusiastic applause.[160] On the following day Ewert made a long and argumentative reply, subjected to mild interruptions by Thälmann and others. He began by saying that the differences "should in no wise lead to a party crisis". He alleged that, at a private meeting of the German delegation, "a fairly large number" of delegates had thought Bukharin's theses "too pessimistic", as offering "prospects of stagnation". The reference was clearly to Thälmann, who indignantly but unconvincingly exclaimed that this was a false interpretation. Ewert correctly pointed out that the differences arose mainly out of work in mass organizations, notably in trade unions, where relations with non-party workers were at stake. But discrimination against individuals on the score of their supposed toleration of the Right would lead "to a group monopoly in the leadership, to the dominance of a group ideology". He

[158] *Ibid.* i, 15–19; at a later sitting a delegate of the Roter Frontkämpferbund addressed the congress (*ibid.* i, 158–159). An article in *Die Internationale*, xi, No. 9, May 1, 1928, pp. 259–261, had protested against a prohibition on outdoor demonstrations of the Roter Frontkämpferbund; for this organization see p. 415, note 64 above.

[159] For Bukharin's report see pp. 196–198 above.

[160] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 333–346; Dengel later renewed his attack on Thalheimer for supporting such "transitional" slogans as Brandler's "programme of action" and "workers' control" (*ibid.* iii, 48–49).

purported to accept the terms of the declaration of the Russian delegation read by Thälmann, but added, with reference to the dispute which had broken out in the German delegation, that if the majority persisted in its erroneous views, the situation would not improve, but grow worse.[161] Ewert's speech made clear the personal character of the rift. The minority was ready to work with Thälmann, but Thälmann and his friends were not ready to work with the minority.

After this, the tone and temper of the debate deteriorated. Lozovsky denounced the failure of the KPD — or of some of its members — to carry out the decisions of the fourth congress of Profintern in March 1928, and criticized by name KPD Rightists working in the trade unions, including Enderle and Walcher.[162] Ulbricht and Lominadze moved into the attack, the former hypocritically defending Bukharin against the imputation of offering "prospects of stagnation", and convicting the Right of being lukewarm about strikes.[163] An unexpected intervention came from Togliatti, who, while conceding that "the greatest danger for the KPD today is from the Right", deprecated the idea that "diversity of opinions on all sorts of different questions" must necessarily lead to "a fight between groups and factions". He went on:

> If because of such divergences a struggle between groups should develop, and if the majority were to adopt organizational measures against the minority, this ... could lead to the narrowing of the basis of the leading group and to a limitation of its political life and internal democracy.[164]

Tittel, the only member of the Right included in the German delegation, asserted that "after the ninth IKKI the party adopted a course, whose centre of gravity lay in trade union tactics, and which, judging by present experience, will lead to the isolation of

[161] Ibid. i, 379–390; for the split in the German delegation see pp. 432–434 above.

[162] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 405–407; for Lozovsky's interpretation of the resolutions of the Profintern congress see pp. 191, 200 above.

[163] *Stenographicheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 454, 464.

[164] *Ibid.* i, 509; the Russian text, by way of keeping at arm's length the unfortunate parallel of the Russian party, inserted after the word "develop" in the above quotation the words "in the German party". For other corrections in the text of this speech see p. 202, note 42 above. Thälmann, still unsure of Bukharin's standing, did not venture to attack Togliatti at the congress for these pronouncements, but did so with gusto at the tenth IKKI a year later (see p. 558 below).

the party". His speech was frequently interrupted and its conclusion was met with cries of dissent.[165] The debate ended in a series of explanations and recriminations.[166] Bukharin, in an embarrassed reply to the debate, hinted at a parallel with the dispute in the Polish party, and said that "we are against attempts to push comrade Ewert out of the party leadership", but that IKKI was "fully and wholly" behind "the core of the Politburo with comrade Thälmann at its head".[167] Thälmann had the final word. He explained that it was not he but Ewert who had wanted to change the party leadership, and quoted a remark said to have been made by Stalin at the meeting of February 29, 1928, that, if Ewert continued to attack the leaders, he would inevitably become the focus of all dissidents, including the Rightists.[168] The passage in Bukharin's theses relating to the KPD repeated the demand both for "a consistent struggle against the Right deviation", and "an unconditional overthrow of the conciliationist trend in regard to such deviations".[169] These conclusions, and the prominent rôle assigned to Thälmann throughout the congress, showed that Thälmann had been given *carte blanche* in Moscow to deal with his opponents, subject only to the personal protection accorded to Ewert (and to Meyer, who was still convalescing in the Crimea). The reservation may have been due to Bukharin's not yet quite exhausted influence. But the Comintern authorities still shrank from granting absolute power to the leader of any foreign party; and Meyer and Ewert never committed the unforgivable sin of disloyalty to the Soviet Union.

Thälmann's advance to absolute authority was interrupted, but in the long run hastened, by a squalid episode. In March 1928 Thälmann appointed as political secretary of the Hamburg district party organization, in which he was popular and all-powerful, a certain Wittorf, one of his friends and boon-companions, though not — as was later alleged — his brother-in-law. Wittorf was soon

[165] *Ibid.* i, 454–460, 461–464, 523–529; Brandler said many years later that he refused an invitation to attend the sixth congress (though still in Moscow), because he did not wish his presence to become a target for an attack on "Brandlerism" and an excuse for his expulsion from the Russian party (K. Tjaden, *Struktur und Funktion der "KPD — Opposition" (KPO)*, (1964), p. 81.

[166] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 570–571, 615–616.

[167] *Ibid.* i, 612–613; for the Polish crisis, see pp. 577–579 below.

[168] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 617.

[169] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 787.

discovered to have helped himself to party funds to the tune of more than 1000 marks. Thälmann and three of his Hamburg colleagues investigated the default, and reproved a penitent Wittorf. But, fearing the damaging effects of publicity, they decided at the end of May 1928 to take no further action, and to hush the matter up.[170] Three months later, however, about the time of the return of the KPD delegates from the sixth congress in Moscow, the scandal came to light, and was gleefully reported in the ultra-Left and SPD press. Indignation in party circles was spontaneous and widespread; and Ewert and his supporters saw the happy prospect of ridding themselves of their rival and persecutor. Eberlein, a senior member of the party central committee with leanings towards the Right, who had been elected by the sixth congress of Comintern to the international control commission, visited Hamburg with the party treasurer to conduct an investigation. He persuaded the Hamburg district organization to expel Wittorf from the party, and to relieve Thälmann's three accomplices of their functions, and returned to Berlin with a report which extenuated nothing of what had occurred.[171] The party politburo deliberated on September 25, 1928. Ewert demanded "sharper measures" against Thälmann; and Thälmann's friends seem to have regarded his cause as lost. The politburo recommended to the central committee to suspend Thälmann from his functions, and to refer to IKKI, of which he was a member, the question of his future employment. When the committee met on the following day, September 26, 1928, Eberlein, Eisler and the conciliators supported this proposal. Hausen, a candidate member of the central committee, speaking for the party Right, called for Thälmann's expulsion from the party.[172] Thälmann defended himself weakly and acquiesced in the verdict of suspension, but apparently rejected an appeal by Eberlein to "disappear" from the workers' movement. The central committee thereupon adopted unanimously a resolution condemning

[170] This corresponds to the statement made by Thälmann to the party central committee on September 26, 1928 (*Die Kommunistische Internationale*, No. 42, October 17, 1928, pp. 2580–2582; this item did not appear in the Russian edition); see also sources quoted in H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 199–200.

[171] *Ibid.* i, 200.

[172] K. Tjaden, *Struktur und Funktion der "KPD-Opposition" (KPO)* (1964), pp. 83–84; Hausen and Eisler were censured in the IKKI resolution of October 6, 1928 (see p. 449 below).

"in the sharpest way" Thälmann's concealment of the scandal at Hamburg as "incompatible with party discipline", and approving the recommendations of the politburo. It also decided to publish the resolution, which appeared not very conspicuously next day in the *Rote Fahne* and other party newspapers.[173]

Nothing could have been less expected in Moscow than this sudden reversal of fortune, and nothing less welcome. Since Thälmann had been accused of no more than concealing, though not condoning, the misbehaviour of a friend, the severe judgment was thought to have been politically motivated. Thälmann's leadership, built up with patient care by Comintern, had crumbled, and no alternative was in sight. Stalin despatched Petrovsky in haste to Berlin with instructions to call off the attacks on Thälmann. But he arrived too late to attend the meeting of the central committee or to prevent publication of its resolution.[174] Two days later Remmele arrived in Berlin from Moscow with the same message; and Heckert and Ulbricht, members of the central committee who were in the Soviet Union, telegraphed their dissent from the resolution of September 26, 1928.[175] Whatever the merits of the decision, it was difficult to deny the damaging effects of the publicity given to it.[176] The party machine was put sharply into reverse. On October 2, 1928, the Roter Frontkämpferbund, Thälmann's own organization, protested against "the flood of lies and calumnies", and declared that it would not allow "mud to be thrown at comrade Thälmann".[177] The party politburo, in a resolution adopted on the same day with three abstentions (Eberlein, Ewert and Süsskind), expressed the view that the central committee had intended that Thälmann, "in spite of his grave political error", should remain the leader of the party.[178] This was

[173] *Die Rote Fahne*, September 27, 1928.

[174] B. Gross, *Willi Münzenberg* (1967), pp. 217–218. The initiative is plausibly attributed to Stalin; but Bukharin must have been privy to it if he was still in Moscow. The date of his departure on holiday has not been precisely established; but he completed *Notes of an Economist* some time between September 21 and 30, 1928 (see Vol. 2, p. 76, note 4), and probably left Moscow soon after.

[175] H. Weber, *Die Wundlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 204, note 85.

[176] This view was later expressed by Meyer, who was at this time convalescing in Sukhum (*ibid.* i, 436–437), as well as by IKKI in its resolution of October 6, 1928 (see below).

[177] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 435–436.

[178] *Die Rote Fahne*, October 5, 1928; *Pravda*, October 9, 1928.

a signal for twenty-five members of the central committee to sign a statement in which, "after taking cognizance of new facts", they withdrew their adhesion to the resolution of September 26, 1928.[179] On October 6, 1928, the presidium of IKKI pronounced judgment. It approved the action taken against Wittorf, and excused Thälmann's "serious error" on the ground that he had merely wished to chose the right moment for disciplining him. But it condemned the publication of the resolution of the central committee of September 26, 1928, without consulting IKKI, as a "highly dangerous error" which had alarmed the party. The error was attributed to "political opponents" in the central committee, who had not accepted the injunction of the sixth Comintern congress to struggle against the Right danger and against the conciliators. The presidium advised the central committee "to take measures to liquidate all fractional groupings in the party", and expressed its "full political confidence in Thälmann's leadership".[180] *Pravda* followed this up on October 9, 1928, with a leading article directed against those "elements in the central committee" which "sought to utilize the Wittorf affair for narrow fractional ends and to transform it into a 'Thälmann affair' ".

The ultimate effect of the Wittorf episode was to strengthen Thälmann's personal position, and to precipitate reprisals against the minority. On October 19, 1928, the party central committee, by a majority of twenty-five to six formally annulled its resolution of September 26, 1928, censured the Rightists as "agents of the enemy in their own camp", and relieved two protesting candidate members of the committee, Hausen and Galm, of their functions.[181] The remaining members of the Right, including Walcher, Enderle and Thalheimer (who since his return to Germany from Moscow in May 1928 had taken no overt part in party affairs)

[179] *Die Rote Fahne*, October 7, 1928; *Pravda*, October 9, 1928.

[180] *Ibid.* October 9, 1928; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 115, October 9, 1928, pp. 2263–2264; *Die Rote Fahne*, October 9, 1928. The meeting of the presidium took place in the absence on holiday of several of its leading members. Bukharin was at Kislovodsk, Manuilsky, Bela Kun and Humbert-Droz at Sochi; of these only Humbert-Droz protested against the decision (J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), pp. 319–320).

[181] *Die Rote Fahne*, October 20, 1928; the decision was endorsed by majorities of varying size in district party organizations (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 122, October 30, 1928, pp. 2406–2408).

met trouble halfway by sending a protest to IKKI against the decision of October 6, 1928; they demanded freedom of discussion, and the convocation of a party congress with fresh elections to the central committee.[182] The appeal was ignored. Eberlein was deprived of his membership, and Süsskind and Eisler of their candidate membership, of the politburo, leaving Meyer and Ewert as the only conciliators in that institution. Dissidents throughout the party recanted, or were removed from their posts. The party as a whole gradually swung back into line behind Thälmann.[183] During October the editors of most party newspapers were dismissed and replaced by Thälmann's nominees: Neumann at last succeeded Süsskind as editor of the *Rote Fahne*. Neumann, who had won the confidence of Stalin during his stay in Moscow, became for a short time an important figure in the KPD. He supplied Thälmann's intellectual shortcomings by drafting his articles and speeches, and was known as "the *éminence grise* of the central committee".[184] The process was carried a stage further at a party conference in Berlin on November 3 and 4, 1928, attended by 225 delegates, of whom four represented the Right, and nineteen the "conciliators". The main report on the situation in the party was delivered by Thälmann; Ewert spoke for the conciliators; Böttcher, who accused the Thälmann group of reverting to "the methods of Ruth Fischer", for the rump of the Right. The conciliators, having made their reservations, decided to vote for the resolution approving Thälmann's report, which was accepted with four adverse votes.[185] The differences between the

[182] This document, dated October 18, 1928, which was widely circulated in the party, was published in the first issue in November 1928 of the Right opposition journal *Gegen den Strom* (for this journal see p. 447 below), and became a rallying-point for the organization of a Right opposition in the KPD (K. Tjaden, *Struktur und Funktion der "KPD — Opposition" (KPO)* (1964), i, 86, ii, 139, note 151).

[183] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 206–210; the party journal, having kept silence for a month about the Wittorf affair, published an article by Remmele, who treated it simply as a pretext for attacks on the leaders by Thalheimer and "other liquidators" (*Die Internationale*, xi, No. 21, November 1, 1928, pp. 709–711).

[184] J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), p. 319. This is confirmed by M. Buber-Neumann, whom Neumann married shortly afterwards, in her reminiscences, *Kriegsschauplätze der Weltrevolution* (1967), p. 243; this account includes a fanciful anecdote (not the only one in the book) which may be credited to his or her fertile imagination.

[185] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 124, November 6, 1928, pp. 2466–2467, and sources cited in H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen*

majority and the conciliators amounted to little more than a difference of emphasis in the attitudes to be adopted to Left social-democrats, especially in the trade unions, and in the degree of toleration to be extended to the Right. The conciliators evidently hoped, by avoiding a confrontation which would have provided an excuse for reprisals against them, to retain the modicum of influence which they still enjoyed.

The situation in the KPD came to a head with the return of Brandler from Moscow at the end of October 1928. Brandler on August 13, 1928, during the sixth congress of Comintern, had written to the central committee of the VKP(B) and of the KPD and to the political secretariat of IKKI "categorically" requesting permission to return to Germany. The German delegation at the congress expressed the opinion that his return was "undesirable", and that he should continue to work in Comintern. Brandler then had a conversation with Molotov, who (rather than Bukharin) now evidently had the final decision, and who told him that a visa would not be refused, but that he must accept the consequences. Brandler reached Berlin on October 27, 1928.[186] His arrival coincided with the first issue of a journal of the Right group in the KPD, significantly named *Gegen den Strom*,[187] of which he quickly became the chief editor and the principal inspiration. Brandler's "programme of action" became the informal programme of the group. Since the main bone of contention was the question of cooperation with social-democrats in non-party mass organizations, of which the trade unions were by far the most important, it was appropriate that Brandler, an old trade union leader, should be at the centre of the group, and that it should include the outstanding KPD workers in the trade unions, Walcher, Böttcher

Kommunismus (1969), i, 211–213; for a critical report on the conference by a Swiss communist who was present see J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), pp. 343–347; for reports from the official point of view see *Die Internationale*, xi, No. 22, November 15, 1928, pp. 757–760 (Ulbricht), 766–767 (Remmele).

[186] See sources quoted in K. Tjaden, *Struktur und Funktion der "KPD — Opposition" (KPO)* (1964), ii, 139, note 149; according to J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), p. 338, the western European bureau of Comintern in Berlin proposed to send Brandler to work in Austria.

[187] The first issue, dated November 7, 1928, was printed in 3500 or 4000 copies (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 140, December 18, 1928, p. 2789); the title was that of a collection of articles by Lenin and Zinoviev, which had originally appeared in Switzerland before the revolution, published in Petrograd in 1918.

and Enderle. Siewert, the principal organizer of the workers' delegations to Moscow in 1925 and 1926, and Beck, the editor of *Einheit*, the journal founded in 1926 to promote trade union co-operation, were among the members of the group.[188]

The autumn of 1928 was a discouraging period for the KPD. Consciousness of repercussions of the Wittorf scandal, and of the reversal under severe Comintern pressure of the verdict on Thälmann passed by the central committee of the KPD,[189] extended far beyond the ranks of the German party. Togliatti in a letter to Tasca of October 6, 1928, expressed his fears that the KPD was undergoing "a process of disintegration, of internal wastage, of the kind which has affected the Polish and American parties", adding that in Germany "this is even graver".[190] The affair was the starting-point of a long period of insubordination in the German communist youth league. Having expressed its approval of the decision of the party central committee of September 26, 1928, to remove Thälmann, the league persisted in this attitude even after instructions arrived from Comintern to reverse the decision. KIM intervened; and a conference of the league in November 1928 was said to have unanimously condemned these errors, and removed the leaders who were held responsible for them.[191] Apart from the Wittorf scandal, the party had sustained a political defeat. A demand for a referendum on the proposal to construct an armoured cruiser, planned on the model of the campaign of 1926 on the expropriation of the royal houses, proved a fiasco, winning only 1,277,000 votes. Not only was social-democratic support not forthcoming (the SPD was now a leading party in the government), but enthusiasm in the KPD had manifestly waned.[192]

[188] K. Tjaden, *Struktur und Funktion der "KPD — Opposition" (KPO)* (1964), pp. 58, 68.

[189] See p. 445 above.

[190] *Annali, 1966* (Milan, 1966), pp. 513–515.

[191] *10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 214–215; an article in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 6, January 18, 1929, pp. 113–114, admitted the persistence of a fraction of "Rightists and conciliators" in the league.

[192] *Die Internationale*, xi, No. 21, November 1, 1928, pp. 705–709; the building of the cruiser was denounced as the symptom of a revival of German imperialism with the connivance of the SPD. For the KPD campaign against German imperialism see p. 424 above.

At the end of November 1928 IKKI set up a commission in Moscow to deal with the German question. Two motives lay behind the decision: anxiety about the confused and precarious condition of the KPD, and desire to attack Bukharin through his sympathizers in the KPD, whom he no longer dared openly to defend. Bukharin had absented himself from Comintern since his return to Moscow early in November,[193] and did not take part in proceedings of IKKI or of its commission. The commission began by considering the case of the two Rightists, Hausen and Galm, relieved of their functions by the central committee of the KPD, who rather surprisingly came to Moscow to plead their cause. Ulbricht served as the prosecutor, and Hausen defended himself at length. The case against him was reinforced by a large array of orators, including Kuusinen, Gusev, Bell, Tasca (his last appearance as a supporter of Comintern orthodoxy) and Kolarov. The condemnation of the two culprits was a foregone conclusion.[194] This minor issue having been disposed of, the commission engaged in a general debate on the affairs of the KPD. Meyer, now recovered in health, spoke for the conciliators, and received doughty support from Humbert-Droz; Ulbricht, just emerging as a party leader, was the official spokesman of Thälmann and the KPD; Kuusinen and Gusev represented the Russian party and the

[193] See p. 236 above.

[194] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 140, December 18, 1928, pp. 2781–2803; this was the only part of the proceedings to be reported at length. Tasca declared that the "fractional activity" of Hausen and his friends in the KPD "would suffice not once, but ten times, to justify their exclusion". He specifically attacked Brandler's "programme of action" and the slogan of workers' control; argued that on the issue of the united front Hausen and his friends "have a tendency to leave the political initiative to the social-democrats"; accused them of a "mistrust of the unorganized workers", which sprang from "a social-democratic view of the trade unions"; and described their attitude to "the inner-party régime" as "a negation of the Leninist conception of democratic centralism". He concluded that the leadership of Comintern must "place itself solidly behind the central committee of the KPD, even if this solidarity is a critical one: that makes it all the more valuable and necessary" (*ibid.* pp. 2790–2796). These last cryptic phrases were the one faint indication that Tasca was not an unqualified supporter of the central committee. Reporting to the PCI on December 5, 1928, he represented himself as the only member of the commission who had raised a "dissentient voice". But he explained that, having discovered that it was not a closed meeting, he put away the speech which he had intended to make, and confined himself to criticisms of the Right, for fear that Hausen after his expulsion might use his remarks against the party (*Annali, 1966* (Milan, 1966), p. 576).

Comintern line. Meyer and Humbert-Droz both preserved copies of their unpublished speeches. Meyer attacked Thälmann's insistence on "an economic offensive" as "a policy of phrases", and accused the party majority of adopting an ultra-Left course and displaying "Ruth Fischer tendencies". The speech was interrupted by altercations with Ulbricht.[195] Humbert-Droz accused the German leadership of distorting the resolution of the sixth congress of Comintern on the relative stabilization of capitalism, and of exaggerating the prospects of revolution, and proposed the removal of Neumann, who was playing a "divisive ideological rôle against the line of the sixth world congress".[196] Gusev, in reply to Meyer, treated the conciliators as no better than Rightists, who were open enemies.[197] The debate ended inconclusively — perhaps owing to divisions in the Politburo and hesitations on the part of Stalin.[198]

While the commission worked in Moscow, the central committee of the KPD met in Berlin on December 14–15, 1928; Meyer, back from Moscow, was present for the first time for a year at a session of the committee.[199] His reappearance encouraged the conciliators, who had already circulated a thirty-page statement, signed by Ewert, Eberlein and five others, announcing a "struggle on two fronts" in the party (i.e. against the leadership and against the Right), and protesting against the proposed expulsion of comrades like Brandler, Thalheimer, Walcher and Enderle, who had been among the founders of the Spartakusbund.[200] (This appeal to sentiment was appropriate at a moment

[195] Quoted from the Meyer archive in H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 214; for an exchange of letters between Meyer and Ulbricht see H. Weber, *Ulbricht Fälscht Geschichte* (1964), pp. 136–138.

[196] J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), pp. 326–340; for the text of the speech see Humbert-Droz archives, 0311.

[197] Quoted from the Meyer archive in H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 214–215.

[198] This is hinted at in J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (1971), pp. 340–341.

[199] Meyer complained on the eve of the session that his colleagues in the party politburo had refused his request for a meeting and had had no communication with him for six months (H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 437–438).

[200] The statement was published in two parts in small type in the party journal, each part being preceded by an article in larger type rebutting it (*Die Internationale*, xi, No. 24, December 15, 1928, pp. 828–839, xii, No. 1–2, January 15, 1929, pp. 46–57).

when preparations were in train to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the KPD and of the murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Liebknecht.) Eight conciliators handed in a further declaration at the session reiterating their objection to the policy of expulsions.[201] Meyer and Ewert made yet another long declaration denouncing "dangerous 'Left' waverings" in the party majority;[202] and Meyer in his speech detected "a pseudo-Left grouping" in the leadership.[203] A resolution was adopted at the session condemning the recent activities of Brandler and Thalheimer as leaders of a "Right group of liquidators", reiterated that they had placed themselves "outside the party", but noted that they were still members of the Russian party, which they had joined during their sojourn in Moscow, and begged that party to put an end to this intolerable situation.[204] In a further resolution, an ultimatum was presented to other prominent Rightists, including Walcher and Enderle, requiring them to submit unconditionally before December 20 to party discipline, and to conform to the decisions of the fourth congress of Profintern and the sixth congress of Comintern on work in the trade unions, in default of which they would be expelled from the party. Yet another resolution censured Meyer and Ewert, but without threatening sanctions.[205] On December 19, 1928, Meyer and Ewert telegraphed to IKKI to protest against these decisions and to announce that Ewert was leaving for Moscow.[206]

The authorities in Moscow would wait no longer. On the day on which this telegram was despatched, the presidium of IKKI met to dispose of the affairs of the KPD, and to approve the terms, drafted by the commission, of an open letter to the party and a confidential letter to the leadership. Gusev presented the draft of the open letter in a long report, which began with an indictment of Brandler, Thalheimer and the Right, and went on to

[201] *Die Rote Fahne*, December 23, 1928.

[202] This was once more published with a reply in larger type in *Die Internationale*, xii, no. 3, February 1, 1929, pp. 103–112.

[203] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 216, note 142.

[204] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 142, December 21, 1928, pp. 2848–2849.

[205] *Die Rote Fahne*, December 16, 18, 1928; for the ultimatum to the Right see the IKKI open letter of December 19, 1928 (p. 453 below).

[206] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 439.

denounce the ambiguous manoeuvres of the conciliators.[207] Both Stalin and Molotov, though not Bukharin, were present, and both spoke. Stalin mentioned no members of the KPD by name, and trained his onslaught on Humbert-Droz and Tasca, who had "descended into the bog of cowardly opportunism". Referring to recent strikes in the Ruhr, he claimed that out of a million workers only 200,000 were organized in unions, and that the unorganized workers were "more revolutionary". Tasca's allegation that the fourth congress of Profintern had instructed communists to work only within the framework of existing unions was "nonsense"; it was also their business to organize the unorganized workers. This appeared to imply the creation of independent Red unions; but Stalin exhibited his usual skill in avoiding a specific commitment on so contentious an issue. He rejected any comparison between the Right in the VKP(B), which did not yet constitute a fraction and accepted majority decisions, and the Right in the KPD, which "breaks with Marxism–Leninism and urges a desperate struggle against Comintern". Here measures of discipline were required to enforce the submission of the minority to the majority.[208] At some point in the proceedings Humbert-Droz read

[207] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 16, February 19, 1929, pp. 327–331. The statement in Barbé's unpublished memoirs (*The Comintern: Historical Highlights*, ed. M. Drachkovitch and B. Lazitch (1966), p. 220) that Gusev, supported by Lozovsky, called for the foundation of a "new independent, revolutionary [trade] union organization in Germany" can hardly be correct; this was not Comintern policy at this time, and Gusev on this issue was opposed to Lozovsky (see p. 241 above).

[208] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, xi, 294–310; as a tribute to the importance of the speech, it was printed in *Bol'shevik*, No. 23–24, December 31, 1928, pp. 40–47, and in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 52 (178), 1928, pp. 14–20, under the title "On the Right Danger in the German Communist Party". According to the German version of the speech in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 1, January 4, 1929, pp. 1–4, Stalin ended by proposing some unspecified amendments in the text of the letter or letters. The resolution of the fourth congress of Profintern cautiously described "the conquest of the reformist unions" as the "central objective", but not as the sole objective (see p. 182 above). According to Barbé's memoirs (*The Comintern: Historical Highlights*, ed. M. Drachkovitch and B. Lazitch (1966), p. 223), Tasca, with a boldness which shocked those accustomed to official obsequiousness to the leader, interrupted Stalin's speech with a flat contradiction of his account of the conclusions of the fourth congress of Profintern. At the tenth IKKI in July 1929 Tasca maintained that Stalin's speech of December 19, 1928, had been a declaration in favour of splitting the trade unions; Thälmann more cautiously attributed to Stalin the view that "we are not in principle against the formation of new trade unions", but that this was not obligatory

an argumentative statement announcing his intention to vote against the draft letters, which so exasperated Stalin that he muttered audibly "Go to the devil!"[209] Klara Zetkin, who was no longer active in party affairs, and whose age and fame made her impregnable, proposed to postpone a decision and allow a free discussion in the party; she is said to have attacked Neumann as "an *agent provocateur* of exclusions and splits".[210] Kuusinen, Lozovsky and Ulbricht followed Stalin's lead, obsequiously attacking Tasca and Humbert-Droz.[211]

The greater part of the open letter was devoted to a dissection of the misdeeds of Brandler and the KPD Right during the past two years. On the trade union issue, it alleged that Brandler's followers "openly declare war on the resolutions of the fourth congress" of Profintern; the Right pretended that Profintern and Comintern policy led "to a split between organized and unorganized workers, to a split in the trade unions, to the liquidation of the influence of the trade unions, and to a complete separation from the workers and to their isolation". The letter also attacked the "platform" presented by Ewert and his supporters to the central committee of the KPD, explaining that "there is no longer any place for conciliationism in the KPD", and that in recent weeks the conciliators had shown themselves more and more tolerant of the Right and intolerant of the party line. The letter approved of the ultimatum presented by the central committee to the Right, and called for "a systematic struggle to overcome conciliationism in regard to Rightists".[212] It was duly adopted by the presidium — against the adverse votes of Humbert-Droz, Tasca and Zetkin[213] — together with a confidential letter which

in all countries (*Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 706, 866).

[209] J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), pp. 349–353; Humbert-Droz described Stalin's speech as "an attack on the conception of the stabilization of capitalism set forth in the theses of the sixth world congress", and added, more shrewdly, that "the real target was naturally Bukharin" (*ibid.* 341).

[210] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 217, note 147; Lozovsky dismissed Zetkin's proposal in a single sentence of his speech (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 17, February 22, 1929, p. 359).

[211] *Ibid.* No. 17, February 22, 1929, pp. 357–360, No. 18, February 26, 1929, pp. 379–384.

[212] *Ibid.* No. 142, December 21, 1928, pp. 2829–2832.

[213] J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), p. 354.

was directed mainly against the conciliators, but contained one minor concession: the view propounded by Remmele and Neumann that the conciliators were more dangerous than the Right was disavowed.[214] In spite of Stalin's rejection of the parallel with the Russian party, the cautious handling of the conciliators in the KPD had close analogies with the tactics employed against Bukharin in Moscow. They were continually harried, but the sentence of excommunication was not pronounced.

The politburo of the KPD hurriedly met on December 21, 1928, to greet in sycophantic language the verdict of the open letter against the Right and the conciliators, and to pass a resolution expelling eight leading Rightists, including Walcher and Enderle, from the party.[215] In response to the invitation of the KPD, the central control commission of the VKP(B) sent Brandler and Thalheimer an ultimatum requiring them, before January 20, 1929, to submit themselves to the decisions of IKKI and of Comintern.[216] On December 29, 1928, seventy-four representatives of the Right, of whom only seventeen had yet been expelled from the party, held a conference, which was addressed by Brandler, Thalheimer, Walcher and Hausen, and decided to constitute a group calling itself "KPD — Opposition (KPO)". It recognized that the strength of the Right lay in the auxiliary organizations in which communists were in direct touch with SPD and non-party workers — the cooperatives, Sportintern, MOPR and MRP, as well as the trade unions — and decided to form fractions in these in opposition to the KPD fractions.[217] This challenge spurred the leadership to a fresh outburst of anger. The party central committee at a session of January 24–25, 1929, rounded once more on the conciliators, whom it taunted as "generals without an army", and accused of temporizing both with "the enemy within (the Right)" and with "the enemy

[214] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 218.

[215] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 143, December 28, 1928, pp. 2863–2864.

[216] *Ibid.* No. 9, January 29, 1929, p. 163; Brandler and Thalheimer failed to comply and were duly expelled.

[217] *Ibid.* No. 20, March 1, 1929, pp. 438–439; K. Tjaden, *Struktur und Funktion der "KPD — Opposition" (KPO)* (1964), i, 112; H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 219. For the strength of the Right in MOPR see *ibid.* i, 219, note 160; Münzenberg's caution about the auxiliary organizations (see pp. 273–275 above) was well justified.

without (the bourgeoisie, social-democracy)".[218] A belated campaign was set on foot against the journal *Einheit*, which still contrived to preach a united front with social-democrats;[219] and it was closed down shortly afterwards.

The trade union issue continued to be the main bone of contention in the KPD. The growing hostility to the reformist trade union leaders proclaimed at the fourth congress of Profintern and the sixth congress of Comintern was fully reciprocated, and resulted in increasingly frequent expulsions of communists and their supporters from social-democratic unions.[220] After the session of the party central committee, a conference of KPD workers in the trade unions was held in Berlin on January 25-27, 1929, at which Heckert delivered a lengthy report.[221] Heckert's theme was the fundamental rift between reformists and revolutionaries. He cited the proceedings of the ADGB at its congress in September 1928 at Hamburg, where the leaders had argued (like Citrine at the simultaneous British trade union congress at Swansea) that the workers had an interest in defending and strengthening the economy, and had supported arbitration in industrial disputes.[222] The most awkward problem was still the creation of Red trade unions. Heckert quoted Stalin's ambiguous remarks in the German commission on December 19, 1928, and denied the charge of the Rightists that Stalin had excluded the obligation to work in the social-democratic unions.[223] The opposition does not appear to have raised its voice. But Heckert in his reply to the debate

[218] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 9, January 29, 1929, pp. 157–160.

[219] *Die Internationale*, xii, No. 1–2, January 15, 1929, pp. 27–30; for *Einheit* see p. 400 above.

[220] According to Lozovsky, the unions expelled "not tens of thousands of workers", but their "chosen spokesmen"; 2000 communists elected to trade union posts had been expelled in the past few months (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 23–24 (201–202), 1929, p. 126).

[221] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 9, January 29, 1929, pp. 165–169.

[222] For a communist account of the Hamburg congress see *ibid.* No. 101, September 11, 1928, pp. 1908–1910, and an article in *Pravda*, September 12, 1928, comparing the Hamburg and Swansea congresses; for the Swansea congress see p. 375 above.

[223] For Stalin's speech and the different interpretations placed on it see p. 452 above.

rejected the criticism of "the Right and the conciliators" that "we want to transfer the centre of gravity of our work to unorganized workers".[224] This caution was little to Lozovsky's taste. In the battle waged by him in the trade union commission of IKKI for the organization of unorganized workers and the formation of new revolutionary unions, the KPD was never far from his thoughts. He complained bitterly of an attitude of "legalism, constitutionalism, fetichism" towards "trade unions as such"; and "this legalism, this remnant of bureaucratic, official psychology, which exists in the working class, can also still be found in our communist party".

> A significant number of officials [Lozovsky continued] vote in words for the decisions of the fourth congress of Profintern and the sixth congress of Comintern, and in practice do not carry out 10 per cent of these decisions, because with them apparently legalism, fear of the bureaucracy, dwarfs everything else.[225]

But, so long as Lozovsky enjoyed something less than the full support of the party leaders in Moscow, his clarion call resounded faintly in Berlin.

In Moscow Bukharin and his associates had been defeated and condemned in the Politburo early in February 1929.[226] The decision, though not yet officially divulged, must have been known in substance to party leaders enjoying the confidence of Comintern, and contributed to the pressure against Bukharin's supporters and former *protégés* in the KPD. The theses of the Agitprop of IKKI for the tenth anniversary of Comintern denounced "the open campaign against the decisions of the sixth congress organized by Brandler and Thalheimer, those heroes of the defeat of 1923".[227] A Berlin district congress in the same month ended with the election of a "*completely homogeneous*" district party committee of 105, which included no Rightists or concilia-

[224] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 9, January 29, 1929, p. 165.

[225] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 23–24 (201–202), 1929, p. 113; for this speech pp. 240–241 above. For an earlier complaint of the legalistic attitude of German workers see *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 6–7 (132–133), 1928, p. 78.

[226] See Vol. 2, pp. 89–90.

[227] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 21, March 5, 1929, p. 450.

tors.[228] From January to April 1929 the expulsion of the Right from all party organizations went on rapidly, the aim being to eliminate it completely before the impending twelfth party congress, fixed for May 1929. Save for a few partial and local exceptions this aim was achieved. After the spring of 1929 two groups of dissident communists expelled from the KPD maintained themselves on the fringe of German politics: the rump of the "ultra-Left" Maslow–Fischer group, calling itself the Leninbund, and the Right Brandler–Thalheimer group, known as the KPO. They continued to lead a shadowy existence for the next three years, publishing their respective journals, but were powerless to influence the course of events. The conciliators, reduced to little more than a small group of intellectuals,[229] earned a brief and illusory respite. Meyer remained as their sole representative in the party politburo. Ewert and Eisler, their most active leaders during Meyer's illness, were summoned to Moscow for employment elsewhere.[230] At the session of the central committee on March 15, 1929, Meyer and Becker pleaded once more for a united front in the trade unions, and condemned the party's "fluctuating and ambiguous attitude".[231] "Waverings and hesitations" were once more detected by the party leaders in the German youth league, especially in its Berlin section, and energetic measures were required to prevent "their development into conciliationism and grave opportunist errors". Representatives of the youth league were summoned to Moscow, where these failures were duly condemned.[232]

Before the next party congress, announced to open in Dresden on May 5, 1929, could meet, the mounting tension was highlighted by tragic events in Berlin. The Berlin police president, Zörgiebel, who was a social-democrat, had imposed a ban on street demonstrations. It was assumed in some quarters that the ban would be relaxed for the demonstrations which both the KPD and SPD normally held on May 1. But, when the central com-

[228] *Ibid.* No. 27, March 22, 1929, p. 606.

[229] Meyer in a conversation with Tasca in Berlin on January 20, 1929, could name only ten members of the group (*Annali, 1966* (Milan, 1966), p. 667).

[230] For Ewert's missions to the CPGB and to the American party see p. 430 above.

[231] *Die Rote Fahne*, March 21, 1929.

[232] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistichen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 215, 355; these proceedings cannot be precisely dated, but preceded the events of May 1, 1929.

mittee of the KPD issued on April 12, 1929, an appeal to the workers for "*revolutionary mass demonstrations*", and urged them to have nothing to do with the reformists, it added the watchword: "In defiance of all prohibitions."[233] The opportunity of demonstrating both the loyalty of the KPD to the call of Comintern for revolutionary action, and its unqualified hostility to social-democracy, was not to be missed. Communist workers marched on May 1, and set up barricades to thwart the intervention of the police. The police fired: twenty-five workers were killed, 160 wounded and more than 1200 arrested. This tragedy added fuel to the campaign against the social-democrats, now openly denounced as Fascists. But a call to all workers for a mass rising against Fascism and imperialism fell on deaf ears; the Roter Frontkämpferbund was banned, the *Rote Fahne* was suspended for three weeks.[234] The twelfth party congress was postponed, and eventually met on June 8, 1929, in Wedding, the Berlin working-class quarter which had been the scene of the May 1 shootings. Ulbricht announced in advance that its theme would be "to utilize the experience of the workers' struggles, from the Ruhr struggles to those of May 1, in the interests of the international class struggle, of an intensification of the struggle of class against class".[235] On the first afternoon of the congress the delegates went in procession to the graves of Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, and the victims of May 1, 1929.[236]

Thälmann, received at the congress with an ovation which consecrated his supreme and uncontested leadership, hammered home in a long political report the familiar theme of the treachery of the SPD and the identification of social-democracy with Fascism. "Never yet," he declared, "was the Fascist danger in the whole world so great as it is now"; and he noted "the active appearance of the National-Socialists in all parts of Germany". He pointed to the German coalition government and to the MacDonald government in Great Britain as examples of "a specially

[233] *Die Rote Fahne*, April 12, 1929.

[234] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 38, May 2, 1929, pp. 902–903; the Prussian Minister of Interior wished to ban the KPD, but was overruled by the Reichsminister on the ground that the prohibition could not be enforced (quoted from the archives in H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), i, 322, note 10).

[235] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 49, June 7, 1929, p. 1183.

[236] *Ibid.* No. 50, June 11, 1929, pp. 1215–1216.

dangerous form of Fascist development, the form of social-Fascism".

> Every worker [he concluded] must recognize, what our conciliators have not recognized, that social-Fascism consists in paving the way for Fascist dictatorship under the cloak of so-called "pure democracy".

And Remmele later in the debate dwelt on "the transformation of social-democracy into social-Fascism".[237] The twelfth congress marked the wholehearted acceptance of the concept of social-Fascism into the party ideology and vocabulary.[238]

But the leaders had another main preoccupation. Before the congress a long and polemical article in the party journal had laid down the pattern of the proceedings, and demanded unconditional submission to the promptings of Moscow. As the eleventh party congress in 1927 had signalized the final defeat of the ultra-Left, so the twelfth congress would put an end to "the petty bourgeois opportunism of the Right liquidators". But even more dangerous than the declared Right were the conciliators, described as "disguised Rightists" and "the auxiliary troops of the expelled renegades".[239] The conciliators submitted a memorandum in the form of a "platform", which returned to the vexed theme of the united front in the trade unions, and attacked the bureaucratization of the party.[240] Ewert was grudgingly given half-an-hour's speaking time. Ignoring derisive interruptions, he attempted to minimize the differences between the party line and that of his group, and promised loyal obedience to majority decisions, but declared that the arbitrary removal of party officials by the central committee was "the reflexion of a relapse into false methods and false tactics *vis-à-vis* the working masses".[241] After Remmele had led the attack on the memorandum, Meyer expressed regrets that the tactics of the united front had not been used on May 1; what happened resulted from "an over-estimate of our own strength as a party".[242] Sémard, as delegate of IKKI, delivered a speech in French, rehearsing the main lines of Comintern policy and

[237] *Protokoll des 12. Parteitags der KPD* (n.d. [1929]), pp. 54–55, 75, 205.
[238] For social-Fascism see Note C, pp. 638–643 below.
[239] *Die Internationale*, xii, No. 8–9, May 1, 1929, pp. 257–271.
[240] *Ibid.* xii, No. 13, July 1, 1929, pp. 431–436.
[241] *Protokoll des 12. Parteitags der KPD* (n.d. [1929]), pp. 176–183.
[242] *Ibid.* pp. 201–206, 220–223.

exposing the heresy of the conciliators, who had taken over "*the rôle of the Right in the KPD*"; and Gallacher of CPGB read a joint declaration on behalf of seven European communist parties condemning the conciliators in the KPD and threatening them with expulsion if they maintained the line propounded in their memorandum.[243] A resolution directed against the Right danger and "opportunism" in the KPD fiercely condemned the Meyer–Ewert platform, and denounced the conciliators as followers of "the Russian Rightists (the Bukharin group)" and in league with "opportunist groupings" in the Italian, American and other parties.[244]

A constant theme was the overriding obligation of communist parties to rally to the defence of the USSR against the threat of war. While the congress was in session, *Pravda* published a leading article which defined "the struggle against war and against the preparations for an attack on the Soviet Uuion" as "the most important task of the international communist movement".[245] This note was struck by several delegates, most graphically of all by Münzenberg, who proclaimed the motto "No 'defence of the fatherland' of an imperialist country", but "Defence of our fatherland, the Soviet Union".[246] Remmele discussed "the rôle of social-Fascism in the war against the USSR". Germany would serve as "an example for all the imperialist Great Powers".

> The Fascist régime of Mussolini [he concluded], the military régime of Yugoslavia, the Pilsudski régime in Poland, will be put in the shade by the governmental methods of social-Fascism in Germany.[247]

The danger of imperialist war was stressed both in the general resolution of the congress as a feature of the "third period" of capitalist development, and in a special resolution.[248] Ambiguity continued to attend the discussion of the trade union question. Merker, who made the report, called for the recruitment of "*new*

[243] *Ibid.* pp. 255–256, 294–296.
[244] *Waffen für den Klassenkampf: Beschlüsse des XII Parteitags der KPD* (1929), pp. 36–45.
[245] *Pravda*, June 12, 1929.
[246] *Protokoll des 12 Parteitags der KPD* (n.d. [1929]), p. 200.
[247] *Ibid.* pp. 331–332.
[248] *Waffen für den Klassenkampf: Beschlüsse des XII Parteitags der KPD* (1929), pp. 7–15, 46–62.

revolutionary forces" in the unions, and insisted that "*an opposition of principle exists between the trade union bureaucracy and the revolutionary opposition*". But "the immediate foundation of new parallel trade unions would be not a progressive, but an inhibiting, factor in the development of the revolutionary class struggle".[249] The long resolution on the trade unions qualified much revolutionary verbiage with a firm injunction to work in existing trade unions of whatever political complexion, and a plain statement that "the foundation of parallel trade unions side by side with reformist unions is not in present conditions on the agenda".[250] In the elections at the end of the congress, which, as usual, took place in closed session, Meyer, Ewert and Eberlein were dropped from the central committee, and Dengel from the politburo; the political secretariat now consisted of Thälmann, Remmele and Neumann.[251] *Pravda*, in a congratulatory article at the conclusion of the congress, referred to Meyer and Ewert as "successors of Brandler", and hailed the KPD as the "German Bolsheviks".[252]

The tenth IKKI in Moscow in July 1929 contributed little to the problems of the KPD except to record unqualified approval of what had been done. Manuilsky in his report reproached the conciliators in the KPD for having objected to the indiscriminate application to the bourgeoisie and the social-democrats, respectively, of the terms "Fascist" and "social-Fascist", and added that, "after the May blood-bath, it is obvious to an infant whither social-democracy is driving".[253] Ulbricht, the first speaker for the KPD, spoke of "*the struggle against the conciliators*", and bracketed Ewert with Bukharin and Humbert-Droz among those who sought "to change the Comintern line in an opportunist sense".[254] Molotov, in the speech in which he unleashed the full-scale assault on Bukharin, argued that "social-Fascism" had hitherto been discussed in too academic a manner: "the Fascist degeneration of social-democracy" should engage the full atten-

[249] *Protokoll des 12 Parteitags der KPD* (n.d. [1929]), pp. 459, 475.

[250] *Waffen für den Klassenkampf: Beschlüsse des XII Parteitags der KPD* (1929), pp. 62–81.

[251] H. Weber, *Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus* (1969), ii, 12–13.

[252] *Pravda*, June 20, 1929.

[253] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 61, 82.

[254] *Ibid.* pp. 359, 365.

tion of the session. He coined the term "police-socialists", and declared that the events of May 1 in Berlin "reveal the true nature of social-Fascism in its full extent".[255] After this signal had been given, the theme of social-Fascism was embroidered by many speakers. Thälmann, in a long speech devoted to the Right deviation in the Russian and other parties, dismissed the conciliators in the KPD as "officers without a rank and file", and "no longer party opponents to be taken so seriously as if they could do us great harm".[256] The resolution on Manuilsky's report proclaimed that the social-democratic leaders "are threatening the German working class with an open Fascist dictatorship", and that social-democracy in coalition with the bourgeoisie "carries out a social-Fascist policy". It recorded with satisfaction that the KPD "under the leadership of IKKI and on the basis of its open letter" had "destroyed the renegade group of Brandler–Thalheimer".[257]

Thälmann reserved his main attack on the "liquidators and conciliators" for his report on the trade union question, accusing Meyer of having wished to participate in the SPD indoor demonstrations on May 1, and to abandon the communist street demonstrations. He also denounced the journal *Einheit*, now just closed down, and its one-time editor Siewert, now expelled from the party, linking them with the "Tomsky–Yaglom group" in Moscow.[258] Lozovsky treated the "Brandler–Walcher group" in Germany as typical of "the Right wing in Profintern and Comintern", though he used Tasca rather than Meyer as the archetype of the conciliators.[259] But the key sentence relating to Germany in the resolution on the trade unions reflected the ambiguities of the resolution and the controversies which lay behind its adoption:

> The creation of new trade unions in countries where an independent revolutionary trade union movement has hitherto been absent (e.g. in Germany) must be carried out only in

[255] *Ibid.* pp. 419–420; for this speech see Vol. 2, p. 95.

[256] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 544–561; for Ulbricht's, Molotov's and Thälmann's speeches see pp. 249–252 above.

[257] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 876–888.

[258] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 634–680. For *Einheit* see p. 455 above; it was revived after July 1929 as an opposition journal (*Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, iv, No. 2, 1956, p. 346, note 13). For Siewert see p. 309 above.

[259] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 694–698; for this speech see pp. 252–253 above.

particular cases, taking into account the whole objective situation.[260]

The dilemma, which could be brushed aside with formulas of compromise in Moscow, was inescapable in Germany, where workers — even communist workers — were perpetually divided by internecine battles between parties and groups.

The twelfth congress of the KPD, followed by the tenth IKKI, in the summer of 1929, launched the party on the stony path which it pursued, in loyal submission to the directives of Comintern, for more than three barren and disastrous years. The German workers' movement had been split, but the loyalty of a majority to the SPD had not been shaken. The experience of 1914 showed that the SPD was in the last resort not a revolutionary party. It had developed some bourgeois, and some western, characteristics, which made it in the middle nineteen-twenties sensitive to any hint of dictation or domination from Moscow. But the KPD itself was not wholly immune from the influences of a western European background. Both the Brandler group and the later conciliators, as well as the ultra-Left, appeared to represent those "anti-Muscovite tendencies" in the party background which were anathema in Comintern,[261] and which promoted in the rank and file the continuing sense of an outlook common to all German workers, irrespective of party allegiance. As late as 1929, it was calculated that 60 per cent of the members of the KPD were former members of the SPD or the USPD.[262] When its leaders at the behest of Comintern substituted a direct offensive against the SPD for the patient tactics of the united front, they deepened the rift between the two wings of the traditional Left, and undermined their own positions. To brand the social-democrats as "social-Fascists" and the most dangerous enemies of the working class became increasingly implausible as a genuine Fascist movement reared its head. The KPD sank slowly into impotence. Its only effective rôle, when the crisis came, was that of a scapegoat.

[260] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 904.

[261] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 331.

[262] *Protokoll: 10 Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 265.

CHAPTER 77

THE FRENCH PARTY (PCF)

THE comprehensive resolution of the sixth IKKI of February–March 1926 on the French question[1] was designed as a directive for the forthcoming congress of the PCF which was to take place in June 1926. Most members of the party, whatever their revolutionary professions, thought of it as an active force in the politics of the Third Republic, and were keenly preoccupied with questions of the united front, still prominent among the Comintern objectives proclaimed in the open letter to party members of December 6, 1925.[2] Already before the session of IKKI, *Humanité* on February 13, 1926, announced the opening of a pre-congress debate, and on the following day published an article by Lozovsky insisting on the demand among the masses for unity of action, which was forcing reformist organizations to form a common front with adherents of Comintern and Profintern. *Humanité* raised the question whether it was possible to cooperate with the League of the Rights of Man and with the Freemasons, and thought that the party should encourage the "awakening class consciousness" of small traders.[3] The high-water mark of the campaign seems to have been the appearance of PCF and SFIO[4] speakers on the same platform to celebrate the anniversary of the Paris commune on March 18, 1926. If the campaign made little progress, this was owing to the persistent lukewarmness of the SFIO and CGT. These proceedings aroused,

[1] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 515–517. The resolution was printed in *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 70, April 15, 1926, pp. 951–964, 970–980, the second part, devoted to a polemic against dissident groups expelled from the PCF (Souvarine, Rosmer and Monatte), being oddly separated from the main resolution and headed simply "Contre la Droite Française"; the first part only, under the title "Rapport sur la Question Française", appeared in the proceedings of the fifth party congress of June 1926 (*V Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), pp. 643–655).

[2] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 362–363.

[3] *Humanité*, February 20, 26, 1926.

[4] SFIO (Section Française Internationale Ouvrière) was a common designation of the French Socialist Party.

however, some anxieties in Moscow. The letter addressed to the PCF by Comintern on the eve of its congress emphasized that the united front should be a "proletarian united front", based on communist leadership of the proletariat. Cooperation for specific ends with petty bourgeois organizations like the League of the Rights of Man must not involve any sacrifice of independence by the party, or "make our party the tool of the Left bloc".[5]

Prospects of a clear and coherent lead from the forthcoming congress were faint. The PCF was a prey to confusions of policy as well as to personal rivalries, which the feud in the Russian party did nothing to mitigate. Petrovsky, who worked as Bennett in the CPGB and in the PCF under the name of Humbold, and Guralsky were in Paris in the spring of 1926, paving the way for the congress. Guralsky was a known follower of Zinoviev, and his contacts were mainly with the Paris organization under Suzanne Girault, which formed the core of the party Left; Petrovsky, who had a keener sense of the shifting balance of power in Moscow, tried to dissuade Guralsky from attending the congress. On June 14, 1926, a week before the congress was due to open, Humbert-Droz appeared on the scene, and found little to encourage him. The rank and file of the party and the working class were passive in face of the financial crisis and the fall of the franc. The former opposition had broken up since its expulsion from the party, but was still a force to be reckoned with. Rosmer was disposed to re-enter the party, but Monatte was obdurate, and was influential in the trade unions.

> The disinterestedness and moral probity of Monatte and Rosmer [wrote Humbert-Droz] make an impression on the working class. It is a factor which plays a considerable part in a petty bourgeois country like France — and not only in France.

Among the PCF leaders, on the other hand, he discerned "a fragmentation, a collection of individualists who struggle against one another". Sémard had no group behind him, but tried to "create an effective collaboration between these diverse individuals". Unity was lacking. Cachin represented the party fraction in the Chamber, Doriot the youth league, Thorez the workers of the

[5] The letter does not appear to have been published, but was quoted at length by Humbert-Droz in an article in *The Communist International*, June 15, 1928, p. 276; this article has not been traced in the Russian edition.

north, Monmousseau the CGTU, and Crémet coveted the succession to Sémard. The Russian party had "lost much of its prestige and authority", and "an anti-Muscovite spirit" was abroad. Humbert-Droz's best hope was that "the congress will pass off without incidents and without battles".[6]

The fifth congress of the PCF met at Lille from June 20 to 26, 1926. It worked intensively, crowding fourteen lengthy sessions into seven days. It was marked by a wide diversity of themes and opinions. Formal dissent was confined to a few individuals, but an atmosphere of uneasiness among the rank and file pervaded the debates. Fraternal delegates brought greetings from the British, Czechoslovak, German and Italian parties; and a letter was read from the Spanish party. Humbert-Droz made a long speech at one of the last sessions as delegate of IKKI. Sémard, as secretary-general of the party, delivered the main report, traditionally described as the "moral report", dividing it on this occasion into two separate reports. The first, devoted to the situation in the PCF, was followed by a debate which extended over three days and six sessions; and a resolution approving it was passed with two adverse votes and one abstention. Then the second report, dealing with the international and national situation and the tasks of the party introduced another prolonged debate; a resolution which did not, however, deal with the international question, was unanimously adopted.[7] But the two debates overlapped, and the whole proceedings of the congress took the form of a far-ranging discussion which frequently gave the impression of a lack of mutual understanding between leaders, anxious to comply with the prescriptions of Comintern, and a rank-and-file membership of the party, preoccupied with the quite different and practical problems of its relation to the French Left.

Disquiet was widespread at the continued decline in party membership; the number of members of the PCF, which had reached 120,000 at the time of its foundation at the Tours con-

[6] This account is derived from three letters written by Humbert-Droz to his wife (J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), pp. 268–274); he remarks that he "could perhaps have softened these impressions a little" in an official report. Humbert-Droz told his wife that he intended to visit Rosmer "one of these days"; it is not known whether he did so.

[7] For the reports see *V Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), pp. 8–31, 297–338, for the resolutions pp. 641–642, 656–667; for their adoption by the congress see pp. 282, 623–624.

gress of December 1920, and was still doubtfully put at 100,000 at its fourth congress in January 1925,[8] was now returned at 55,000. (One delegate thought even this total suspect, being based on reports from local organizations.) This fall was attributed by Sémard partly to the process of reorganization, but mainly to the party's uncompromising attitude to the wars in North Africa and Syria; the Algerian organization of the PCF had lost three-quarters of its members.[9] Other delegates put the blame on the resignations and expulsions of dissidents, on "the measures adopted against the Right", or on "the excessive centralism and exaggerated discipline in the party".[10] The fall in numbers was matched by passivity among the rank and file and lack of confidence in the leaders. Sémard distinguished three dissident groups in the party — Leftists, whose errors were due mainly to lack of political experience (the PCF had never faced the test of civil war), Centrists, who demanded unlimited freedom of discussion in party journals (fourteen of them had recently sent a letter of protest to Comintern), and Rightists, whose views resembled those preached in the *Révolution Proletarienne* and the *Bulletin Communiste*.[11] But "Left" and "Right" labels had ceased to have much meaning except as weapons in party controversy.

Complaints against the leadership were heard at the congress from all the groups. The strength of the Left lay in the Paris regional organization still dominated by Treint and Suzanne Girault, which was described by one delegate as "a volcano always in a state of eruption".[12] But the most determined of the critics was Gauthier, a communist deputy and a former railway worker, one of the organizers of the "letter of the 250". He objected to

[8] A French delegate at the sixth congress of Comintern said that the PCF at its fourth congress had "100,000 members on paper, really 80,000" (*Classe contre Classe* (1929), p. 132); Pyatnitksy gave a total of 83,000 for August 1925, and 65,000 for an unspecified date in 1926 (*Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 260).

[9] *V Congrés National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), pp. 10–11, 103.

[10] *Ibid.* pp. 72–73, 81.

[11] *Ibid.* pp. 22–31; for these journals see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 348–350, 388–359. Dengel, the fraternal delegate of the KPD at the congress, more accurately classified the three groups as Souvarine's, which was Trotskyite (Gauthier was its only representative at the congress), Rosmer's, which was social-democratic, and Monatte's, which was anarcho-syndicalist (*Die Internationale*, ix, No. 14, July 20, 1926, p. 422).

[12] *V Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), p. 127.

being labelled as a "Rightist" ("I consider myself as on the Left"), and protested once more against the imposition by Comintern of decisions which "do not accord with the state of mind of the French proletariat". In a passage which gave particular offence, he declared that "in Comintern it is the Russian party which dominates", and that other parties, for fear of seeming to condemn the Russian party, remained silent. Gauthier betrayed the keen interest in the Russian opposition which all the delegates felt, but few expressed openly, and ended by demanding to know "the truth about the campaign against Trotsky and so-called Trotskyism, about the expulsion of Souvarine and the expulsions that followed, the truth about the struggle led by the party apparatus against the revolutionary opposition, the truth about what goes on in the party leadership and is concealed from the party".[13] Sémard accused Gauthier of "nationalism" on the score of his "anti-Russian tendency", and compared him with the ultra-Left opposition in the KPD. He argued that the party could not discuss the divisions in the Russian party "without having the necessary documents", and reminded the congress of the warning of the Russian party against mechanically transporting the Russian discussion into other parties.[14] Humbert-Droz repeated the same warning, and concluded rhetorically that the question for the PCF was not whether it stood behind Zinoviev, Stalin or Trotsky, but "how to act against the French bourgeoisie".[15] These pleas enabled the congress to evade altogether the issue of the opposition in the Russian party, and of the relations of the PCF to Comintern, which were uppermost in the minds of many delegates.

A substantial part of Sémard's second report, and of the debate which followed it, was devoted to the international question, though conclusions on it were conspicuously absent from the resolutions of the congress. Sémard reiterated current Comintern views on the temporary stabilization of capitalism and its inevitable crisis, on increasing American domination not only over Europe but throughout the world, which was becoming "more and more the opponent of British imperialism", and on the rôle

[13] *Ibid.* pp. 230–250; for the "letter of the 250" see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 359.

[14] *V Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), p. 271; for the warning see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 493.

[15] *V Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), p. 541.

of the USSR, "the only country which resists American domination". Hence the obligation for the workers to defend the USSR, which was under attack by social-democrats as well as by imperialists.[16] Treint, who exhibited a large measure of restraint at the congress, and confined himself almost exclusively to this theme, still regarded the "fundamental antagonism" between "the Anglo-European system and the United States" as being "in the forefront of history", and the League of Nations as the "European instrument against America".[17] Nobody supported Treint, who was attacked by Crémet for ignoring antagonisms within Europe, by Costes, his chief rival in the Paris organization, and by Suzanne Girault, for overlooking the problems of eastern Europe and the importance of the USSR.[18] Finally, Humbert-Droz also summed up against Treint's "dangerous conception", which was "very near to that of the social-democrats". Locarno was directed not against the United States, but primarily against the Soviet Union. Comintern stood not for a bourgeois, but for the socialist, United States of Europe.[19]

The congress was manifestly reluctant to plunge into the ambiguities and complexities of the trade union question. In spite of the split in the trade union movement, and the existence of an impressive trade union organization affiliated to Profintern, the numerical weakness of the French trade unions, and what communist observers called "survivals of anarcho-syndicalist traditions" of independence and political neutrality, still powerful throughout the movement,[20] made the CGTU an unreliable and sometimes reluctant ally of the PCF. Before 1914 the base of the movement was still in artisan industry. The concentration of capital and the development of French heavy industry since the war rendered this orientation obsolete. But large-scale industry and mass unions were a slow and recent growth, which did not yet seriously impinge on prized and ingrained syndicalist traditions. In 1920 the undivided CGT, in the labour troubles after the war, reached a peak of 1,300,000 members. By the middle

[16] *Ibid.* pp. 310–313.
[17] *Ibid.* pp. 386–387.
[18] *Ibid.* pp. 445, 452, 492–493.
[19] *Ibid.* pp. 534–535.
[20] For the insistence of the CGTU on the independence of Profintern from Comintern see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 460–461, *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 940–941.

nineteen-twenties the three organizations into which the movement had split — revolutionary (CGTU), reformist (CGT) and Christian — mustered something over a million members out of a total worker population of 12 millions. In 1927 the CGTU claimed 550,000 members, the CGT 600,000;[21] nor, in the period of pressure on the workers in the late nineteen-twenties, were even these modest levels maintained.[22] Moreover, if the trade unions provided doubtful support, the attitude of the PCF to the unions was also equivocal. A majority of the proletarian membership of the party, especially in the Paris region, consisted of highly skilled workers, the so-called "labour aristocracy"; and this was recognized in Comintern circles as "a large defect in the social composition of the PCF" and "a source of opportunism".[23] Such workers were apt to feel more solidarity with fellow-workers in CGT unions than with the unskilled workers of the rank and file of the CGTU, and were ardent supporters of united front policies. Some worker members of the PCF did not belong to any trade union; and, when pressure was put on them to join, 90 per cent of them replied that they would rather abandon their party card than take a union card.[24] These moods were widely at variance with the desire of the PCF leaders, fostered by Comintern, to make the CGTU an effective instrument for the political and revolutionary indoctrination of the workers. In the friction between the two organizations the CGTU constantly emerged as the less effective partner, strong enough only to obstruct. Humbert-Droz admitted that the trade union commission of the party had substituted itself for the central bureau of the CGTU, and rather hypocritically attributed this to the lack of leadership in the CGTU.[25] But the party, having usurped authority over the

[21] These figures, which are at best approximate, are taken from two articles in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 79, August 5, 1927, pp. 1719–1720, No. 98, October 7, 1927, pp. 2110–2111.

[22] Trotsky in 1930 quoted figures for the CGTU of 475,000 in 1926, 452,000 in 1927 and 375,000 in 1928 (*Byulleten' Oppozitsii* (Paris), No. 8, January 1930, p. 10).

[23] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 10 (136), 1928, p. 42; at a party congress of Paris region in March 1929, out of 270 delegates, 185 were workers in large-scale industry, 111 in the metal industries (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 28, March 27, 1929, p. 634).

[24] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 10 (136), 1928, pp. 43–45; for this article see p. 508 below.

[25] J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), p. 270.

CGTU, lacked the means to make its authority effective. The CGTU, wrote Trotsky in 1929, was "the pale shadow" of the PCF.[26]

Sémard in his initial report at the congress admitted that it was even more difficult to eradicate "social-democratic deviations" in the CGTU than in the PCF. He deplored the political apathy of the unions, and bitterly attacked a party member who, echoing a phrase of Monatte, protested against the "communist emblem hoisted over the door" of the CGTU, and claimed that all workers, communist or not, should have an equal right to participate in its leadership; and later he quoted with disapproval another communist who explained that "workers join the unions to defend their bellies, not to defend their political views".[27] The CGT tried to "compromise" the CGTU by alleging that it was "subordinate" to a political party. Yet the party spokesman attempted to meet this charge not by justifying the relation of the CGTU to the PCF, but by alleging that CGT unions were also subject to political control, being subsidized by socialist municipalities, and that the secretary-general of the CGT was closely linked with international capital and with the League of Nations, and was summoned to discussions on collaboration with the French Government.[28] Crémet, presenting to the congress what was tentatively called a "draft thesis" prepared by the trade union commission, evaded all issues of principle, and professed to confine himself to questions of immediate practical significance. The draft thesis followed conventional lines, and ended with an appeal "to work for the re-establishment of trade union unity while destroying the influence of the reformist leaders, and winning over the workers to our conception, the class struggle".[29]

The issue of current policy most widely discussed at the congress was, however, the united front. The principle was incessantly reiterated. But the definition of the relation of the PCF to other parties of the Left, though indispensable, was a constant source of embarrassment. Sémard in his report to the congress devoted a long passage to "the confusion between the proletarian

[26] *Byulleten' Oppozitsii* (Paris), No. 1–2, July 1929, p. 33.

[27] *V Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), pp. 28–30, 335.

[28] *Ibid.* p. 56.

[29] *Ibid.* pp. 580–591, 675–678.

united front and temporary alliances"; these alliances with petty bourgeois groups for specific purposes were sometimes misleadingly referred to as "the enlarged united front".[30] The congress censured *Humanité* for having incautiously praised "the democratic ideas" of Caillaux which led him to oppose the pretensions of the Banque de France.[31] The practical difficulties were more apparent in the localities than at the centre; in some regions, "our comrades, if they are not aided, supported, sometimes directed, will drown themselves in the united front, side by side with socialist bosses and CGT politicians", so that the PCF was eliminated altogether or lost its influence.[32] Sémard in his second report praised the KPD for its successful excursion into united front tactics on the expropriation of the German ruling houses, and also insisted that, "in agreement with the trade union organization, we must take the lead in the defence of certain day-to-day demands".[33] But the obscurities of "united front" and "temporary alliances" continued to cloud the debate. Treint pointed out that, "in default of a sufficiently solid proletarian base, the anti-capitalist united front would drift along tossed about by floating allies, themselves subject to the attraction of the big bourgeoisie"; and Costes was eloquent on the danger of "occasional agreements" with the petty bourgeoisie. Sémard's final pronouncement that "the present task is to find in the socialist party a serious support-point for the tactics of the united front and also for our tactics of trade union unity", stated the problem but contributed little to its solution.[34] None of the resolutions of the congress broke fresh ground, or attempted to resolve these ambiguities.

Questions of organization had been dealt with by a special conference on the eve of the congress, and by a commission during the congress. Thorez reported on them, and presented a resolution, at the last plenary session. Apart from the perennial dilemma of combining centralized direction with local initiative, the major issue was still that of the organization of the party in factory cells.[35] A number of minor resolutions passed by the congress generally excited interest only in so far as they involved issues of

[30] *V Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), pp. 15–22.
[31] *Ibid.* pp. 384–385.
[32] *Ibid.* pp. 137–138.
[33] *Ibid.* pp. 304, 333.
[34] *Ibid.* pp. 393, 455, 527.
[35] For the report, debate and vote see *ibid.* pp. 595–616, for the resolution *ibid.* pp. 668–672; for the question of cell organization see Note B, pp. 632–637 below.

the united front with other parties. Since the autumn of 1925, the PCF had adopted a less aggressive attitude on the question of Alsace-Lorraine. Lozovsky at the sixth IKKI in February 1926 argued that, while the slogan of "self-determination" was "absolutely right" for communists, it should not be included in any programme of joint action with workers of different views; and the resolution of the session claimed only that "the population wants autonomy".[36] At the congress Béron, a delegate from Alsace-Lorraine, gave a long *exposé* of the economic and financial grievances of the territory, and pleaded for communist support for a local organization, the Heimatbund, which demanded only "autonomy within the framework of France", German-language schools, and the cessation of governmental persecution of its activities. He rejected Sémard's description of the Heimatbund as "reactionary and clerical", and believed in the possibility of common action between it and the PCF, both being victims of the same measures of repression. The congress reached no formal decision, but voted to print Béron's allocution as a pamphlet.[37] A resolution on the "middle classes" was a more direct contribution to the question of the united front. It opened with a preamble:

> Considering the process of pauperization of the middle classes, the congress admits the prospect of a whole period of solidarity with the proletariat.

Since only capital and labour had a historical rôle, the middle classes were bound to disappear. Insecurity would drive them towards Fascism, and it was the task of the PCF to woo them away from leaders associated with the big bourgeoisie, and to "utilize them in the struggle waged by the proletariat for its emancipation". But the proviso remained:

> *The congress recalls ... that the claims of the middle classes can be supported only within limits where they are not opposed to the claims of the working class.*[38]

[36] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 309; *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 604–605; for the discussions of 1925 see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 359.

[37] *V Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), pp. 338–352; for Sémard's comment see *ibid.* p. 331.

[38] *Ibid.* pp. 690–692; for the report presenting the resolution see pp. 629–630.

Formal resolutions were adopted on the colonial question, on the cooperatives, on the youth movement and on sport, and on work among women. The report on the last topic, which deplored the fact that women made up only 1 per cent of the membership of the PCF, was delivered to "an almost empty congress".[39]

The last business of the congress was, as usual, the election of a central committee. When Humbert-Droz wrote that "the real discussions took place, and the intrigues were conducted, in the corridors of the congress", he seems to have been thinking primarily of this problem, which occupied him on his arrival in Paris before the congress. In letters to his wife he expressed disgust and pessimism at the "manoeuvres and counter-manoeuvres" of the leaders, but noted that "the six" — Sémard, Cachin, Doriot, Crémet, Monmousseau and Thorez — had reached agreement on a central committee of sixty-two and a politburo of thirteen.[40] Little was said on the subject at the sessions of the congress. Marty complained that the central committee had lost all respect, and angrily recalled a meeting presided over "by a comrade who is not even a member of the committee".[41] Treint, no doubt aware of what was going on, referred to talk about "cutting off heads". Humberdot thought that "Treint and Suzanne Girault have their place in the leadership of the party, even though they are responsible for errors of the past".[42] Girault tried to save herself by a speech expressing solidarity with the leaders and criticizing Treint on several points.[43] Humbert-Droz detected "a kitchen odour in the corridors", and sententiously pronounced that elections should take place on the basis not of personalities, but of a political programme.[44] When Sémard at the last session presented a list of members of the

[39] *Ibid.* pp. 552–559; a long controversy was conducted on the short-comings of the party journal for women, *L'Ouvrière*, which suspended "for financial reasons" in the spring of 1927 (*Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 69, April 1, 1927, pp. 421–422).

[40] J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), pp. 268–272; Stalin in his speech in the French commission of the sixth IKKI in March 1926 had praised Crémet for exposing "Right groupings" in the PCF, and named him with Sémard, Thorez and Monmousseau as the "leading group" in the party (Stalin, *Sochineniya*, viii, 102–103).

[41] *V Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), p. 153; only a Comintern delegate — perhaps Petrovsky — could have done this.

[42] *Ibid.* pp. 385, 434.

[43] *Ibid.* pp. 492–501.

[44] *Ibid.* p. 540.

central committee for approval, it contained eighty names, and included those of Treint and Girault. But, though the election of the politburo was formally the prerogative of the central committee, Sémard also announced that Treint and Girault would be excluded from the politburo, and read the list of the thirteen members to be elected. The central committee list was then approved by the congress against two adverse votes.[45] Sémard must have breathed a sigh of relief that an awkward passage had been safely negotiated. Humbert-Droz afterwards boasted that he had been responsible for the exclusion of Treint and Girault from the politburo, and of "some creatures of Suzanne Girault" from the central committee.[46] But his efforts seem to have earned him lasting unpopularity in the PCF.

However little cohesion may have been realized at the Lille congress by the party leadership, the dissidents, whether or not they had already incurred the sentence of expulsion, even more conspicuously failed to achieve any unity of policy or oganization. Besides the *Révolution Proletarienne* of Monatte and Rosmer and Souvarine's *Bulletin Communiste*, several new opposition journals announced themselves in 1926. The Treint–Girault group launched the *Unité Léniniste*, a group of Trotsky's supporters *Clarté* (a title changed in 1928 to *La Lutte des Classes*), and Paz, Loriot and other signatories of the "letter of the 250" *Contre le Courant*. Pyatakov, a prominent member of the Russian opposition, at this time attached to the French delegation in Paris for the financial negotiations, is said to have exhorted the dissident factions to unite, and *Contre le Courant* is alleged to have received funds from the Russian opposition as the organ round which the French opposition might hopefully rally.[47] No such result, however, ensued. The differences which divided the rebels were as great as those which separated them from the party.

The second half of 1926 was a period of economic crisis in France, resulting from the revaluation of the franc, accompanied by increasing pressure on wages and by mounting unemployment.

[45] *Ibid.* pp. 617–620, 622–623.

[46] J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), p. 274.

[47] L. Trotsky, *Le Mouvement Communiste en France*, ed. P. Broué (1967), p. 284; these statements rest on the authority of Broué.

Such conditions bore heavily on worker members of the PCF and increased their readiness to collaborate with other workers in defence of living standards and in the promotion of day-to-day demands. On December 9, 1926, the Paris regional committee put out a characteristic "united front" programme of radical demands likely to attract the sympathy of socialist workers, including workers' control of production, and the creation of "national workshops" administered by workers' organizations.[48] How far these moods of compromise, encouraged by the watchword of the united front, had penetrated the PCF at this time was shown by a meeting at Tours on December 10, 1926, between ten leading local communists and ten leading socialists to discuss the conditions of unity between the two parties. A similar meeting is said to have been held at Longeau in the Somme department.[49] Both the PCF and the CGTU at this time based their campaign on the right to work, equal pay, control of production, the eight-hour day, and relief for the unemployed, including public works. The PCF concentrated especially on the unity of the working class and abolition of discrimination by employers against different categories of workers, on protests against unemployment and capitalist rationalization, and on the shift in emphasis from economic to political agitation — attacks on the capitalists and on the Right-wing "national bloc". At senatorial elections on January 9, 1927, the PCF formed joint lists with other parties of the Left, including petty bourgeois parties, and successfully supported candidates of the Left, "especially the socialists", against the reactionaries.[50]

A particularly embarrassing issue was the presence in France of some three million foreign workers, mainly from Italy, Spain and North Africa. Manuilsky, in reproaching the French delegates at the fifth congress of Comintern in June 1924 with their lukewarmness towards colonial claims, reminded them that they had 800,000 colonial workers in France, and asked rhetorically what

[48] A. Ferrat, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français* (1931), pp. 196–197.

[49] *Ibid.* p. 207.

[50] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 10, January 21, 1927, pp. 188–189; for a defence of these tactics by Costes, secretary of the Paris regional party committee, see *Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, No. 69, April 1, 1927, pp. 392–395. This was regular party practice at the time; joint lists in municipal elections had been specifically approved by the fourth party congress in 1925 (see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 155).

they had done "to organise these workers, to train them as cadres for our revolutionary agitators in the colonies".[51] Since then the influx had continued at a mounting rate, and its domestic implications could not be ignored. At the party congress in June 1926 Sémard had drawn attention to this "new phenomenon for our country" as being "a fairly powerful and fairly formidable weapon in the hands of capitalism against the French workers", and announced that a commission had been appointed to report on it to the congress. No report appears to have been received — perhaps an indication of the delicacy of the question. In a period of acute economic depression and unemployment, the competition of cheap immigrant labour easily gave rise to feelings of "nationalism and xenophobia" among French workers; and towards the end of 1926 both the PCF and the CGTU put forward a somewhat shamefaced demand for "the prohibition of collective immigration of foreign labour".[52]

Meanwhile leading members of the PCF watched with uneasy fascination the drama of the struggle against the opposition in Moscow. Zinoviev had been disgraced and removed from the Politburo by the party central committee in July 1926; and three months later the PCF joined with other important communist parties in a petition requesting that he should be relieved of his functions in Comintern.[53] At the seventh IKKI in November 1926 interest in the PCF was eclipsed by the affairs of the Chinese and British parties, and by the struggle against the opposition. Treint took the opportunity to air once again the thesis, which he had propounded to the fifth party congress, of the fundamental opposition between the United States and Europe, which would be driven to unite in defence against American imperialism. Pepper and Kurella were put up to refute him; and Bukharin began his reply to the debate with a long polemic against Treint's views.[54] The episode was significant only of Treint's persistence as a cantankerous, but not dangerous, dissident. Sémard, who led

[51] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 631.

[52] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 10, January 21, 1927, pp. 196–198; for Sémard's remarks at the fifth party congress see *V Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), pp. 322–323. According to A. Ferrat, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français* (1931), p. 198, the demand was put forward in a circular of December 9, 1926.

[53] See Vol. 2, p. 17.

[54] For Treint's speech and the replies see p. 135 above.

the French delegation, made a wholly conventional speech in which he rejected Treint's thesis, and attempted to defend the PCF against the more serious charge of inadequate vigour in face of Poincaré's capitalist offensive.[55] The resolution on Bukharin's report cautiously looked forward to "a sharpening of the class conflict" in France, and blamed the PCF in fairly mild terms for not showing "sufficient activity in mobilizing the broad masses" against the Poincaré government.[56] Sémard made himself useful throughout the session, and was rewarded with the honour of delivering the valedictory address at its close.[57] Crémet who had been elected to the presidium of IKKI in March 1926, was now also appointed to the newly created political secretariat with Bernard as his alternate.[58] Treint remained in Moscow as representative of the PCF in IKKI.[59] The official fidelity of the PCF to the Stalinist and Comintern line did not, however, go unchallenged in the party. Zinoviev, and still more Trotsky, had enjoyed great prestige in the French Left; and to see them publicly reviled and disgraced was a shattering experience. Even before the seventh IKKI, Jacob, a leading member of the Paris regional organization, had "expounded the views of the opposition" in party discussions.[60]

A session of the enlarged central committee of the PCF, attended by delegates of the CGTU, was held from January 11 to 13, 1927. Sémard and Monmousseau made reports and submitted resolutions on the proceedings of the seventh IKKI in Moscow a month earlier — the first on general questions, including capitalist stabilization, rationalization and the international situation,

[55] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 218–226.

[56] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 630, 640.

[57] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), ii, 385–389.

[58] A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *Desyat' Let Kominterna v Tsifrakh* (1929), pp. 327, 329.

[59] After the end of the session Treint handed to the secretariat a memorandum replying to criticisms and complaining that Pepper and Kurella had misrepresented him; his chief argument was a quotation from Stalin who, in his speech at the fifteenth party conference in October 1926, had said that the United States had "run far ahead, leaving England and the other European Powers behind", and that this fact "holds in itself the germ of new and greater conflicts and wars". The memorandum does not seem to have been published in Moscow, but appeared some months later in the French party journal (*Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, No. 69, April 1, 1927, pp. 419–420; for the quotation see Stalin, *Sochineniya*, viii, 253).

[60] *Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, No. 70, April 15, 1927, p. 478.

the second on the opposition in the Russian party. Thorez reported on the situation in France and the tasks of the PCF.[61] The first resolution on the seventh IKKI and the Thorez resolution on the French situation were carried unanimously. The latter was not published, but was devoted mainly to the well-worn topics of the economic crisis — wages, rationalization, and unemployment, though some differences of opinion occurred on the way in which unemployment benefits were to be financed. It also appears to have condemned the attempt to ban collective immigration of foreign workers.[62] So far as the evidence goes, the discussions proceeded smoothly, but contributed little that was new.

The debate on the Russian opposition, though it did not touch the immediate concerns of the workers, was more hectic, since it directly involved the opposition in the French party. The resolution on the subject asserted that the opposition in the PCF, though it had not crystallized into a bloc, "is moving in a single direction, which is that of the Zinoviev–Trotsky–Kamenev bloc". It censured Jacob, who had declared that the policy of the Russian party was "wrong", and Girault, who had condemned the disciplinary measures taken against the opposition and talked of "workers' democracy", thus aligning herself with the Rightists in the PCF. When the resolution was put to the vote, Girault, Faussecave, Béors and Gourdeaux voted against it, and Jacob abstained.[63] A few expulsions from the party were registered, mainly of supporters of Souvarine, who was now openly regarded as a counter-revolutionary. The dissidents at the session undertook to maintain discipline and refrain from fractional activities, and no sanctions were invoked against them.[64] On January 15, 1927, two days after the session, eleven other members of the opposition issued a letter headed "For Workers' Democracy", and addressed "to the International and to members of the party",

[61] *Ibid.* No. 65, February 1, 1927, pp. 79–83, 158–162.

[62] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 32, March 22, 1927, pp. 698–699; A. Ferrat, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français* (1931), pp. 198–199.

[63] *Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, No. 65, February 1, 1927, pp. 82–83, 162. The three objectors, other than Girault (who had presumably spoken her mind at the session), handed in declarations which were published in the party journal (*ibid.* No. 66, February 15, 1927, pp. 235–242; by an odd coincidence three of the four dissidents were women).

[64] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 32, March 22, 1927, pp. 698–699.

denouncing the degeneracy and stagnation of the party, which had lost its appeal to the masses and its revolutionary character:

> The whole attention of the working class has been directed to the parliamentary comedy, speeches, manoeuvres in the corridors, elections.

"Workers' democracy" was declared to imply "liberty to examine and discuss openly all questions of the life of the party, as well as the election of officials and committees from top to bottom". The main responsibility rested on Comintern which "has installed in power, in a party which in no way chose them, the men who now lead the French party"; they had been selected "not by reason of their capacities, or of the confidence which they merited, but because of their docility in regard to the crisis in the Russian party which has lasted for three years".[65] The party politburo took this protest seriously enough to inform the signatories of its decision to publish their letter with an extended reply in the party journal, and to summon four of them before the party control commission for breaches of party discipline.[66] A few days later two of them, Engler and Germaine Goujon, were expelled from the party on the charge of consorting with Souvarine.[67] But these reprisals did not silence dissentient voices in the party, especially in the turbulent Paris region. Meetings organized throughout the region in February and March 1927, nominally in preparation for the regional and national party conferences due to take place in June, provided a forum for numerous speakers who did not conceal their sympathy with the Russian opposition, and freely criticized the absence of democracy in the Russian party.[68] Suzanne Girault addressed a letter to the politburo invoking the resolution of the fifth party congress and Bukharin's exhortations at the seventh IKKI, and accusing the party leadership of reacting feebly to the Poincaré government and to the provocations of the SFIO; this was published in the party journal with a reply harping on Girault's past inconsistencies.[69]

[65] *Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, No. 65, February 1, 1927, pp. 146–152; a copy with some textual variants is in the Trotsky archives, T 917.

[66] *Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, No. 65, February 1, 1927, pp. 153–157.

[67] A protest against their expulsion is in the Trotsky archives, T 729.

[68] *Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, No. 70, April 15, 1927, pp. 479–483.

[69] *Ibid.* No. 70, April 15, 1927, pp. 427–435.

The insubordinate behaviour of Treint at the seventh IKKI in December 1926, the crisis of leadership in the PCF, and the continued sympathy manifested in its ranks for the Russian opposition, all aroused anxiety in Moscow, and suggested a failure in Comintern control of the PCF. Since Humbert-Droz's high-handed interventions at the fifth party congress in June 1926, communications between the party and Moscow had broken down. The situation made Humbert-Droz vulnerable; and a campaign against him in the winter of 1926–1927 secured the support of the ambitious and pertinacious Petrovsky.[70] Humbert-Droz's first reaction was to ask Bukharin to initiate a discussion in the Latin secretariat on the French question. While this was in progress a letter arrived from the PCF, in which Humbert-Droz traced the hand of Treint, full of complaints against the Latin secretariat and against Humbert-Droz in particular. Humbert-Droz wrote a personal reply to the PCF defending himself, but asked for the appointment of a commission "to enquire into the working of the Latin secretariat and the political situation and tactics of the PCF". A high-level commission was appointed which counted Stalin, Bukharin and Kuusinen among its members; and the French delegation included Treint, already in Moscow, and Thorez who came from Paris in the middle of the proceedings. The struggle was conducted with great personal rancour. Treint brought up against Humbert-Droz a proposal which he had made at the time of the fifth congress to visit Monatte and Rosmer.[71] But Humbert-Droz was probably helped rather than damaged by the bitterness of Treint's attacks.

Whatever the personal asperities of the quarrel, however, the debates of the commission were necessarily conducted in terms of policies and principles with some paradoxical results. It was at this moment that Humbert-Droz, invoking the slogan "Class against Class", proposed that the PCF should revise the electoral

[70] This episode is recounted in J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), pp. 277–281, on the basis of Humbert-Droz's letters of February 26, March 5, April 8, 1927, to Togliatti (J. Humbert-Droz, *Il Contrasto tra l'Internazionale e il PCI* (1969), pp. 238–247, Humbert-Droz archives, 0077, 0078, 0081), and of April 10 to Crémet (J. Humbert-Droz, *"L'Oeil de Moscou" à Paris* (1964), pp. 250–255, Humbert-Droz archives, 0082).

[71] See p. 466, note 6 above; for an earlier attempt by Treint to smear Humbert-Droz on the score of his association with Monatte and Rosmer see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 152, note 2.

practice of withdrawing the communist candidates at the second ballot, and voting for another candidate of the Left who had more chance of defeating a candidate of the Right. Humbert-Droz now proposed to abandon this practice in so far as it required support of candidates of bourgeois parties of the Left, while maintaining it in favour of socialist candidates.[72] In the winter of 1926–1927 the Cartel des Gauches of 1924 had patently broken down; and the appeal to socialists to abandon it in favour of working-class cooperation against the bourgeoisie seemed particularly plausible. The appeal was, however, accompanied by an attack on the leadership of the PCF for following too passive a policy and allowing itself to be dragged by the socialists into compromises with the bourgeoisie in the name of national unity; and it therefore inevitably looked like a demand for a more radical and aggressive policy. When, on the other hand, Petrovsky, anxious to propitiate the PCF leaders, supported the objections of nearly all of them to Humbert-Droz's proposals, he defended policies associated, both before and after, with the Right wing of the party. But these attitudes were not characteristic of either of the two men, and were clearly influenced by the personal rivalry and hostility between them. Treint, now allied with Petrovsky through a common enmity to Humbert-Droz, had hitherto ranked as a Leftist.[73]

No records of the commission were published; nor is it known what French delegates, other than Treint, participated in the debates. But it is clear that the French delegation, and the PCF as a whole, were firmly wedded to the well-tried electoral tactics of the common list, and that Humbert-Droz's proposal to reverse these tactics in the major elections to the Chamber a year ahead, encountered general and stubborn opposition. According to Humbert-Droz's memoirs, Stalin took no active part in the proceedings, and his ignorance of French affairs was total. But his description of Petrovsky as Stalin's "pet" is implausible at this date. Petrovsky was an ambitious man who later managed to ingratiate himself with Stalin by faithful service. But it would have been contrary to Stalin's practice to take sides in so intricate a dispute at so early a stage. It seems clear that no authority in Comintern was prepared to take the responsibility for a decision,

[72] See p. 161 above.

[73] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 516.

and that a compromise had therefore to be reached. Bukharin's patronage was sufficient to keep Humbert-Droz's personal position intact; on the other hand, it was impossible to impose a decision which encountered the total resistance of PCF leaders enjoying the support of Petrovsky. In effect, the supple and uncommitted Petrovsky seems to have taken up the rôle of a mediator between the PCF and Humbert-Droz, presenting a succession of compromise drafts. In the middle of the proceedings Thorez arrived from Paris, raised new questions and caused further delays. But he seems to have been personally less hostile than Treint to Humbert-Droz, and was brought to abandon his uncompromising support for common electoral lists. A final French draft made "some acceptable amendments", but continued to insist on electoral agreements with the socialists on particular occasions, on common lists with the socialists on the first ballot, and on the campaign for trade union unity. The French text allowed for wide exceptions to any general prohibition of joint action with the socialists. Two sessions of the presidium of IKKI were required to bring the matter to a head. Bukharin made, according to Humbert-Droz, "a very vigorous speech", while Petrovsky offered a feeble defence of current PCF tactics, and was attacked by Schüller, the delegate of KIM. Final differences were ironed out at a meeting between Thorez and Humbert-Droz.[74]

The compromise was embodied in an agreed letter from IKKI to the central committee of the PCF of April 2, 1927. Humbert-Droz claimed it as a victory, telling Togliatti in his letter of April 8, 1927, that, "though the terms have been softened, the content is clear enough".[75] But this is hardly borne out by his statement a year later, with specific reference to the letter of April 2, 1927, and to a further letter of September 1927, that "all this was independent of electoral tactics".[76] The letter declared that the policy

[74] This account comes from J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), pp. 277–281. According to a speech of Humbert-Droz in the Latin secretariat of Comintern in July 1928, Thorez insisted on common lists in the Nord region, but, when the French politburo made the same demand for the Sarthe, saw the danger of the policy, and retreated (*Classe contre Classe* (1929), p. 232); Thorez on the same occasion recalled that he had originally supported "the false line" against Humbert-Droz and Bukharin (*ibid.* p. 174).

[75] For this letter see p. 481, note 70 above.

[76] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 233–234; this was said at a time when the electoral tactics had turned out badly, and emphasis on other aspects of the policy was therefore desirable.

of the PCF must be "to force its political parliamentary life out of its traditional rut by making the great movements of class struggle dominate the political battle, the battle of next year's elections". Electoral tactics were to take the form not of a mechanical abstention in favour of "Left" candidates, but of the mobilization of the masses. "Opportunist" attitudes towards "Left" parties and common lists with the SFIO were condemned; and similar injunctions were given to CGTU unions on the question of "workers' unity". It is significant that the letter never appears to have been published either in Moscow or by the PCF; and the only available record of it is a brief summary published a few years later in a party history.[77] In the debate in the Latin secretariat during the sixth congress of Comintern in July 1928, Cachin spoke of "a certain number of letters addressed to the French politburo, of which members of the politburo knew nothing"; another delegate at the congress said that he had read the letter of April 2, 1927, for the first time on that very day in Moscow, since it had not been possible for him to see all the Comintern letters in France.[78] The leaders of the PCF appear simply to have turned a blind eye to a document whose contents puzzled or displeased them. Non-publication in Moscow suggests that, while Humbert-Droz had retained his personal position as head of the Latin secretariat responsible for French affairs, the makers of Comintern policy were at this stage unwilling to support him in enforcing radical policies against the resistance of most of the leading members of the PCF. The slogan "Classe contre Classe", which he claimed to have launched at this time, does not seem to have figured in the letter of April 2, 1927, and was not heard again for more than six months.[79]

Throughout the summer of 1927 the PCF pursued its course in apparent disregard of anything that had happened in Moscow.

[77] A. Ferrat, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français* (1931), p. 221.

[78] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 125, 166; Schüller in the French commission of the ninth IKKI in February 1928 had stated that "the French comrades did not understand the point at issue when they received the letter" (*ibid.* p. 40).

[79] J. Fauvet, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français*, i (1964), 74, states that "in April 1927 Comintern called on the party to mobilize under the 'Class against Class' banner", but quotes no evidence and gives no indication of having seen the text of the letter of April 2, 1927.

The politburo published in the party journal of April 1, 1927, a characteristically ambiguous analysis of the problems of the united front:

> If we must *always* make the united front from below, and if we must *never* make it solely from above, when can we make it from above and from below? This question has hitherto remained unclear for our party.

"To combine insults with proposals for a united front" was condemned as the "method of Souvarine". But appeals should still be made to reformist leaders "when they adopt what appears to be an attitude of opposition to the bourgeoisie"; and the economic demands of the workers, military laws and the danger of war were said to provide "numerous occasions" for the application of united front tactics. The declaration purported "to dissipate the confusion which a certain Leftist policy had for too long kept alive in the ranks of the party".[80] At a session of April 6–7, 1927, the party central committee approved this declaration, and made an unqualified appeal for united front tactics, Girault recording a single dissentient vote.[81] The most remarkable feature of these proceedings was the total neglect of the Comintern letter of April 2, 1927, which was nowhere referred to.

The CGTU was even less inclined than the PCF to heed a call from Moscow for a more uncompromising attitude to the socialists. Appeals to the CGT for the reunification of the trade union movement were traditional for the CGTU;[82] and a session of the national council of the CGTU on April 4, 1927, approved the text of an offer to be made to the CGT:

> The CGTU is ready to consider the re-entry *en bloc* of CGTU unions into the organization of the CGT on the condition of recognition of equality of rights between all trade unions, of the right of opinion, and of the sovereignty of trade organizations. There should be held, within 15 days of the re-entry of the CGTU unions, general assemblies to appoint delegates to the department and federal congresses, and to the congress of the CGT which is to meet in July.[83]

[80] *Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, No. 69, April 1, 1927, pp. 365–377.

[81] *Ibid.* No. 71, April 30, 1927, pp. 491–493.

[82] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 153–154.

[83] A Ferrat, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français* (1931), pp. 199–200; the writer comments: "It is impossible for the communists to go further on

On the following day, Monmousseau had to report to the council that the offer had met with a "stereotyped refusal" from the CGT, but a fortnight later did not hesitate to proclaim that it was still open.[84] Togliatti, in a letter to Humbert-Droz, sharply criticized the offer. Earlier proposals had always been for a unity congress, thus reserving the independence of the CGTU; the present proposal was for unity within the framework of the CGT. It was a proposal "from above" to the leaders, not a proposal for unity "from below". It was, at this moment, "out of place", and could lead only to "disquiet and oscillations in the ranks of the CGTU".[85]

The same session approved, for submission to the next CGTU congress, a project for what was called "syndicalisme à bases multiples", said to have been under discussion for two years. Anxiety had long been felt about the weakness of the French trade union movement (only a million industrial workers were unionized); the CGTU unions, in particular, had a large floating membership. The professed establishment of a "National Security Fund" as a basis for benefit funds in individual unions — hitherto non-existent in France — was designed to provide inducements for permanent membership in CGTU unions and to "realize mass trade unionism". Such projects before 1914 had always come from the Right wing of the labour movement, and had been resisted by the CGT. It was now carefully explained that the present proposal "does not in any way mean that the CGTU should become a reformist organization accepting capitalism and bourgeois society".[86] Among the other resolutions adopted at the session was one on the danger of war against the USSR.[87]

It appears to have been at this time also that a firm veto was

this path, short of accepting the liquidation pure and simple of the CGTU movement". A commentator at the time called it "a final concession" (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 79, August 5, 1927, p. 1719).

[84] *Humanité*, April 18, 1927; after the session a "group of friends unity" was set up, which from May 1927 onwards issued a fortnightly journal *Unité* pleading for trade union unity (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 79, August 5, 1927, p. 1719) — the counterpart of the German journal *Einheit* (see p. 400 above).

[85] J. Humbert-Droz, *Il Contrasto tra l'Internazionale e il PCI* (1969), pp. 247–248 (Humbert-Droz archives, 0085).

[86] The fullest available account of the proposal is in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 28 (102), 1927, pp. 33–39.

[87] *Humanité*, April 13, 1927.

placed on the embarrassing demand for a prohibition on the immigration of foreign workers. Some months later *Humanité* reminded the CGTU of a resolution adopted by the party central committee in April 1927, and stressed that "all demands of foreign workers are closely linked with the totality of the aspirations of the French proletariat".[88] But an article on the expulsion by the government of foreign workers who had become party or trade union militants admitted that difficulties arose not only from official persecutions, but from indifference among the rank and file of the PCF.[89] Sémard alleged that a campaign against foreign workers in the bourgeois press was designed to foment xenophobia in the working class, and to create prejudice against the communists, on the ground that "these undesirables are received with open arms by the CGTU".[90] The persistence of the problem was shown by some remarks of Varga in the French commission of the ninth IKKI in February 1928:

> Heavy work on a mass scale in France is done more and more by workers from abroad and from the colonies, and the native French workers tend to develop into a sort of workers' aristocracy; large strata of the French proletariat are in a privileged situation in regard to foreign and colonial workers.

The moral was that the PCF should intensify its activities among immigrant workers — a hint at their recruitment into the trade unions and the party.[91] But Sémard, while noting that some factories in the Paris region employed from 50 to 80 per cent of foreign workers, admitted in July 1928 that "for some months we have not touched the foreign workers"; the numbers were immense, few French party members could be found to work among the immigrants, and those who did were subject to police repression.[92]

[88] *Humanité*, September 12, 13, 14, 1927; for this question see p. 477 above. At the Buenos Aires conference in June 1929 (which will be discussed in a later section of this volume) Humbert-Droz recalled "the error committed by the PCF in regard to immigration", which had been "severely criticized" by Comintern (*Il Movimento Revolucionario Latino Americano* (Buenos Aires, n.d.), p. 312); no communication from Comintern on the subject has been traced.

[89] *Humanité*, September 12, 1927.

[90] *Ibid.* October 28, 1927.

[91] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 52–54.

[92] *Ibid.* pp. 224–225; an article in *Humanité*, August 23, 1927, claimed that CGTU funds for organization and propaganda among colonial and foreign

The widening rift between the PCF and the French Socialist Party, the growing hostility of the French Government to the Soviet Union, and increasingly vigorous police action against French communists, appear to have been more directly responsible than any initiative from Moscow for the slow drift of the PCF throughout 1927 towards more combative attitudes. Hostility to the PCF was increasing in French governmental circles *pari passu* with diplomatic antipathy to the Soviet Union.[93] On March 10, 1927, while the Moscow discussions were in progress, Sarraut introduced into the Chamber a draft electoral law in preparation for the elections of 1928. This proposed to abandon the so-called *scrutin de liste*, which was a system of proportional representation, in favour of the *scrutin d'arrondissement*, a system of direct election in each constituency with two ballots. The motive of the proposal was not disguised. Proportional representation was favourable to the communists, and was likely to increase their present number of deputies to seventy in the next Chamber; the *scrutin d'arondissement* might reduce it to ten or twelve.[94] The SFIO could only gain from the emasculation of its principal rival. The congress of the SFIO, which met in Lyons on April 18–29, 1927, was heralded by a polemical article from Sémard's pen in *Humanité* of April 14, 1927, which may have drawn inspiration from the unpublished Comintern letter of April 2. Communists were said to be "for the unity of the working class, but on the basis of the class struggle", and were determined to uphold "the class unity of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and its lackeys, the social-democrats". When the congress met, Blum argued that "the working class is less exploited now than ever before", and made it clear that the SFIO was in no mind to break with "democratic elements" in the bourgeois and capitalist class; Longuet and Faure denounced "Red imperialism". A small Left minority led by Bracke made an attack on the Boncour mili-

workers were almost as great as those allocated to work among French workers, but referred defensively to language difficulties, police persecution, etc.

[93] See pp. 63–64 above.

[94] The PCF appears to have been slow in reacting to these proposals. But an article in *Humanité*, April 28, 1927, demanded the retention of the proportional principle, and put forward an amendment of the draft law to that effect; and *Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, No. 71, April 30, 1927, pp. 512–516, published a cautious analysis of the implications of the law.

tary law which called for total mobilization of "the French people without distinction of age or sex" in the event of war, but was heavily defeated in the vote. At a banquet after the congress, Breitscheid, the fraternal delegate of the KPD, praised Stresemann's foreign policy as identical with that of the social-democrats. The congress was diagnosed in the PCF journal as a "triumph of the socialist Right".[95] Two days after the end of the congress Sarraut's notorious and much publicized speech — "le communisme, voilà l'ennemi"[96] — was the signal for a sharp turn in French official attitudes. Vaillant-Couturier qualified the speech as "the most violent since Versailles 1871"; and the PCF in a short statement declared that it set the seal on a broad national front of the SFIO and the bourgeoisie.[97] A few days earlier the appointment of Chiappe as Préfêt de Police brought the police under the authority of a ruthless custodian of public order who quickly became known as the scourge of the communists. Arrests of communists began in April 1927. Monmousseau and two other trade union leaders were arrested on May 1, 1927, and proceedings were started against Sémard, the secretary of the party, and Barbé, the secretary of the youth league.[98] Sarraut followed up his offensive against the communists by a vigorous speech in the Chamber in which he denounced communist efforts to spread disaffection in the army and navy; this had been particularly effective among units in Morocco and on certain naval ships.[99] The pages of *Humanité* in May and June 1927 are full of reports of police action against party members. Sémard was arrested, but together with Monmousseau released after some days. Barbé, Duclos, Suzanne Girault and several others were sentenced to terms of imprisonment. Cachin was spared for the moment owing to his immunity as a deputy; Doriot, also a deputy, was still absent in China.[100] Thorez escaped in disguise when the police

[95] For the congress from the point of view of the PCF see *Humanité*, April 10, 1927, and following days; *Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, No. 71, April 30, 1927, pp. 497–500, No. 72, May 15, 1927, pp. 566–570. The Boncour law had been adopted by the Chamber on March 7, 1927, but was drastically amended by the Senate, and eventually abandoned.

[96] See p. 64 above. [97] *Humanité*, April 23, 25, 1927.

[98] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 47, May 6, 1927, pp. 991–992, Beilage, p. 2.

[99] *Le Temps*, May 29, 1927.

[100] Doriot's mission to China will be discussed in a later section of this volume.

came to arrest him;[101] since he remained at liberty, and active in party affairs, for another two years, the search cannot have been very rigorously pursued.

Against this background preparations were made for the Paris regional conference and the national party conference fixed for June 1927. In May the politburo issued theses for the national conference. The economic questions which had occupied the conference of January 1927 were the most conspicuous theme. Poincaré was described as the embodiment of the "capitalist union" which had replaced the Cartel des Gauches. The CGT and the socialist party had been "more and more integrated into the bourgeois system of government". The aim of the PCF must be "the united front from below in all its forms". It was claimed that membership of the party had increased since its fifth congress a year earlier from 55,000 to 64,000, and that the opposition to the leadership had been reduced to a mere handful. The approach of the elections of May 1928 was said to be "in danger of producing a certain electoral fever in our ranks"; but the subject was brushed aside with the assurance that "direct collective action" was more valuable than purely electoral action.[102] It may have been on this occasion that Thorez, whose conversion to a more radical line had begun in Moscow in March 1927,[103] made a declaration to the effect that the united front should be directed against the whole socialist leadership, and did not mean "writing letters to the socialist chiefs", and forced a vote in the politburo on the question; this, according to his later rather confused recollections, "was the beginning of our differences".[104] He found no support. Sniping by several opposition groups marked the Paris regional conference, which met on June 11, 1927. But the attacks seem to have been directed more specifically against the treatment of the Russian opposition, and against the policies of Comintern in China and in Great Britain, than against the policies of the PCF.[105] Treint, who held the post of

[101] M. Thorez, *Fils du Peuple* (1949), pp. 58–59.

[102] *Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, No. 72, May 15, 1927, pp. 555–565. For statistics of party membership see pp. 466–467 above, and 529–530 below; Vasiliev claimed an inflated total of 70,000 on January 1, 1927 (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 104, October 25, 1927, p. 2233).

[103] See p. 483 above.

[104] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 173–174.

[105] *Humanité*, June 12, 18, 20, 1927.

secretary of the Paris regional organization, was apparently still absent in Moscow, where two or three weeks earlier he had been in dispute with Stalin and Bukharin at the eighth IKKI about the condemnation of Trotsky and about policies in China.[106] Dissent at the Paris conference may well have reflected Treint's attitudes.

The national conference at St. Denis lasted from June 26 to 29, 1927. A letter was addressed to it by Sémard and Monmousseau from the Santé prison, though Sémard was in fact released on the eve of the conference and arrived in time to take part in the proceedings. The letter called for an "intelligent and methodical" application of united front tactics: "the united front and trade union unity constitute the two most powerful factors of our activity". The SFIO was divided between those who wished for a *rapprochement* with the PCF and those who wanted a bloc with reactionaries against communism. Cachin in his opening speech invited the conference to send to the national council of the SFIO then in session an appeal to "carry on in common with our party" a struggle for the defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack, for joint action against military preparations, for the withdrawal of armed forces from China, for workers' economic demands, and for an amnesty for offenders against repressive laws in France or in the colonies. The appeal was delivered with "some difficulties" to Faure, the president of the council of the SFIO, and copies handed to other members. But it received no reply.

While this episode attracted more attention than anything else at the conference, the main report by Bernard on the international situation and the theses of the eighth IKKI was couched in a different vein. Bernard proclaimed the *leitmotif* of the united front: to separate the masses of workers from the socialist leaders. He defended Comintern policy in China and in the Anglo-Russian committee on orthodox lines. He launched an all-out attack on Trotsky and the Russian opposition, and criticized members of the PCF who demanded the publication of opposition documents. "Freedom of the press" merely meant freedom for the opposition to renew its slanders. What Comintern needed was "not democracy, but unity ... iron unity". The dissidents, though

[106] For the condemnation of Trotsky see p. 146 above; the Chinese episode will be discussed in a later section of this volume.

less numerous and less vocal than at the Paris regional conference, rose to this challenge. Treint, now back from Moscow, was in an unusually restrained mood. He expressed himself in "broad agreement" with the IKKI theses, though with some reservations about the Anglo-Russian committee: on China he admitted that the opposition had "committed enormous mistakes". The most vigorous and persistent of the critics was Calzan; an attempt to limit his speaking time to fifteen minutes was defeated by vote of the conference. He fiercely demanded the publication of the opposition documents, and declared that a party which sought to condemn without publication "*would show a lack of integrity*". Thorez made an unsensational report on economic questions. The conference recorded its acceptance of the theses of the eighth IKKI, and approved the theses of the Politburo, judiciously amended by the Paris regional conference, which were specifically said to have been endorsed by Comintern.[107] An orthodox PCF commentator in the Comintern news-sheet significantly omitted any mention of the approach to the SFIO, and described the opposition as "virtually non-existent". He praised Bernard's "brilliant" report, but thought that the debates were too theoretical, and reflected the "Left errors" of the previous leadership (a hit at Treint and Girault); Thorez's report by way of exception dealt with practical questions. But "a certain passivity among the workers" was admitted. In spite of the collapse of the Cartel des Gauches many hoped for a new cartel at the next elections, and looked on the united front mainly as an issue of electoral policy.[108] It is remarkable that, throughout these debates, the PCF should have remained totally oblivious of the more radical policies apparently envisaged in the IKKI letter of April 2, 1927, and that Comintern should have remained equally inactive. Togliatti in his letter to Humbert-Droz of June 2, 1927, expressed astonishment that no Comintern representative should have been sent to the St. Denis conference of the PCF; if the purpose was to leave the party in peace, he thought that this was a grave miscalculation which would have unfortunate results.[109]

[107] *Humanité*, June 27, 1927, and following days; for the politburo theses see p. 490 above.

[108] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 70, July 12, 1927, pp. 1500–1501.

[109] For this letter see p. 486, note 85 above.

Interest now shifted momentarily to the trade unions. When the CGT held its congress in Paris on July 26–29, 1927, the CGTU, ignoring past rebuffs, sent a message recalling and repeating the offer of fusion made three months earlier. But the few CGT delegates who showed any inclination for unity with the CGTU were badly received; and a resolution was voted inviting workers who were interested in unity to enter unions affiliated to the CGT, and deploring the interference of political parties in trade union affairs.[110] The congress of the CGTU met in Bordeaux on September 19–24, 1927, 600 delegates representing 1486 trade union organizations with 525,000 members. Monmousseau had been released from prison just in time to take charge. A letter from Profintern advised the congress not to listen to "voices from beyond the grave [*d'outretombe*]", and offered firm directives to the congress on most items of its agenda, including such familiar topics as the struggle against imperialism and the threat to the Soviet Union and the struggle against capitalist rationalization. But most attention was given to what were evidently the two most contentious issues. The proposals for the establishment of a national security fund for the protection of workers against sickness and unemployment were endorsed. The danger to the revolutionary spirit was not, as the syndicalists pretended, "mutualism", but opportunism. The second and more embarrassing proposal, since it was strongly supported by the opposition, was for the omission of the formula of the dictatorship of the proletariat from the statutes of Red trade unions. The Profintern letter argued that "the words mean less to us than the thing", and concluded that, "if this formula may provoke doubts in the minds of workers, it is better to withdraw it". This would be a concession, "not to former communists who relapse into anarcho-syndicalist childishness, but in order to win the masses". It was a remarkable example of the distance which the leaders of Profintern were ready to travel at this time in implementing the policies of the united front.

The congress, benefiting from these flexible attitudes, passed off easily. Chambelland spoke in the name of a small "syndicalist league", apparently followers of Monatte. But Monmousseau's report was approved by a majority of 1995 votes to 60. Reso-

[110] *Humanité*, July 27, 1927; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 79, August 5, 1927, pp. 1719–1720. For the previous offer of April 1927 see pp. 485–486 above.

lutions were passed denouncing imperialism, the danger of war, and capitalist rationalization. The congress also drafted "a project entirely new in the French trade union movement — *a national fund for mutual assistance*". It adopted "concrete decisions" on the "*immediate day-to-day demands*" of the workers, and recognized the need for "*intensive recruitment among the 11 million unorganized workers*". Insistence on the dictatorship of the proletariat in the statutes of CGTU unions was silently dropped.[111] The CGT retorted to these decisions by ironically hailing the conversion of the CGTU to "reformism", and by accusing it of taking over the CGT programme. Sémard in an article in *Humanité* attempted to refute the charge; the congress had been a turning-point because it worked out a serious programme of immediate demands, and laid the foundation for mass unions to resist the governmental and capitalist offensive.[112] But the congress illustrated the dilemma of a revolutionary party confronted with a working class and a trade union movement more concerned to uphold the interest of the workers within the capitalist economy than to overthrow it. Doriot later praised it for having concentrated on the material demands of the workers, and thus corrected the previous line of the CGTU, which had been "too much the policy of the PCF, and not enough a trade union policy".[113] Nor was any pressure from Moscow for a more radical line operative at this time.

During the summer of 1927 the police applied to leading members of the PCF a cat-and-mouse policy of rapidly alternating arrests and releases. Cachin's immunity as a deputy was withdrawn by a vote of the Chamber at the end of June. Marty, whom the police had been seeking for some time, was caught in August; Thorez escaped arrest. At the beginning of September 1927 fifteen leaders of the PCF, the French communist youth league

[111] The congress was reported in *Humanité* on September 20, 1927, and following days (the Profintern letter appeared on September 23), and in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 97, October 4, 1927, pp. 2089–2090, No. 98, October 7, 1927, pp. 2110–2111.

[112] *Humanité*, October 25, 1927; Monmousseau was also on the defensive in an article describing the Bordeaux congress as "the finest congress we have ever had" (*ibid.* November 5, 1927).

[113] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), p. 74.

and the CGTU were in the Santé prison.[114] On September 17, 1927, Monmousseau was sentenced to four years' imprisonment; ten days later Marty and Duclos were sentenced to five years (in addition to terms imposed under previous sentences), and six others to three years.[115] According to calculations in *Humanité*, 418 communists were put on trial in 1927, and 356 more arrested.[116] The attitude of the PCF to police repressions did not escape criticism. A letter from Togliatti to Humbert-Droz of June 29, 1927, complained that the campaign of protest against them was conducted on too personal a note; what was at stake was not the personal fate of Sémard, Monmousseau or Cachin, but the fate of the French proletariat. The party was paralysed by "*respect for legality*". The communist fraction in the Chamber had declined to vote against the withdrawal of Cachin's immunity; and Sémard and other members of the party had given themselves up, and gone to prison voluntarily, on a simple order of the Ministry of Justice.[117] Sémard and Monmousseau, in prison on the eve of the party conference, issued a statement renouncing any claim to preferential treatment, and demanding only the strict observance of rules and regulations.[118] Costes, one of the leaders of the Paris regional organization, "allowed himself to be arrested" after the end of the party conference; and Cachin, at the moment of his arrest, boasted that "we have said not a word, we have made no move, in order to save any of us from being subjected to the general fate of the party militants".[119] Alleged irregularities in the treatment of communists in prison — notably a report that Marty had been deprived of his status as a political prisoner, and

[114] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 88, September 2, 1927, p. 1007.

[115] *Izvestiya*, September 29, 1927; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 97, October 4, 1927, p. 2082.

[116] *Humanité*, January 2, 1928.

[117] J. Humbert-Droz, *Il Contrasto tra l'Internazionale e il PCI* (1969), p. 249, Humbert-Droz archives, 0082. Cachin later claimed that the decision not to resist arrest was taken unanimously by the politburo; but, according to Barbé, three members of the politburo — Célor, Galopin and Ferrat, all representatives of the communist youth league — protested against it at a meeting of July 4, 1927 (*Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 124, 147). The motive of voluntary submission was the hope of profiting by amnesties on July 14 or November 11 (*ibid.* p. 157; Thorez called this "the purest manifestation of cretinism").

[118] *Humanité*, June 17, 1927.

[119] *Ibid.* July 3, 5, 1927.

compelled to wear "the prison clothes of murderers and thieves" — led *Humanité* to call for action by the workers "to enforce respect for the political order [*pour faire respecter le régime politique*]".[120] It is not surprising that stalwarts in Moscow and elsewhere, who believed that the aim of communists was to overthrow the bourgeois political order, should have been puzzled by these professions of loyalty to it.

What troubled the authorities most at this time was fear of subversive propaganda in the armed forces. Many of the charges against arrested communists were based on their attitude to the colonial wars in North Africa. Marty, as the ringleader in the famous Black Sea naval mutiny of 1918, was a conspicuous target of hatred and suspicion. "Ferment in the French army" was recorded in July 1927;[121] and *Humanité* for some time ran a regular column for complaints about bad food, low pay, and bad conditions in barracks. Naval mutinies, involving more than a hundred sailors in Toulon, were reported by *Humanité* in July and September 1927. At the beginning of October 1927 a mutiny in the cruiser *Ernest Renan* attracted special attention, perhaps because it originated, like the *Potemkin* mutiny of 1905, in complaints about rotten meat.[122] On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the October revolution, the Comintern news-sheet published an article by Marty, already in prison, on the Black Sea mutiny which was said to have "created a truly revolutionary movement in the French navy";[123] and on December 16, 1927, an article by Marty appeared in *Humanité* on the "ferocious class struggle" in the French navy. At the Soviet Komsomol congress in May 1928 the French communist youth league was said to have been responsible for seventy cases of unrest in the armed forces during the past year;[124] and at the sixth congress of Comintern two months later it was claimed that seventy military and naval mutinies had occurred in the previous year, as well as demonstrations against the call-up and in military prisons.[125] It

[120] *Ibid.* September 1, 1927.

[121] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 75, July 26, 1927, pp. 1597–1599.

[122] *Ibid.* No. 97, October 4, 1927, p. 2083.

[123] *Ibid.* No. 105, October 28, 1927, pp. 2270–2272.

[124] *VIII Vsesoyuznyi S"ezd VLKSM* (1928), p. 335.

[125] *Stenograficheskii Ochet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 72; an attempt by Frachon to give a detailed account of some of these manifestations (*ibid.*

remains uncertain how far the PCF was responsible for fomenting these troubles, and how far it profited from them. What is clear is that nothing remotely resembling a revolutionary situation existed, though this mirage may have dazzled the eyes of some party militants.

Meanwhile the insubordination of Treint and his handful of supporters had become a running sore in the party. In June 1927, at the St. Denis party conference, just back from his long sojourn in Moscow and his clash with Stalin and Bukharin at the eighth IKKI, he had professed loyal acceptance of the decisions of the majority.[126] On July 22, 1927, moved to righteous indignation by the collapse of Comintern policy in China, and by the events in Vienna, he circulated a letter to party members attacking the Comintern leaders. At the session of the party central committee of August 3–4, 1927, he put forward theses on the Chinese question and on the Vienna rising in which he declared that "the opportunism of the Stalin–Bukharin group is stained with blood", and denounced "Stalinism". At the next session of the central committee of September 10–11, 1927, he was threatened with expulsion, but given a respite to reform his conduct. About this time, however, he began to issue a dissident broadsheet under the title *Unité Léniniste*, and absented himself from the important session of the central committee which approved the open letter of November 9, 1927, thus virtually writing himself out of the party.[127] The struggle against the dissidents in the PCF became inevitably identified with the struggle against the opposition in the Russian party, now at its culminating point. In November 1927 two leading articles in *Humanité* by Thorez embroidered this theme; and the politburo of the PCF announced the opening of a discussion with full publication of documents.[128] It can only

ii, 149) was not very impressive. A report on the French communist youth league claimed that the anti-militarist campaign "greatly increased our influence among the young workers, soldiers and sailors" (*The Young Communist International: Between the Fourth and Fifth Congresses* (1928), pp. 176–177).

[126] See p. 492 above.

[127] For this narrative of events see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 8, January 24, 1928, pp. 148–149; according to *Humanité*, December 6, 1927, Treint and his supporters pretended that they had been prevented from attending the session by some irregularity in convening it. For the open letter see p. 499 below.

[128] *Humanité*, November 15, 26, 1927; another denunciation of "fractionalism" by the politburo appeared *ibid.* December 4, 1927.

have been a traditional aversion from extreme measures, together with reluctance to add a further crisis to those already confronting the party leaders, which still delayed the expulsion of the dissidents.

It was in September 1927 — the month which saw a sharp deterioration in Franco-Soviet relations, and the demand for the recall of Rakovsky from Paris[129] — that Comintern betrayed a renewed awareness that all was not well in the PCF. At the beginning of October 1927 the political secretariat, simultaneously with a similar telegram to the CPGB, sent a telegram to the PCF instructing the party "to come out at the forthcoming elections as an independent party with its own candidates", even in opposition to socialists, and followed this up with a letter explaining that the aim should be to create at the elections a "fundamental watershed" between the communist party on one side and bourgeois parties, together with the social-democrats, on the other.[130] This seems to have met with no response. But later in the same month Humbert-Droz came to Paris, and in the first days of November 1927 had discussions with PCF leaders on the new tactics. Cachin and Doriot were in prison. Thorez energetically supported the new line. But Sémard and Monmousseau were obstructive, and Sémard accused Thorez of having been "won over" by Humbert-Droz. Humbert-Droz was convinced that Thorez represented a "healthy base" of younger members of the PCF, and that the older leaders were in danger of relapsing into the errors of Treint and Girault.[131] Humbert-Droz, whose identity had been discovered by the police, was arrested and imprisoned, but not before agreement had been reached in

[129] See pp. 67–68 above.

[130] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional: Kratkii Istoricheskii Ocherk* (1969), p. 284, quoting from archives; for the telegram and letter to the CPGB see p. 359 above. G. Walter, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français* (1948), p. 186, mentions a "new message" of IKKI to the PCF in September 1927, and Sémard later spoke of Comintern directives received "on many occasions" in the interval since the Lille party congress of 1926 (*Classe contre Classe* (1929), p. 5); but none of these messages was published at the time, or has been published since.

[131] This account is given in a letter from Humbert-Droz to his wife of November 8, 1927, obviously written in cryptic language to mislead a censor (J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), pp. 294–295).

the party central committee on an "open letter", dated November 9, 1927, to party members on the new policy.

The open letter began by inviting a realistic discussion in the PCF, based on "self-criticism". It admitted "the relative success of the Poincaré experiment ... from the angle of the interest of the big bourgeoisie", and the strengthening of the "national" union; the radicals had contributed to this policy, and the socialists, slipping towards the Right, connived at it. The aim must be to expose both the national government and the "anti-worker policies of the socialist leaders"; the united front of workers and peasants must be directed against socialist organizations and reformist trade unions which supported the bourgeoisie. This was the essence of the proletarian formula "Class against Class", which found its expression in electoral tactics, though these were only a phase in a larger struggle. Half a century of parliamentary democracy had blurred in the minds of the French worker the elementary principle of the unbridgeable gulf between classes. The respect shown by French communists for bourgeois legality was castigated. The view of the PCF as an "extreme Left wing" in a Cartel des Gauches was false. The purpose of electoral tactics must be "to unite the masses under the leadership of the proletariat and of its communist party for a remorseless struggle against all fractions of the bourgeoisie". Against the slogans of Daladier and Paul-Boncour (i.e. the radicals and the socialists) must be raised "the proletarian slogan 'Class against Class' ". The letter ended with the following "proposals" of the central committee:

> The Communist Party will put forward its candidates, at the second as at the first ballot, against bourgeois candidates, both radical and reactionary.
>
> The Communist Party will immediately propose to the Socialist Party the formation at the second ballot of a workers' bloc in order to support the socialist or the communist against *all* bourgeois candidates. The mutual withdrawal of candidates by the two parties claiming to represent the working class will be conditional on the acceptance of a minimum programme.
>
> The Communist Party declares that, if the Socialist Party rejects its proposal of a worker–peasant bloc, the Communist Party reserves the right to maintain a proletarian candidate in defiance of any socialist leaders who perform a counter-

revolutionary function and declare themselves defenders of bourgeois democracy against communism.[132]

The language of the letter was emphatic to the point of truculence. But the details of what was to be done were vague and contradictory, and the concluding instructions for the conduct of elections were couched in the tentative form of "proposals".

The ambiguity was illustrated in Bukharin's comments at the fifteenth congress of the Russian party a month after the letter was written. Having rhetorically observed that the PCF might soon receive its baptism of fire, and that the elections must be conducted in such a way as to show that "the bourgeoisie and its socialist minions" were on one side of the barricades, and "the only revolutionary party of the working class" on the other, he added that "this, of course, does not preclude proposals for a united front, or voting in particular cases for socialist candidates when reactionary candidates might otherwise get in".[133] Hesitation in Moscow was matched by lukewarmness and deep divisions among the PCF leaders. As Sémard later admitted, there was at this time "no agreement in the politburo on the tactics to be applied in relation to the socialists".[134] Leaders who desired to conform, at any rate in words, to the Comintern directives were faced with an ingrained reluctance in the rank and file to abandon the traditional methods of parliamentary democracy and of electoral bargains between parties of the Left. Well-founded doubts were expressed whether the regional party organizations had "all applied the directives given to them".[135] The conviction prevailed,

[132] *Humanité*, November 19, 1927. This was apparently the only publication of the complete text; for an excerpt, including the last section, see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 116, November 25, 1927, p. 2597. No publication in Moscow has been traced; according to a later statement by Thorez, Comintern sent a telegram approving the open letter, and followed this up six weeks later with a further telegram drawing attention to "contradictions" in the campaign for putting it into effect (*Classe contre Classe* (1929), p. 184). That it attracted little attention at the time is suggested by Bukharin's casual remark at the sixth congress of Comintern in July 1928 that the "Class against Class" line had been proclaimed "some two months ago" (*Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 611).

[133] *Pyatnadtsatyi S"ezd VKP(B)*, i (1961), 658.

[134] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), p. 6; A. Ferrat, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français* (1931), p. 223, states that the open letter was approved "by a majority of the central committee"; it is not clear whether a vote was actually taken.

[135] *Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, No. 86, December 15, 1927, p. 1289.

especially in the industrial north, where the socialists were strongest, that a total rift, engineered by the PCF, between communists and socialists, would be misunderstood and resented by the masses of workers, and would alienate them from the party. This fear was expressed by a delegate at a conference of the PCF on January 31, 1928, and was countered by the brusque assertion of an unnamed Comintern representative that "our line is correct and must be accepted with all its consequences, the aim of which is to dispel, even brutally, the illusions of the working class".[136] But this view was adopted, evidently after a struggle, only by a majority of twenty-three to thirteen. The intended reorientation of the party, recorded an observer, had not been achieved by the open letter of November 9, 1927; it had only now begun.[137]

Nor was any great eagerness shown by the leaders to publicize the new policy. On November 10, 1927, immediately on its adoption by the central committee, *Humanité* carried on its first page a brief article by Cachin under the heading "Class against Class". It was not till November 19, 1927, that *Humanité* printed on a back page the text of the letter, and, on November 24, 1927, the list of "minimum demands" which were to be the condition of communist–socialist cooperation. These included, in addition to the normal items relating to wages and conditions of labour, demands for the nationalization of banks, for the defence of the USSR against any imperialist attack, for the release of political prisoners, and for the united front (in the organization of strikes) in factories. From this time the slogan "Class against Class" appeared regularly in the party press, though without any further elaboration of its meaning. Petrovsky, in an article in the party journal on electoral tactics, condemned "the parliamentary degeneration" which had overtaken French communists and their "submission to parliamentary traditions". This extended to "benevolent submission to judicial verdicts" which was tantamount to "*submission to capitalist legality*". What was required was "a courageous defiance of the capitalist legality of democratic France".[138] Another article complained that the party had not

[136] *Humanité*, February 1, 2, 1928.
[137] A. Ferrat, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français* (1931), p. 227.
[138] *Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, No. 86, December 15, 1927, pp. 1290–1294.

"mobilized the broad masses against the danger of war", and was "caught in an atmosphere of pacifism and democracy".[139]

The open letter of November 9, 1927, had confronted the party with a contentious issue, but offered no clear-cut solution and achieved no agreement. A meeting of the central committee of the SFIO on December 26-27, 1927, once more registered its rejection of communist overtures. The leaders of the PCF retaliated with a manifesto addressed to "socialist workers and all working people" based on the slogan:

> *Against national unity and its props, the socialist leaders. For a worker–peasant bloc.*[140]

The party central committee met on January 11, 1928, with two items on the agenda; the opposition, and the open letter. The first was simply disposed of. Treint, supported by three fellow dissentients, Girault, Faussecave and Barré, re-stated the criticisms of the opposition. The other members of the committee then formally asked the four whether they were prepared to submit to the decisions of the committee, abandon their fractional activities and stop their publications. Refusal to answer involved their automatic expulsion from the party, though this apparently required formal ratification by a higher organ.[141] The open letter presented a more intractable problem, since no agreement could be reached "on the tactics to be applied in regard to the socialists". Finally, the politburo put forward a compromise. The issue was to be remitted to a party conference to be held later in the month and attended by representatives of Comintern; a formula on electoral tactics was to be proposed to the conference endorsing the maintenance of communist candidates "against all bourgeois candidates and socialist candidates who have rejected the worker–peasant bloc, *subject to exceptions determined by the central committee in agreement with Comintern*". Of those who had hitherto opposed the new line, Doriot and Bernard accepted the compromise, and Renaud Jean and Jacob rejected it. It was carried by twenty-one votes to thirteen.[142]

[139] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 1, January 5, 1928, pp. 10–12.

[140] *Ibid.* No. 1, January 5, 1928, p. 9.

[141] *Humanité*, January 14, 1928; Béors had already been expelled for misconduct (*ibid.* January 19, 1928).

[142] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 6–8; elsewhere the voting figures are given as twenty-three to thirteen (*ibid.* p. 27).

The party conference of January 31–February 2, 1928, traversed the same ground before a larger audience. The same crucial questions were put to the four dissidents, who this time made elaborate statements, and named some surprising conditions on which they were prepared to submit. These included the reinstatement of all oppositions expelled from communist parties (the Russian and German parties were named), the publication of all opposition documents and free discussion. After this act of defiance, the four were expelled from the PCF by 174 votes to 1 with 4 abstentions.[143] Sémard delivered the usual report on the tasks of the party; Barbé[144] was responsible for the major indictment of the opposition; and an unidentified Comintern representative (presumably Humbert-Droz, who had just been released from prison) expressed satisfaction at the expulsion of the opposition and the acceptance of the open letter.[145] The main resolution of the conference followed the line of the open letter; the section on electoral tactics (which was headed "Class against Class", though the phrase did not appear in the text), reiterated the principle of maintaining communist candidates against all comers, but allowed the party central committee to make proposals to Comintern to sanction exceptions in concrete cases.[146] Sémard, in an article on the conference, opined that the exceptions would be "very few".[147] This was doubtless the understanding of Comintern. But it may not have been shared by those who were conscious of the difficulty of explaining the new tactics to the rank and file of the PCF. After the expulsions, a shake-up evidently occurred in the leadership of

[143] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 11, February 3, 1928, p. 213.

[144] Barbé, an ambitious leader of the French communist youth league, had caught the eye of the leaders of Comintern at the eighth IKKI in May 1927, when he was appointed to the political secretariat in Moscow (A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *Desyat' Let Kominterna v Tsifrakh* (1929), p. 329), replacing Crémet, also a former youth leader, who was said to have enjoyed Stalin's patronage (L. Trotsky, *Le Mouvement Communiste en France* (ed. P. Broué, 1967) p. 282), but who was now tainted with oppositionist leanings; in 1928 and 1929 Barbé served as a spear-head for the attack on Rightist elements in the leadership of the PCF (see pp. 518–521 below).

[145] The conference was reported at length in *Humanité*, January 31, February 1, 2, 1928.

[146] *Ibid.* February 6, 1928 (for the resolution, described as unanimous, expelling the opposition, see *ibid.* February 13, 1928); *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 13, February 10, 1928, pp. 259–260.

[147] *Ibid.* No. 14, February 14, 1928, pp. 280–281.

the Paris regional organization by way of making it more amenable to the directives of the party central committee.[148]

The precarious situation in the PCF made it an object of attention at the ninth IKKI which met in Moscow on February 9, 1928; and a commission was set up to consider it. Sémard opened the proceedings with a conventional speech. He dismissed the affair of the opposition as "already liquidated", and on the issue of electoral tactics he struck a diffident note: "if the party must not be too far in advance of the masses, it must not trail behind them". He referred to "comrades from the provinces who submitted as an act of discipline", and whom it remained to convince. He hoped that "a greater number of our comrades who formulated reservations will finally rally to the politics and tactics of the party".[149] Schüller, the KIM leader, expounded the official Comintern line. France had undergone a change, economic, social and political, since the war. The rôle of the petty bourgeoisie had declined. Class contradictions had sharpened. Poincaré's government of national union ranged radical Left elements, the SFIO and the CGT, with the capitalists in an offensive against the working class. The error of the PCF was that, in spite of the promptings of Comintern ever since the letter of April 2, 1927, it had been too slow in changing course. Of those who still resisted the change he criticized Renaud Jean (while expressing personal consideration for him as a valuable member of the party) for allowing himself to be influenced by its most backward element, the peasantry. He attacked the "northern comrades" (only Jacob was named) for their resistance to the new electoral tactics. He believed that Doriot and Bernard were now in agreement with

[148] Bukharin in his speech in the French commission of the ninth IKKI spoke appreciatively of "the state of mind in the Paris region" (*Classe contre Classe* (1929), p. 85), and the resolution of the session praised "the local committees and cells of the Paris region" for their part in the campaign to improve *Humanité* (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 761; for this campaign see pp. 506–507 below). An angry delegate from the Paris region at the sixth congress of Comintern five months later complained that attempts had been made at the ninth IKKI "to isolate the leadership of the Paris region, the 'regional committee', from the rank and file in the interests of the rectification of the party line", and that Bukharin had totally misrepresented the position in the Paris region (*Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 321–322).

[149] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 17–29. This volume appears to contain all the speeches delivered in the commission; no criticism of the official line was heard.

the "fundamental line", though they still disputed over the electoral formula; and he understood that the tension between the party leadership and the Paris region had now been resolved.[150]

Nobody showed any desire to dispute either the criticism of the past or the optimism for the future. Dengel's speech as fraternal delegate of the KPD was noteworthy only for the casual remark that Thorez had been the first to accept the Comintern line, Sémard had accepted it a little later, and Bernard and Doriot had followed afterwards. Dengel was a docile servant of Comintern who ventured on no judgments of his own; and the remark was sufficient indication that Thorez was being thought of in high places for the succession.[151] Varga maintained that the history of the Cartel des Gauches had conclusively proved the inability of the petty bourgeoisie to stand up against the big bourgeoisie, and suggested that this gave the PCF the opportunity to manoeuvre between different layers of the same class — the nearest point to a dissentient opinion recorded in the debate. A representative of Krestintern made a somewhat surprising appearance to plead for more attention by the PCF to the peasant and for the creation of a mass peasant organization comprising working peasants of all categories".[152] Doriot protested against "revolutionary phrase-making" within the trade union movement. He declared that the doubts of those who shared his views had been prompted by "the fact that our electoral tactics may momentarily separate us from the masses of socialists and sympathizers who are indisputably evolving in our direction". While stipulating, however, that socialists who had not associated themselves openly with the bourgeoisie might be supported, even if they had not rallied to the communist programme, he managed to proclaim his acceptance of the new line. Kolarov attributed the weaknesses of the PCF to "Jaurès traditions, which have not been finally liquidated".[153] Bukharin expressed satisfaction that the "latest crisis" between Comintern and the PCF had been relaxed, and significantly praised the part played both by Humbert-Droz and by Thorez

[150] *Ibid.* pp. 36–46.

[151] *Ibid.* p. 47.

[152] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 52–54, 58–60; the resolution (see p. 506 below) also included the demand for a mass peasant organization. Renaud Jean, though a persistent dissident, appears to have owed the mild treatment which he received to his rôle as spokesman of the peasantry.

[153] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 70–77, 79.

in inaugurating the new line. Thorez had at first been against Humbert-Droz, but had been convinced by him, and had since used all his powers to convince the rest of the party. Bukharin effectively argued against reopening a discussion of the new line only a few weeks before the elections; this would inevitably lead to the loss of the battle and the discrediting of the Comintern directive.[154] Sémard presented to the plenary session the text of a resolution agreed by the commission, which was adopted without further discussion. It pronounced once more the now familiar diagnosis:

> The economic rôle of the petty bourgeoisie still continues to decline, and social forces tend ever more to become polarized in the fundamental opposition of the working class and the big bourgeoisie.

The process of the "radicalization of the masses" had provoked "entrepreneurial pressure and repressions of the state apparatus against the proletariat and proletarian class organizations". The open letter of November 9, 1927, and the resolution of the party conference in January 1928 represented a "profound change" in tactics. But impatience was expressed at the failure of the party in many respects to apply the new line. Finally IKKI approved the expulsion of "the leaders of the Trotskyist fraction, Treint, Suzanne Girault, etc.", and summoned the party to promote "the mobilization and the struggle of the masses against the capitalist and governmental offensive".[155]

The ninth IKKI was also marked by constant criticisms of the party newspaper, *Humanité*. *Humanité* had long been subject to sporadic attacks by "Leftists" in the party, mainly on the ground that it sought to be a professionally competent "journal d'information" for the workers rather than a party organ for the inculcation of communist doctrine and policies. It attracted a wide circle of readers. Thorez claimed for it a circulation of 230,000; this meant that three-quarters of those who bought it were not members of the PCF, and made it the fourth largest French newspaper.[156] On questions of party policy it tended to side with the

[154] *Ibid.* pp. 82–89.

[155] *Ibid.* pp. 90–97; *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 759–762.

[156] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 65, July 10, 1928, pp. 1175–1176.

Right, especially on any issue of the united front. The fact that it carried beneath its title the name of Jaurès as its founder, and its year of publication reckoned from 1904, suggested an appeal to a French radical tradition older than the revolution of 1917. Dissatisfaction was summed up in the complaint that *Humanité* was not sufficiently subordinated to the party. At the session of the politburo of the PCF on February 3, 1927, *Humanité* submitted a defence of its position. The politburo accepted the plea that *Humanité* was "not a journal for militants, but a journal of the masses". New arrangements were said to have removed causes of friction between the newspaper and the party. The director of *Humanité* was now a member of the politburo; the chief editor attended sessions of the politburo; the other editors were members of the party central committee. Mistakes had, of course, been made. But criticisms of *Humanité* were apt to emanate from members of the party opposition, and were "utilized at the present time to attack the leadership of the party".[157]

The critics, however, were not so easily silenced. In the French commission of the ninth IKKI, Togliatti declared that the line recently followed by *Humanité* had not been in agreement with the open letter of November 9, 1927, but was "an opportunist line masked by Left phrases". As the newspaper of a legal party, *Humanité* was more than the organ of the PCF. It was an organ of the whole of Comintern, being read by hundreds of workers and by all the leaders in many countries: this made it essential to get the line right. The attack was reiterated by Schüller and by Thorez, who said that *Humanité* contained "absolutely contradictory articles on party tactics".[158] The resolution adopted by IKKI rehearsed in captious detail the errors committed by *Humanité*, and called on the party to take measures to ensure the application of the new line, "especially as regards *Humanité*".[159] The newspaper found itself significantly faced with the dilemma of choice betweeen a popular and successful formula, which com-

[157] *Cahiers du Bolchévisme*, No. 66, February 15, 1927, pp. 229–235.

[158] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 32, 35, 45, 68.

[159] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 761. One of the offences constantly brought up against *Humanité* was its irresponsible announcement on August 23, 1927, of a mass demonstration of workers against a march of the American Legion through Paris, following on the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti; nobody had organized the demonstration, which was a fiasco.

bined revolutionary rhetoric with the desire of a majority of its worker readers to participate with other parties of the Left in the parliamentary manoeuvres of the Third Republic, and an uncompromising sectarian line dictated from Moscow which would alienate many of its faithful supporters.

If the PCF proved a reluctant and sometimes recalcitrant exponent of the Comintern line, the CGTU was even less amenable to promptings from Moscow. Schüller at the ninth IKKI in February 1928 tartly observed that "the errors of the party are still more accentuated in the CGTU", and that the process of rectification had "made far less progress in the CGTU".[160] An article which appeared after the session in the Comintern journal attributed "special weakness" to the work of the PCF in the trade unions. All trade unions, reformist and communist, showed a decline in their already inadequate membership. The conference of the PCF in January 1928 had already spoken of the need to struggle against "the spirit of passivity, the lack of faith in the powers of the working class, the inclination to compromise etc.".[161] About the same time Bernard, a member of the party central committee, wrote an article in which he took a no less gloomy view of the present condition of the CGTU, but proposed remedies which would have been doubtfully acceptable in Moscow, arguing that the CGTU had concentrated too much on political questions, such as trade union unity, affiliation of unions to Profintern or disputes with the anarcho-syndicalists, and too little on practical questions of wages and conditions of work.[162]

The fourth congress of Profintern, which met in Moscow on March 15, 1928, did little to relieve these doubts. Lozovsky mentioned the CGTU only in passing in order to jeer at its habit of writing "loving and not-so-loving letters to the reformists", and to urge greater efforts to recruit the 90 per cent of French workers who were still unorganized.[163] Monmousseau said nothing of substance, but in a rhetorical peroration called for "an unconquerable united front against the bourgeoisie and its

[160] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), p. 45.

[161] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 10 (136), 1928, pp. 43–45.

[162] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 27, March 13, 1928, pp. 505–506.

[163] *Protokoll über der Vierten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), pp. 90–91.

reformist allies for the defence of the Soviet Union and the international liberation of the proletariat". Another French delegate incongruously praised the united front achieved in the railway workers' federation, which was divided between CGT and CGTU unions.[164] The resolution "On the Immediate Tasks of the CGTU" repeated the familiar slogans, but also made one or two concessions to current practice. The "incipient radicalization of the masses" was to be utilized in order to strengthen "the Left wing within the reformist unions", and "the platform of a united front between lower organizations of the CGT and CGTU" was cautiously commended. A separate resolution sanctioned collective agreements between Red trade unions and capitalist employers, which were, however, to be regarded as "a temporary pause for breath between hostile armies, to be utilized by the proletariat for the energetic preparation of new class struggles".[165]

The two ballots in the elections to the Chamber were fixed for April 22 and 29, 1928. An unsigned article in *Pravda* on the coming electoral struggle congratulated the PCF on adopting the brief and clear formula: Class against Class.[166] In the first ballot, the PCF could boast of an increase in votes cast for it to 1,069,000 (875,000 in 1924). But under the procedure of *scrutin d'arrondissement* no communist candidate secured an absolute majority; and this, though it can hardly have surprised anyone who understood the new system, apparently infuriated Stalin, who raged against the "class against class" policy, and proposed to send a telegram to Paris instructing the PCF to revert to the tactics of bargains with other Left parties. Humbert-Droz succeeded with difficulty in dissuading him from this bizarre attempt to change horses in mid-stream.[167] No fresh instructions came from Moscow. Sémard in an article written between the two ballots declared that the party, faithful to the slogan "Class against Class", would withdraw its candidates in the second ballot only in two exceptional cases: in the Nord, in order to secure the defeat of Loucheur, the candidate of the big industrialists, and in the Haute-Garonne,

[164] *Ibid.* pp. 120, 159–160.

[165] *Ibid.* pp. 623–634.

[166] *Pravda*, April 20, 1928.

[167] This story, related many years later in J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), pp. 281–282, should perhaps be taken with a grain of salt.

where the socialist candidate had voted in the Chamber against the war in Morocco and the Boncour military law.[168]

What happened in the second ballot bore no relation to these precise instructions. Party discipline failed to enforce an unpopular decision. Both in rural areas and in the great industrial centres, local organizations and rank-and-file members were guilty of "defaults and swindles (*cochonneries*)". In some places, "deliberate sabotage" took the form of bargains with socialist, or even with radical, leaders. Elsewhere, PCF candidates were formally maintained, but party members voted for the socialists in order to keep the national bloc out.[169] The final results gave the national bloc 380 seats in a Chamber of 612. Of the opposition parties, the PCF had 12 seats (against 27 in 1924), the SFIO 101 (against 104), the Radical Socialists 123 (against 138), and the Republican Socialists 47 (against 42). It was estimated that the SFIO owed 58 of its seats, the Republican Socialists 10, and the Radical Socialists 37, to communist votes.[170] How far communist candidates enjoyed reciprocal advantages is less clear. But it was considered satisfactory that, with 180 fewer constituencies voting in the second ballot than in the first, the PCF had still registered 798,194 votes. The victory of Duclos over Blum in a Paris constituency could be hailed as a triumph. It was, however, galling to record that Jacob, a known oppositionist in the PCF, had won a brilliant victory in Valenciennes, and that Thorez was among the defeated communist candidates.[171]

Recriminations about the results were few — perhaps because critics would inevitably have been led to point a finger at the tactics dictated by Comintern. The voting strength of the party had increased. If the number of communist deputies had fallen, it was less important to win seats in the Chamber than to win the

[168] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 41, April 29, 1928, pp. 727–728.

[169] The frankest available account is that given by Sémard in the discussion in the Latin secretariat of Comintern in July 1928 (*Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 112–113).

[170] E. Bonnefous, *Histoire Politique de la Troisième Republique*, iv (1960), 251–252, 256; according to J. Fauvet, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français* (1964), ii, 81, 60 per cent of communists voted for other Left candidates in constituencies where this seemed likely to defeat a Right candidate.

[171] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 44, May 8, 1928, pp. 779–781; the total number of votes was cited in the theses of the party conference of June 1928 (see p. 512 below).

support of the masses. Towards the end of May 1928, the party central committee prepared theses for the national party conference to be held in the following month. They contained some remarkably contradictory pronouncements. A break had been made with "the democratic tradition which fettered the proletariat to the allegedly Left petty bourgeoisie". On the other hand, "the open letter, especially the part which relates to participation in the elections, passed over the head of the mass of party members"; local organizations "broke discipline" either by withdrawing communist candidates, or by ceasing to support them, at the second ballot. Dissent still existed in the party, especially on the trade union question. At a recent meeting of the Paris regional committee, fourteen members had abstained from a vote of confidence in the party leaders, which was carried by eighteen votes. The conclusion drawn was the need to tighten party organization and to carry on the "Class against Class" campaign. On the other hand, the united front, even if it was disowned in an electoral period, remained an essential weapon in the struggle to detach workers from their socialist leaders.[172] A party commentator, in an exercise in wishful thinking, concluded that "the *élite* of the working class" had understood the new policy, and that it was only "*the petty bourgeois, the less advanced workers and the backward strata of the peasantry*", who had been misled by the cry: "The communists play into the hands of reaction".[173] It cannot have made things easier for supporters of the official line when the SFIO deputies in the Chamber on June 14, 1928, sponsored a motion to uphold the immunity of Cachin, Doriot and Duclos (as well as of two deputies from Alsace-Lorraine), which was defeated by 342 votes to 167.[174] The ambiguities of "Class against Class", added to those of the united front, continued to bewilder the rank and file of the PCF. During the weeks

[172] *Humanité*, June 2, 1928; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 54, June 5, 1928, pp. 985–986 (a slightly abbreviated version).

[173] *Ibid.* No. 57, June 15, 1928, pp. 1024–1025; Thorez at the sixth congress of Comintern baldly asserted that "the workers followed us" (*Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 216).

[174] *Journal Officiel: Chambre des Députés*, No. 48, June 14, 1928, pp. 1934–1940. An odd feature of the debate was that the supporters of the motion mentioned only the Alsace-Lorraine deputies; Béron, himself a deputy of that region, was chosen to announce that the communists would vote for the motion. It was the spokesman of the government who pointed out that it also covered Cachin, Doriot and Duclos.

that followed an attempt seems to have been made to divert attention from the dubious results of the electoral tactics to other aspects of the campaign.

A party conference was announced for June 18, 1928, and theses for submission to it were drafted and published well in advance by the central committee. These referred to "opportunist errors" during the elections, but also to differences of opinion with "some comrades of the Paris region", who had "separated themselves from the majority" by abstaining from a vote of confidence in the party leaders on the basis of the open letter of November 1927 and the resolution of the party conference of January 31, 1928.[175] A Paris regional party conference, held on the eve of the national conference on June 17, 1928, was the culminating point of a long struggle in which the chronically rebellious Paris organization was at length brought under the firm control of the national leadership. No detailed report of the regional conference was published. But the main topics of debate were "the application of the united front" and "the leading rôle of the party in workers' organizations". Changes of personnel were necessary to bring about agreement; and finally "a large majority" accepted the proposal of the party leadership "for a reinforcement of the regional committee with workers, and for a reconstitution of the bureau to ensure an improvement in collaboration with the politburo".[176]

This hurdle having been cleared, the national conference met from June 18 to 21, 1928, and mustered 178 delegates, together with fifty-four members of the central committee, and nineteen representatives of the communist youth league. Sémard as usual made the main report, and Renaud Jean repeated his protest against the electoral policy, calling for "more flexible tactics". A clash also occurred on the theses on the trade union question submitted by Monmousseau on behalf of the politburo, which had been published in *Humanité* on May 27, 1928. Even before the conference "some comrades in the Paris leadership", who represented an "ultra-Left tendency", had insisted on stressing the importance of party leadership in the trade unions, and had accused the central committee of making "a concession to anarcho-syndicalist theories" of politically "neutral" trade

[175] *Humanité*, June 2, 1928.
[176] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 59, June 22, 1928, p. 1069.

unions. But the objectors were now a minority, even in the Paris organization, and were overruled, apparently after some amendments to the theses.[177] The main resolution of the conference on Sémard's report was carried unanimously with eight abstentions, all from the Paris region. This made it possible to describe the conference as "a milestone on the road to rallying all healthy elements round the leadership".[178]

When the sixth congress of Comintern opened in Moscow on July 17, 1928, Bukharin in his main report briefly reproached the PCF with its devotion to "parliamentary traditions — in the bad sense of the term". But the charge was vague and impersonal, and was not pressed very hard. Some members of the party had made mistakes, since corrected. A change in tactics had been necessary.[179] In the debate Sémard kept on the safe ground of the Kellogg pact, international relations and French imperialism.[180] Thorez, probably schooled behind the scenes, was more adventurous. The PCF, he declared, was faced with, "on the one hand, a radicalization of the working class, on the other hand, a revival in its midst of reformist illusions". Ever since the open letter of November 9, 1927, some comrades had been seeking for common ground with socialists. Reformist tendencies still lurked in the Red trade unions, and created "a certain awkwardness" in their relations with the party, taking the form of "autonomism" and "federalism". Thorez defended the electoral tactics of the party, which "came out as one against all"; this was "the meaning of our tactics", and "the workers followed us". He sharply

[177] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 57, June 15, 1928, p. 1025. It was later alleged that the politburo had never approved the draft published in *Humanité*, which was the work of Bernard, already suspect of "Right" tendencies; Humbert-Droz rather awkwardly admitted that he had "taken a considerable part in preparing the draft of the trade union theses", which was "directed against the errors of a group of comrades in the Paris region", but that the secretariat was responsible for its "presentation". The draft was said by Barbé to have been "not only revised by our national conference, but completely changed" (*Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 145, 151, 207).

[178] The conference was poorly reported in *Humanité*, June 19–29, 1928; the fullest available reports are in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 59, June 22, 1928, pp. 1069–1070, No. 60, June 26, 1928, p. 1086, with an account by Sémard in *ibid.* No. 61, June 29, 1928, pp. 1102–1103.

[179] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 59–60.

[180] *Ibid.* i, 107–130.

criticized Bukharin's theses for putting on the same plane the Right and Left deviations in the PCF. The Right deviation was identified with various forms of opportunism — submission to bourgeois legality, wrong tactics in the elections, anarcho-syndicalist traditions in the trade unions, hostility to factory cells. The Left deviation was sometimes a reaction against opportunism, and was not dangerous.[181] Bukharin, in his long reply to the debate, clearly sought to damp down controversy. Without mentioning Thorez, he conceded the predominant importance of the Right deviation. The PCF, when it proclaimed the slogan "Class against Class", and adopted the new electoral tactics, had executed "a sharp turn, ... *the most principled turn in the history of the French party*", had delivered *"a blow against the Right danger"*.[182]

The major debate on PCF affairs at the sixth congress took place, however, in a series of meetings in the Latin secretariat. Humbert-Droz, who presided, announced two main topics of discussion: the "new line", including all questions of the internal policy of the PCF, and the trade union question.[183] Sémard congratulated the party on its success, in spite of some errors during the elections, in overcoming past opportunism, and also in "correcting certain Leftist errors which had arisen in our principal region, the Paris region". He made the prediction (echoed later by Lozovsky and Thorez) that the party would soon become illegal, and must learn to fight in these conditions. On the leadership and organization of the party he struck a defensive note. He dismissed the attacks of "certain comrades who criticized the leadership *en bloc*, and declared that it was incapable of rectifying the party". But he admitted that the "very large" central committee of eighty-one or eighty-three needed an overhaul, that the "too large" politburo of eighteen had failed, down to the end of 1927, to make any serious or profound analysis of the changes which had occurred in France in its political and economic structure, precisely because disagreements existed among its members. The lack of homogeneity which paralysed the politburo also affected the secretariat.[184]

[181] *Ibid.* i, 212–219; Thorez's demand for an amendment to Bukharin's theses stressing the greater importance of the Right deviation was made by decision of the politburo of the PCF (*Classe contre Classe* (1929), p. 182).

[182] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 610–611.

[183] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 107–108.

[184] *Ibid.* pp. 108–123.

Renaud Jean was the only speaker who unreservedly condemned the new electoral tactics, though he added that they had now done all the harm they could do, and that the issue was closed. But he criticized the "internal régime" in the party which prevented open discussion, and exposed dissidents like himself to petty attacks.[185] Barbé, appearing as leader of the communist youth league, delivered a sweeping and detailed attack on the past record of the party. The politburo had been "a politburo of permanent compromise", not the kind of politburo needed to direct a communist party. The rectification of the party had been announced, but had scarcely yet begun. Barbé paid some conventional compliments to Sémard's speech, but attacked Cachin, Doriot and Bernard by name. "The personal composition of the leadership of the party" was, however, less important than to consolidate its organization and give it "a political leadership of iron".[186] Thorez in an aggressive speech diagnosed the divisions in the party as a rift between generations: the young worker had "a different conception of the struggle, different ways of fighting". What those ways were he frankly explained:

> If one knows the conditions in which the battle of the Nord is developing, between communist workers and socialist workers, that means that they no longer spoke to one another except to exchange punches.

He agreed that no serious debate had been possible in the party before the ninth IKKI, not because of any repressive measures, but because "people refused to discuss" — a hit at Doriot, who disguised his disagreement by remaining silent. What was needed was not a renewal of discussion, but "the creation in the politburo of a majority of comrades who have demonstrated in practice their agreement with the correct line of the party and of Comintern", to prepare for the next party congress.[187] Bernard beat an uncomfortable retreat. He and his supporters had feared that the new tactics "could cause a brutal break at the bottom between socialist and communist workers, which would make difficulties from the point of view of our *liaison* with the masses". He now believed that these arguments and objections had been mistaken, and he too ended by calling for "a firm leadership, a majority in the politburo". Bernard was the only speaker openly to attack

[185] *Ibid.* pp. 129–135. [186] *Ibid.* pp. 146–164. [187] *Ibid.* pp. 168–186.

Sémard, whom he accused of "changing his positions" and not being "the guide he ought to have been".[188] But one delegate observed that the proceedings marked a shift towards the Left, and expressed the ironical fear that Barbé and Thorez might have inherited the former errors of the Paris organization.[189] It was noteworthy that, throughout the debate, only two otherwise undistinguished delegates expressed any disquiet at the unconditional obedience now required of the party. The first mildly observed that "one should not look like those comrades who, once in Moscow, discover all the truth which they did not see in France". The other spoke of the unfortunate effects of brusque interventions by Comintern on rank-and-file members, for whom "the International ... is a supreme being, all-powerful, which, far away from France, from time to time delivers its judgments".[190] Nobody else challenged any longer the principle of total submission to decisions handed down from Moscow.

Sémard, winding up the debate, slyly bracketed Doriot and Bernard with Renaud Jean, but left the summing-up to the spokesman of Comintern. Humbert-Droz angrily rejected Renaud Jean's assertion of the harm done to the party by the new tactics. Had the old line been pursued, the PCF might have had eighty deputies in the Chamber, but the result would have been "the disintegration and the liquidation of the party". But Humbert-Droz, like his patron Bukharin, sometimes qualified uncompromising pronouncements by concessions to moderation. The watchword "Class against Class" had been "absolutely right and necessary in order ... to define clearly that the political and social struggle is concentrated more and more between the two fundamental classes: the bourgeoisie on one side, the proletariat on the other". Nevertheless, this did not mean that the party should ignore the rôle of the petty bourgeoisie, or that the peasantry should be written off as the ally of the bourgeoisie. It was the duty of the party "to work to win the peasant masses and certain strata of the petty bourgeoisie to make them allies of the proletariat". Conventional emphasis was laid on the danger of war, and on the Right danger in the party. Bernard and Doriot were criticized for concealing their disagreements with the party line. Humbert-Droz ended in a mild vein by declaring himself "against the formation of party leaderships in Moscow"; the aim should be

[188] *Ibid.* pp. 204–211. [189] *Ibid.* p. 212. [190] *Ibid.* pp. 193, 203.

"to reinforce the majority of the politburo, but without eliminating comrades like Cachin, who have experience, and represent in the politburo the opinion of a section of the party".[191] No report was made to the congress. But these discussions apparently formed the basis of a resolution adopted by the presidium of IKKI after the congress had ended.[192]

The debates of the congress on the programme of Comintern unexpectedly revived the issue of the peasantry. The PCF had never shown much concern for the peasant, though a peasant council existed as one of the organs of its secretariat. The poor showing made by the party in the elections of April 1928 in rural areas may have helped to break down this indifference.[193] At the party conference of June 18–21, 1928, for the first time for many years, a "broad discussion" of the peasant question took place. But Sémard in his final speech warned the conference against "over-estimating the rôle of the peasantry", and no change in party attitudes seems to have occurred.[194] At the sixth congress of Comintern a month later Dombal congratulated the PCF on having decided to transform the peasant council into a mass organization of peasants.[195] Renaud Jean once more raised the issue in the programme commission of the congress, and was answered by Sémard in plenary session. Renaud Jean demanded the exclusion from the programme of the total nationalization of land, since peasants should be allowed to retain ownership of the land cultivated by them; Sémard countered this by conceding that peasants, in order to secure their "neutrality" and their co-operation in revolutionary action, might be guaranteed the usage of the land which they tilled. Renaud Jean also wished to omit the leadership of the proletariat from the programme; the bourgeoisie had given the peasant equal political rights, and the proletarian revolution should not deprive him of these. This demand was

[191] *Ibid.* pp. 229–249.

[192] See p. 518 below.

[193] In the discussion during the sixth congress of Comintern Sémard spoke of work among the peasants as "the great weakness of our party revealed in the course of the electoral campaign"; Humbert-Droz, speaking of "the great mass of peasants" as a potential ally of the proletariat, went on: "If we won over a significant proportion of workers' constituencies, we lost influence in the countryside" (*Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 114, 235).

[194] For reports of the conference see p. 513, note 178 above.

[195] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 444; if the party conference took such a decision, it remained a dead letter.

totally rejected by Sémard with quotations from the *Communist Manifesto*; and Skrypnik intervened to explain that the purpose of the leadership of the proletariat, in terms of the 1919 programme of the Russian party, was not to establish for it any political privileges, but to forge closer links with "the most backward and dispersed masses of the rural proletarians and semi-proletarians, and also of the middle peasants".[196] Sémard's speech faithfully foreshadowed the conclusions which were embodied in the final text of the programme.[197]

The main resolution of the congress on Bukharin's report devoted one paragraph to the PCF. It recorded that "the experience of the electoral struggle justified the line indicated to the French party by the ninth IKKI", but noted "a whole series of errors and shortcomings" during the campaign. The party was instructed to "conduct an energetic struggle against Right currents", but at the same time "to overcome 'Left' tendencies"; these included a desire to "dictate" to the trade unions, and "a denial of the tactics of the united front".[198] A separate resolution rejected an appeal from Suzanne Girault and some of her supporters against their exclusion from the PCF, as well as similar appeals on behalf of "Treint's group" and a group calling itself La Lutte des Classes, which "stood on the platform of Trotskyism".[199] Barbé remained in Moscow as delegate of the PCF to IKKI — a position which marked him out as the agent of Comintern policies in the PCF and a watch-dog against the Right. On September 3, 1928, a few days after the congress ended, a meeting of the presidium of IKKI adopted a resolution which spelled out in detail the instructions already given to the PCF on the familiar topics — on the danger of war, on "Class against Class" tactics, on the attitude to socialists and other Left parties, on the Right danger as the "principal danger" in the party, on the threat of illegality and on the attitude to the trade unions. It ended with a plea to the next party congress to elect a central committee which would "improve

[196] *Ibid.* iii, 94–96, 113–114; the proceedings of the programme commission were not published (see p. 226, note 11 above), and Renaud Jean's arguments have to be inferred from Sémard's reply.

[197] For the section of the programme relating to the peasantry see pp. 229–230 above.

[198] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 786.

[199] *Ibid.* p. 874; this resolution was adopted without discussion by the congress (*Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), v, 136).

its liaison with the politburo and with the rank and file of the party in order to exercise better its rôle of political leadership".[200] Bukharin in his report on the sixth congress to the Moscow party organization merely named the PCF among the parties particularly liable to a Right deviation.[201]

During the session of the sixth congress of Comintern in Moscow, the Paris police arrested several hundred participants in anti-war demonstrations organized by the PCF and the French communist youth league on the anniversary of the outbreak of war in 1914, and held many of them for up to forty-eight hours; a celebration of International Youth Day on September 9, 1928, was also broken up. These events were greeted as evidence of "the radicalization of the masses".[202] But the delegates back from Moscow found little evidence that the lessons of the sixth congress had penetrated the rank and file of the PCF, where the old heresies — neglect of the danger of war and of the class struggle, addiction to "partial demands" and to cooperation with a Left wing of the SFIO and the CGT — were still rife.[203] It was not till November 3, 1928, that the central committee of the PCF met in a four-day session to review results of the congress. Reports were made by Sémard on the international situation and by Thorez on the affairs of the party. Doriot called for a standing "action committee" for communication with "sympathizing organizations" for specific objectives. The committee adopted unanimously a resolution approving the general conclusions of the sixth congress of Comintern. It adopted with five "reservations" (Renaud Jean, Bernard, Doriot, Alice Brissot, and Villatte) a resolution approving the condemnation by the congress of the past Rightist errors of the PCF, and with three "reservations" (Renaud Jean, Brissot and

[200] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 253–260; a long summary of the resolution appeared in *Pravda*, September 8, 1928, and *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 111, October 2, 1928, pp. 2117–2118, giving the date of the meeting, September 5, 1928, and the names of those present, who included Bukharin, Molotov, Kuusinen and Humbert-Droz, Barbé (the only French delegate) and several other foreign delegates, together with Manuilsky, Lozovsky and Khitarov as candidate members of the presidium.

[201] *Pravda*, September 12, 1928; for this report see pp. 221–222 above.

[202] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 106, September 21, 1928, pp. 2030–2031.

[203] A. Ferrat, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français* (1931), pp. 237–238.

Villatte) a resolution approving the resolution of the presidium of IKKI of September 5, 1928.[204]

But it was easier to wear down the opposition in the leadership than to change the attitudes of party members throughout the country. The formation on November 11, 1928, of a reconstituted Poincaré government, with Tardieu, a notorious bugbear of the Left, as Minister for the Interior, inspired another appeal from the politburo of the PCF to the workers, who were exhorted to unite and organize themselves on the principle "Class against Class".[205] But the mood of the party provided no solid basis for this rhetoric. In order to improve party work, what were called "information conferences" were held in all the regions between November 18 and December 2, 1928. The best conferences were those of the Paris region, attended by 450 delegates, and of the Nord region with 110 delegates; the latter was said to have overcome "reservations" expressed at the time of the elections. But confusion reigned in much of the party, and was fostered by Renaud Jean and Doriot; most party members were disinclined to take part in the discussion. A secretary of the Nord region summed up in a pessimistic report:

> With so much passivity, a Right ideology is, against our will, seeping through all the pores of our movement.

A further letter of exhortation from the politburo on December 15, 1928, is unlikely to have remedied so deep-seated a malady.[206] On the following day the central committee of the communist youth league passed a resolution reaffirming unconditional fidelity to the open letter of November 9, 1927, and to the decisions of the sixth congress of Comintern; and this, by way of demonstrating the league's rising prestige in official circles, was published in *Humanité* on January 1, 1929, with an introduction demanding full participation for the league in the forthcoming party congress and the preliminary debates, and the admission of a larger number of its members to the party, and promising determined warfare against opportunists in the party. Meanwhile, an

[204] *Humanite*, November 6, 7, 8, 18, 1928; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 127, November 13, 1928, pp. 2530–2531, 2539.

[205] *Humanité*, November 15, 1928.

[206] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 143, December 28, 1928, pp. 2862–2863; for the Paris regional conference addressed by Sémard, Costes and others see *Humanité*, November 19, 1928.

article by Thorez at the turn of the year concentrated mainly on the difficulties of the French economy, but reproached "the Rightists in the bosom of the PCF" with failing to understand "the character and the rôle of the socialist party and the CGT".[207]

Preparations now went ahead for the sixth congress of the PCF — the first since 1926 — to be held in April 1929. On January 8, 1929, *Humanité* published the first of a series of "supplements" devoted to a pre-congress discussion, starting with an article by Thorez which ranged the PCF behind the crucial open letter of IKKI to the KPD of December 19, 1928, and the efforts of the majority of the KPD to carry out the decisions of the sixth congress of Comintern.[208] A session of the central committee of the PCF opened on February 21, 1929. Its first act was to issue a vituperative declaration denouncing "the counter-revolutionary Trotsky and his organization", and fully approving the "defensive measures" taken by the VKP(B) against him.[209] It passed a long resolution harping once more on the familiar themes of the danger of war, "Class against Class" and the united front from below, and criticized Doriot for his attitude to the open letter, for his proposal of a joint "action committee", and (without naming him) for his "systematic silence". It also adopted a number of draft resolutions for submission to the congress.[210] Barbé, still absent in Moscow, contributed a mordant letter exposing Doriot's "policy of silence" as "cowardly opportunism".[211] A review of the regional party conferences held in preparation for the congress disclosed the same disquieting symptoms: "a sceptical and passive mood in broad strata of the party, expressing itself in an uncontestably Rightist mass phenomenon", "the ambiguous and very clever tactics of the Rightists and secret conciliators", and "the low level of political education in the whole party and especially of party officials". These defects were scarcely balanced by routine assurances of the radicalization of the masses, and praise of the communist youth league.[212] At the Paris regional conference which met from March 15 to 17, 1929, and then, after

[207] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 7, January 22, 1929, pp. 127–128.

[208] For the open letter see pp. 451–454 above.

[209] *Humanité*, February 23, 1929.

[210] *Ibid.* February 24, 26, 1929.

[211] *Ibid.* March 10, 1929.

[212] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 27, March 22, 1929, p. 606.

a week's adjournment, resumed on March 23, a small Left minority was still vocal; one speaker spent an hour defending what were described as "Trotskyite positions", and was refused permission to continue. On the other hand, Doriot now declared that he accepted the decisions of the sixth congress of Comintern and, amid applause, that he had never been right against the party. The conference came to an untimely end. On March 24, 1929, the police cleared the hall and arrested 120 delegates, of whom twenty were held in prison.[213] On the next day the offices of *Humanité* were ransacked.[214]

In this tense atmosphere the sixth congress of the PCF met in St. Denis on March 31, 1929, the building being surrounded by police. Frachon, who made the principal report on the international situation, dwelt on the danger of war against the USSR and on the radicalization of the masses, and denounced the Right deviation in Comintern, in the KPD and in the PCF. He challenged Doriot, who had already confessed his errors, to come out openly against the conciliators. Amid the chorus of approval, few dissentient voices were heard. Crozet was the sole spokesman of the old Right, denying that capitalism was faced by an impending crisis or that war was imminent. Pillot, belonging to what was now an "ultra-Left" minority in the Paris region, doubted the capacity of the present party leadership to win the masses. Jacob of the Nord region confessed his past errors and rallied to the party line. Berlioz asked the forbidden question about Bukharin's current position, apparently without eliciting any answer. Sémard delivered a report on the economic situation in France, and also challenged Doriot to speak openly. Cachin spoke at length on the programme of Comintern. Billoux praised the communist youth league, deprecating proposals for the party to take it over and stressing the value of its anti-military work. Then, on the evening of April 3, 1929, Doriot made his eagerly awaited speech. He again admitted his errors, notably his support of joint "action committees", and of a united front with socialists, thanked his colleagues in the politburo for having opened his eyes, and declared that he could never lead an opposition to the policies

[213] *Humanité*, March 16, 17, 18, 24, 25, 1929; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 28, March 27, 1929, pp. 634–635, No. 29, April 3, 1929, pp. 668–669.

[214] *Humanité*, March 26, 1929.

of Comintern: "Rightists abroad as well as in France should lose all hope." Monmousseau rounded off the general discussion by attacking those who decried the radicalization of the masses. He explained the weakness of the trade unions by their defective composition: they "are based only on the upper strata of the workers".[215]

The leaders, by this time thoroughly schooled in the discipline of Moscow, were determined to enforce the most rigid conformity and the maximum of self-abasement on past offenders. On April 5, 1929, *Humanité* published a long article by Sémard; since Mikhailov, using the pseudonym Williams, had arrived secretly from Moscow to watch over the congress, it is reasonable to suspect his hand in it. Its main purpose was to make it clear that Doriot had not done enough to purge his guilt. Doriot had analysed the Right deviation as if it were peculiar to the Russian party. In fact it was common to all those elements in Comintern — Humbert-Droz and Tasca were named — who questioned the pronouncements of the sixth congress on the rotten and temporary character of capitalist stabilization in the third period. Even Doriot's method of admitting his errors showed "a certain disdain for the party and for Comintern". The article also criticized Jacob for failure to understand the decisions of the sixth congress and the "Class against Class" policy. On the same evening the chairman dramatically announced that "Williams", the delegate of IKKI, had slipped through the police net and would address the congress. Mikhailov then made a speech in which conventional praise and blame of the PCF were distributed about equally. He denounced Crozet, and supported Sémard's strictures on Doriot, who should be required to state clearly his attitude to the party. The speech received a rapturous ovation.

The serious business was now over: Doriot attempted a further reply. But Sémard was inexorable: Doriot had moved some way towards the party, but it was still necessary to fight him. One speaker complained ineffectively of the hostility of Comintern to the views of the Paris region; and Jacob handed in his resignation of the secretaryship of the Nord region. Various dele-

[215] *Ibid.* April 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 1929; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 31, April 9, 1929, pp. 712–715, No. 32, April 12, 1929, pp. 737–739. These were brief summaries of the proceedings; verbatim records of the congress were never published.

gates made reports on subsidiary subjects.[216] A resolution on the international situation and the Right danger was submitted to the congress. It rehearsed the conclusions of the sixth congress of Comintern on the danger of war and the crisis of capitalism as symptoms of the third period, in which "the rôle of social-democracy as the consistent agent of imperialism has been confirmed". Failure to understand this analysis led to an underestimate of "the immense value of the workers' struggles", and was the basis of the Right deviation. Brandler was sharply attacked, and the open letter from IKKI to the KPD of December 19, 1928, approved. But similar "opportunist deviations" were detected in the PCF. The former leaders of the Paris region had been guilty of "a truly ultra-Left appreciation" of the crisis of capitalism as "catastrophic" and "without issue". Other comrades disagreed in one way or another with the open letter of November 9, 1928, and some, like Crozet, had adopted the position of "the worst Rightists and even avowed liquidators". Some, like Doriot, who had confessed his errors, were under an obligation to make their acceptance of the party directives effective. The resolution ended with a declaration of "complete solidarity with the Bolshevik party".[217] When it was put to the vote, one delegate voted against it and one abstained; eleven delegates registered a reservation on the section relating to the Nord region (presumably the section condemning disagreement with the open letter, since the region was not mentioned in the resolution), and six on the section referring to the Paris region.[218]

Immensely long and discursive "Theses on the National Situation and on the Tasks of the Party", originally submitted by Sémard and extensively amended in the political commission of the congress, took the decisions of the sixth congress of Comintern as their starting-point, and covered (with the notable exception of electoral tactics) almost every contentious issue that had arisen in the PCF during the past year, including some which were also dealt with in separate resolutions of the congress. The

[216] *Humanité*, April 6, 7, 8, 1929; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 33, April 16, 1929, pp. 765–768, No. 34, April 19, 1929, pp. 799–800.

[217] *VI Congrés National du Parti Communiste Français: Manifeste, Thèses et Résolutions* (n.d.) pp. 53–60.

[218] For figures of this and other votes at the congress see *Humanité*, April 8, 1929, and *Internationale Press-Korrespondenz*, No. 34, April 19, 1929, pp. 799–800; slight discrepancies occur between the two versions.

significance of the theses resided only in the points chosen for emphasis. It was characteristic of the third period that "the two fundamental classes, the big bourgeoisie and the proletariat" confronted each other more decisively, with the petty bourgeoisie more and more disorganized and leaning now to the Right, now to the Left. Meanwhile the reformist movement, which had developed during the war into social-chauvinism, was developing in the third period into social-imperialism and social-Fascism. Evidence of "the radicalization of the working class" was found in the increasing number of strikes; the bourgeois state was undergoing a process of "Fascization". In the words of the sixth congress of Comintern, "the axis of the united front must be shifted towards the base"; it must be operative primarily in the factories. Finally, greater attention must be given to the election of the central committee (at the fifth congress in 1926 its number had been raised to eighty-three "without serious selection"), and "a politburo having the maximum homogeneity" should be elected to ensure the correct application of the line laid down by the congress.[219] The theses were adopted unanimously with one abstention. The "Right danger" having been somewhat cursorily treated in the theses, a separate resolution was adopted on "the Right danger in Comintern", dealing with Right deviations in the German, Czechoslovak and other parties, as well as in the PCF.[220] The list of candidates prepared by the political commission was then approved by a majority of 171 to 2, with 24 abstentions and with 16 reservations registered against Renaud Jean, and 28 in favour of Jacob.[221]

The congress issued four public declarations. The first was a manifesto in terms of popular rhetoric and adorned with a wealth of capital letters. The party's goal was proclaimed as "*the installation of world communism by the dictatorship of the proletariat*". The world was living "*under the threat of an imminent new imperialist war*". The socialist party had become not only "*an instrument of the defence of the bourgeoisie*", but "*an instrument of the capitalist attack against the working class*". The con-

[219] *VI Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français: Manifeste, Thèses et Résolutions* (n.d.), pp. 11–52.

[220] *Ibid.* pp. 53–60.

[221] For the sources see p. 524, note 218 above: the list does not appear to have been published; but the reservations indicate that Renaud Jean was included and Jacob excluded.

cluding appeal was to "*workers, peasants, soldiers and colonial slaves*":

> *The party summons you to unify your common struggle against imperialism and its socialist lackeys. Face to face with the united front formed by the bourgeoisie and by social-democracy to wage imperialist war and strangle the proletarian revolution, the communist party summons you to the united front of all the exploited and oppressed: CLASS AGAINST CLASS!*[222]

The other three declarations consisted of an address to IKKI pledging the support of the PCF for the struggle against imperialism, for the International Red Day on August 1 against war, and for the struggle against Rightists and conciliators; a similar address to the VKP(B); and an address to the KPD on the common struggle which was being waged by both parties against the Right danger, against imperialism and for the defence of the Soviet Union.[223]

A device to which great importance was attached, though it apparently figured little in the debates of the congress, was the creation of "factory committees". The congress theses treated this as an essential part of "the organization of the united front from below". All groups of workers should be drawn into the committees. The delegates elected to the committees should do nothing without the approval of their electors who could revoke their mandates at any moment. It was the business of the party representatives to see that the committees maintained their character as organs of "the proletarian struggle"; they should also serve as a recruiting ground for the party and for CGTU unions.[224] The separate resolution on factory committees insisted in greater detail on the combative functions of the committees. "The factory committees, being an organ of struggle, cannot subsist simply on the basis of demands"; they were destined for "political struggles against the régime". Liaison between committees was to be estab-

[222] *VI Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français: Manifeste, Thèses et Résolutions* (n.d.), pp. 5–10; it was published in *Humanité* on April 8, 1929, and was said by Cachin to "give in condensed form the results of the congress" (*ibid.* April 9, 1929).

[223] *Ibid.* April 7, 1929; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 34, April 19, 1929, p. 800.

[224] *VI Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français: Manifeste, Thèses et Résolutions* (n.d.), pp. 31–32.

lished by a "congress of factory committees, either by industry or by region". The factory committee, as "an elementary organization of workers", forming "a mass united front for the struggle of the working class", supplemented and did not replace the trade union.[225] The insistence on the political rôle of the committees, as well as the provisions for the revocation of delegates by the workers and for bringing together the committees in a congress, clearly revealed the inspiration of the Soviets of 1917. But what was most significant was the absence from published records of debates at the congress, and even of the speech of the delegate of IKKI, of any reference to these revolutionary factory committees. The rhetoric of the manifesto, the one document of the congress published while it was in session, included one phrase which may have been an oblique reference to them: "From the factories the workers' columns must march, compact and disciplined." But the elaborate organization of the committees, and insistence on the revolutionary rôle assigned to them, appeared only in the theses and in resolutions of the congress, published some time later. It is difficult to resist the conclusion that these committees, based on a Soviet prototype, were, like the factory cells as units of party organization, a device inspired from Moscow, and accepted on paper by the docile leaders of the PCF, but never understood or acclimatized in the party ranks. No evidence exists of the creation or operation of such committees or of any interest displayed in them.

Fear of police interference may explain the lack of publicity accorded to a conference on foreign workers in France held during the party congress, the declared purpose of which was "to take every day a further step towards the effective integration into our party of all workers without distinction of language, race and colour". It was pointed out that the 3 million foreign workers "constitute a decisive factor in production in the mines and in the great industrial regions", and therefore in "the preparation of imperialist war". The main prescriptions in the resolution adopted by the conference were for the appointment at every level of party officials responsible for work among the foreign workers, and for the election of such workers to responsible party posts, ranging from the bureaus of party cells to the central committee. Similar steps were to be taken in trade unions. An active

[225] *Ibid.* pp. 61–65.

campaign was to be conducted for the removal of all official discrimination against foreign workers. How many foreign workers took part in the conference is not clear, but it was rather oddly said to have facilitated "the participation of the best foreign militants in the political discussion of the agenda of the congress".[226]

The congress, in spite of its large output of documents and apparent unanimity, left the PCF rudderless and leaderless. Barbé was still in Moscow, being groomed by Manuilsky behind the scenes for the leadership;[227] he and Thorez were notable absentees at the congress. Thorez may have been engaged on some Comintern mission — he was in Berlin towards the end of April 1929; or he may simply have wished to evade the police, who had been on his tracks for some time. The choice of Frachon, an undistinguished nonentity, to deliver the main report to the congress was a snub to Sémard. But such direction as was given to later stages of the congress came from the old hands, Sémard and Monmousseau.[228] According to a later account, Sémard in 1929 was "thrust aside, replaced by a 'collective' secretariat of four 'young' communists" — Barbé, Célor, Thorez and Frachon.[229] But no formal decision was recorded, and the four never functioned collectively; Thorez was already in prison when Barbé returned to Paris in July 1929. Sémard wielded less and less real authority; Sémard and Monmousseau, wrote Trotsky at this time, "try everything, promise everything, in order to do nothing".[230] But Sémard retained the titular post of secretary of the party till he was succeeded by Thorez in July 1930.

The sixth congress of the PCF took place at a moment when government action against the party was being progressively intensified. On February 5, 1929, Cachin in the Chamber of Deputies proposed a motion to restore Marty's immunity and release him from prison. This was once again supported by the socialists, but rejected two days later by a majority of 320 to

[226] See *ibid.* pp. 73–75, for a brief *communiqué* on the conference and the text of its resolution; this was referred to in the theses adopted by the congress (*ibid.* pp. 36–37), but has not been traced elsewhere.

[227] See pp. 503, note 144, 518, 521 above.

[228] See pp. 522–525 above.

[229] L. Trotsky, *Le Mouvement Communiste en France*, ed. P. Broué (1967), p. 282.

[230] *Byulleten' Oppozitsii*, No. 1–2, July 1929, p. 33.

161.[231] The trial of Marty for slander on the ground of his open letter to Foch of August 1927,[232] dragged on: an eloquent speech by him in court on April 24, 1929, was reported at length in *Humanité* on the following day. Big May 1 demonstrations, accompanied by a resounding PCF declaration against imperialism and the danger of war, resulted in more than 3000 arrests (Doriot being among the victims) — an estimate raised a few days later to 4500.[233] Municipal elections in Paris brought the PCF 9000 more votes in the first ballot than in 1925, and five PCF candidates were elected outright. The second ballot was conducted under the slogan "Class against Class", said to be directed in the first place against imperialist war and for the defence of the Soviet Union. As a result, the PCF was reported to have maintained its position in central Paris and to have improved it in the suburbs.[234] At the end of May 1929 Marty received a prison sentence of five years and ten months.[235] The arrest of Thorez followed a few days later.

Sémard and Monmousseau journeyed to Moscow for the tenth IKKI at the beginning of July 1929. Barbé, already well placed in the Comintern hierarchy, stole some of the limelight through his appearance as ***rapporteur*** on the "international day" of protest against war; in this capacity he delivered two speeches on the second day of the session.[236] Later Sémard made a colourless speech in the general debate.[237] Pyatnitsky's review of the state of the parties offered little encouragement to the PCF, which had shown a continuous decline in membership and now numbered only 46,000.[238] Molotov named France with Germany and Poland

[231] *Journal Officiel: Chambre des Députés*, No. 12, February 5, 1929, p. 343, No. 15, February 7, 1929, p. 393.

[232] See p. 66 above.

[233] *Humanité*, May 1, 2, 5, 1929.

[234] *Ibid.* May 6, 12, 13, 1929.

[235] *Ibid.* June 1, 1929.

[236] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 86–99, 159–164; for the "international day" see pp. 213, 246 above.

[237] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 321–332.

[238] Later PCF statistics gave totals of 56,000 for 1926, 64,000 for 1927,

as countries where a "revolutionary upsurge" was in progress, called for "*the conquest of the majority* of the working class", and spoke of "*the political mass strike*" as the weapon of the future. But his only specific reference to the PCF was an expression of doubt whether "the struggle against the Right and the conciliators has in practice been put on the proper level of principle".[239] The trade unions were always a sore point. Lozovsky pointed to the presence in the CGTU of "a fully organized and politically very dangerous Right wing", representing "a peculiar mishmash of traditional anarchism and modern reformism". Nor was the PCF blameless; it was long before the party press could be persuaded to criticize the errors of the trade union attitude to strikes. Monmousseau's reply consisted of confession of past failure and unconvincing promises for the future.[240] The debate was lifeless. The trade union resolution of the session noted that the "fundamental defect" of the CGTU consisted in "an under-estimate by a certain section of the revolutionary trade union activists of *the radicalization of the masses and an under-estimate of the new character of trade union reformism*".[241] Amid much revolutionary phraseology, faith in the revolutionary potentialities of the PCF and the CGTU was at a low ebb.

Preparations for the "international day" of protest against war on August 1, 1929, and the repressive activities of the police, were now the main preoccupation of the PCF. In May 1929 the Western European Bureau of Comintern in Berlin had issued a call to the European parties to organize mass demonstrations;[242] in the following month a similar appeal came from the executive committee of the CGTU.[243] The gradual descent of the PCF into illegality was marked by the frequent appearance in *Humanité* of articles signed with pseudonyms. On July 7, 1929, *Humanité* published

56,000 for 1928 and 45,000 for 1929 (J. Fauvet, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français* (1964) ii, 280); for earlier figures see p. 467, note 8 above.

[239] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 414–418, 426; the statement attributed to Molotov by Trotsky (*Byulleten' Oppozitsii*, No. 8, January 1930, p. 13), that "a general strike is now practically on the agenda" in France, goes beyond anything that Molotov is recorded as saying. For Molotov's speech see Vol. 2, p. 95.

[240] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 694, 723, 794–802.

[241] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 895.

[242] *Humanité*, May 7, 1929; for the international day see pp. 213, 246 above.

[243] *Humanité*, June 22, 1929.

the first of several articles on the preparations for August 1 written by Thorez in prison and signed "Germinal". The writer admitted that objections had been raised "within our movement" to the planned demonstration; this he attributed to an "opportunism" whose characteristics were "lack of faith in the capacity of the proletarian masses, scepticism and fear of direct action".[244] The police did not remain inactive. Raids on PCF headquarters and on the offices of *Humanité* were reported with numerous arrests.[245] A worker–peasant conference of the Paris region issued an alarmist manifesto in preparation for the forthcoming demonstration: the Chinese attack on Soviet institutions in Manchuria were cited as evidence that "the war is here".[246] The last days of July 1929 were marked by a series of raids and arrests of communist leaders; on the eve of August 1, 150 were alleged to be on hunger strike in prison.[247] How many workers absented themselves from work on August 1, and how many participated in demonstrations, is difficult to guess. *Humanité* reported many isolated incidents, and claimed "success in spite of police provocation".[248]

The fifth congress of the CGTU sat in Paris from September 15 to 21, 1929, in a far more controversial atmosphere than that which pervaded the sixth congress of the PCF five months earlier. Monmousseau having been arrested on the day the congress opened, Gitton delivered the main report, dwelling especially on the danger of an imperialist war, the radicalization of the masses, the united front from below, the organization of unorganized workers, and the need for a bloc with the PCF. He claimed that the minority which rejected "the leading rôle of the party" nevertheless accepted the necessity of a bloc. A minority spokesman argued that submission to "the leading rôle of the party" hampered recruitment to the unions. The debates on the report were stormy, both syndicalist and "reformist" tendencies being represented in the opposition. Chaussin denied the radicalization of the masses, and earned much opprobrium by borrowing a remark, said to have been made by the CGT leader Jouhaux two years

[244] Further articles by "Germinal" appeared *ibid.* July 12, 15, 1929.

[245] *Ibid.* July 18, 19, 1929.

[246] *Ibid.* July 22, 1929; the Manchurian episode will be discussed in a later section of this volume.

[247] *Ibid.* July 24, 25, 26, 31, 1929.

[248] *Ibid.* August 3, 1929.

earlier, that the masses were "flabby [*avachies*]".[249] An unnamed delegate of Profintern, in a long speech which had little in common with the mood of the congress, defined the aim of the congress as being "*to surmount the trend within the CGTU which strives to abandon the revolutionary line in order to fall into the swamp of reformism*". A further need was "to link economic struggles with political struggles and with the fight against imperialist war". He insisted on "the radicalization of the masses and the intensification of the class struggle" as illustrated by "the growing wave of the strike movement". No struggles any longer were purely economic. The direction of the CGTU by the party was necessary. On the other hand, the CGTU should not become a communist organization; like Profintern itself, it should remain independent. The minority which denied the radicalization of the masses, and wanted a united front with the reformist leaders, sabotaged the campaign against war. After Germaine Goujon, expelled from the PCF, but a delegate at the congress, had attacked the official strike policy, and alleged that "the masses do not understand your slogans", Chambelland delivered a major broadside on behalf of the minority. He asserted that capitalism had stabilized itself in Europe for twenty years, and denied any imminent danger of war or revolutionary upsurge of the masses; he thought that there could be no revolution for forty years. He congratulated the congress on the freedom of debate; "where there is discussion, there is life". Indignant spokesmen of the majority reproached the dissidents with failure to "see" the war in Manchuria: "your attitude in the Sino-Soviet conflict is a clear indication of your counter-revolutionary position".[250]

The voting at the end of the debate showed a large majority for the official line; Gitton's report was approved by 1512 votes (representing 934 unions) to 214. The remainder of the proceedings was less contentious. Cachin greeted the congress on behalf of the PCF. An official spokesman called for the strengthening of the united front from below by the formation of committees. But he used the equivocal term *comités d'entreprise*; and the insistence of the sixth party congress on factory committees as the source of revolutionary action was wholly absent. When the list of proposed members of the general council of the CGTU was sub-

[249] *Humanité*, September 16, 17, 1929.
[250] *Ibid.* September 18, 19, 1929.

mitted to the congress, it contained the names of three members of the opposition, Chambelland, Chaussin and a teacher named Schumacher. The three protested that the minority was entitled to five or six seats in the general council, and, when this was rejected, declined to serve, thus incurring the paradoxical charge of evading their responsibility.[251] Some trade unions held their congresses immediately after the CGTU congress, and demonstrated that the spirit of revolt was still alive. The Foodworkers' Union, by a majority of twenty-eight to twenty-six, refused Gitton a hearing when he appeared to bring the greetings of the CGTU; "here we are at home [*chez nous*]," exclaimed one delegate. By a majority of thirty-eight to thirty-two, the congress approved Chaussin's "reformist" position. The Public Services' Union was more docile, endorsing the CGTU line by ninety-five votes (seven with reservations) to three.[252] The congress of the CGTU had demonstrated that, as the PCF became more submissive to the guidance of Comintern, the CGTU grew increasingly restive under the supervision of the party. But neither the conformity of the PCF nor the chronic divisions in the CGTU concealed the progressive decline of the influence of both over the mass of French workers.

[251] *Ibid.* September 20, 21, 22, 1929.
[252] *Ibid.* September 24, 25, 1929.

CHAPTER 78

THE ITALIAN PARTY (PCI)

THE holding of the third congress of the PCI in Lyons in January 1926[1] had marked its clandestine and outlaw status on Italian soil, where its underground activities were subject to frequent, though still intermittent, police interference. Notwithstanding these conditions, a mood of euphoria prevailed in party circles in the summer of 1926. A party report to Comintern of April 1926 stressed the deepening of class antagonisms in the Fascist camp and discontent in the Fascist hierarchy with the "plutocratic" policies of the régime.[2] The régime was seen as wrestling with insuperable economic difficulties. The party newspaper *Unità*, which continued to circulate in defiance of the official ban, pronounced on June 9, 1926, that "Fascism has demolished bourgeois-democratic illusions", and that "the workers will therefore choose Soviet democracy". A session of the party central committee on August 2–3, 1926, did nothing to dispel the prevailing optimism. Gramsci made a report in which he explained that, while the proletarian dictatorship was the one ultimate alternative to Fascism, the transition from one to the other might pass through the intermediate phase of a democratic–republican coalition; and this possibility offered the PCI a certain freedom of manoeuvre in relation to other anti-Fascist parties.[3] The committee in its resolution on the Italian situation noted that opinion in Italy had become "more radical"; the PCI was no longer an isolated group, but was "at the centre of a vast coalition of proletarian forces in which elements coming from all the parties and from the masses participate" — symbol of "the principle of the hegemony of the proletariat".[4] In the same month the Comintern

[1] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 369–371.

[2] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 34.

[3] A. Gramsci, *Lettere dal Carcere* (1965), p. xxxvii; P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), pp. 32–35, where the report is dated August 11, 1926.

[4] P. Secchia, *L'Azione Svolta dal Partito Comunista in Italia* (1970), p. 6, quoting a *communiqué* in *Unità*, August 17, 1926. The only resolution of the

news-sheet detected rifts in the Fascist party and described Mussolini as "a prisoner — of course, a willing one — of the capitalists". A few days later it explained enigmatically that "the economic apparatus of Italy is in a crisis of growth, while the objective situation calls for retrenchment". A bomb thrown at Mussolini's car in Rome on September 11, 1926, was said to have "exploded at a moment of great external and internal difficulties for the Fascist government".[5] The central committee of the PCI, in a resolution of October 9, 1926, reiterated the willingness of the party to cooperate with other anti-Fascist parties on a platform advocating a republican assembly, workers' control of industry, and land for the peasants.[6]

In the autumn of 1926 the fierce struggle waged by Stalin against the united opposition in Moscow made its impact on the much tried Italian party. In January 1926, with the issue still hanging in the balance, the Russian party had warned foreign communist parties not to involve themselves in discussion of "the Russian question".[7] Now, with the opposition being slowly reduced to the rôle of a dissident faction, Togliatti, the delegate of the PCI to Comintern, wrote to the party secretariat urging the party to come out in support of the official line on problems which were vital not only to the Russian party, but to all communist parties.[8] Gramsci responded with a series of articles in *Unità*, beginning in September 1926; he defended the view that the USSR remained a socialist and workers' state, but pleaded that, in a country where a primitive peasant agriculture still dominated the economy, incentives to the peasantry were in the first instance necessary in order to build up reserves. Bordiga, true to his past record, cautiously praised Zinoviev and Trotsky, in a letter to

session to be published in full was one on the international situation, which revealed Comintern inspiration (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 111, September 3, 1927, pp. 1874–1876); it discussed the situation in the Polish, British and French parties, and, in an oblique reference to the affairs of the Russian party, denounced the formation of fractions, but said nothing of the PCI.

[5] *Ibid.* No. 100, August 3, 1926, pp. 1630–1631; No. 104, August 10, 1926, pp. 1729–1730; No. 116, September 17, 1926, pp. 1968–1969.

[6] P. Secchia, *L'Azione Svolta dal Partito Comunista in Italia* (1970), pp. 6–7; the writer, who quotes the resolution from party archives, comments on the lack of "any indication to put the workers on their guard against the possibility of the situation lapsing rapidly into total dictatorship".

[7] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 493.

[8] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 47.

Korsch, as "men who have a sense of reality". But even he expressed disapproval of the methods of the opposition, and plainly shrank from the prospect of a split in the party and in Comintern.[9] At the moment when the united opposition in Moscow sustained a major defeat in the first half of October 1926,[10] controversy both between *Unità* and the Fascist press, and within the ranks of the CPI, on the rift in the Russian party was in full swing.

It was at this moment, on October 14, 1926, that Gramsci addressed to the central committee of the Russian party a letter which was not published till many years later. He touched lightly on current issues, observing that Italy, like the Soviet Union, was a country where the workers confronted a large peasant population, and mentioning the contradictions of NEP. He cited the request of the Russian party to foreign parties in January 1926 not to intervene in the Russian question. But the main purpose of the letter, which was couched in emotional language, was to express the "uncontrollable sense of anxiety" provoked in the PCI by the bitter polemics exchanged between majority and opposition in Moscow. The consequences of failure to end the split might be tragic: already the bourgeois press was predicting that the conflict would lead to "the slow death agony of the dictatorship of the proletariat" and "the collapse of the revolution". The masses did not understand the violence of the dispute, and "want to see in the Soviet republic and in the party ... a single fighting unity". The letter accepted the line of the majority as "fundamentally correct", but observed that "unity and discipline cannot be mechanical and forced", and must be "based on loyalty and conviction". It concluded:

> Comrades Zinoviev, Trotsky and Kamenev have made a powerful contribution to our revolutionary education; they have sometimes corrected us vigorously and sternly; they have been our teachers. It is especially to them that we turn now, as to those most responsible for the present situation, because we want to be sure that the majority of the central committee of the USSR, if it wins, does not intend to press its victory too far, and is willing not to employ excessive measures.

[9] *Ibid.* ii (1969), 50–51; Bordiga's letter to Korsch, dated October 28, 1926, was originally published in *Il Prometeo* (Brussels), October 1, 1928; for this journal see p. 557 below.

[10] See Vol. 2, pp. 13–16.

Gramsci, while purporting to conform to the official line, and placing on the opposition the responsibility for the dispute, had delivered a severe, though tacit, indictment of the tactics of the majority.[11]

Togliatti handed the letter to Bukharin, ostensibly under the impression that Bukharin would deliver it to the Politburo. It seems unlikely that this was done, since the letter remained in the archives of Comintern. It was plainly an embarrassment. Togliatti hastily sent, on October 18, 1926, a dry answer in which he reproved Gramsci for not entering into the merits of the dispute, for not more explicitly condemning the opposition, and for appearing to doubt the sense of justice of the central committee. Did not Gramsci's emphasis on the avoidance of "excessive measures" imply "mistrust of the party"?[12] Humbert-Droz was despatched to Italy to "explain" the situation to the PCI leaders, whom he eventually met near Genoa in the first days of November 1926. Gramsci was already too closely shadowed by the police to attend. Tasca, Bordiga and Leonetti also failed to arrive, perhaps out of sympathy for the opposition. The meeting is said to have condemned the Zinoviev–Trotsky line, but refrained from approving the tactics of the majority in the Russian party.[13]

[11] The letter was first published by Tasca, who copied it from the Comintern archives, in a journal *Problemi della Rivoluzione Italiana* (Paris, 1938); this has not been available. It was first published in Italy in *Rinascità*, May 30, 1964, with an explanatory introduction by Togliatti.

[12] For Togliatti's account of his actions and his reply to Gramsci see *Rinascità*, May 30, June 13, 1964, where he also stated that, in view of the opposition surrender of October 16, 1926, which occurred between the despatch and receipt of the letter (see Vol. 2, p. 15), it had ceased to be topical; this was manifestly untrue. Gramsci replied to Togliatti, but the text of his letter has not been published (P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 51, 58).

[13] *Annali, 1966* (Milan, 1966), pp. 301–302; P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 50, where Grieco, Scoccimarro and Camilla Ravera are named among those present. Ravera, in a letter of November 16, 1926, to Togliatti in Moscow, stated that she was not present and could report only what Humbert-Droz told her of the meeting (A. Gobetti, *Camilla Ravera: Vita in Carcere e al Confino* (1969), p. 346). Humbert-Droz locates the meeting, which he calls "a session of the central committee", in the mountains near Genoa. Members who succeeded in attending reported the attempt on Mussolini's life at Bologna, and the subsequent arrests (see below); "Gramsci's letter was discussed, but the Russian question had happily passed into the background of our preoccupations, and nobody thought of further complicating the tragic situation in which the party found itself by mixing up with it the fractional struggles in the Russian party" (J. Humbert-

The ideological crisis in the PCI was brutally interrupted by external events. A real or alleged attempt on Mussolini's life in Bologna on October 31, 1926, by a youth of fifteen, who was lynched on the spot, provoked a wave of repressions against the Left, and was followed on November 7, 1926, by the promulgation of a "Law for the Defence of the Régime", under which the PCI was effectively outlawed, and the immunity conferred on deputies to the Chamber withdrawn. The PCI was taken by surprise, and few precautions had been taken. Gramsci was arrested in the following night,[14] and during the next few weeks Bordiga and most of the other party leaders were also arrested,[15] Gramsci and Bordiga being among those transported to Ustica, the most remote of the notorious islands. The party leadership seemed to have been wiped out. Gramsci's arrest was followed by an episode which was afterwards variously reported. According to the most plausible account, five or six party leaders who were still at liberty gathered informally in the neighbourhood of Milan. Tasca put forward a resolution, which was supported by Grieco and apparently accepted by the rest, to wind up the party organization till the worst was over. When, however, other members of the central committee heard of the proposal, they expressed strong disapproval; and a further meeting, at which Humbert-Droz was present, annulled the resolution. This meeting also decided to tighten up the local party organization (cells, units, etc.) to meet the emergency.[16] Grieco left shortly after for Moscow

Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), pp. 274–275). Humbert-Droz records nothing further of this visit to Italy.

[14] According to an article in *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, No. 1, 1966, p. 111, he was preparing to leave for the session of the seventh IKKI in Moscow.

[15] By the end of November 1926 200,000 (perhaps a misprint for 20,000) persons were said to have been arrested, among them the PCI leaders Gramsci, Grieco, Soccimarro, Di Vittorio and Graziadei (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 150, December 7, 1926, pp. 2644–2645); some of these were, however, soon released.

[16] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 68. According to another account, which rests on the testimony of Camilla Ravera, Grieco at the second meeting renounced the proposal, and Tasca alone stuck to his guns and was outvoted (A. Gobetti, *Camilla Ravera: Vita in Carcere e al Confino* (1969), pp. 41–42); but is odd that Ravera, if she was concerned in the affair, should not have mentioned it in her letter of November 16, 1926, to Togliatti (see p. 537 note 3 above), in which she praised the state of party morale. Togliatti, in a conversation of 1964, professed to have heard nothing of the proposal (P. Secchia, *L'Azione Svolta dal Partito Comunista in Italia* (1970), p. 18, note 3).

to attend the seventh IKKI. Comintern never pronounced formally on the proposal to suspend the activities of the PCI. But it is unlikely to have left the party leaders in any doubt of its hostile reaction.[17]

The seventh IKKI in Moscow in November 1926 paid little attention to Italian affairs. Togliatti spoke briefly on Fascism, and acted as *rapporteur* on the general questions of the organization of Comintern and of the trade unions.[18] Another Italian delegate pronounced an unreserved condemnation on the Russian opposition, whose arguments were being used by the Fascist press to prove that the Soviet Union was on the way to become "a purely capitalist state".[19] But after the session Grieco remained with Togliatti in Moscow; and on January 28, 1927 — the delay suggests prolonged discussion — two resolutions said to have been adopted by the Italian delegation received the formal approval of IKKI. The first, headed "The Economic and Political Situation in Italy and the Tasks of the PCI", admitted the passivity of the working class in face of the blows inflicted on it by Fascism, but condemned policies of inaction, especially in the trade unions, and denounced the supineness of the non-communist opposition. It firmly declared that "the duty of the party is to stay in the country, and show the maximum activity among the masses", and it launched a number of slogans on resistance to Fascism and on such topics as the eight-hour day and rights of national minorities. The second resolution, on organization, was specifically said to have been adopted after consultation with Comintern and Russian party leaders. This proposed the creation of a Foreign Bureau (Ufficio Estero), functioning abroad as the "directing nucleus" of the politburo, and charged with ultimate responsibility for policy, tactics and organization. In Italy the party would maintain a secretariat, and sections for organization, Agitprop, trade unions and sport. The resolutions were approved by the party politburo on February 28, 1927, and by the central committee at a session of

[17] The Japanese party disbanded itself in similar circumstances in March 1924 — an action which was later severely condemned (see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 883–884, 886–887).

[18] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 365–366, ii, 345–348, 368–372; for Togliatti's remarks on Fascism see p. 542 below.

[19] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii*, ii, 56–58; P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 83, note 1, identifies the speaker as Reggiano, using the pseudonym Cavalli.

March 2–3, 1927.[20] Of the former members of the politburo only Togliatti, Grieco and Camilla Ravera remained. Gramsci, Scoccimarro and Terracini, all under arrest, were replaced by Leonetti, Tasca and Tresso, with Silone as candidate member.[21] No further change was recorded for many years in the formal organization of the party, in Italy or abroad. But how much of this organization existed, or was effective, on Italian soil remains doubtful. According to a report by Togliatti to Comintern on March 10, 1927, 1000 party members had been imprisoned or deported to the islands by the end of 1926, and 100 party officials had emigrated. The party had lost one-third of its members. But the party authorities still directed underground work on Italian soil. *Unità*, formerly a daily newspaper, for some time appeared illegally once a fortnight, and in February 1927 managed to circulate 23,000 copies all over Italy.[22] The party theoretical journal, the *Stato Operaio*, began to come out regularly from March 1927 in Paris.[23]

Persecution intensified the differences already latent in the party on principles and tactics. The initial difference turned on the nature of Fascism. Bordiga ever since 1922 had consistently defined it as a specific stage in the development of capitalist society and the product of a homogeneous ruling class, the corollary of this view being the rejection of appeals to the petty bourgeoisie and of the tactics of the united front.[24] Stalin in 1924 more vaguely called Fascism "the fighting organization of the bourgeoisie, resting on the active support of social-democracy",

[20] P. Secchia, *L'Azione Svolta dal Partito Comunista in Italia* (1970), pp. 21–23; P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 104–105.

[21] *Ibid.* ii, 69; Leonetti, in the preface to his *Notes sur Gramsci* (French trs. 1974), p. 9, names Ravera, Silone, Ravazzoli and Tresso as members of the illegal "centre" constituted in Italy in 1927.

[22] Quoted from party archives in P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 71; editions were printed in Turin, Milan, Bologna, Florence and Rome (P. Secchia, *L'Azione Svolta dal Partito Comunista in Italia* (1970), p. 26). An article in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 40 (114), 1927, p. 37, claimed for it a circulation of "over 50,000".

[23] The chronology in *Tridtsat' Let Zhizni i Bor'by Ital'yanskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (Russian trans. from Italian, 1953), p. 643, dates from January 1927 the creation in Paris of "a foreign centre of the party, directed by Togliatti". Elsewhere the foreign centre is said to have been established "at first in Switzerland, then in 1928 in Paris" (*ibid.* p. 217); the central committee met twice in 1928 in Bâle (see pp. 547, 549 below), but the headquarters appear to have been in Paris throughout.

[24] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 82, note 2, 500–502.

and described the social-democrats as "objectively the moderate wing of Fascism".[25] Gramsci in his theses for the third congress of the PCI in January 1926, which were supported by Togliatti and adopted by an overwhelming majority, offered a more complex analysis, pointing to the inherent weakness of capitalism in a still predominantly agricultural country. A peculiar feature of Italy was the division between an industrial north and a "colonial" south; in opposition to the Left which denied significance to any peasant movement, Gramsci regarded the peasants of southern Italy as "the most revolutionary social element in Italian society". The northern industrialists were not themselves strong enough to constitute a ruling class. Hence they had to seek an alliance with the land-owning interests of the south and support from the urban petty bourgeoisie. Fascism was a political and ideological amalgam of these potentially discordant elements. It had not achieved "organic unification", and was unable to overcome the economic contradictions within it.[26] While Gramsci foresaw that Italy's insoluble economic problems would drive the Fascist régime into imperialism, it was Tasca who, already in May 1926, made the most striking prediction, arguing that the ruling classes, in their effort to surmount the crisis of over-production, would "resort to war in the same way in which they resorted to American loans", and that this would most probably happen in Africa, "where armed conflict will break out in Ethiopia".[27]

The main weakness of Gramsci's analysis was the optimistic belief, which events did nothing to justify, that the internal contradictions within the Fascist movement would weaken and destroy it. The merit of the analysis was a degree of flexibility which allowed it, in contrast to Bordiga's uncompromising programme of direct confrontation between the party and the régime, to contemplate a temporary link with disaffected petty bourgeois or republican–democratic elements on the fringes of Fascism.[28] It stressed the lack of homogeneity in the bourgeoisie, as well as in the ranks of the Fascists themselves, and opened the possibility of an appeal to disaffected petty bourgeois elements against the

[25] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vi, 282.

[26] For these theses see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 369, note 5.

[27] Quoted from party archives in P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 31.

[28] See p. 534 above.

régime. After Gramsci's arrest Togliatti at the seventh IKKI in Moscow in November 1926 exploited this flexibility to the full. Fitting Italian Fascism into the general picture of "capitalist stabilization", he concluded that Fascism was not only "a method of stabilization", but was that "particular element which has become the starting-point of all the contradictions of stabilization". Economic contradictions bred social contradictions. The measures which the Italian ruling class was obliged to take in order to overcome the crisis "still further intensify the economic struggle against the middle strata of the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie, which form the social basis of Fascism".[29] The resolution adopted at the end of the session referred to "the clear and inevitable transition of Fascism into the camp of large-scale capital" and to "new regroupings of the masses of the petty bourgeoisie, of the small peasantry and of the deceived proletariat", and imposed on the PCI the task of "mobilizing all forces to take advantage of the economic and political crisis".[30]

The wave of persecutions descending on the now underground party made these gestures of compromise in Moscow distasteful to the devoted militants who remained in Italy. The Italian youth league (Federazione Giovanile Comunista Italiana) became a centre of unrest. Secchia, one of its leaders, quoted a quip to the effect that "the crackpots stay in Italy to work, the clever ones go abroad". Longo demanded the abandonment of the slogans of a "people's revolution" and a "republican assembly".[31] The league wanted the party to encourage the peasants of southern Italy to make a revolution and seize the land. Longo was rebuked by Togliatti, who reproved the league for pitting itself against the party. In the debates which followed the league was accused of not having outgrown the heresies of Bordiga and of "rigid extremism", and replied with charges of opportunism and of failing to recognize the views of those who were exposed to police persecution. The league, whatever doubts may have been felt of its wisdom, nevertheless secured the right to be represented at

[29] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 365–366.

[30] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 630, 641.

[31] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 90, 107; at the seventh IKKI in Moscow, Longo as the spokesman of KIM had belaboured the Russian opposition, but did not mention the Italian or any other youth league (*Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), ii, 257–262).

the discussion of political questions in the party central committee. New grounds of dispute soon appeared.[32] When the Italian delegation to the eighth IKKI in May 1927 reported back to the politburo of the PCI, attention was concentrated not on Silone's dramatic clash with Stalin over the condemnation of Trotsky, but on the appeal to communist parties, by way of countering the threat of imperialist war, to rally mass support for the defence of the Soviet Union and of the Chinese revolution.[33] Longo on behalf of the youth league argued that the danger of war could be averted only by a struggle against capitalism, for socialism, and thus for the Soviet Union, and Ravera, the party secretary, wished to meet it by a call for insurrection. Silone, Grieco and Leonetti joined Togliatti in dismissing such proposals as madness.[34] But the rift in the party was unhealed. Severe police repression precluded armed resistance. But it also made any alternative course of action seem futile and hopeless.

Relations with the trade unions were a source of embarrassment to the PCI, as to other communist parties. The introduction by the Fascist government in 1926 of a trade union law designed to bring the trade union movement under police control was followed in July by a congress of the anti-Fascist Confederazione Generale del Lavoro (CGL), which divided into three groups: reformist unions affiliated to IFTU, a small group of Leftists known as "maximalists", and communists. But, united only by a common dislike and fear of Fascist control, the congress failed to take any effective action.[35] Early in December 1926, following the repressive measures of the previous month,[36] Mussolini announced a bargain which left the CGL in being with a semblance of independence, but involved the exclusion from it of communists, now banned under the "Law for the Defence of the Régime".[37]

[32] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 108.

[33] For the eighth IKKI and the clash with Silone and Togliatti see p. 146 above.

[34] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 132.

[35] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 108, August 24, 1926, pp. 1809–1810.

[36] See p. 538 above.

[37] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 153, December 14, 1926, pp. 2751–2752; No. 154, December, 1926, pp. 2755–2756.

This compromise did not last. A split occurred among the reformist leaders of the CGL. At a meeting of the executive committee in Milan on January 4, 1927, a majority, led by D'Aragona and Maglione, voted to dissolve the organization and seek an agreement with the Fascist corporations; the minority, led by the secretary-general Buozzi, decided to transfer the rump of the CGL to Paris, and to work there under the continued patronage of IFTU.[38] The promulgation by Mussolini of a Labour Charter, based on the principle of "solidarity between the different factors of production", was an attempt to provide an ideological foundation for Fascist trade unions.[39]

The PCI, though its own efforts to maintain communist or independent trade unions on Italian soil had little chance of success, continued to denounce any renunciation of active work in Italy as an act of treachery. The split in the CGL in January 1927 left two alternatives open to it. It could treat the dissentient rump led by Buozzi, and established under the aegis of IFTU in Paris, as accomplices in the surrender, equally responsible with the majority for the dissolution of the CGL; or it could seek cooperation with the rump in Paris, notwithstanding its affiliation to IFTU, in the campaign against Fascism. At a time when united front policies were still in vogue in the PCI and in Moscow, the second course was preferred. The trade union department of the PCI, headed by Ravazzoli, put forward to Profintern a proposal for an appeal to IFTU for common action in support of all anti-Fascist trade unions. It was true that IFTU was no more likely to accede to such an appeal than it had been to an appeal on behalf of the British miners in 1926; but the appeal had then been judged good tactics. When, however, the PCI proposal reached Profintern some time late in January 1927, Lozovsky, now increasingly intransigent towards trade unions affiliated to Amsterdam, reacted sharply against it; and a commission of Profintern drafted a resolution rejecting it. At this point Humbert-Droz, having learned belatedly of the whole affair, came out strongly in favour

[38] *Ibid.* No. 17, February 8, 1927, pp. 361–362; *Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoyuzov*, No. 8–9, 1927, p. 125.

[39] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 45, April 26, 1927, pp. 924–925; the Italian delegate at the fourth congress of Profintern in March 1928 said that it was designed "to lend a theoretical basis to a labour community of classes and to the Fascist form of the rule of capital" (*Protokoll über den Vierten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), p. 518).

of the proposed appeal to IFTU, and announced his intention of carrying the issue to the presidium of IKKI.[40]

When the presidium met, Lozovsky was supported only by Treint, and was obliged to withdraw his draft resolution. Bukharin adopted delaying tactics, and proposed to await further documents from Italy.[41] Meanwhile, apparently without awaiting a verdict from Moscow, three Italian trade union federations led by communists, together with a handful of reformists and "maximalists", despatched the proposed communication to IFTU.[42] A secret meeting of trade unionists, attended by communists and by dissident reformists, was held in Milan on February 20, 1927, in an attempt to maintain or re-establish an Italian base for the CGL. It condemned the action of both wings of the old CGL at the meeting of the executive committee on January 4, 1927, and demanded the maintenance of a trade union centre in Italy and an organization based on the factories. But, on the more practical question of relations with Buozzi's organization in Paris, it seems to have spoken with an uncertain voice. A majority declared itself for "the principles of Profintern" but also wished to support the movement for "international trade union unity represented by the Anglo-Russian committee".[43] In Moscow the question lost its urgency. Lozovsky had left for China. Treint, who continued to uphold his views in the Latin secretariat, attacked negotiations with Buozzi, and detected "liquidationist tendencies" in the PCI; he received some support from Kuusinen. Humbert-Droz, who a few weeks earlier had vigorously criticized an announcement by Buozzi of his intention to abandon all activities in Italy, now argued against "condemning directly and completely the negotiations with Buozzi", and was supported by Bukharin.[44] No firm decision appears to have been taken. Comintern in a letter to the PCI of March 29, 1927 denounced Buozzi's spurious CGL in

[40] This account comes from a letter of Humbert-Droz to Togliatti of February 26, 1927 (J. Humbert-Droz, *Il Contrasto tra l'Internazionale e il PCI* (1969), pp. 239–240 (Humbert-Droz archives, 0077)).

[41] *Ibid.* p. 241 (letter of March 5, 1927, Humbert-Droz archives, 0078).

[42] *Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoyuzov*, No. 8–9, 1927, p. 125, which describes it, perhaps tendentiously, as a "protest"; the text of the communication has not been traced.

[43] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 30, March 15, 1927, pp. 652–653; *Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoyuzov*, No. 8–9, 1927, pp. 125–126.

[44] J. Humbert-Droz, *Il Contrasto tra l'Internazionale e il PCI* (1969), pp. 241–242, 244 (Humbert-Droz archives, 0078, 0081).

Paris;[45] and communist protests against his activities and his recognition of IFTU continued throughout the year.[46] Nevertheless, Ravazzoli, the head of the trade union section of the PCI, apparently continued in spite of pressure from Profintern to maintain relations with Buozzi[47] — a symptom of a confused situation and of divided counsels in the PCI.

In the year which followed the introduction of the "Law for the Defence of the Régime" of November 1926 ever-increasing numbers of communists were arrested and progressively severer sentences imposed by Mussolini's extraordinary tribunals. In March 1927 some thirty "Tuscan" communists were condemned to terms of imprisonment ranging up to fourteen years.[48] The extraordinary tribunals were kept busy throughout the year.[49] In September 1927 an impending trial of eighty-six leading communists was foreshadowed under procedures which threatened the death penalty.[50] Gramsci was among those indicted. He had been removed earlier in the year from Ustica to Milan, where he remained for many months under interrogation in brutal conditions which further undermined his already fragile health.[51] The optimistic mood of the previous year had now evaporated. An Italian writer in the journal of Comintern in November 1927 taunted the social-democratic leaders with pretending that Fascism had lost its hold on the bourgeoisie. Fascism was assiduously wooing the big bourgeoisie (stabilization of the lira) and the landowners (agrarian tariffs); price controls affected only the petty bourgeois

[45] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 100.

[46] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 72, July 19, 1927, pp. 1156–1157; No. 89, September 6, 1927, pp. 1945–1946.

[47] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 99–100.

[48] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondez*, No. 31, March 18, 1927, pp. 671–672; the inclusion of Gramsci's name among those tried and sentenced must be an error.

[49] For a summary list of trials and sentences see *Tridtsat' Let Zhizni i Bor'by Ital'yanskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (Russian transl. from Italian, 1953), pp. 644–645.

[50] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 93, September 20, 1927, p. 2019, No. 107, November 1, 1927, pp. 2319–2320, No. 117, November 29, 1927, pp. 2634–2635.

[51] A. Gramsci, *Lettere dal Carcere* (1965), pp. xxxix–xl; a letter from "An Italian in England" (identified *ibid.* pp. 913–914 as Piero Sraffa) was published in the *Manchester Guardian*, October 24, 1927, protesting against Gramsci's inhuman treatment and impending trial.

small traders. The task of the PCI was to "liquidate the remains of the petty-bourgeois-pacifist-social-democratic ideologies and illusions of the masses".[52] At the end of 1927 communists could boast that the PCI was "the only opposition party which has not fled from the battlefield", and that "all political opposition parties except the PCI have vanished from Italian soil".[53]

This exception was however short-lived. What came to be known as the "second conference" of the PCI (the first having been held in 1924 in Como) met in Bâle on January 29–31, 1928. All the available party leaders, including Togliatti, Grieco, Ravazzoli, Tasca and Silone, were present, as well as representatives of "Italian groups in west European parties". Grieco made the report on the Italian situation, Ravazzoli on the trade unions, and Togliatti on the international situation. The debates reflected the differences on the nature of Fascism and on party tactics current in the party during the past year. Tasca, the spokesman of the Right, insisted on the lack of homogeneity in the bourgeoisie, and on the possibility of wooing allies from the petty bourgeoisie (small traders and artisans) and from the "labour aristocracy" for the struggle against Fascism. On the extreme Left, Pastore wanted to see the fighting units organized for armed action against Fascism, and argued that even an unsuccessful insurrection would have more influence than a strike. This was too much for Togliatti, who rebuked him with the remark that what the party wanted was "a successful insurrection, ... a movement that will win".[54] Longo, the representative of the youth league, known for its radical views, was apparently dissuaded from speaking.[55]

The main resolution of the conference on Grieco's report was an ambiguous compromise clearly designed to ensure a semblance of unanimity. In accordance with the prevailing trend in Comintern, it sought cautiously to move away from the Right without giving hostages to the adventurous policies of the extreme Left. It attempted to define Fascism in terms of the current "stabilization

[52] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 46 (120), 1927, pp. 19–28.

[53] *Ibid.* No. 40 (114), 1927, p. 35, No. 51 (125), 1927, p. 43.

[54] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 149, quoting from the party archives an official record of the conference published in Paris in 1928; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 16, February 17, 1928, p. 349, No. 33, March 30, 1928, pp. 618–619. The latter source referred to this conference as an "Information and Organization Conference".

[55] *Annali, 1966* (Milan, 1966), p. 439.

of capitalism": "*the special mode of the stabilization of Italian capitalism is Fascism*". It spoke slightingly of the group of parties in Paris and in Italy (reformist, maximalist, republican) calling itself the "Anti-Fascist Concentration", which had no programme and no future. Nevertheless, it would be futile to deny the significance of this movement in Italy: "*the Concentration exists in Italy because in Italy its social basis exists*". Only the proletariat could lead the masses. But the proletariat needed allies, and should not hesitate to use such "democratic" slogans as a republican assembly, workers' control and land for the peasants. The draining away of petty bourgeois support from Fascism meant its close identification with finance capital, and this had a further corollary: "*Fascism is war*". The resolution ended by warning the party against a Right deviation which believed that no revolutionary action was possible, and an extreme Leftism which sought to "promote *coups* and actions by small groups".[56] The conference also approved two reports on the international situation and the situation in the Soviet Union. The latter took note of "the current sharpness of the attitude of the opposition bloc, and the danger which the action of the opposition presents for the strengthening of the first workers' state and the development of the international revolution", and recognized "the grounds on which measures have been taken against those Russian communists who have violated the discipline of the party and of the Soviet state".[57] The proceedings of the conference bore the mark of Togliatti's astute guidance, and were inspired as much by the prevailing mood in Moscow as by anything that happened in Italy.

In Italy the year 1928 witnessed a succession of arrests and trials of communists which virtually wiped out the party. On April 12, 1928, an attempt on the King in Milan, in which the King escaped unharmed but twenty people were killed, led to further mass arrests, and was followed by what was called "the Rome monster trial [*processone di Roma*]", which lasted from May 28 to June 4, 1928. The original indictment named fifty-four communists, but many of them, including Togliatti, Germanetto and Grieco, were safely abroad. Among the twenty-four eventu-

[56] The full text is in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 24, March 6, 1928, pp. 469–70, No. 25, March 9, 1928, pp. 480–481, No. 28, March 13, 1928, pp. 544–546.

[57] *Ibid.* No. 33, March 30, 1928, pp. 618–619.

ally brought to trial were Gramsci, Terracini, Scoccimarro and Roveda. These were condemned to penal servitude for twenty years or upwards, the remainder for rather shorter periods. The accused behaved with defiant dignity, and Terracini delivered a political speech, which earned him the longest of all the sentences.[58]

These savage sentences were pronounced at a moment when the central committee of the PCI was in session, once more in Bâle, its agenda comprising the question of organization, the drawing up of a programme of action and preparations for the sixth congress of Comintern. Much of the debate turned on the plight of the party, and the tone was critical of the leadership of Togliatti and Grieco. It was admitted that tactics had been faulty, that the party did not "know how to retreat", and that the organization had broken down with the infiltration of *agents provocateurs*. Leonetti delivered a vigorous indictment:

> We cannot trust any of the old elements ... We must withdraw, but instead of withdrawal the secretariat puts forward grandiose plans which may endanger the most precious elements. We must tell the International the truth. In Italy we are reduced to a small group, a handful of survivors.

Longo, the representative of the youth league, was still more voluble in his strictures, accusing the party of "Economism" and of trailing behind the Anti-Fascist Concentration. These attacks from the Left were, however, rebuffed by Togliatti, Tasca and others, and seem to have made little impact on the unanimous resolutions of the session. The resolution on organization stressed the necessity "to remove from the party the so-called opposition elements, ... and all those who do not recognize party discipline"; and it denounced the disruptive work of "the so-called Lefts, who live in emigration in France, and have contacts with isolated elements in Italy". Another resolution criticized the "Anti-Fascist Concentration" as a barrier to the formation of a genuine worker–peasant bloc, and dismissed as worthless the slogan of a "*democratic republic of the workers*". The committee postponed the framing of the programme to a more propitious season, and in-

[58] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 158–159; *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 23–24 (149–150) 1928, pp. 10–13; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 54, June 5, 1928, pp. 977–978 (for a protest by MOPR see *ibid.* No. 55, June 8, 1928, pp. 992–993).

structed the Italian delegates to the sixth congress of Comintern to urge "the necessity of a struggle against social-democracy", and of raising the fighting capacity of communist parties through "an internal consolidation of their central leaderships".[59]

Togliatti remained throughout 1928 a sensitive barometer of changing relations with Comintern, and of the adjustments required of the PCI, as of other parties. At the trade union commission of the ninth IKKI in February 1928 he had opposed Lozovsky's attempt to radicalize trade union policy and destroy the last figment of the united front. While it was clear that Lozovsky had not yet secured official endorsement for his views, Togliatti's active intervention in what was essentially a dispute between Soviet leaders may have aroused doubts of his unconditional orthodoxy.[60] In the polarization of opinions and attitudes in Comintern, which underlay the still undeclared rift between Bukharin and Stalin, Togliatti showed no enthusiasm for the new line, and would at best seek to remain neutral and uncommitted. It may also have been felt that he was building up too strong a personal position in the PCI, which might under his leadership attempt to assert its independence of complete Comintern control. He did not, like Thälmann, or later Thorez, owe his position to the initiative and support of Comintern. Such doubts may have been behind a proposal apparently emanating from Manuilsky, and approved by other members of the presidium of IKKI, to appoint Togliatti as head of the newly created Western European Bureau of Comintern in Berlin. Togliatti in a long and anxious letter to Humbert-Droz of March 17, 1928, detailed his objections to the proposal. Pyatnitsky had tried to persuade him that the new post would not be incompatible with leadership of the PCI; but other comrades had made it plain that he would have to reside in Berlin, and that his work there would have priority. It was wrong to take such a decision without previously consulting the PCI. It would weaken the leadership of the party at a critical period. It was impossible to lead the party from afar; his removal from the scene would make him "a simple observer and critic of the work of the party, not an active collaborator". The formation of

[59] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 149–160; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 58, June 19, 1928, pp. 1045–1046; No. 59, June 22, 1928, pp. 1070–1071. For "Economism" see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 1, pp. 10–12.

[60] For this debate see p. 174 above.

the cadres of the communist movement should not be viewed merely from the point of the "apparatus".[61] In a handwritten letter of March 19, 1928, to the party politburo Togliatti announced his strong objections to the move, which he attributed to "an under-estimate of the rôle of the PCI"; and Grieco referred to the plan to "absorb" Togliatti as being opposed to the vital needs of the party and liable to "open a crisis in the leadership".[62]

The issue appears to have been fought out in Moscow with some bitterness. In the political secretariat Remmele, Šmeral and Pyatnitsky supported the proposal; Humbert-Droz and Maggi, the Italian delegate, opposed it. Pyatnitsky wavered; and in the absence of Bukharin no firm decision was taken. The letter sent to Togliatti, while not withdrawing his appointment to the Western European Bureau, apparently recognized the importance, if not the priority, of his work for the PCI. On receiving it, Togliatti wrote, on May 11, 1928, that he was fully occupied at present by conferences of the PCI and by party preparations for the sixth congress of Comintern, and that he would postpone a visit to Berlin till these meetings were over, even though "friends in Berlin" might protest that he was "sabotaging the decision".[63] In the event the Western European Bureau never became a politically active organ, and Togliatti never appears to have worked there. He had characteristically won his case, not by overt resistance, but by masterly evasion. His position in the PCI was correspondingly strengthened, though he functioned officially not as secretary-general, but simply as "responsible for the work of the secretariat".[64]

The sixth congress of Comintern in July 1928, at which Togliatti played a correct, but somewhat ambiguous, rôle,[65] paid no

[61] J. Humbert-Droz, *Il Contrasto tra l'Internazionale e il PCI* (1969), pp. 250–252 (Humbert-Droz archives, 0083); I. Silone, *Uscità di Sicurezza* (1965), p. 103, who praised Togliatti for his shrewdness in rejecting the proposal, attributed the initiative to Manuilsky.

[62] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 183–184; this account, based on party archives and presumably reflecting party opinion, speaks of "traps set from above" by Comintern to remove Togliatti.

[63] J. Humbert-Droz, *Il Contrasto tra l'Internazionale e il PCI* (1969), pp. 253–255 (Humbert-Droz archives, 0084, 0086).

[64] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 183.

[65] See pp. 201–202 above.

great attention to the affairs of the PCI. Bukharin's theses approved by the congress warned the PCI against "Right deviations (refusal to fight for the leadership of the proletariat)"; the party had failed to adapt itself to the new conditions in such a way as "to maintain its full revolutionary fighting capacity". On the other hand, the PCI must "decisively resist any tendency to renounce or restrict the possibility of work on a broad front to win the masses".[66] The ambiguities and compromises of the united front had not been resolved. After the congress Togliatti was replaced as delegate of the PCI to Comintern in Moscow by Tasca, a less astute and less pliable character, whose sympathy with Bukharin was more marked than his own.[67] The two men were, however, in agreement on the tactics to be pursued. Togliatti in a letter of October 6, 1928, exhorted Tasca "not to be in any way drawn into the inflammatory and dangerous path of fighting between groups". When general issues were discussed, it was prudent to remain "provincial and cautious"; one might then "safely exert at least a minimum influence — for today and tomorrow".[68] Tasca's obedience was not unqualified. He told the party on October 21, 1928, that he would "act with the maximum of caution compatible with not assuming responsibility for methods which I consider harmful for the development of our movement". The reservation implied a note of ambiguity. At a meeting of the political secretariat of IKKI on November 2, 1928, Tasca declared that the resolution of the central committee of the KPD on September 26, 1928, on the Wittorf affair had been "a crime against the party", and that it was "absolutely indispensable to reaffirm the authority of comrade Thälmann *vis-à-vis* the masses and the party", he incongruously added that he none the less regarded Thälmann's tactics as "fractional" and contrary to the letter and spirit of the decisions of the sixth congress.[69]

From this time Tasca's disillusionment grew rapidly. Constant reports of strife in the Politburo between Stalin on one side and Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky on the other, and the withdrawal of Bukharin from the affairs of Comintern,[70] convinced him that

[66] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 786–787.

[67] For these moves see P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 178.

[68] *Annali, 1966* (Milan, 1966), pp. 513–515.

[69] *Ibid.* pp. 523, 535; for the Wittorf affair see pp. 442–445 above.

[70] See Vol. 2, pp. 78–79; see also p. 236 above.

moderation and compromise were a lost cause. When the Hausen case came before IKKI, he effectively burned his boats in a letter to the secretariat of November 22, 1928. Calling for a postponement of the discussion till the next session of IKKI, he expressed concern at the prospect of the creation of a "third party" in Germany which would result from the expulsion of the Right from the KPD. He proposed the despatch of a delegation to Germany to deal with the crisis, the annulment of the decision of the central committee of the KPD of October 19–20, 1928, on the constitution of the politburo, and its reorganization "on the basis of the decisions of the sixth congress (participation of the Ewert group in the party leadership)"; and he demanded the removal of Neumann from all KPD activities.[71] When, in spite of these delaying tactics, a commission was set up by IKKI to investigate the crisis in the KPD, Tasca voted, as a minority of one, against its decision to expel not only Hausen and his supporters but Brandler and Thalheimer as well. Tasca reported this defiance to the PCI, still in a slightly apologetic vein. Togliatti had begged him "to bear in mind the difficulties involved in taking a stand". In Russian matters he had formerly "counselled prudence". In German affairs "we now have all the elements which permit us to judge the situation".[72] Tasca's patience was now at an end. In a long letter of December 14, 1928, he wrote to the PCI:

> The disagreements, for example, on the KPD, cannot be healed, and will be repeated in the context of every problem in the future. In these conditions my continued stay in Moscow makes no sense ... You must face the problem of finding a substitute, a comrade who would be in agreement, or less in disagreement, with the prevailing political line.[73]

The evolution of Togliatti in face of this dilemma was still more significant. In an unusually frank private letter to Tasca of December 17, 1928, he described the central committee of the PCI as working in its relations with Comintern on two levels. It had decided to draw up two reports, one for public use, expressing its endorsement of Comintern policy, the other for restricted circulation, registering its reservations. He concluded:

[71] *Annali, 1966* (Milan, 1966), p. 571; for the Hausen case see p. 449 above.
[72] *Annali, 1966* (Milan, 1966), pp. 576–577.
[73] *Ibid.* pp. 578–584.

> From these "German affairs" arises the problem of the internal régime of Comintern generally. This régime is bad, and tends to get worse. The struggle of groups and factions increases, and extends to all parties. When the factional struggle is unleashed, inner-party democracy is no more. These phenomena pervert the development of our parties, and also prevent a clear understanding of political issues.

Belatedly he concerned himself with "the cutting off of heads":

> If Trotsky goes and we then see the unity of the Russian party, all is well. But, if we see that Klara Zetkin goes and her place is taken by Heinz Neumann, things change, and we have the right to be preoccupied.[74]

While this missive was on the way, the presidium of IKKI was debating the terms of an "open letter" of instruction to the KPD. Both Tasca and Humbert-Droz spoke against it — these two and Zetkin cast the only adverse votes — and on December 19, 1928, were the targets of a vituperative attack by Stalin himself;[75] and on the following day, December 20, 1928, Tasca wrote a further letter to the PCI urgently demanding his replacement and describing the situation as "very acute indeed".[76]

This was the parting of the ways. The central committee of the PCI had now either to retreat from its exposed position and disown Tasca, or to break with Comintern. Togliatti faced the same dilemma as Tasca, and chose the opposite alternative. A break with Comintern was inconceivable. Togliatti is said to have warned Tasca that, if they did not submit, "Moscow will not hesitate to fix up a leadership of the Left with some youngster from the Lenin school."[77] He now executed a total, and less than dignified, *volte-face*. On December 27, 1928, he replied to Tasca's last letters in coldly critical terms, censuring him for abandoning the theses of the sixth congress of Comintern to which he had once subscribed, reflecting ironically on Tasca's "conscience", and formally summoning him to return in good time for a meeting of

[74] *Ibid.* pp. 588–593. Togliatti in his letter related an occasion in September 1928 when Manuilsky, being in Switzerland, asked to attend a meeting of the central committee of the PCI; a special meeting was arranged for his benefit, and the real meeting held elsewhere without his knowledge.

[75] See pp. 452–453 above.

[76] *Annali, 1966* (Milan, 1966), p. 598.

[77] *Ibid.* p. 982.

the party central committee in Switzerland at the end of January 1929.[78] Tasca left Moscow on January 17, 1929. On January 20, from Berlin, he avenged himself, in another letter to the party, by a fierce personal invective against Stalin: Comintern did not exist, the VKP(B) did not exist, and now Stalin "liquidates the revolution".[79] Owing to interference by the Swiss police, the meeting of the party central committee had to be transferred to Paris, where it finally took place from February 28 to March 3, 1929. Tasca submitted a 300-page memorandum which covered the history of the PCI, the question of the KPD, socialist construction in the Soviet Union, and the rôle of Comintern.[80] Grieco presided, and among those present were Togliatti, Ravazzoli, Silone, Leonetti, Longo, Camilla Ravera, and Secchia, with Remmele representing the KPD and acting as watch-dog for Comintern. The *clou* of the proceedings was a merciless indictment of Tasca by Togliatti. Tasca had listened to gossip in corridors and ante-rooms, without really knowing what went on, and had protected "conciliators" in the KPD and elsewhere. The central committee should accept without qualifications the decisions of Comintern on the KPD, and its condemnation of Tasca's "open opportunism". Togliatti ended with a call to "disown and condemn comrade Tasca, absolutely and unreservedly".[81] Given the recent close relations between the two men, it was a brutal performance. Tasca replied, and Remmele and Silone (speaking under the name Pasquini) added their stones to the hail of reproaches.[82] Nobody uttered a word in defence of Tasca. The resolution adopted at the session was a full-dress indictment of Tasca. It approved the open letter to the KPD, and denounced Tasca's attitude and pronouncements as "a radical revision of the line of the sixth congress". Tasca was accused of exaggerating the stabilization of capitalism, of rejecting aggressive tactics in the trade unions, and of opposing the struggle against social-democracy; he had also failed to support the Russian party in its struggle against "the strengthening of capitalist elements in the countryside". The

[78] *Ibid.* pp. 616–618. [79] *Ibid.* pp. 668–671.

[80] *Ibid.* pp. 671–805. Particular indignation was aroused by Tasca's assertion that communist parties were now weaker than in 1919–1921, and that "the balance of forces is not more favourable to us than in 1921"; these passages were quoted at the tenth IKKI in July 1929 (*Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 59, 83).

[81] *Annali, 1966* (Milan, 1966), pp. 805–828. [82] *Ibid.* pp. 828–868.

session ended, however, without pronouncing a sentence of expulsion from the central committee or from the party. Tasca resigned his membership of the politburo, but the committee strangely refused to accept his resignation. It was decided that Grieco should replace Tasca as PCI representative in Moscow.[83] The central committee also paid tribute to Comintern orthodoxy by electing three workers as candidate members of the committee.[84]

While the doctrinal waverings of leaders of the PCI outside Italy absorbed the attention of Comintern, and were judged mainly in the light of what was happening in other parties, the record of the underground party in Italy was one of inactivity and impotence under increasingly brutal persecution. The "monster trial" of May 1928 was a landmark and a warning. The party organization was riddled with *agents provocateurs*, and broken up by the police. The clandestine press had been destroyed. Three out of four members of the "internal centre" which directed underground operations were arrested in May–June 1928.[85] As Grieco confessed to the central committee a few months later, "since the end of May we lost contact with the party".[86] Reliable statistics of party membership are lacking for the Fascist period. Pyatnitsky recalled in 1928 that, of a membership of 50,000 before Mussolini's *coup*, three-quarters had been lost at a time when "the Fascist terror was weaker than now".[87] Since then the losses must have been greater still. The precise statement that, of 260 members of the communist youth league in Turin in December 1926, only

[83] *Ibid.* p. 888; the proceedings of the last meeting on March 3, 1929, though available in the party archives (P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 225), were not printed in the *Annali, 1966*. The text of the main resolution, dated March 1929, is in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondez*, No. 23 March 8, 1929, pp. 496–597. Molotov at the tenth IKKI in July 1929 bitterly reproached the PCI for its failure to forestall Tasca's resignation by expelling him (*Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 425); for Togliatti's lame defence of the failure to take disciplinary measures against Tasca see *ibid.* pp. 383–384.

[84] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 228.

[85] *Die Kommunistische Partei Italiens* (German transl. from Italian, 1952), p. 57; *Tridtsat' Let Ital'yanskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (Russian transl. from Italian, 1953), p. 646. For the "monster trial" see pp. 548–549 above.

[86] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 160, note 1.

[87] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 16 (142), 1928, p. 20.

twenty-five were left in December 1927 (before the terror reached its peak)[88] may give some indication of the magnitude of the decline. By the autumn of 1928 2 million workers were said to be enrolled in Fascist trade unions.[89] The victim of the first death sentence on a communist, on October 17, 1928, was a worker, who had shot two policemen in resisting arrest. Estimates of the number of communists arrested and imprisoned are too variable to inspire confidence; but they certainly ran into many hundreds. After Gramsci's removal from Ustica in 1927, Bordiga launched a polemical compaign against the party leaders among the 200 communist prisoners held on the island; and his supporters abroad started in Brussels a journal of Trotskyite complexion entitled *Il Prometeo*. In 1929, the authorities, feeling perhaps that he was more likely to injure than to help the cause of the PCI, released him.

It was difficult to establish much common ground between events in Italy and the debates of Comintern in Moscow. Early in 1929 Grieco replaced Tasca as delegate of the PCI to Comintern.[90] The succeeding period was marked by the condemnation of Bukharin and the gradually increasing publicity given to his downfall. At the tenth IKKI in July 1929 denunciation of "conciliators" and of the Right was the main theme of the debates. Open attacks on Bukharin were still restrained, though they increased in volume as the session went on.[91] Tasca was one of the principal targets, being pilloried in turn by, among others, Manuilsky, Togliatti, Molotov, Thälmann and Lozovsky. His mammoth report to the central committee of the PCI was quoted with disgust; and it was repeatedly said that he was no longer a mere conciliator, but "a typical Rightist". Even Togliatti did not escape unscathed. When Pyatnitsky naively complained that Comintern was not well informed about "what goes on in the PCI within the country", when Molotov spoke of the "error" of the PCI in selecting Tasca as its representative in IKKI, and another speaker reproached the PCI with lukewarmness in the campaign against the danger of war,[92] these were shafts aimed at the leader. More direct attacks followed. Neumann, punning on Togliatti's pseudonym Ercoli,

[88] P. Secchia, *L'Azione Svolta dal Partito Communista in Italia* (1970), p. 121.
[89] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 185, note 6.
[90] *Annali, 1966* (Milan, 1966), p. 888. [91] See pp. 249–251 above.
[92] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 268, 425, 460.

declared that Tasca had "passed beyond the pillars of Hercules of opportunism". Thälmann cited Togliatti's ambiguous pronouncements at the sixth congress of Comintern, when he had failed to give the KPD full support against the conciliators and "liquidators". Kuusinen still more bluntly accused him of having shown too much tact towards Tasca, just as he had towards Trotsky at the eighth IKKI; and Ulbricht interjected: "Perhaps this was something more than tact".[93] In the debate on the trade unions echoes were heard of Togliatti's brush with Lozovsky in the commission of the ninth IKKI early in 1928.[94] At the end of the session Grieco, in the name of the Italian delegation, apologized for the error of the party central committee which, having energetically denounced Tasca's views, had none the less retained him as a member of the politburo. He proposed a short resolution, which was adopted, instructing the PCI to rectify its error.[95] But Togliatti was paid the compliment of being invited to deliver the formal valedictory speech at the end of the session;[96] this was proof that he had — perhaps by a narrow margin — weathered the squalls and was still in good standing. Though less than fully trusted, he had become the essential link, indispensable to both sides, between the PCI and Comintern.

A meeting of the politburo of the PCI took place on August 28–29, 1929, and was attended by Stepanov, Humbert-Droz's deputy in the Latin secretariat of Comintern.[97] It heard a report by Grieco on the result of the tenth IKKI. He emphasized once more the close cooperation between social-democracy and Fascism, with special reference to Germany. He reported, somewhat equivocally, on the anti-war demonstrations of August 1, 1929; he claimed them as a "success", but added that it was still too early to make a "self-criticism" of the proceedings. He claimed that the masses in Italy were straining for action, but were restrained by the "tail-endism" of the party attitude. Finally, he broached the

[93] *Ibid.* pp. 467, 545–547, 624; for Togliatti's remarks at the sixth congress see pp. 201–202 above.

[94] See p. 174 above.

[95] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 877; the resolution does not appear to have been published.

[96] *Ibid.* pp. 880–883.

[97] Stepanov (sometimes Stefanov) was a Bulgarian, whose real name was Minieff (J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), p. 280, note 1); he appeared in the record on this occasion under the name of Mario.

essential question of Comintern's disapproval of the failure of the party to apply "organizational measures" to the rebel Tasca. Togliatti followed with a review of party history and a diatribe against "opportunism". The debate revealed a growing hostility to Togliatti from the Left, the attack being led by Leonetti and Longo. Both disputed Togliatti's complacent view of the party record. The party had followed erroneous policies in underestimating the radicalization of the masses, in refusing to adopt the slogan of a worker–peasant government, and in taking too seriously the Anti-Fascist Concentration. Ravazzoli, struggling to organize trade union activity, also criticized Togliatti's attitude to the past, challenged the identification of social-democracy with Fascism, and repeated that their social bases were different. Stepanov agreed with Togliatti's plans for future action, but also blamed the lack of self-criticism in his report. When Togliatti interjected the comment that comrades might ask "Why are we against Tasca and not against Bukharin?", Stepanov, who treated the Italian leaders with a great show of deference, gave an assurance that throughout the Russian party "a critique *against* Bukharin" had already begun. Togliatti and Grieco seem to have parried the attack by threatening to resign if a resolution were adopted censuring party policies. The threat of a split brought the critics to heel.[98]

Even now the leaders evidently shrank from the drastic conclusion of Tasca's expulsion. A last chance was offered him to save himself by withdrawing the hostile criticisms in his report to the central committee of the previous March. In a letter addressed to the central committee on August 30, 1929, he grudgingly replied that he might have been prepared to change some passages in his report on socialist construction in the Soviet Union if these issues had been topical, but that his views on the KPD and on the régime in Comintern were unchanged.[99] A session of the party central

[98] P. Secchia, *L'Azione Svolta dal Partito Comunista in Italia* (1970), pp. 235–250, gives an abbreviated text of the speeches from the party archives; P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 216–219, also using the archives, briefly summarizes the debate, but quotes some piquant passages omitted by Secchia. It is odd that Stepanov apparently did not yet know of the publication in *Pravda*, August 21, 1929, of the hitherto secret resolution of the tenth IKKI (which was perfectly well known both to him and to Togliatti) condemning Bukharin (see Vol. 2, p. 96). For "tail-endism" see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 1, p. 18.

[99] *Annali, 1966* (Milan, 1966), pp. 966–968.

committee, immediately following the session of the politburo, formally approved "without reservations and unanimously" the expulsion of Tasca from the party, and the text of a circular letter to party members explaining the reasons for it.[100] Even this decision was apparently not final without the endorsement of Comintern, and a request was made to the secretariat of IKKI for formal confirmation.[101] Tasca soon learned, however, from a correspondent in Berlin that the verdict had been announced in the *Rote Fahne*; on September 23, 1929, he wrote a sardonic letter to Togliatti remarking that the question of his expulsion had evidently been resolved, since the party no longer sent him journals and other party material.[102] Finally, after what were presumably bureaucratic delays, Comintern ratified the sentence of expulsion; and on November 18, 1928, Tasca wrote a letter to all anti-Fascist *émigré* journals stating that he had learned of his expulsion from its publication in the French opposition journal the *Révolution Proletarienne*.[103]

By 1929 the leaders of the PCI outside Italy were concerned primarily with questions of doctrinal purity and loyalty to the prescriptions of Comintern. Togliatti devoted the major part of his speech at the tenth IKKI in July 1929 to the issues of party orthodoxy. But in a concluding passage he turned to "the question of everyday party life and everyday party activity". He asserted that, since the sixth congress of Comintern a year earlier, the party had been "built anew". Party organizations had been rebuilt "in all the great centres of industry, in the regions of the national minorities, in the agricultural regions of the Po basin", and a beginning had been made in the agricultural regions of central and southern Italy. But these claims, and an optimistic peroration, sounded less convincing than his confession that "the change-over to illegality has meant a break-up of the cadres, a loss of members and a profound crisis", and his warning to other parties that they might face the same experience, especially in the probable event of an outbreak of war.[104] In Italy Mussolini's concordat with the Vatican of

[100] P. Secchia, *L'Azione Svolta dal Partito Comunista in Italia* (1970), pp. 250–251.

[101] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 227.

[102] *Annali, 1966* (Milan, 1966), pp. 968–969, 972–973.

[103] *Ibid.* p. 981.

[104] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 384–387.

February 11, 1929, was generally felt to have strengthened the régime. In a plebiscite of March 2, 1929, on a list of 400 deputies submitted by the Fascist Grand Council, 89·6 per cent of an electorate of 9 millions went to the polls, and only 135,670 responded to the call of the PCI to vote "No".[105] Known communist leaders were serving long prison sentences in the harshest conditions; and underground party activities were at a standstill. In Paris a rump party leadership, dominated by Togliatti, assumed a progressively more sectarian character. Tasca's was only the first of many expulsions. In 1930 Bordiga, who had played no political rôle since his release from prison, was expelled from the party on the ground of his Trotskyite sympathies, Ravazzoli, Leonetti and later Silone, as would-be conciliators and Rightists. The communist historian of the PCI has depicted the "dark period" in the party's history following the tenth IKKI and Tasca's expulsion:

> An illegal party in which democracy was inevitably limited, which depended also financially in great part, if not totally, on the help of Comintern, ... a leader, formerly Gramsci, now Togliatti, suspect of insufficient orthodoxy or a hyper-critical spirit — what margin of autonomy remained?[106]

The PCI at the end of the nineteen-twenties provided a striking example of the total dependence of illegal parties on Moscow — a dependence which was part consequence, part cause, of a growing divorce between the party leaders and the masses of workers in whose name they purported to speak.

[105] The leaders of the Anti-Fascist Concentration called on their supporters to abstain; but the number of political abstentions must have been small.

[106] P. Spriano, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano*, ii (1969), 228.

CHAPTER 79

THE POLISH PARTY (KPP)

PILSUDSKI'S seizure of power in Warsaw in May 1926 caught the KPP in a mood of confusion and frustration. The "three W's" headed by Warski who had hitherto led the party were discredited at the fifth congress of Comintern in June 1924, partly on the score of their sympathy with Trotsky, but partly also because — like Brandler in Germany — they had consistently practised the policy of a united front with other parties of the Left, including Pilsudski's Polish Socialist Party (PPS). It was not till March 1925 that the third congress of the KPP ratified the transfer of the leadership to Domski, the outspoken champion of a more independent and aggressive line. But by this time reaction had set in in Moscow against policies of adventure. Domski began to be known as an adherent of Zinoviev, and incurred frequent censures from Comintern during the summer and autumn of 1925; one of the main errors attributed to him was his rejection of united front tactics. In December 1925 the fourth party conference, with the approval of Moscow, virtually reinstated the "three W's" in the leadership. Lenski, who had formerly been associated with Domski, was able to dissociate himself, by a combination of skill and good fortune, from Domski's errors, and came to occupy a middle position which he afterwards exploited with outstanding success.[1] These dissensions scarcely affected the practical issue of the attitude to be adopted to Pilsudski. When in April 1926 a coalition government under the Right-wing peasant leader Witos came into power in Warsaw, it would have seemed unthinkable for the KPP to withhold support from anyone possessing the strength and courage to attack it. The party central committee duly resolved to "support the struggle of all democratic elements, not excluding the Pilsudskists, in so far

[1] For these events see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3. pp. 380–390.

as they fight against Fascism in defence of republican–democratic institutions and worker–peasant demands".[2]

When, therefore, on May 12, 1926, Pilsudski unexpectedly mounted a military challenge to the régime, nobody in the KPP had serious doubts about the course to pursue. On the day of the *coup* the party central committee described it as a struggle of "democratic soldiers and officers, and also democratic strata of workers and peasants", against a régime of "capitalists, *kulaks* and Fascists", and demanded a "worker–peasant government". On the following day it issued an appeal for a united front of workers and peasants in support of the insurgents and for a general strike and the formation of workers' committees; and the party newspaper called for "a mobilization of the worker–peasant masses against the Fascists" — a label reserved at this stage for the Witos government.[3] Within two days Pilsudski was master of Warsaw, and his victory was triumphantly celebrated in a further manifesto of the KPP and an article in the party newspaper on May 16, 1926.[4] But the proffered support of the KPP was neither needed nor wanted.[5] Pilsudski, far from welcoming such allies, broke up communist demonstrations which might have tarnished his image in the west as a bulwark against Bolshevism.[6] It was soon clear

[2] J. Regula, *Historja Kommunistycznej Parti Polski* (1934), p. 167, where the resolution is said to have been drafted by Warski; for the character of this source see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 184, note 3.

[3] These documents were quoted in *Pravda*, May 19, 1926; see also *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4 (24), 1963, p. 135. Three appeals of May 13, 1926, from the KPP and communist youth league and an article from the party newspaper of the same date were translated in *Die Internationale*, ix, No. 12, June 20, 1926, pp. 342–344. Similar appeals were issued simultaneously by the PPS, and bitter recriminations were later exchanged between the two parties. The PPS alleged that the KPP had sabotaged the united front by making a separate appeal for workers' committees (*Pravda*, May 16, 1926). Radek in a leading article in *Pravda* accused the PPS of rejecting proposals of the KPP for a united front (*ibid.* May 18, 1926); and an article from Warsaw dated May 17, 1926, in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 76, May 21, 1926, pp. 1209–1210, claimed that the KPP had rallied to Pilsudski's support more promptly than the PPS, and that Pilsudski was "objectively" serving the communist cause.

[4] *Die Internationale*, ix, No. 12, June 20, 1926, pp. 345–348.

[5] Sochacki, a leading communist deputy to the Sejm, is said to have called at Pilsudski's headquarters on the day after the *coup* to offer communist support, but to have been rebuffed (W. Pobog-Malinowski, *Najnowsza Historja Polityczna Polski*, ii (London, 1956), 482).

[6] On May 20, 1926, Pilsudski assured the French Ambassador that "during the battle they [the communists] had wished to profit by the mess, but that

that Pilsudski did not intend to place himself at the head of a revolution of any kind, and that his denunciation of corrupt party politics and his personal antipathy to the politicians of the Right were not matched by any inclination towards the Left. No section of the KPP was, however, yet ready to accept this disconcerting conclusion. An article by Warski in the party journal on May 19, 1926, and an article by Fiedler, a member of the party Left, which appeared in the *Rote Fahne* of May 23, 1926, both justified party support for Pilsudski on the score of his democratic and revolutionary aims.[7]

Reactions in Moscow were quicker and sharper. On April 4, 1926, the precarious situation in Poland had been discussed by a Polish commission of Comintern, consisting of Dzerzhinsky, Zinoviev, Chicherin and Voroshilov, the presence of the two last reflecting the growing preoccupation of Comintern with questions of Soviet foreign and defence policy. Dzerzhinsky thought that the principal danger, including the danger of war against the Soviet Union, came from the Polish national-democrats and their Right-wing allies; he did not expect danger from Pilsudski who was not really a Fascist. Chicherin had a more realistic recollection of Pilsudski's Russophobe past, and of his acts of aggression in 1920, and expressed apprehension of the consequences of the Pilsudski *coup*. Zinoviev temporized. No conclusions were reached, and no guidance given to the KPP.[8] No further activity by the commission is recorded till it was urgently recalled to life by the events in Warsaw. Hastily meeting, on May 15, 1926, at the moment of Pilsudski's victory, it resolved that a policy of neutrality for the KPP would have been inadmissible, but that support of Pilsudski was equally inadmissible; the party should have placed itself at the head of a Left and democratic bloc, committed to a "deepening" of the revolution. On the following day, with the new régime firmly installed in Warsaw, the commission sent a telegram bluntly calling the party's support of Pilsudski's armies an "error".[9] But these pronouncements were not published;

he had turned the mobile machine-guns [*auto-mitrailleuses*] against them" (J. Laroche, *La Pologne de Pilsudski* (1953), p. 41).

[7] Quoted in *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4 (24), 1963, p. 135.

[8] *Ibid.* No. 4 (24), 1963, pp. 130–131. For an earlier Polish commission of IKKI see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 387; they seem to have been *ad hoc* bodies without formal constitution or powers.

[9] Quoted from party archives in *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4 (24), 1963, pp. 135–136. Stalin is not named in these records as a member of the commission;

and the Moscow press, though increasingly hostile to Pilsudski, refrained from criticizing the KPP. The central committee of the KPP, meeting from May 23 to 26 in the relative security of Danzig, stubbornly reaffirmed its earlier line, and instructed the communist deputies in the Sejm to vote for Pilsudski in the forthcoming presidential election.[10] This persistence in error provoked an uncompromising response from Moscow. A telegram from the Polish commission of Comintern condemned the action of the central committee of the KPP and demanded its prompt reversal.[11]

The first public censure of the KPP in Moscow took the form not of an official statement, but of an article, prominently featured in *Pravda* on May 28, 1926, by the KPD leader Thälmann, professedly in reply to Fiedler's article in the *Rote Fahne*. What was needed, explained Thälmann, was to "destroy the illusion of the masses about 'Pilsudski's struggle against reaction'" and to "organize an independent and relentless mass struggle against Pilsudski and against open reaction"; and he summoned the KPP to "correct its errors in the most rapid and energetic way". The device of encouraging one party to criticize another was familiar in Comintern;[12] and nobody doubted the source of this harsh reproof. This time the message was received. On May 31, 1926, the day of the presidential election, the six communist deputies issued a declaration asserting that Pilsudski was the candidate, "not only of the petty bourgeois parties of the so-called Left, but of the capitalists, bankers, landowners and Fascists", and demonstratively cast their votes for Lancucki, an imprisoned party leader.[13] Radek in *Pravda* hailed this act of repentance as "a step

but, according to his own unconfirmed account more than a year later, he and Dzerzhinsky were responsible for insisting, against the contrary opinion of Zinoviev, that no support should be given to Pilsudski (Stalin, *Sochineniya*, x, 4–5). The commission was embarrassed by the precedent of June 1923 when the Bulgarian party was censured for failure to support Stambuliski (see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 153) — hence its insistence on the inadmissibility of a policy of neutrality; but the alternative proposed was hardly realistic.

[10] J. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), pp. 172–173; *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4 (24), 1963, p. 136.

[11] *Ibid.* No. 4 (24), 1963, p. 137.

[12] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 323.

[13] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 82, June 8, 1926, p. 1307; Pilsudski withdrew his candidature, and a puppet president was elected in the person of Moscicki.

towards the correction" of the KPP's error.[14] It was, however, marred by a note of dissent. Throughout the changes in the party leadership during the past two years, the Warsaw regional party committee, representing the hard core of industrial workers, had remained loyal to Warski and to the principles of the united front.[15] On the occasion of the presidential election, communist workers participated in a demonstration in Warsaw organized by the PPS in honour of Pilsudski; and the Warsaw committee was censured by the party central committee for this "deviation from the correct Bolshevik line under pressure of the petty bourgeoisie".[16] This reproof constituted the first symptom of a rift in the ranks of the party. Finally, the Soviet leaders declared themselves. On June 8, 1926, both Stalin and Bukharin, the former speaking in Tiflis, the latter in Moscow, denounced Pilsudski as an enemy of the revolution and referred to the "gross error" of the KPP. Bukharin directly compared Pilsudski with Mussolini; Stalin described Pilsudski's *coup* as "a struggle between two fractions of the bourgeoisie", adding that the Polish party was "weak, in the last degree weak", and that Thälmann's criticism of it had been absolutely correct".[17]

These rebukes added to the confusion generated in the minds of the KPP leaders by the events of May 1926. The repeated intervention of Comintern during the past two years in the strife of factions within the KPP, and the promotion or removal of individual leaders at its behest, had demoralized the party. On the present occasion the displeasure of Moscow had fallen impartially on all the factions and all the leaders; and the central committee itself had unanimously renounced the May error, and censured Warsaw workers who still hankered after common action with the PPS. Nevertheless, the likelihood of further intervention by Comintern in the choice of leaders bred an atmosphere of intrigue and encouraged the ambitions of fresh aspirants to power. The seeds of discord were sown in advance. It was in these conditions that the central committee of the KPP, at a session of June 10–12, 1926, made the first of many attempts to compose differences in

[14] *Pravda*, June 2, 1926.

[15] *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4 (24), 1963, pp. 128–129.

[16] *Ibid.* No. 4 (24), 1963, p. 137.

[17] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, viii, 168–172; Bukharin's speech appeared nearly three weeks later in *Pravda*, June 26, 1926. For the original publication of Stalin's speech see p. 324, note 42 above.

the party which ended merely in crystallizing the dissent. Both Warski and Lenski submitted draft theses. Both agreed that the Polish revolution was still in its bourgeois–democratic stage. But, while Warski believed that at this stage the petty bourgeoisie might play an important rôle, Lenski attacked this belief as the fundamental cause of the May error. He refused to concede any significant rôle to the petty bourgeoisie, insisted on the leadership of the proletariat, and convicted Warski of the Menshevik heresy of schematically dividing the two stages of the revolution.[18] A compromise resolution was adopted, and was grudgingly approved in Moscow as "the first serious step towards the correction of the May error".[19] When at the end of June 1926, the PPS organized a protest meeting against the attempts of Pilsudski to curtail the powers of the Sejm, and called for fresh elections, the KPP used the occasion to launch a campaign against the "bogus democratism" of the PPS, which failed to protect the rights of the workers. This was approved as an example of correct tactics.[20] The communist group in the Sejm also went over to the offensive. Sochacki, in a speech on July 19, 1926, opposing the ratification of the Polish–Rumanian treaty, declared that "Pilsudski means war", and that he was turning Poland into "a marionette in the imperialist plans of England directed against the Soviet Union".[21] But waverings in the KPP continued to excite disquiet in Moscow. At a meeting of the Polish commission of IKKI in Moscow on July 2, 1926, at which both Warski and Walecki were present, Trotsky argued that the Pilsudski régime was an instrument of "the Fascist struggle for stabilization", and, "like Fascism in general, plays a counter-revolutionary rôle". While refraining from personal attacks, he made clear his dissent from the attitude of the KPP leaders.[22] IKKI, in an open letter to the party early in August

[18] *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4 (24), 1963, pp. 138–139.

[19] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 310.

[20] *Tätigkeitsbericht der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale, Februar bis November 1926* (1926), p. 115.

[21] *Dokumenty i Materialy po Istorii Sovetsko-Pol'skikh Otnoshenii*, v (1967), 22–24; in a further speech of September 23, 1926, Sochacki spoke of "the Fascist government of Pilsudski", and "the truly bourgeois-landlord character of the régime" (*ibid.* v, 46–49). For the Polish–Rumanian treaty of March 26, 1926, see p. 76, note 4 above.

[22] *Byulleten' Oppozitsii* (Paris), No. 29–30, September 1932, pp. 20–24; two slightly different versions of the speech are in the Trotsky archives, T 2995, 3024.

1926, maintained its impartiality by asserting that "all the prominent representatives of the different lines in the party and in the present membership of its central committee bear the blame" for the grave errors that had been committed[23] — an abdication of judgment which did nothing to heal the breach between the two main factions in the KPP.

It was about this time that Lenski began to play a decisive and sinister rôle in the affairs of the KPP. During the summer of 1926 he was in Moscow as KPP delegate to Comintern.[24] Evidence of his activities and contacts is lacking. But he seems to have groomed himself, or to have been groomed, for a rôle not unlike that of Thälmann in the KPD, a leader who exercised authority in his party by the sure device of displaying an undeviating loyalty to Comintern and to the Soviet Union, and of undertaking no step not known to accord with the views of the authorities in Moscow. Lenski's hand may be conjecturally detected in an unsigned first article in the journal of Comintern for August 1926, which provided an authoritative assessment of the Pilsudski *coup* and of the rôle of the KPP. The *coup* had been a response to the precarious economic and political situation of Poland, and to the weakened position of France resulting from the Locarno treaty. Pilsudski, while posing as the champion of the unemployed worker, the White Russian peasant and the urban petty bourgeoisie, was in fact the agent of Anglo-American capital, committed to a policy of stabilization at the expense of the workers. The cause of the "monstrous aberration" of the KPP had been failure to recognize that "the bourgeois revolution in Poland is a stage long past", that

[23] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), pp. 310–311; the text has not been found.

[24] He spoke in this capacity at a memorial session of the Moscow Soviet on the death of Dzerzhinsky at the beginning of August 1926 (*Dokumenty i Materialy po Istorii Sovetsko-Pol'skikh Otnoshenii*, v (1967), 31, note 2). Lenski (for whom see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 192, note 3) had been appointed Polish commissar in the People's Commissariat of Nationalities in November 1917; doubts were said to have been expressed about his suitability for the post owing to his past membership of Rosa Luxemburg's party with its heretical views on nationalism, but were overruled (*Leninskii Sbornik*, xxi (1933), 95, note 2). His association with Stalin, then People's Commissar for Nationalities, may have helped his rise to power in the KPP in the nineteen-twenties, though it did not save him from liquidation ten years later.

the present alternatives were the dictatorship of large-scale capital, which was the aim of Fascism, and the dictatorship of the proletariat; between them no independent position was possible for the petty bourgeoisie, which must follow the leadership of one or the other. A "revolutionary dictatorship" was a dream which existed "only in the fantasy of Polish communists, and of the petty bourgeois masses themselves". No Polish leader, except Domski, was criticized by name in the article. But "all the principal representatives of the different party tendencies in the present central committee" were declared "responsible for these errors". The KPP was exhorted to "set its course for a rise in the revolutionary movement", to resist "the sacrifice of the independence of Poland to the designs of British imperialism", and to proclaim the "fundamental slogan" of a "*workers' and peasants' (Soviet) government*".[25] In spite of a show of impartiality between different "tendencies" in the party, the main shafts were plainly aimed at the leadership of "the three W's", still enmeshed in the tradition of the united front.

Crushed by this further rebuke, the central committee of the KPP met again in Warsaw at the end of August 1926 in a forlorn attempt to restore its unity and authority. It was able to pass unanimous resolutions describing propaganda against Pilsudski's preparations for war against the Soviet Union as the party's most important task, and condemning the "new opposition" in the Russian party. On the more controversial Polish issues the gulf could not be bridged. The rift, at first barely discernible but sedulously widened by the minority, was between those who, while condemning the May error, showed some indulgence for past party policies which had led up to it, and those who condemned without reservation the whole course of policy pursued under the leadership of the "three W's". The majority, led by Warski, Walecki, Kostrzewa and Brand, while purporting to bow to the decision of Comintern, put forward theses which were alleged by the minority to condone and continue the "May error" by stressing the rôle of the petty bourgeoisie. An ultra-Left group of four headed by Fiedler denied

[25] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 8 (57), August 1926, pp. 5–18; in token of its authoritative character, a translation appeared simultaneously in the KPP journal *Nowy Przeglad*, and was reprinted in *KPP: Uchwaly i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 360–376.

that capitalism had achieved any measure of stabilization, and demanded an out-and-out struggle against Pilsudski and against bourgeois democracy in the name of workers' democracy.[26] A centre group led by the more astute Lenski expressed its opposition to the majority in less uncompromising terms, which were accepted by the group of four. This produced a deadlock in the committee. In face of mounting resistance the majority withdrew its theses and substituted a compromise resolution which was adopted.[27] But the yielding attitude of the majority merely whetted the appetite of the minority, which on October 11, 1926, issued a statement condemning the resolution adopted in the previous month, and openly demanding a change of leadership; this move in turn provoked a bitter retort from the majority.[28] Meanwhile the party central committee proclaimed its unanimity on one point, in a manner highly gratifying to Moscow, by issuing a manifesto on the danger of war against the Soviet Union. "*Pilsudski in power means inevitable war*"; and Great Britain was named as the main instigator of war preparations. The manifesto also denounced any cooperation by the KPP with the PPS or with the Pilsudskist peasant party Wyzwolenie.[29] It did not mention the ostensibly non-communist Independent Peasants' Party recently founded under KPP or Comintern auspices.[30]

The seventh IKKI, meeting in November 1926, had little time for the Polish question. Bukharin, in his written report, referred mildly and unprovocatively to the errors of the KPP, and called for "a mobilization of the masses for the struggle against Pil-

[26] The views of the group were expressed in a slightly earlier article by Fiedler in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 105, August 10, 1926, p. 1745.

[27] No record of the session was published; for accounts which reflect the confusion of the proceedings see *Tätigkeitsbericht der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale, Februar bis November 1926* (1926), pp. 116–119, and *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4 (24), pp. 141–143. The brief account in *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 311, appears to confuse "the four" of the ultra-Left group with the four leaders of the majority.

[28] *Tätigkeitsbericht die Exekutive den Kommunistischen Internationale, Februar bis November 1926* (1926), p. 119; *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4 (24), 1963, p. 143.

[29] *Dokumenty i Materialy po Istorii Sovetsko-Pol'skikh Otnoshenii*, v (1967), 63–69.

[30] Bošković, in his speech at the seventh IKKI (see note 32 below), referred to this party, together with similar but more successful parties in Western White Russia and the Western Ukraine (for which see pp. 586–593 below); but it never seems to have enjoyed much support from the KPP.

sudski's Fascist régime".[31] Boškovič, speaking on peasant affairs, gave a hopeful, but unrealistic, account of communist efforts to unite the peasants of Poland on a programme of the transfer of land to them without compensation, and of the struggle against the bourgeoisie.[32] But other speakers soon returned to the disputes in the KPP. Brand expounded the views of the majority on capitalist stabilization; and Lominadze, who was just emerging in the Russian party as a flamboyant champion of the Left, attacked both Brand and Kostrzewa for painting too rosy a picture of the prospects of capitalist stabilization and exaggerating the significance of technological development.[33] Lenski handed in an argumentative statement designed to prove that only the views of the minority coincided with Bukharin's theses, and proposing reference of the question to a commission. The majority replied briefly by denouncing Lenski, and promised to expose his "false assertions" in the commission.[34] A minor Polish delegate read a statement, on behalf of the whole party, associating the KPP with the struggle of the leaders of the VKP(B) against the united opposition.[35] The resolution on Bukharin's report exhorted the "Polish comrades", in the briefest terms, to "carry out in a friendly way the line laid down".[36] But this curt dismissal did nothing to heal the breach. Further sessions of the party central committee in November 1926 and February 1927 merely aggravated the dispute, which spread to party cells and local organizations, and "degenerated into an embittered fractional struggle".[37] On January 21, 1927, the Polish commission of IKKI adopted yet another resolution demanding a termination of the fractional struggle and "energetic preparation for the great tasks" that confronted the party.[38]

During 1927 the situation in the KPP grew steadily worse: war between the groups paralysed party activity. Both factions, wooing the support of Moscow, sought to assimilate their disputes to the controversies current in Comintern, and to depict their views as the true mirror of Comintern orthodoxy; and the argu-

[31] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 108.
[32] *Ibid.* i, 198.
[33] *Ibid.* i, 310–314, 338–345.
[34] *Ibid.* i, 392–394.
[35] *Ibid.* ii, 54–56.
[36] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 641.
[37] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 311.
[38] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje* (1955), ii, 377–378.

ments on both sides, which proliferated in the party press, became artificial and scholastic. The majority tended to stress the stabilization of capitalism, the minority its temporary and partial character. In Polish terms, this meant that the majority was accused by the minority of allowing some measure of success to Pilsudski's economic policies. The majority regarded Fascism as a movement of the big bourgeoisie for the defence of capitalism in a period of crisis; the minority treated it as a movement of the bourgeoisie as a whole, proving that the bourgeois revolution was now a thing of the past, and that the bourgeoisie had passed into the counter-revolutionary camp. In Poland everything turned on the rôle assigned to the petty bourgeoisie, and especially the peasantry. The majority believed that Pilsudski did not have the full support of the petty bourgeoisie, and that the KPP could still find common ground with peasant parties of the Left and with some elements in the PPS, so that united front policies were still practicable. It even accused the minority of underestimating the rôle of the peasantry — a charge which carried the dangerous stigma of Trotskyism. The minority regarded the petty bourgeoisie as committed to Pilsudski's Fascist régime and incapable of playing any independent rôle. Collaboration between the KPP and petty bourgeois peasant parties or with "Left" elements in the PPS were ruled out; Fascism, as the last stage in the decay of bourgeois capitalism, would succumb only to a direct assault spear-headed by the party of the proletariat. In all these respects the majority exhibited a certain caution which exposed them to the ready charge of opportunism. The minority claimed more of the dynamic ardour of the revolution.

These ideological controversies were reflected in disputes about tactics. It would be fair to say that the majority had retained more of the democratic traditions of the first years of the party, and that the minority had accepted more easily the pattern of Bolshevization on the Russian model; the majority was more inclined to rely on mass action by the workers, the minority on action planned and organized by a small group of leaders. But these differences bulked less large in Moscow than in Warsaw. By this time the Soviet authorities, having secured a unanimous recantation of the May error, and having established resistance to Pilsudski's anti-Soviet policies as the prime duty of the KPP, wanted above all a solid and united party, strong enough to make this resistance effective.

To end the feud within the party seemed more important than to award to one side or the other a victory which would split it in two. Reluctance to displace "the three W's" was reinforced by the prestige which they, and particularly Warski, enjoyed among the rank and file of the workers.[39] So long as Bukharin's standing among the Soviet leaders, and his supreme authority in Comintern, remained unshaken, this attitude could be maintained. But the abrupt changes in the leadership of the KPP enforced by Comintern between 1924 and 1926 had undermined its independence. The tradition of intervention by Comintern, and the expectation that such intervention would recur, hung over the party and encouraged its leaders to look to Moscow for the verdict which would resolve its conflicts and rivalries. The past actions of Comintern had helped to make the unity which it now desired unattainable. The eagerness of both factions in the KPP to invoke the support of powerful patrons in Moscow, and to justify this support in ideological terms, had in the long run the disastrous effect of emptying the divisions in the KPP, as in other parties, of any independent content and turning them into adjuncts of struggles for power within the Russian party.

At length, in September 1927 the fourth party congress was convened, like its two predecessors, on Soviet soil, in the neighbourhood of Moscow. The congress coincided with the final stages of the struggle in the Russian party against the united opposition; and it is unlikely that the Soviet leaders gave much thought to it. But it proved a tough assignment for the Comintern representatives who strove to effect a settlement between the warring factions. Bukharin several months later offered a despairing retrospect on the congress as seen by Comintern. All the Polish leaders had been responsible for "the gross and harmful opportunist error" committed in May 1926; all had now disowned it; "political differences ... have been reduced to a minimum". Yet personal animosities were such that, without "extreme pressure from Comintern", the congress would have ended with the KPP split in two.[40] All other differences had been swallowed up in a struggle between the factions for control of the party. The main resolution

[39] According to J. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 179, Comintern feared the demoralizing effects of yet another change in the party leadership after the crises of 1924 and 1925.

[40] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 62–63.

of the report of the central committee, adopted under Comintern pressure by the congress, began by rejecting the charge brought by the minority that the majority had done nothing to rectify its May error and maintained the same "opportunist platform". But the text was strewn with routine formulas and scholastic distinctions. The stabilization of capitalism was once more a bone of contention:

> The representatives of the majority ... in general correctly assessed the facts and achievements of Polish capitalism under the Fascist régime. The representatives of the minority were inclined to deny these facts, especially in regard to manufacturing industry.

The rôle of the petty bourgeoisie was again exposed to abstruse analysis:

> The minority stressed the basic (i.e. capitalist) class character of the Fascist dictatorship as above all a dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie in the present period, but under-estimated the degree of consolidation of different strata, and failed to analyse the internal mechanics of the *coup d'état* (utilization of the petty bourgeoisie, of part of the proletariat). The majority, on the other hand, while recognizing the capitalist character of the Fascist dictatorship, and engaging in the elucidation of the specific forms and methods of its realization, nevertheless, through some false assertions tending to exaggerate the rôle of the petty bourgeoisie, weakened the thesis of the large-scale capitalist character of Fascism.

Kostrzewa, the only party leader named in the resolution, was censured for having said that the petty bourgeoisie had appeared "for the third time in the historical arena in the character of an independent political force", the two previous occasions having been the French and Russian revolutions. The resolution ended on familiar lines by impartially blaming both factions for the errors of the past and calling on both for "friendly joint work" in the future.[41] A further resolution on the tasks of the party spoke out more boldly. It defined "the chief task of Comintern and of all its sections at the present time" as being to defend the Chinese

[41] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje* (1955), ii, 383–397; a Russian version, showing minor variants, appeared in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 38 (112), 1927, pp. 8–15.

revolution and the USSR, and to "smash the plans of English imperialism", Polish Fascism being "a phenomenon not divorced from world imperialism". It ended with a firm declaration that "*the party must insist not on an automatic collapse of the Fascist dictatorship and a return to bourgeois democracy, but on the overthrow of the dictatorship by way of proletarian revolution, by way of armed insurrection.*"[42]

The elections at the end of the congress were equally the product of Comintern pressure in a desperate effort to secure agreement. The representation of the minority on the party central committee was raised from five to seven; and, though Warski resigned, or was removed from his seat on the committee, the majority retained eight seats, thus formally remaining a majority. But two representatives of IKKI, Manuilsky and Kuusinen, were added to the committee, so that the minority had only to win their support in order to outvote the majority.[43] Such a solution was likely only to perpetuate an atmosphere of intrigue and mutual animosity. A session of the party central committee in January 1928 called again for "*an immediate liquidation of the fractions in the KPP*", and expressed pious confidence that, as a result of the labours of the fourth congress, the "ideological differences of opinion" in the party had "grown somewhat less".[44] The sequel showed the hollowness of this belief. It might have seemed that the only way to preserve a semblance of unity would have been for Comintern to award the victory to one side and to eliminate the other from positions of authority in the party. But this was precisely the step which the Soviet leaders were still unwilling to take.

The rift in the party did not prevent it from wooing fresh recruits. The fourth congress in September 1927 was able to record a growth in the number of peasant members, especially in the

[42] *KPP: Uchwaly i Rezolucje*, ii, 398–435.

[43] *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4 (24), 1963, p. 150; J. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 202; Brand at the sixth congress of Comintern recalled that the majority, in the interests of unanimity, had even voted for minority candidates (*Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 493).

[44] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 8, January 24, 1928, pp. 150–151.

Western White Russian party, and of worker members; the KPP now claimed to command "an absolute majority of the workers" in the Warsaw and Dombrowa regions.[45] In the 1922 elections to the Sejm the KPP had polled 132,000 votes. In the still relatively free elections of March 1928 the KPP and other revolutionary groups had polled 900,000; in Warsaw the KPP had registered 67,000 votes against the 42,000 of the PPS, in Dombrowa 66,000 against 29,000.[46] The KPP secured seven seats in the Sejm;[47] at the first session the communist deputies, including Warski, were ejected from the chamber for shouting insults at Pilsudski. But increasing numerical strength brought a change in the character of the party. The hard core of industrial workers had been schooled in united front traditions to cooperate with workers in the PPS — the policy originally associated with the leadership of the "three W's". But the bankruptcy of this policy, after the disaster of May 1926, confused and discredited its supporters. The gulf between PPS and KPP had become unbridgeable; and the proletarian core of the party was diluted by a large influx, especially in Warsaw, of white-collar workers and intellectuals, who were more exposed than any other sector of the population to the harsh pressures of unemployment and social and economic discrimination. A high proportion of the new recruits were Jews; and anti-Semitism became a familiar ingredient of propaganda against the party.[48]

The new recruits tilted the balance in favour of the so-called "minority", notably in the Warsaw party organization, hitherto a stronghold of the majority. Majority and minority, now sharply divided and well-organized groups, clashed at the elections of

[45] *KPP: Uchwaly i Rezolucje* (1955), ii, 391.

[46] *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4 (24), 1963, pp. 176–177; the results were hailed as a communist victory in an article by Brand in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 28, March 13, 1928, pp. 535–536. As in other countries, communist voters in elections far outnumbered party members; no reliable statistics are available, but according to a party writer in *Nowe Drogi*, November–December 1948, p. 148, party membership in the nineteen-twenties never exceeded 20,000.

[47] The Ukrainian Sel'rob won seven seats, the White Russian Hromada three (for these parties see pp. 586–593 below); the total number of seats was 444, of which seventy-two were held by the national minorities.

[48] J. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 199, calls the communist demonstrators against the murder of Voikov in May 1927 "a handful of young hooligans, chiefly Jews" — an unlikely feature at that time. Statistics of Jewish members of the KPP were not available for this period; Jewish industrial workers were numerous in the Lodz textile factories, but rare in the heavy industries of Warsaw and the Dombrowa basin.

March 1928 on the well-worn crux of the application of the united front, though even "some comrades of the minority", according to Lenski's later admission, "did not rule out a possibility of applying tactics of the united front from above at the time of the electoral campaign".[49] On May 1, 1928, the May day processions of KPP and PPS clashed in the main square of Warsaw. Shots were fired; five demonstrators were killed and fifty seriously wounded.[50] A protest by IKKI branded "the leaders of the whole Second International" as responsible for the Warsaw massacre.[51] The embittered feelings aroused by these events in the KPP strengthened the hands of the minority. The majority, tainted by its past indulgence towards the PPS, was thrown on the defensive. Street fights occurred between followers of the two factions.[52] The Warsaw party committee, now captured by the minority, defied the orders of the party central committee, which by the margin of a single vote decided to disband it; and the central committee of the communist youth league, which had been "perverted by the minority into a tool of the fractional struggle", and had employed against the majority "the same methods used by the police against the communist movement", was also dissolved.[53]

This was the desperate situation confronting the sixth congress of Comintern when it met in July 1928. Bukharin in his main report offered a gloomy and pessimistic account of the proceedings of the fourth congress of the KPP, and ended with the acid comment that he would rather have a party headed by workers who would "fight as soldiers of the revolution" than by "leaders who fight continuously among themselves, and will ruin the party at

[49] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 426.

[50] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 43, May 4, 1928, pp. 763–764, which treated the incident as proof of "*the alliance of Fascism with social-democracy*"; *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4 (24), 1963, p. 151; J. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 206, puts the blame on the communists, who abused their opponents as "social-Fascists".

[51] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 45, May 11, 1928, pp. 893–894.

[52] J. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), pp. 206.

[53] These incidents were aired in recriminations between majority and minority delegates at the sixth congress of Comintern in July 1928; according to a minority spokesman, more than 700 members of the Warsaw organization "in countless resolutions" expressed their indignation at these proceedings, and only thirty to forty supported Kostrzewa's "splitting" policy (*Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 536). In Great Britain and France the communist youth leagues, with encouragement from Comintern, had figured in attacks on leaders of the CPGB and PCF for Rightist tendencies (see pp. 393–394, 503, note 144 above).

the moment of its gravest danger".[54] His appeal for unity found, however, little response in the ensuing debate. Kostrzewa, the principal speaker for the majority, carefully aligned the policy of the majority with current Comintern orthodoxy and depicted the sins of the minority as Rightist errors. But a note of anxiety could be heard in a passage in which she deprecated Bukharin's attempt to contrast "workers from the bench, capable of fighting", with the party leaders, and treated this as implying a proposal to "dismiss the leaders". Lenski attributed the crisis in the party to "opportunist errors and departures from the line of the fourth congress by the majority", and openly advocated the intervention of IKKI to put the affairs of the KPP in order; Brand in turn defended himself and denounced the tactics of the minority.[55] Skrypnik reminded the congress that Lenski had shared Warski's Trotskyite position in 1923, and, like Domski, had denounced the "Red Imperialism" of the Bolsheviks in 1920 — a charge vigorously rebutted by one of Lenski's supporters.[56] Mitskevich-Kapsukas, the Lithuanian member of the secretariat, delivered what was evidently intended as an official summing-up. He began by repeating the verdict on the error of May 1926: both "the group of comrade Kostrzewa" and "the group of comrade Lenski" were equally guilty. It was false to distinguish between the two groups as "Right" and "Left". Errors committed by both since the fourth party congress, though less grave than the earlier errors, had been errors of the Right. He quoted evidence to show that the mass of party members and workers were disgusted by "this criminal fractional struggle which has been shaking the KPP for almost two years". But his only proposal was yet another commission to bring it to an end.[57] Bukharin in his reply to the debate dismissed the Polish question without further comment.[58] The

[54] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 62–63.

[55] *Ibid.* i, 368–379, 421–428, 493–496.

[56] *Ibid.* i, 518, 538. For the speech of Skrypnik, who appeared under the pseudonym of Mikolos, see also pp. 591, 595 below; attempts from the platform to curtail his speech were frustrated by demands from the floor to prolong his speaking time.

[57] *Ibid.* i, 555–559.

[58] *Ibid.* i, 613. In the debate on the Comintern programme, Ryng for the minority and Brand for the majority resumed their quarrel, the former arguing that Poland was now fully bourgeois and ripe for a socialist revolution, and the latter retorting that the forthcoming revolution in Poland would have "in a significant degree a bourgeois-democratic content" (*ibid.*

long main resolution of the congress showed an equal disinclination to dwell on this troublesome question. It bracketed the Fascist dictatorships of Poland and Italy as displaying "more and more aggressive tendencies", and as "equivalent to a constant threat of war". Recognizing that the KPP had now "completely corrected the gross opportunist errors" of May 1926, it called once more for "a decisive termination of fractional strife", and gave to IKKI "a special mandate in the name of the congress to take all appropriate measures".[59]

The main step taken in pursuance of this mandate was to appoint to the central committee of the KPP three representatives of Comintern — Knorin, Popov and Poddubny. Not only did these appointments fail to heal the breach, but the members of the commission themselves were drawn into the dispute; Knorin was said to have sided with the minority, the other two with the majority.[60] This intervention was backed up by another open letter from IKKI to all members of the KPP, which declared that the consolidation of the KPP was a necessary condition of "the preparation of the KPP for the maturing of a revolutionary situation at the moment of the impending war". It insisted yet again on "the unconditional abolition of fractions and cessation of the fractional struggle"; the ending of the "monopoly" exercised, whether by the majority or by the minority, on regional party organizations; and "unconditional submission of the whole leadership of the central committee of the KPP" to Comintern decisions.[61] Accept-

iii, 35, 61), Bukharin appeared to lean towards the majority view, maintaining that the proletariat included both proletarianized peasants and proletarianized urban petty bourgeoisie, and that Pilsudski had been supported by "petty bourgeois plus fairly broad proletarian strata", but finally refused to pronounce between the two factions (*ibid.* iii, 138, 144, 150).

[59] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 778, 788.

[60] J. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 207. Knorin, an old Bolshevik of Latvian origin, was secretary of the Agitprop department of the party central committee in the early nineteen-twenties, and was transferred to Comintern, where he worked in the Central European secretariat; he was elected to the party central committee at the fifteenth party congress in December 1927 (*Malaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, v (1937), 596–597; *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, No. 8, 1965, p. 107; *Istoriya SSSR*, No. 2, 1967, pp. 105–110). Poddubny (perhaps a pseudonym) has not been identified, and does not appear again.

[61] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 469–483; for the adoption of the open letter on September 5, 1928, by a session of the presidium of IKKI at which Polish delegates were not present, see *Pravda*, September 28, 1928, and *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 111, October 2, 1928, p. 2117.

ance of these demands was formally registered by the central committee of the KPP in a resolution of November 1928;[62] IKKI took the occasion of a congratulatory letter on the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the KPP on December 15, 1928, to reiterate the demand for the cessation of the fractional struggle;[63] and a session of the party central committee in January 1929 succeeded in adopting a unanimous resolution on the duty of the party to rally to the defence of the Soviet Union and to wage a relentless struggle against Pilsudski's Fascist régime.[64] Meanwhile fresh fuel for discord in the KPP had been provided by a split in the PPS in the autumn of 1928, when a group headed by Jaworski, which continued to proclaim its hostility to communism, attacked the Pilsudski régime for its defiance of parliamentary democracy.[65] This situation inspired Stefanski to publish in the KPP journal an article in which, quoting the authority of Warski, he sought to establish a more indulgent attitude to the parliamentary democrats of the PPS Left, and rejected the application to them of the label of "social-Fascism".[66] While Kostrzewa hastened to dissociate herself from this now heretical view, the article provoked a fresh outburst of anger from the minority.

The trade union question was a constant bone of contention. At the fourth congress of Profintern in March 1928, Witkowski, the principal Polish trade union delegate, sharply criticized the pusillanimous attitude of the KPP to strikes. In a strike in the Lodz textile industry in March 1927 involving 100,000 workers, the party had failed to take over the leadership, even when "the reformist trade union bureaucracy betrayed the strike". In this strike, and in a strike of metal workers in Warsaw in the following

[62] *KPP: Uchwaly i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 484–489.

[63] *Ibid.* ii, 490–492.

[64] *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4 (24), 1963, p. 152; the resolution was published, but was not reprinted in *KPP: Uchwaly i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 493, on the ground that "its fundamental theses were included in an expanded form in the resolution of the party politburo of April 1929" (see pp. 583–584 below).

[65] For an account of the split see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 109, September 28, 1928, p. 2085; for an article by a representative of the KPP minority explaining that no distinction could be drawn between the two wings of the PPS, and that Jaworski was perhaps the more dangerous as a "masked enemy", see *ibid.* No. 115, October 9, 1928, p. 2267.

[66] *Nowy Przeglad*, No. 11–12, 1928, pp. 122–141.

year, the majority, "under the influence of an erroneous attitude to 'conciliationist' parties", was said to have practised "tactics of the united front from above". On the crucial issue of splitting the unions, Witkowski continued to hedge. He asserted that "the working class, the trade unions, can be won only as the struggle proceeds", and preached "unity from below". But he emphatically maintained the need to remain in the reformist unions, and to fight against expulsions, and avoided any proposal to form separate Red trade unions.[67] In the next two months a strike wave spread to the textile industry in Bialystok and Lodz. In the latter town, after a strike had been voted by the workers, it was called off by reformist trade union leaders; and the KPP, under pressure from the majority in the central committee, rejected a proposal to call a strike independently of them.[68] The sixth congress of Comintern made no specific pronouncement on the Polish trade unions. But in its general resolution, in conformity with the turn to the Left, it insisted on the importance of strike action taken, if necessary, "against the will of the reformist trade union bureaucracy".[69] The situation reflected that prevailing in the KPD and in the German trade unions. The now dominant Lenski group, firmly geared to Comintern policies, exhorted trade union members of the KPP to demand and organize industrial action in defiance of the decision of the reformist trade union leaders; and the argument of the former majority that this policy merely had the effect of alienating the party from the mass of workers, whose loyalty to existing trade union leaders could not be shaken, was condemned as heretical. But the party leaders still recoiled from the logical step of demanding the formation of separate Red unions.

In the autumn of 1928 another strike in the explosive textile factories at Lodz caused further strife and recrimination in the KPP. This time the Polish and Baltic commissions of IKKI took a hand, and drafted a resolution which was adopted by the political secretariat of IKKI on December 10, 1928. The resolution, while in general praising the Lodz party organization, convicted the strike committee of "a legalistic attitude to the PPS unions" and

[67] *Protokoll über den Vierten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (1928), pp. 160–166.

[68] This confused, and no doubt tendentious, account was given by a spokesman of the minority at the sixth congress of Comintern (*Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 535).

[69] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 782–783.

of an incorrect interpretation of the united front; this apparently consisted in the admission of a large number of representatives of the PPS unions to the committee. The Lodz party organization was also blamed for not having seized the opportunity to create an independent trade union in opposition to the existing unions.[70] When the resolution was discussed in the political secretariat, Humbert-Droz proposed to omit the passage on the creation of an independent union, on the ground that this committed IKKI to the principle of forming new revolutionary unions. His proposal was rejected.[71] Two months later, however, the political secretariat reconsidered its views on the question of principle, and pronounced the formation of new unions in countries where the trade union movement was not already split to be undesirable. Humbert-Droz, welcoming this decision, noted that the resolution of December 10, 1928, on the Lodz strike was inconsistent with it; but nothing appears to have been done to clear up the anomaly.[72] These shifts in Moscow cannot have helped to relieve the tensions within the KPP. Meanwhile, the split in the PPS led by Jaworski was followed by a split in the PPS unions,[73] which made the line of non-cooperation with any PPS union all the more difficult to justify. The session of the central committee of the KPP which attempted to grapple with these problems in January 1929 seems to have been the last occasion when even the forms of joint action were preserved between majority and minority in the KPP. A resolution was adopted apparently by unanimous vote, but was never published and was revised by the committee three months later.[74] Mutual exasperation and animosity had now struck so deep that nothing could preserve or restore the semblance of unity in the central committee but a victory which would place the control of the party unconditionally in the hands of one group or the other.

[70] The resolution was not published in full, but a lengthy summary appeared in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 143, December 28, 1928, p. 2860.

[71] J. Humbert-Droz, *De Lénine à Staline* (Neuchatel, 1971), p. 370.

[72] *Ibid.* pp. 370–374; divisions of opinion in the Soviet leadership on this issue were reflected in Lozovsky's controversy with Pyatnitsky and Gusev in the spring of 1929 (see pp. 240–241 above).

[73] This was referred to by Lozovsky a year later at the central council of Profintern (*Protokoll der VI Session des Zentralrats der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (1930), p. 275), but does not appear to have had any lasting effect.

[74] See p. 583 below.

The final *dénouement* depended, however, on events in Moscow rather than in Warsaw. The gradual shift in Comintern to the Left during 1928 tilted the balance in favour of the minority in the KPP, and enabled it more plausibly to convict its opponents of Rightist errors. The crushing defeat of the Bukharin–Rykov–Tomsky group in the politburo and the presidium of the party control commission on February 9, 1929, heralded the introduction of harsher and more uncompromising procedures into Comintern affairs. Bukharin was condemned as the protagonist of a Right deviation, and as the patron of Rightists in the KPD; and the extension of the analogy to the KPP, where Bukharin had always played the rôle of a conciliator, was almost automatic. Manuilsky gave a sly signal that Comintern was ready to abandon its show of neutrality between the Polish leaders. Busying himself in Berlin with the affairs of the KPD, he wrote an article attacking Brandler and the party Right, in which he incidentally condemned the Rightist views of Kostrzewa and her supporters on stabilization.[75] Lenski, in a frontal attack on the majority, now assailed the central committee resolution of January 1929 on the ground that it was tainted by the Right deviation, and did not sufficiently recognize the PPS, like social-democrats everywhere, as the principal enemy. On April 8, 1929, at the moment when the disclosure of Bukharin's disgrace was being prepared in Moscow,[76] the party politburo in Warsaw issued a revised version of the January resolution of the central committee. The resolution, though correctly emphasizing "*the danger of armed attack on the Soviet Union*", required extension and precision on certain points. It had taken too seriously the pretensions of the Left wing of the PPS, and failed to see in it "the most menacing symptom of the Right danger". The January resolution had been adopted at a moment when the secretariat of IKKI in Moscow was emphasizing the need to create new revolutionary trade unions. Now that more prudent counsels had prevailed in Moscow,[77] this attitude was pronounced heretical, and the resolution was suitably revised. The amended resolution was, however, not free from the usual ambiguities. It repeated the now routine assertion that the Fascist dictatorship

[75] J. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 217; the article appeared in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 15, February 15, 1929, pp. 285–290.

[76] See Vol. 2, p. 91.

[77] See p. 582 above.

could be overthrown only by proletarian revolution. But, while sternly condemning individual attempts to apply "the united front from above", it still demanded "a united front of the masses", especially in the anti-war campaign, in campaigns against high prices and taxes, as well as in "factory committees, delegations to the USSR, etc.".[78]

The *coup de grâce* was delivered at the session of the central committee of the KPP (the "sixth plenum") on June 18–25, 1929. The session was attended by Knorin and Popov, the representatives of IKKI. The authority of the old leaders was now hopelessly compromised. Warski was no longer a member of the committee; Walecki was in Moscow as Polish delegate at the headquarters of Comintern; and Brand had also been seconded for work in the Soviet Union. Kostrzewa and Stefanski, the chief spokesmen of the old majority, fought a losing battle against the Lenski group, which by the narrowest of majorities dominated the proceedings.[79] Kostrzewa pleaded in vain that advantage should be taken of clashes between different sections of the bourgeoisie, thus reverting to the heresy of the revolutionary rôle of the petty bourgeoisie.[80] Stefanski was said at first to have admitted his errors, but then "*de facto*" retracted the admission.[81] The main resolution adopted at the session rehearsed once again all the issues which had divided the party, and attacked Kostrzewa, Stefanski and Brand by name. It criticized the committee's January resolution — notably its proposal to create new revolutionary trade unions instead of continuing to work in existing PPS unions. A brief resolution endorsed "the Bolshevik tactics and strategy" employed by the Russian party in its struggle against the Right danger; and a further resolution requested the party journal to undertake "a critical appraisal of the ideological inheritance" derived by the KPP from its two progenitors — Rosa Luxemburg's social-democratic party and the PPS Left; this seemed to reveal an odd determination to perpetuate a division which had ceased to have

[78] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje* (1955), ii, 493–505.

[79] The account in *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4 (24), 1963, pp. 152–154, is based on unpublished party archives; the only recorded vote showed nine supporters of the new majority, seven against and one abstention. The votes of Knorin and Popov presumably turned the scale.

[80] J. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 224.

[81] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 225–226.

any real significance.[82] Kostrzewa and Stefanski were not elected to the politburo, which included Knorin and was dominated by the former minority.[83]

The tenth IKKI meeting in Moscow on July 3–19, 1929, had little to do but register satisfaction with this transformation in the KPP. No representative of the former majority appeared at the session. Purman denounced Pilsudski's Fascist régime and preparations for war against the Soviet Union. Lenski repeated his indictment of Kostrzewa and Stefanski.[84] Only Skrypnik, speaking as a delegate of the autonomous White Russian party, delicately insinuated that the new leadership might not be entirely free from the faults of the old, and suggested greater attention to the aspirations of the national minorities.[85] Mitskevich-Kapsukas, as the impartial spokesman of IKKI, greeted what had happened as "a decisive step forward", and hoped that "the best part of the political friends of Kostrzewa and Stefanski" would rally to the decisions of the new central committee. Kuusinen, in winding up the debate, looked forward to "a coming together of the best Bolsheviks of both fractions", but gave a clear preference to the views of Lenski.[86] The main resolution of the session merely listed the KPP among parties which had achieved a process of Bolshevization and "a purge of the opportunists".[87] Finally, in a resolution of October 16, 1929, the political secretariat of Comintern congratulated the KPP on having achieved "consolidation" on the basis of decisions of the tenth IKKI and of the sixth plenum of the party central committee: it noted with approval that "the overwhelming majority of the party, irrespective of its former fractional affiliation, condemned the Rightist deviations of Kostrzewa, Stefanski and Brand".[88] For more than two years Comintern had demonstratively refused to take sides between the warring factions. It

[82] *KPP: Uchwaly i Rezolucje* (1955), ii, 506–555; the resolutions are dated "August 1929", which suggests that the committee may have remained in session till after the session of the tenth IKKI. At that session the heretical Skrypnik argued that former PPS members of the KPP bureaucracy were no less open to criticism than those who had a "social-democratic Rosa Luxemburg past" (*Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 178).

[83] *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4 (24), 1963, p. 154.

[84] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1929), pp. 108–112, 224–226.

[85] *Ibid.* pp. 176–182. [86] *Ibid.* pp. 499–500, 624.

[87] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 885.

[88] *KPP: Uchwaly i Rezolucje* (1955), ii, 556–559.

would not be fair to say that the Comintern leaders imposed Lenski on the KPP — even in the sense in which Thälmann was imposed on the KPD. It was Lenski who wooed them rather than they who particularly wanted to instal Lenski in power. But it was the constant intervention by Comintern over a long period of years which encouraged the forces of disruption within the party, and ultimately frustrated the quest for unity by agreement. Moreover, within Comintern the policy of neutrality was especially associated with Bukharin; and, when he fell, it was easy to identify the old leaders with him, and Lenski with Stalin. The KPP entered on the path of total and lifeless subservience which led to its annihilation at Stalin's hands in the purges.

The two parties subordinate to the KPP, the communist parties of Western White Russia (KPZB) and of the Western Ukraine (KPZU), continued to be sources of embarrassment rather than of strength.

The KPZB seems to have been almost wiped out by the mass secession of the summer of 1925,[89] though it was claimed that its numbers were rising again by the beginning of 1926. But such effectiveness as the communist movement had among the peasants of the region was to be found in the Hromada, a professedly non-party peasant organization founded in 1925 under communist leadership, which proclaimed such slogans as confiscation of large estates, national self-determination and a worker–peasant government.[90] Working in opposition to the Pilsudskist peasant party Wyzwolenie and its affiliated White Russian party Stronnictwo Chlopskie, it was subject to intermittent persecutions, which were intensified after Pilsudski's seizure of power. Breaking up of meetings and arrests of leaders were frequent in the winter of 1926–1927, and were regarded as symptoms of a campaign against communists and against the national minorities.[91] In January 1927 a meeting of scientific and cultural workers in Western White

[89] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 384.

[90] It was officially described as "a legal organization closely linked with the KPZB and KPP" (*Dokumenty i Materialy po Istorii Sovetsko-Pol'skikh Otnoshenii*, v (1967), 98, note 2).

[91] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 1, January 4, 1927, pp. 12–13, No. 13, February 1, 1927, p. 254. The first of these articles reported 1200 cells of the Hromada with 100,000 members, the second 2000 with 60,000 members; all these figures are likely to have been exaggerated.

Russia protested against the persecution of the national movement and the closure of schools giving instruction in the White Russian language.[92] In March 1927 the Hromada was officially banned, and its activities driven underground. It was never easy to determine, in regions where national minorities predominated, whether the appeal of such revolutionary organizations was primarily directed to national or to social and economic discontents. The two elements were inextricably intertwined.[93] This fusion was favourable to communist activity among peasants who belonged to national minorities. By the same token, however, it proved an embarrassment to communists of the ruling nation, who often found it invidious to support the secession from the national state of territories inhabited by minorities. In Poland, the insistence of Comintern on the unconditional right of Western White Russia and the Western Ukraine to separation may well have looked like a legacy of earlier Russian hostility to Polish claims and little enthusiasm was manifested in the ranks of the KPP for the cause of the national minorities. The fourth congress of the KPP in September 1927, probably under Comintern pressure, called for "a bloc of proletariat, peasants and oppressed peoples under the leadership of the KPP", and complained that the party had "not yet sufficiently learned to realize a bloc ... with the workers of Western White Russia and Western Ukraine"; the suppression of the White Russian Hromada had "not met with the proper echo in the Polish masses".[94] A mass trial of members of the Hromada in Vilna in the spring of 1928 received indignant publicity in Moscow.[95] It dragged on for more than two months, and led to the condemnation of thirty-seven persons to a total of 209 years' hard labour.[96]

[92] *Dokumenty i Materialy po Istorii Sovetsko-Pol'skikh Otnoshenii*, v (1967), 96–98.

[93] For Stalin's insistence that the national question could not be separated from the peasant question see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 402.

[94] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 451, 456; protests against the suppression of the Hromada "had an independent character only in Western White Russia" (*Die Komintern vor dem 6. Kongress* (1928), p. 315).

[95] Its opening was reported on the first page of *Pravda*, February 29, 1928; for a protest by the presidium of Krestintern see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 24, March 6, 1928, p. 472.

[96] *Ibid.* No. 51, May 29, 1928, p. 926; according to a report *ibid.* No. 29, March 16, 1928, p. 559, Guryn, who had led the secession in 1925, appeared as a witness for the prosecution.

The almost complete impotence of the KPZB made its relations with the KPP and with Comintern uneventful and relatively easy. A congress of the KPZB held on Soviet soil at Minsk was addressed on November 26, 1926, on behalf of the KPP by Sochacki, who attacked the plans of "the western imperialists and the Polish Fascist government" for an invasion of Lithuania and an attack on the Soviet Union.[97] But the divisions in KPP between majority and minority reproduced themselves in the subordinate party; and Comintern imposed the same "neutral" solution which was accepted, though with reluctance, by the minority.[98] The report of IKKI to the sixth congress of Comintern in July 1928 offered routine praise of the resilience displayed by the KPZB, and noted its close relations with the KPP.[99] The delegate of the KPZB at the congress remarked on the exposed position of Polish White Russia, which would be the "rear" in a Polish offensive against the Soviet Union; this lent importance to the "modest rôle" of the party. He admitted "significant successes" of the Fascist dictatorship in wooing *kulaks* and middle peasants, but romantically claimed that the party was at the head of "an organization a hundred thousand strong of the toiling masses of White Russian peasantry, the worker–peasant Hromada", notwithstanding its dissolution as a legal institution. He was careful to deny that the KPZB put the national issue before the social issue, or had ever sought an alliance with *kulaks*; and he attacked Brand and Kostrzewa, and defended Lenski.[100] His speech was a model of tact and conformity. This did not deter Purman, the representative of the KPP Left, from complaining a year later of the weakness of the KPZB; its activity consisted mainly in the issue of "directives and instructions whose execution we cannot so far verify".[101]

The rôle of the KPZU was far more complex and embarrassing. Ukrainian nationalism, both in the Ukrainian SSR and in the Western Ukraine (the Polish province of East Galicia), was a more active force than White Russian nationalism on either side of the frontier. The Ukrainian communist party (KP(B)U) in the

[97] *Dokumenty i Materialy po Istorii Sovetsko-Pol'skikh Otnoshenii*, v. (1967), 233–235.

[98] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 566.

[99] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 318.

[100] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 562–566.

[101] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 110.

Soviet Union was a more powerful body than its White Russian counterpart, and had more intimate links with its co-nationals on the Polish side of the frontier. Relations with the KPP were correspondingly more difficult.[102] The friction occurring in 1925 over the issue of self-determination, and the support given by Comintern to a recognition of the right of secession,[103] seems to have triggered off a strong nationalist movement in the KPZU which, working through the communist-sponsored but non-party peasant union Sel'rob (the counterpart of the White Russian Hromada), played down social and agrarian issues, and sought to unite the whole peasant population on a platform of national independence. The situation was complicated by the existence in the Western Ukraine of an influential Ukrainian National-Democratic Union (UNDO) of bourgeois complexion, strongly hostile to the Soviet Union, maintaining close links with underground organizations in the Soviet Ukraine, and disposed to purchase toleration from the Pilsudski régime by its support of anti-Soviet policies. A nationalist wing of the KPZU, which dominated the central committee of the party, was alleged to have close affiliations with a national movement in the Ukrainian SSR led by Shumsky, which during these years pursued a vigorous campaign in the name of Ukrainian nationalism against policies dictated from Moscow, and struggled to import an effective content into the constitutional fiction of Ukrainian sovereignty. At a KPZU conference in the spring of 1927, "nationalist deviations in the ranks of the KP(B)U met with at first masked and then fairly open support from a majority of the central committee of the KPZU".[104] These developments made the attitude of the KPZU and of its leader Vasilkov anathema in Moscow. The KPP, under the leadership of Warski and Kostrzewa, reacted slowly. In September 1927 the fourth congress of the KPP reproved its central committee for having failed to give attention to "the growth in the leadership of the KPZU of an extremely dangerous opportunism", which had

[102] For the origins of the KPZU see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 190–191.

[103] See *ibid.* Vol. 3, pp. 386, 388, and pp. 592–593 below.

[104] Quoted from the resolution of the KP(B)U of March 12–16, 1928 (see 590–591 below); according to Skrypnik, who was present at the conference, the central committee of the KPZU "in fact took the line of supporting the chauvinist Ukrainian-nationalist deviation" (*Pyatnadtsatyi S"ezd VKP(B)*, i (1961), 718–719), and "went over to a line of out-and-out-nationalism" (*Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 516).

neglected the poor and middle peasant, and played into the hands of the Pilsudski régime by encouraging its attempts to win over the Ukrainian bourgeoisie for a policy of war against the USSR and the Ukrainian SSR.[105] Even now neither the KPP nor Comintern was ready for drastic action; and Vasilkov, for all his errors, remained for some months longer at the head of the KPZU.[106]

The decisive moment came in January 1928 — apparently as the sequel to a similar purge in the KP(B)U. The central committee of the KPP, at its session of January 1928, devoted "much time" to the Ukrainian question, resolving to cancel a number of resolutions of the KPZU and requesting the leaders of that party to bring its resolutions into line with those of the KPP.[107] Vasilkov and his principal adjutant Turyansky were removed from the leadership of the KPZU, and with them most of the party officials, so that the party was obliged "to build up anew the whole party apparatus and the party organization, which under the former leadership was for the most part embodied in the apparatus".[108] A resolution of the ninth IKKI in February 1928 pronounced that "the Vasilkov–Turyansky group expresses the political leanings of the top stratum of the petty bourgeoisie, of the *kulaks* and of the petty bourgeois nationalist intelligentsia"; that its refusal to raise the slogan of confiscation of land without compensation was tantamount to support for the agrarian policy of Pilsudski; and that it was aiding "the most implacable enemy" of the proletariat, Polish imperialism. The dissident group, which had already set up an independent peasant organization and split the Sel'rob, was excluded from the ranks of Communist International.[109] On March 12–16, 1928, a joint session of the central committee and the central control commission of the Ukranian Communist Party, itself now purged of the taint of Shumskyism, adopted a long resolution which denounced Vasilkov and his supporters as "traitors and renegades from communism", and repeated the conclusions, and much of the phraseology, of the ninth IKKI. The resolution, while condemning "Ukrainian nationalist deviations", also issued a caution against "lack of principle and a contemptuous

[105] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 391–394.

[106] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 537.

[107] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 8, January 24, 1928, p. 151; for this session see p. 575 above.

[108] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), pp. 318–319.

[109] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 767.

attitude to the national question", and concluded that the KPZU could achieve victory "only with the proletariat of Poland, under the leadership of the general staff of the revolution in Poland in the KPP".[110] This was the only mention of the KPP in this resolution or in that of the ninth IKKI. The initiative rested firmly in the hands of Comintern.

These events were the subject of controversy and recrimination at the sixth congress of Comintern in July 1928. Lenski accused the majority in the KPP of supporting "the nationalist-opportunist deviations of the former leading group of Vasilkov", and was sharply refuted by Skrypnik who indicted the minority.[111] The question found no place in the resolutions of the congress. But the KPZU, perhaps stimulated by these proceedings, contrived to hold its third congress at the end of August 1928. It repeated the condemnation of Vasilkov and Turyansky as *de facto* agents of Fascism, and demanded "a struggle against all influences of bourgeois Ukrainian nationalism", as well as against "Polish great-power chauvinism and Jewish nationalism". On the other hand, it insisted on "the unity of the revolutionary movement in Poland", and rejected "any kind of separation in this respect".[112] The open letter from IKKI to KPP after the congress endorsed the condemnation of "the former leadership of the KPZU (the Vasilkov–Turyansky group)", which had "failed to notice the '*kulak*' ";[113] and on September 26, 1928, the presidium of IKKI rejected an appeal of Vasilkov and Turyansky for reinstatement.[114] In April 1929 the international control commission of Comintern set up a committee to investigate the alleged association of Shumsky and his associate Maximovich with the Vasilkov–Turyansky group. The

[110] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional,* No. 27–28 (1953–154), 1928, pp. 139–143.

[111] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 425, 517–518; see also p. 578 above. Another spokesman of the KPP minority replied to Skrypnik (*ibid.* i, 535–538), and the wrangle continued in increasingly bitter terms at later sessions (*ibid.* ii, 79–83, 106).

[112] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz,* No. 117, October 16, 1928, pp. 2306–2307. The article reporting the congress purported to come from Lemburg (Lvov); but the congress is unlikely to have taken place on Polish soil, and may have been held in Moscow.

[113] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje,* ii (1955), 479; for the open letter see p. 579 above.

[114] *Pravda,* September 29, 1928; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz,* No. 113, October 5, 1928, p. 2198. For the appeal see *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), v, 136.

two accused presented two declarations condemning the splitting tactics of the Vasilkov group, and protesting against its use of their names to justify its actions. These were rejected as insufficiently categorical. Shumsky received a severe reprimand and a warning; Maximovich was expelled from Comintern.[115] About the same time the central committee of the KPZU claimed, not very convincingly, that the hopes of the third party congress for a sharpening of the class struggle in the villages were in course of fulfilment.[116]

The issue of self-determination still hovered in the background of discussions of policy in the KPZB and KPZU. The third congress of the KPP in March 1925 had clearly endorsed the right of national self-determination to the point of secession from Poland, which in these two areas could in practice mean only annexation to the USSR; and an attempt in the KPZB later in the same year to go back on the principle was firmly repressed.[117] But this conclusion was accepted in the KPP with some ingrained reluctance, attributable partly, perhaps, to a covert Polish nationalism, but partly also to the Luxemburgist tradition which, though never mentioned except in terms of reprobation, was still alive in many sections of the KPP. Rosa Luxemburg's scorn of Polish nationalism was no longer relevant and could be forgotten; her scorn of Ukrainian nationalism was remembered.[118] A certain ambiguity marked the resolutions of the much divided fourth congress of the KPP in September 1927. The diagnosis of the nationalist policy of the KPZU leaders as an "extremely dangerous opportunism"[119] was balanced by recognition, with specific reference to the Western Ukraine and Western White Russia, of "the right of self-determination of subject peoples to the point of secession", though any mention of this right was conspicuously absent from the section of the resolution dealing with Upper Silesia, when its application might have meant annexation to Germany.[120] Even the recognition by the KPP of the right of secession for Western White Russia and

[115] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 44, May 22, 1928, pp. 1069–1070, which published the report of the committee and the second of the two declarations.

[116] *Ibid.* No. 31, April 9, 1929, pp. 709–710.

[117] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 383–384, 386.

[118] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 1, p. 262, note 1.

[119] See p. 589 above.

[120] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 455–457.

Western Ukraine was never, perhaps, quite whole-hearted. The KPP, wrote one of its leaders, "must, while incessantly preaching the solution of self-determination to the point of separation, never forget the close fraternal alliance of the proletarians of all the peoples of Poland".[121]

Sniping was resumed at the sixth congress of Comintern in July 1928, when the delegate of the KPZU reminded Lenski that the Left in the KPP had once supported "the slogan of autonomy".[122] The delegate of the KPZB admitted that his party had committed "a big mistake" in putting forward the slogan of autonomy in the spring of 1926, but claimed that it had corrected the error later in the year, and exonerated Lenski and the minority in the KPP from any responsibility for it, taking sides with them against the majority. Skrypnik, on the other hand, attributed the error to "representatives of the present minority".[123] "Anti-Ukrainian pogroms" in the Western Ukraine on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the Polish republic in November 1928 evoked, according to Skrypnik, "scarcely an echo from the KPP".[124] At the tenth IKKI in July 1929 it was alleged that the "social-Fascists", tacitly supporting the Pilsudski régime, "avail themselves of the deceptive slogan of national autonomy".[125] But the issue of autonomy in the KPZB and KPZU had become stale and irrelevant, and was allowed to drop out of sight. "The task of the KPZB and KPZU," observed the central committee of the KPP in its resolution of August 1929, "is a sharpening of the struggle against the occupying authorities, ... in particular, of the struggle against war".[126]

[121] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 69, July 20, 1928, p. 1249.

[122] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1928), i, 548; for past attitudes to these questions see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 386.

[123] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Komintera* (1928), i, 564, ii, 80.

[124] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.). p. 181.

[125] *Ibid.* p. 822.

[126] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 539.

CHAPTER 80

THE AMERICAN PARTY

At the fourth party congress in Chicago in August 1925 Comintern had firmly placed the leadership of the Workers' Party of America in the hands of the Ruthenberg group.[1] The small amount of satisfaction accorded at the sixth IKKI in February 1926 to the Foster minority group was evidence not so much of divided counsels in Moscow as of an unwillingness to become involved in the factional struggles which continued to disfigure the troublesome American party.[2] No American questions were on the agenda of the seventh IKKI meeting in November 1926; and Bukharin in his report admitted that "our tasks in this country are for the present still very modest".[3] The party was represented only by Lovestone, Ruthenberg's chief lieutenant, who used the pseudonym Birch, and by Foster's second, Bittelman. Both spoke briefly and unprovocatively in the main debate on Bukharin's report. Lovestone asserted that "American imperialism has not yet reached the highest point of its development", and that "America is fighting England on many fronts", but contrived to attack both Trotsky's remark that the United States had "put Europe on rations", and Treint's belief that capitalist Europe would unite against capitalist America. Bittelman declared that "American capitalism is still moving upwards", and mildly voiced an odd complaint of the minority group that "the Communist International and our party have not yet formulated the prospects that lie before us".[4] At the end of the debate on the opposition, Lovestone explained that, owing to the backwardness of the American working class, "the example, the rôle and the experience of the Soviet Union" were important "revolutionary factors" for the American party, and on behalf of the party read a declaration hailing "the shining example

[1] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 409–411.

[2] See *ibid.* Vol. 3, 520–522.

[3] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 26.

[4] *Ibid.* i, 220–230, 237–239; for Bukharin's report see pp. 133–134 above; for Treint's argument see p. 135 above.

of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" and denouncing the opposition.[5]

The sudden death on March 2, 1927, of Ruthenberg, the efficient though far from charismatic general secretary of the party,[6] at once produced a crisis of leadership. The young, active and ambitious Lovestone was nominated by the political committee as acting secretary, but had too many enemies in the party to step into Ruthenberg's shoes without a struggle. Foster and Cannon decided to back Weinstone, the head of the New York organization under Ruthenberg, who was ready to play with the minority group. In the factional struggle which soon broke out both sides appealed to Comintern, and the party was eventually invited to send a delegation representing both factions to the eighth IKKI, which was to meet in Moscow on May 18, 1927.[7] The session was completely overshadowed by the threat of war, by the British and Chinese crises, and by the bitter controversy with the opposition arising out of them. Nobody wanted to discuss the American factional quarrel; and the only recorded activity of the American delegation was to sponsor the resolution threatening Trotsky and Vujovič with expulsion from IKKI.[8] At the end of the session, a commission was set up to deal with the affairs of the American party under the presidency of Ewert, the KPD leader already suspect as a "conciliator", now functioning under the *alias* Braun; it is fair to guess that he owed the appointment to a desire to find employment for him outside the ranks of the KPD.[9]

On July 1, 1927, no doubt after much hard bargaining, the commission produced an agreed resolution. Its first section was devoted to the danger of American imperialism. The second pronounced that "American capitalism is still on the upward grade of development", though "the time is approaching when the crisis of world capitalism will also extend to the United States of America"; as regards the American communist movement, "a great rise is not to be expected in the nearest future". The third

[5] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), ii, 213–218; for this debate see pp. 139–140 above.

[6] A belated memorial article appeared in *Pravda*, April 23, 1927.

[7] For a detailed narrative of these events, based on party archives, see T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 248–257.

[8] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 57, June 3, 1927, pp. 1226–1228.

[9] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 258–259; for Ewert see p. 430 above.

section reflected current ambiguities in Moscow on trade union policy. The TUEL was not to confine itself to work within the A. F. of L. It was to organize the unorganized workers, in existing unions where possible, but by forming new unions where this was not possible; such a policy was likely to expose the TUEL to the charge of "dual unionism", i.e. the creation of Red unions in the same industry side by side with A. F. of L. unions. The fourth section trod delicately round the problem of leadership, maintaining a great show of impartiality. The commission to prepare for the forthcoming congress was to have a "neutral" chairman, with Lovestone and Foster as deputies. Meanwhile the party was to have two secretaries, Lovestone and Foster, and its trade union department two directors, Foster and Gitlow. Changes in the top leadership could be decided only at the party congress. A supplementary agreement named Pepper to act as Comintern representative till after the congress.[10]

Evidence suggests that Lovestone had secured the confidence of Bukharin and Stalin as the most efficient and reliable leader of the American party. The affairs of the party appeared to be in good order, and Lovestone was able to claim that its membership, minute though it was, had increased from 7200 in October 1925 to 9400 in March 1927.[11] His position was, moreover, reinforced by a *gaffe* of his rivals, who at this crucial moment, eager to consolidate their resistance to Lovestone's ambitions, issued an appeal to party members in the name of a "national committee of the opposition bloc". In the eyes of Moscow in 1927 no title could have been more compromising. On July 7, 1927, the presidium of IKKI, no doubt schooled by Lovestone, sent a telegram to the party recalling the general support of Comintern for the "Ruthenberg group", and condemning "most categorically every attempt

[10] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 259–261, quoting documents from party archives and from subsequent proceedings of the Congress Committee on Un-American Activities. The main resolution was published only in the *Daily Worker* (N.Y.), August 3, 1927; the supplementary resolution was not published.

[11] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 69, July 8, 1927, p. 1479. Statistics of the American party are particularly volatile; the membership is put by Comintern sources at 12,000 on January 1, 1927 (*ibid.* No. 104, October 25, 1927, p. 2233), at 13,000 in July 1928 (A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *Desyat' Let Kominterna v Tsifrakh* (1929), p. 347), and at "between 9000 and 11,000" in 1929 (*Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomittees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 260).

towards the sharpening of the dissension in the party, especially in the present objective situation, as exemplified by the formation of a national committee of the opposition bloc". This was denounced as "factionalism without political differences". It may have been under cover of this affair that Lovestone secured from Bukharin and Kuusinen what was tantamount to a modification of the two-secretary agreement. It was now understood by Comintern that Lovestone was the first secretary of the party with full powers, and Foster merely "second secretary". This piece of sharp practice raised factional bitterness in the party to a new height. But Lovestone was now in the full flush of success. In the election of delegates to the approaching fifth party congress, his supporters outnumbered those of Foster in the proportion of three to two.[12] The congress lasted from August 31 to September 7, 1927. Lovestone's majority made it a smooth affair; and Ewert, now calling himself Grey, arrived as Comintern delegate to curb any excesses. Lovestone had virtually a free hand, subject to the recognition of Foster's position as head of the TUEL and of the party's trade union department. Lovestone's supporters were in a substantial majority on the new party executive committee and the political committee. He himself became "executive secretary" with Foster and Gitlow as now clearly subordinate secretaries. The party headquarters were transferred from Chicago to New York; the transfer of the *Daily Worker* had taken place some months earlier. In New York Lovestone was on his home ground; Chicago was Foster's stronghold.[13]

Lovestone's leadership of the American party, like Thälmann's of the KPD, was the result of pressures applied in Moscow; the price was unswerving obedience to the dictates of Comintern. The differences between the two cases were that Comintern both knew and cared far less about the American party than about the

[12] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 261–265; IKKIM adopted a resolution on the American youth league, described as "a small group separated from the mass of young American workers" (evidently with Fosterite leanings), exhorting it not to meddle in the factional struggle in the party, and especially not to support "the opposition bloc" (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 84, August 19, 1927, pp. 1837–1840).

[13] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 265–267, quoting reports of the congress from the *Daily Worker*; the dispute over the transfer had been going on since the autumn of 1926 (*ibid.* pp. 236–237).

KPD; that communications between Moscow and New York were tenuous and intermittent; and that Lovestone's rival, Foster, had a patron in Moscow in the person of Lozovsky, who had an interest of his own in American trade union policy. When the ninth IKKI was convened for February 9, 1928, the occasion seemed to present no importance for the American party. Engdahl, the resident representative of the party in Moscow, and Pepper, both staunch supporters of Lovestone, were appointed delegates, together with Browder, who was absent in China, and an obscure representative of the minority named George.[14] In advance of the session a trade union commission met, at which Lozovsky reverted to the need to organize the unorganized workers, and frankly admitted that in the United States — and perhaps in other countries — this meant the creation of new unions. This proposal shocked American delegates of both factions, who were wedded to the principle of forming Left wings within the existing unions and regarded "dual unionism" as a cardinal sin. Lozovsky hit back hard, denounced the Americans for their temporizing attitude, and demanded an exodus of communists from the United Mine Workers (UMW — John L. Lewis's organization) and the formation of a new revolutionary miners' union. Lozovsky put forward a draft, and Engdahl and Pepper a counter-draft.[15] The dispute apparently did not reach the plenary session of the ninth IKKI, where Humbert-Droz delivered a long report on trade unions without mentioning the American problem at all. But the resolution eventually adopted ended with a special American section. "To form a strong Left wing" in A. F. of L. unions was pronounced "absolutely necessary". But it was also the duty of communists to organize new trade unions "in branches of production in which the workers are wholly or mainly unorganized"; and "Left elements" were specifically urged to form new unions in mining regions where the

[14] *Ibid.* p. 496, note 6.

[15] The only sources for this clash are a fragmentary account given by Lozovsky in a speech a year later (see p. 241, note 19 above), and the archives of the American party which contain the draft and counter-draft (T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 285–286, 497, note 8). Lozovsky in a major article of February 2, 1928 (see p. 174, note 33 above), admitted that the organization of unorganized workers in new unions was incompatible with a united front embracing A. F. of L. unions.

workers were not organized, or where the organizations were in a state of decay.[16]

These developments put the whole American party in a quandary. Lovestone had no love for Lozovsky, who had always supported his rival, Foster; Foster could not easily bring himself to jettison the tradition built up over many years by the TUEL of working within A. F. of L. unions. Lozovsky clearly had something less than complete backing from Comintern. It seemed safer to wait and see. None of the American leaders travelled to Moscow for the fourth congress of Profintern which opened in March 1928. The American delegation was headed by Johnstone, a Fosterite, and included Gitlow, as well as Dunne, an old worker in the TUEL. Lozovsky, in his report to the congress, noted that, of 26 million American workers, employees and small officials, only 3 millions were organized in trade unions. But, instead of setting to work to organize the rest, the American comrades indulged in "their own particular disease — fear of 'dual unionism', of parallel unions". The TUEL had actually put out the slogan "Save the Unions" — as if the American unions were worth saving.[17] Dunne retorted that Lozovsky's attitude was "one-sided"; he laid too much stress on the formation of new unions, and too little on work in the old unions, and applied too widely the policy of sharpening revolutionary activity. Gitlow roundly condemned the formation of new unions as an "error", which would "divorce us from the masses in the trade unions".[18] Johnstone tried to soften the clash. He too pleaded against "premature action" in regard to "dualism". But this was not the real danger. The real danger resided in the weakness of the party and the TUEL, and in "over-emphasis on the low political level of the American workers and an under-estimate of their readiness to

[16] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 754–755. According to Lovestone, whose hostility to Lozovsky makes him a dubious witness, Lozovsky's original draft did not mention work in the A. F. of L. unions at all; the American delegation introduced a counter-draft and won the day, not even Foster supporting Lozovsky (*Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Komintern* (1929), i, 491). For Humbert-Droz's report see p. 175 above.

[17] *Protokoll über den Vierten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), pp. 76–77; the slogan "Save the Union" had been regularly used in the UMW in protest against alleged attempts by its leader, John L. Lewis, to disrupt it.

[18] *Ibid.* pp. 149–151, 200–203.

fight".[19] Lozovsky in reply to the debate denounced the feebleness of the American party in its attitude to strikes, and sharply criticized Gitlow by name.[20] The resolution "On the Tasks of Adherents of Profintern in the United States" repeated the attempt made at the ninth IKKI a month earlier to overcome the prejudice against "dual unionism". The organization of unorganized workers was declared to be "the most important task of the TUEL". It was implied rather than stated that this would involve the formation of new unions "in branches in which the workers are completely unorganized or inadequately organized". The TUEL might attempt to unite such unions with the A. F. of L. "in case of necessity, yet only if class leadership and a class programme are guaranteed" — a condition that patently would not be fulfilled. The two functions of the TUEL were summed up in terms which made no allowance for the latent incompatibility between them:

> The TUEL must now become a genuine organizing centre of the unorganized workers, and at the same time a centre for the Left wing in the reformist unions.[21]

The dilemma was betrayed in a clause relating to the key case of The United Mine Workers, which was prudently withheld from publication:

> The organization of the Left wing in the UMW and amongst the unorganized miners must prepare to become the basis of a new union.[22]

Once this intention was betrayed — and it was no doubt difficult to conceal in practice — work in a reformist union like the UMW was quickly denounced and discredited as an attempt to split the union.

The response of the American party to these puzzling events was affected by the return to the American scene of Pepper, who arrived unexpectedly in New York in the middle of March 1928. It may be surmised that his performance at the ninth IKKI had made his presence in Moscow embarrassing. He came with a

[19] *Ibid.* pp. 224–227. [20] *Ibid.* pp. 274–275. [21] *Ibid.* pp. 617–623.

[22] Marked "Not for Publication" in a text of the resolution in the American party archives (T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), p. 289).

mission not to take sides between the American factions, and to compose the difference between them.[23] At the session of the party central committee in May 1928 preoccupation with the approaching presidential election made it easy to relegate contentious issues to the background. It was once more reaffirmed that American capitalism was "still on the upgrade as compared with Europe, especially with British capitalism", but that "the present economic depression has already created mass unemployment on a large scale". It was "the historic task" of the party, though not yet a mass party, "to assume aggressively the initiative and leadership to organize the vast millions of unorganized workers". But this did not mean ceasing to work for "a powerful Left" among the three million workers in A. F. of L. unions. Some meaningless prescriptions on electoral tactics — "no united front with the Socialist Party leaders" and "no voting for Socialist Party candidates as a general rule" — were borrowed from current Comintern instructions to European parties.[24] Pepper appeared to have discharged his mediatory mission with complete success. But he had lost something of his flair. In the summer of 1926 he had briskly switched his loyalty from Zinoviev to Bukharin.[25] In the spring of 1928 he displayed less agility, and remained a fervent Bukharinite. He seems to have convinced himself and his American friends that Bukharin was firmly in command in Moscow, and that Lozovsky's offensive need not be taken too seriously. No section of the American party liked Lozovsky's new policy, or believed it to be workable. The news was gladly received; and articles critical of Lozovsky appeared in the party press. The harmony was partially disrupted when Cannon, a supporter of Foster, came out whole-heartedly in favour of Lozovsky and denounced any temporizing with A. F. of L. unions. The compromise between the top leaders, cemented by Pepper, lasted long enough for the party at the end of May 1928 to nominate Foster and Gitlow respectively as candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency of the United States at the November presidential election.[26]

[23] *Ibid.* p. 291; Pepper's position on the Chinese question at the ninth IKKI will be described in a later section of this volume.

[24] *Communist* (N.Y.), No. 7, July 1928, pp. 413–420; for Comintern instructions to the CPGB and PCF see pp. 359, 498 above.

[25] See p. 135, note 20 above.

[26] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 295–298.

The sequel demonstrated once more the total dependence of the American party on Comintern. While long-standing disputes on tactical issues, as well as bitter personal rivalry between leaders and groups, divided the party, it was what happened in Moscow that decided when these fires should be damped down, and when they should burst into a conflagration. An article in *Pravda* on the eve of the sixth congress of Comintern in July 1928 on "Problems of the American Communist Party" kept alive the burning issue of the trade unions. It denounced the A. F. of L. as "an organization of skilled workers" and "a constituent part of American imperialism", and described "the organization of unorganized workers and the formation of new trade unions" as the central problem.[27] But the struggle for power within the Russian party was ultimately the decisive factor. The opening of the rift in the American party followed the course of the still undeclared rift between Stalin and Bukharin. Almost all the American leaders gathered in Moscow early in July 1928 for the sixth congress. The whispering campaign against Bukharin, under the catchword of the "Right deviation", was in full swing;[28] and Foster, apparently after some brow-beating by his former associates, was induced to join in a concerted attack on Lovestone as the representative of the Right in the American party. As the congress opened, a document entitled "The Right Danger in the American Party", signed by seven members of the delegation including Foster, Cannon and Bittelman, was sent to the Anglo-American secretariat.[29] Foster was rewarded by a personal interview with Stalin on the eve of the latter's departure on vacation. Foster inferred, from the fact of the interview as much as from anything that was said, that "*Stalin was decidedly against the Lovestone group and in favour of us*". Stalin, with his habitual caution, expressed himself against "our proposal for the removal of the Lovestone group from power at one blow", and explained that "that cannot be done from the top — meaning from here"; and later, when Foster's report of the interview had been divulged, he found it convenient to assert with some vigour that Foster's wish had been father to the thought, and that he had refused to take sides between the

[27] *Pravda*, July 17, 1928.

[28] See Vol. 2, p. 69.

[29] For the subsequent publication of the document in the American party press see T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), p. 501, note 13.

factions.[30] But Foster's confidence must have been reinforced by an interview granted to Bittelman and Philips by Molotov. While Molotov failed to react to a mention of Bukharin, he left his visitors with the impression that they were assured of "complete support for our side".[31]

The battle was joined in increasingly acrimonious tones on the floor of the congress. As Philips recalled many years later, the American delegation was split between Lovestone's supporters "speculating on Bukharin's triumph" and "our group speculating on Stalin's triumph".[32] No less than ten American delegates, including Pepper, spoke in the debate on Bukharin's main report, Foster and Lovestone reserving themselves for the last. Pepper attacked the Fosterite document on "The Right Danger in the American Party", which he had described as incompatible with Bukharin's theses. Bukharin had said that "the United States march forward"; according to the document, this led to "a dangerous, opportunist view of the present position of American capitalism". More effectively, Pepper taunted the opposition with its opportunist errors at the time when it controlled the party in 1924.[33] Foster retorted that "the fundamental mistake of the majority of the central committee [of the American party] is a systematic under-estimate of the internal contradictions, and an over-estimate of the reserve resources, of American imperialism". He denounced the majority as being set on a "Right Course", and observed that Pepper had devoted fifty minutes of his speech to the struggle against the Left and only two minutes to the struggle against the Right.[34] Lovestone, perhaps sensing his vulnerability, was angry and bitter. He once more cited the document of the Fosterite opposition to show that it clashed with Bukharin's views; the opposition accepted Bukharin's theses only with a host of reservations. The present leaders of the party had struggled against the Right danger at a time when Foster and his

[30] *Ibid.* pp. 311–312; the disclosure of the report was due to its theft by the Lovestone group from an office in New York (B. Gitlow, *I Confess*, pp. 501–504). For Stalin's disavowal see I. Stalin, *O Pravykh Fraktsionerakh v Amerikanskoi Kompartii* (1930), pp. 10–11.

[31] *Survey*, lv (April 1965), 120; Philips used the pseudonym Gomez.

[32] *Ibid.* lv, 119.

[33] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 169–182; for Bukharin's remark, made by contrast with the decline of Britain, see *ibid.* i, 32.

[34] *Ibid.* i, 432, 436.

supporters created it. Lovestone then launched a vehement personal attack on Lozovsky. Lozovsky had alleged that the American party, like the German party, ignored the decision of the fourth congress of Profintern on the organization of unorganized workers; he sharply criticized Pepper, did not mention Lovestone, but accused even Foster, Bittelman, Cannon and Johnstone of pretending that no such resolution had been passed. Lovestone now indicted Lozovsky for "attacking our party in the most shameless way", and, echoing a phrase which Lozovsky had used of Pepper, declared that "the tragedy of Profintern consists in the fact that it is led by Lozovsky, who hopelessly muddles almost any affair that he touches". He traced Lozovsky's hostility back to the days before the seventh IKKI of November 1926, and ended with a harsh warning:

> Let him take his hands out of American fractional affairs, or we will do it for him.[35]

Such language from a foreign delegate to a high Russian official in good standing was rarely heard in Moscow, and must have helped to seal Lovestone's fate. Bukharin in winding up the debate avoided these quarrels, and took the tactful view that the disagreements of principle in the American party were not great enough to justify the formation of fractions.[36]

Whatever happened in the political commission which drafted the final text of the theses, mutual animosities within the American delegation were not assuaged, and found expression in every debate throughout the congress. Bukharin was still sufficiently in command to avoid open intervention by Comintern. The section of the theses relating to the American party was anodyne and colourless. Right errors had been committed, but could not be laid to the account of the majority of the central committee. The congress decided "to shift the centre of gravity to work in the trade unions, to the organization of unorganized workers into unions, etc., thus providing a basis for the full realization of the slogan of a workers' party organized from below"; and the section ended with a call to end "the fractional struggle".[37] When the

[35] *Ibid.* i, 472–492; for Lozovsky's remarks see *ibid.* i, 405, 408–409. For the earlier clashes with Lozovsky see p. 598 above.

[36] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 613.

[37] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 789–790.

theses had been unanimously adopted, Johnstone made a statement to the effect that the minority of the American delegation, while voting for the theses as a whole, dissented from the American section, which had neglected to censure the majority of the central committee for its failure to carry out the directives of Comintern and of the fourth congress of Profintern, "especially in the question of the organization of unorganized workers into new unions". Lovestone replied defending the theses, denouncing the minority, and calling for unity in the party.[38] The elections to IKKI at the congress reflected the spirit of conciliation which the Comintern leaders still strove to inculcate. Both Lovestone and Foster became members, and Gitlow a candidate.[39] The omission of the extremists of the minority, Bittelman and Johnstone, may have been significant. Lest any doubt should remain of the Comintern attitude, the political secretariat issued a statement on September 7, 1928, reiterating that the charge against the majority of representing "a Right line" was unfounded, and calling on the party to refrain from fractional activities, to postpone its own congress, and to concentrate on the American presidential election in November 1928.[40]

The respite lasted for three months. Three communist-sponsored trade unions were set up in opposition to existing A. F. of L. unions — a National Miners' Union, a National Textile Workers' Union, and a Needle Trade Workers' Union.[41] In October 1928 the majority on the central committee celebrated its victory in a long declaration citing the pronouncements of the sixth congress and the political secretariat's statement of September 7, 1928, which consecrated and justified its leadership of the party.[42] The modest total of 48,000 votes cast for the communist ticket in the presidential election seemed to confirm the cautious

[38] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), v, 125–127.

[39] *Ibid.* v, 139–140.

[40] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 377–378; it is worth noting, however, that Bukharin's report to the Moscow party organization on the sixth congress (see pp. 221–222 above) emphasized rather more strongly than the congress resolution had done the potential Right danger in the American party.

[41] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), p. 380; Foster, in an article in the party journal *Communist* for January 1929, withdrew his opposition to the creation of new unions, which he described as "our major task" (quoted *ibid.* pp. 394–395).

[42] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 120, October 26, 1928, pp. 2359–2361.

view of the majority on revolutionary prospects in the United States. But the course of events was once more dictated by what happened in Moscow. A crucial session of the Russian party central committee, which opened there on November 16, 1928, marked a further defeat for the Right group and weakening of Bukharin's personal position.[43] On November 21, 1928, the political secretariat of Comintern addressed to the American party a communication which came like a bolt from the blue. It adversely criticized the complacent tone of the October resolution of the American party, denied that the sixth congress had "expressly declared its confidence in the majority in contrast to the minority", and instructed the committee to postpone its party congress till February 1929.[44] But the weak and dispirited minority group, far from being able to profit by this unexpected gift, had suffered a fresh blow. Cannon, the over-ardent Fosterite, confessed himself a convert to Trotskyism, and was expelled from the party with a handful of his supporters.[45] The majority seized this heaven-sent opportunity to rehabilitate itself in Moscow. On December 6, 1928, the party central committee adopted a resolution on the Right danger in the Soviet Union and Germany, ostentatiously congratulated the KPD on "its decisive victory over the outspokenly opportunist Brandler group", and draw a parallel between these events and the expulsion by the American party of the Trotskyite group of Cannon, Lore and Eastman, which it described as "the open ally of the capitalists, the social-democrats, and the American Federation of Labour, which aims at the annihilation of the communist party".[46] At the session of the party central committee on December 15–19, 1928, the Lovestone group had a sweeping majority behind it. But the danger signals

[43] See Vol. 2, pp. 78–80.

[44] The letter was published in the *Daily Worker* (N.Y.), December 26, 1928, together with a reply expressing the contrite submission of the central committee (T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 385, 520, notes 27, 29).

[45] For this episode see *ibid.* pp. 364–371; the expulsions, which took place on October 27, 1928, were announced only in the middle of November after the presidential election. The text of the announcement is in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 139, December 14, 1928, pp. 2769–2771; for an apologetic statement by the minority, followed by an attempt of the majority to make such capital as was possible out of the affair see *ibid.* No. 10, February 1, 1929, pp. 186–187.

[46] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 138, December 11, 1928, p. 2750.

from Moscow had not been read. The active participation in these proceedings of the now discredited Pepper was unlikely to propitiate the Comintern leaders. Worse still, Lovestone took occasion to pay a personal tribute to Bukharin:

> For me he does not represent the Right wing of the Communist International, although for some he does. For me comrade Bukharin represents the communist line, the line of the central committee of the CPSU.[47]

The innocence of misplaced loyalty could not go further.

The party congress (in American terms a "convention") was due to meet on March 1, 1929; and guidance was offered by Comintern in the favourite form of an open letter. It praised the party for its work in the past year in organizing new trade unions, but recognized that it was "not yet equipped for the great class conflicts". Numerous criticisms were carefully balanced between majority and minority. It was emphasized more than once that no "substantial differences on points of principle" existed to justify the persistence of the warring fractions. The positive injunctions were jejune and conventional. The letter ended abruptly: "The fractional struggle is to be liquidated, and workers brought into the leadership." What clearly emerged was that Comintern, far from being committed to the present leaders, would look favourably on a change. But the question, what change, and how it was to be effected, went unanswered.[48] The disgust of the party leaders on the receipt of these enigmatic injunctions was expressed in a letter of February 20, 1929, from Bedacht, head of the Agitprop section of the party, to Wolfe, in Moscow:

> Just at the moment when we have the whole outfit on the run, when the factional fight promises to end because of the exhaustion of one of the forces, then the danger arises of the application of a pull-motor to revive the dying opposition and to encourage it to further unprincipled factionalism. Of course, we are not silent partners to such a crime. On the contrary, our

[47] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 384, 388–389.

[48] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 18, February 26, 1929, pp. 373–374, No. 20, March 1, 1929, pp. 424–426. The letter is not dated; but an advance copy — possibly a draft — was shown to Wolfe in Moscow early in January 1929 (T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 392, 394).

> plans are to exploit the present exhaustion of the opposition and to throw the whole pack on the scrap-heap.[49]

The same aggressive mood permeated a pamphlet issued by Lovestone:

> The convention will deal a death-blow to factionalism. This is the determination of the Communist International. We must put an end to factionalism. We must liquidate all the groupings in the party. We must abolish the factions.[50]

Self-confidence was confirmed by the election of the 104 delegates to the congress, held before the receipt of the open letter; of these ninety-five were pledged to support Lovestone.[51]

Lovestone had, however, reckoned without the mistrust which his successes and his arrogance had aroused in Moscow, and the determination of Comintern not to allow him to enjoy the fruits of victory. On the eve of the congress two delegates of Comintern — Dengel of the KPD and Pollitt of the CPGB — arrived in New York, bringing fresh oral instructions. These related not to policy, but to organization. Foster was to be appointed secretary-general of the party, and Lovestone and Bittelman, as leaders of the contending fractions, were to be withdrawn from party work and given appointments under Comintern in Moscow.[52] The congress opened in New York on March 1, 1929, being attended by the 104 delegates and 500 other party members, most of them workers.[53] Bitterness between the groups was intense; and fights occurred on the floor of the congress.[54] The proposal to appoint Foster secretary-general was rejected with contumely. On political issues the congress proved more docile. Lovestone and Gitlow, under pressure from Dengel, sponsored a resolution condemning Bukharin, and sent a telegram of congratulation to "the Bolshevik leadership headed by comrade Stalin". This gesture was felt to

[49] Quoted in the appeal to Comintern (see p. 613, note 65 below).

[50] Quoted in a bitter indictment of Lovestone by Pollitt in the *Daily Worker*, March 27, 1934.

[51] According to Pollitt (*ibid.*), "not one of these ninety-five delegates was democratically elected; every one was hand-picked by Lovestone from his office in New York".

[52] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), p. 399.

[53] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 22, March 5, 1929, p. 476.

[54] Both B. Gitlow, *I Confess* (N.Y., 1940), p. 517, and Pollitt in the *Daily Worker*, March 27, 1934, recorded acts of physical violence, the latter attributing them to "Lovestone's gangsters".

have earned some reward. Stalin was in a gracious mood. He replied that, subject to the sending of Lovestone, Bittelman and Pepper to Moscow, and to the right of Comintern to revise decisions, the congress was free to act as it pleased. This meant, on the one hand, insistence on the decapitation of the present leadership, and, on the other hand, withdrawal of support from Foster. The elections and appointments at the end of the congress left Foster a member of the central committee and head of the trade union department, but made few other concessions to the minority. Gitlow succeeded Lovestone as secretary-general; and the party changed its name from "Workers' (Communist) Party of America" to "Communist Party of the USA".[55]

Lovestone, apparently prompted by Wolfe, now proposed the sending of an American party delegation to Moscow to clear up the situation; this was accepted by Comintern. Bittelman had already planned his departure for Moscow, and Foster was summoned to make the journey. The whole leadership of the American party assembled in Moscow, and was confronted on April 14, 1929, by an American commission presided over by Kuusinen, and including among its members Stalin, Molotov, Lozovsky and Manuilsky, as well as Bell, Kun and Ulbricht. The proceedings opened with long orations from Gitlow and Foster, each vehemently attacking the other. The members of the commission then cross-examined the American delegates, not sparing the errors and deficiencies of both groups.[56] An adjournment was necessary in order to permit the Soviet leaders to attend the sessions of the party central committee and the sixteenth conference, which lasted from April 16 to 29, 1929.[57] After the resumption, and after further speeches from American delegates, Lozovsky, Gusev and Kolarov all spoke. Finally, Stalin and Molotov both spoke at the final meeting of the commission on May 6, 1929. Stalin asserted that both groups "exaggerate the significance of specific features of American capitalism", and thus overlooked "the general features of capitalism, which are the same for all countries" and

[55] For the congress, and the sources for it, see T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 399–403; Stalin's reply was never published.

[56] *Ibid.* pp. 403–408; the most detailed source for the proceedings is an unpublished letter by one of the American participants (see *ibid.* p. 514, note 4).

[57] For these sessions see Vol. 2, pp. 91–93.

must form "the foundation of the activities of every communist party". Both groups, "and particularly the leaders of the majority", had been guilty of "unprincipled factionalism", and had based their relations with Comintern "not on a principle of confidence, but on a principle of rotten diplomacy, a policy of diplomatic intrigue". Foster and Bittelman were self-righteously reproved for calling themselves "Stalinites": there were no such animals. But the majority had defended Pepper and resisted the demand of Comintern for his recall; then it had attempted to curry favour by suddenly expelling him from the party. Stalin announced the intention of the commission to address another "open letter" to the American party. This would censure the majority for their recent behaviour, denounce factionalism, and insist on the transfer of Lovestone and Bittelman to Moscow.[58]

Stalin's evident determination to break up the existing leadership filled the American delegates with rage and despair. It was in this mood that they issued on May 9, 1929, a statement to the effect that, if this decision were persisted in, the American party would conclude that IKKI "desires to destroy the central committee, and therefore follows a policy of legalizing the past factionalism of the opposition bloc and inviting its continuation in future".[59] This unprecedented and open defiance could only aggravate the punishment. On May 12, 1929, Molotov, Kuusinen and Gusev presented to the commission the proposed "Address" from IKKI "To All Members of the Communist Party of the United States". This held both majority and minority responsible for the "unprincipled factional struggle". But the lion's share of the blame appeared to rest on the majority which, since the sixth congress of Comintern, had been guilty of "gross Rightist errors". The Address flayed "the so-called theory of 'exceptionalism' ", which found its clearest expression with Pepper and Lovestone. The crisis of capitalism, the radicalization of the working masses, the need to sharpen the struggle against reformism, the need to struggle against the Right danger — all these existed else-

[58] I. Stalin, *O Pravykh Fraktsionerakh v Amerikanskoi Kompartii* (1930), pp. 3–17; this speech, as well as Stalin's two speeches of May 14, 1929 (see pp. 611–612 below), were omitted from the collected edition of his works. According to Pollitt in the *Daily Worker*, March 27, 1934, Lovestone's "theory of American 'exceptionalism' " consisted in a belief that "America was the one country that would not be drawn into the economic crisis".

[59] The statement was published *ibid.* June 12, 1929.

where, but not — it was claimed — in the United States or in the American party. Pepper's resistance to instructions to return to Moscow was cited. Lovestone was reproved for referring at the American party congress to a "running sore" in the apparatus of Comintern; and Gitlow and Bedacht, as well as Lovestone, were condemned for failure to carry out Comintern decisions. The operative conclusions were, once more, to transfer Lovestone and Bittelman to Moscow and to refer Pepper's case to the international control commission. The American delegation was asked for its views. Lovestone attempted to hedge, and was challenged for a "Yes" or "No" to the question whether he accepted the Address. When Lovestone again evaded the question, Kuusinen retorted that this was no longer a case of factionalism by the party leaders against the minority, but of factionalism against IKKI itself.[60] The commission ended its labours on this ominous note.

The issue now passed to the presidium of IKKI which had an all-night sitting with the American delegation on May 14, 1929. Kuusinen read the text of the Address, and Gitlow read a statement on behalf of the ten American delegates that acceptance of it would create "demoralization, disintegration and chaos in the party", and would "make it absolutely impossible for us to continue as effective workers in the communist movement". After several representatives of other parties, and American students at the Lenin party school, had exercised their powers of persuasion on the American delegates, Stalin summed up. He denounced the "super-factional" declaration of May 9, 1929, and "the still more factional and anti-party" statement just read by Gitlow to the presidium. He now directed his assault almost exclusively on Lovestone and his supporters, who identified their group with the party. This, Stalin asserted, was a grave mistake. The party followed Lovestone because it regarded him as a loyal supporter of Comintern. If he now declared war on Comintern, his "formal

[60] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 414–415; the text of the Address was published in *Pravda*, May 18, 1929, in the *Daily Worker* (N.Y.), May 20, 1929, and in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 45, May 24, 1929, pp. 1083–1085. Kuusinen's and Molotov's speeches were published in *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States* (Seventy-sixth Congress, H. Res. 282), xi (1940), 7124–7133, having apparently been communicated to the Committee on Un-American Activities by Lovestone.

majority" would vanish.[61] The presidium then adopted the Address with one adverse vote — that of Gitlow, the only American member of the presidium. This made the decision mandatory, and the American delegates were asked one by one to state their attitude. Two of them, Bedacht and another delegate named Noral, recanted, and announced their unconditional submission. Seven, including Lovestone and Wolfe, declared that they disagreed with the decision, but accepted it as a matter of discipline. Gitlow alone declared that he opposed the decision and would continue to fight against it. This provoked Stalin into an angry outburst, in the course of which he described Lovestone and Gitlow as "anarchists" and "strike-breakers", who had rejected the principle of individual submission to the "collective leadership". Lovestone, Gitlow and Wolfe all afterwards recalled insulting and threatening phrases which were not included in the record of the speech. Having delivered himself, Stalin marched out of the room, and the meeting broke up.[62]

The collapse of the revolt was sudden and complete. On May 17, 1929, the political secretariat of IKKI passed a resolution barring Lovestone, Gitlow and Wolfe from responsible office in the American party, removing from the political committee any members who did not submit to the decisions of Comintern, and warning Lovestone not to leave the Soviet Union.[63] It would appear that Stalin had accurately gauged the temper of the party. The text of the Address reached New York on May 18, 1929; and on the same day the political committee, shorn of its absent leaders, but presided over by Minor, hitherto one of Lovestone's supporters, decided unanimously on submission. It passed a resolution unreservedly accepting the Address, and calling on the members of the delegation in Moscow to abandon all opposition and carry out its injunctions. The party central committee telegraphed the text of this resolution to IKKI, and requested its communication to the delegation.[64] Of the American delegates

[61] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 417–419; I. Stalin, *O Pravykh Fraktsionerakh v Amerikanskoi Kompartii* (1930), pp. 18–40.

[62] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 420–423; the published text of Stalin's remarks is in I. Stalin, *O Pravykh Fraktsionerakh v Amerikanskoi Kompartii* (1930), pp. 41–47.

[63] The text was published in the *Daily Worker* (N.Y.), June 12, 1929.

[64] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No 45, May 24, 1929, p. 1085.

Lovestone was the last to leave Moscow. After two half-hearted declarations of submission, in the second of which he agreed to accept employment under Comintern in some country other than the United States and the Soviet Union, he was granted permission on May 31, 1929, to return on a visit to New York. In spite of an attempt by the new American party leaders to veto his journey, he left Moscow for Danzig, *en route* for New York, on June 11, 1929. At the end of June, Lovestone, Gitlow and Wolfe were expelled from the party by decision of the political committee. They at once launched an appeal to the plenum of IKKI, then meeting for its tenth session in Moscow, requesting that the decision of the presidium of May 14, 1929, be overruled, and a fresh commission appointed to examine the affairs of the American party.[65]

When the tenth IKKI opened on July 3, 1929, interest in Moscow in the troublesome American party had abated. Its affairs were not discussed by Kuusinen or Manuilsky in their initial reports.[66] Minor, who had organized the surrender of May 18, was now the chief spokesman of the American delegation. He accused Pepper and Lovestone of having failed to mention the "third period" in the theses which they drafted for the sixth congress of the party, and identified Lovestone and Gitlow with Brandler and Thalheimer. He ended by praising the new trade unions affiliated to the TUEL as "a new chapter in the history of the class struggle in America".[67] Lozovsky, in the debate on the economic struggle, did not miss the opportunity of once more belabouring Lovestone for his resistance to the formation of new unions. Browder, who owned his promotion mainly to the accident of his employment by Comintern in the Far East, which for two and a half years had kept him aloof from the bitter feuds in the party, was the American speaker in this debate. But his remarks were colourless, and remarkable only for their avoidance of personal invective.[68] The main resolution on Kuusinen's and

[65] The *Appeal to the Comintern* (1929), in which these events were narrated, was published as a broadsheet (nicknamed owing to its format the "bedspread") and reprinted in *Investigation of Un-American Activities in the United States* (Seventy-sixth Congress, H. Res. 282), xi (1940), 7141–7146.

[66] For these see pp. 247–248 above.

[67] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 561–571.

[68] *Ibid.* pp. 702–703, 778–794.

Manuilsky's reports congratulated IKKI on having rid the American party of "unprincipled fractionalism" and of "the disintegrating influence of Lovestone and Pepper". A special resolution adopted on the last day of the session repeated the condemnation of Lovestone and described his appeal to Comintern (his two comrades were ignored) as "a manoeuvre". It nevertheless instructed the international control commission to hear the appeal if Lovestone appeared in person to present it; otherwise his expulsion was final.[69]

Mikhailov, *alias* Williams, came to New York as Comintern representative to supervise the reorganization of the party. Bedacht was appointed acting secretary, with Minor, Weinstone and Foster as members of the secretariat.[70] The aim was clearly to leave control in the hands of former members of the Lovestone group who had disowned him in good time. Foster retained his pre-eminence only in the trade union movement. The TUEL held a large congress with 695 delegates at Cleveland on August 31–September 2, 1929. It adopted a new programme and statutes; and, now that its policy was clearly to split the movement by creating revolutionary unions, it renamed itself the "Trade Union Unity League".[71] In 1930 Bedacht was replaced as secretary by Browder. The stormy days were over. The Communist Party of the United States had been duly Bolshevized and become a well integrated section of Comintern. Since it had always been peripheral to American political life, it lost perhaps less than some other communist parties through this operation.

[69] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 885, 913; the obviously correct reference to the international control commission has dropped out of this text of the second resolution, but appears in the German text in *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), p. 934.

[70] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), p. 430.

[71] Foster gave an account of it to the sixth session of the central council of Profintern in December 1929, and the council congratulated it on its achievements (*Protokoll der VI Session des Zentralrats der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (1930), pp. 285–302, 571–576).

CHAPTER 81

THE JAPANESE PARTY

THE collapse of the Japanese Communist Party in 1924 left open to the authorities in Moscow three lines of action which they pursued intermittently, but persistently, during the next few years: support for a Left-wing movement in the trade unions, culminating in the foundation of a dissident trade union federation, the Hyogikai, in 1925;[1] the promotion of a legal Workers' and Peasants' Party;[2] and plans for a revival of the communist party itself. Of these the first seemed the most promising. In May 1926 the Hyogikai sent out invitations to a conference to be held at its headquarters in Osaka for the purpose of discussing the convocation of a congress to set up an all-Japanese federation of trade unions — an initiative reminiscent of the current tactics of Profintern.[3] Favourable replies were received from twenty-nine unions; and the major trade union federation Sodomei, which maintained relations with the ILO in Geneva and with IFTU in Amsterdam, though it expressed disapproval of the proposed congress, agreed to send a representative to the conference. When the conference met on June 20, 1926, it quickly developed into a battle between the Hyogikai and the Sodomei, which gave the victory in words to the former and in substance to the latter. The principle of a unitary trade union federation was accepted in the concluding resolution, but no procedure laid down for achieving this end.[4] At the fifteenth congress of the Sodomei in October 1926, the leaders were able to boast that they had foiled the Hyogikai offensive, and issued their own appeal for a united trade union organization based on the Sodomei.[5]

[1] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 888–889.

[2] See *ibid.* Vol. 3, pp. 892–893.

[3] For the appeals of Profintern for trade union unity see *ibid.* Vol. 3, pp. 564–567.

[4] *Mezhdunarodnoe Rabochee Dvizhenie*, No. 35 (76), September 2, 1926, pp. 11–12.

[5] *Ibid.* No. 46 (87), November 18, 1926, p. 16; a Japanese communist source put the membership of the Sodomei at 23,000 in 1925 and 43,000 in

The experiment of a legal Workers' and Peasants' Party under communist patronage had from the first been beset with difficulties. The party executive in session at Osaka on July 26, 1926, again insisted on the exclusion of the Hyogikai and other Left organizations from the party, and the ban was reaffirmed three months later at the congress of the Sodomei; this amounted in the eyes of Moscow to "a break-up of the party".[6] Some resistance was, however, encountered. The session of the party executive on October 24–25, 1926, was captured by a group representing the Japanese Peasant Union, who protested against the ban on the Left and demanded its reconsideration at the next party congress. The Sodomei representatives thereupon walked out; and the executive issued an appeal for the admission of all proletarians to the Workers' and Peasants' Party.[7] But the only result of these proceedings appears to have been a rift within the Japanese Peasant Union and an attempt by the Sodomei to set up a new Workers' and Peasants' Party under its own auspices.[8] The claim of Katayama at the seventh IKKI in November 1926 that "the Workers' and Peasants' Party has great influence, has more than two million adherents, and stands today under the control of the Left wing",[9] was remote from reality.

In these confused circumstances, it was a group of intellectuals, many of them students, who provided the impetus for the resuscitation of the Japanese Communist Party, so ardently desired in Moscow. A Proletarian Youth League, created mainly by communists as a substitute for the former communist youth league, held its initial convention in Tokyo in December 1925 and provoked several arrests.[10] The most influential figure of this period was an energetic and learned young Japanese Marxist named Fukumoto, who set out to provide a sound Marxist–Leninist basis for Japanese communism and acquired wide popularity and sup-

1926, and of the Hyogikai at 18,700 in 1925 and 34,000 in 1926 (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 125, October 15, 1927, p. 2151).

[6] *Ibid.* No. 136, November 9, 1926, pp. 2450–2451; *Mezhdunarodnoe Rabochee Dvizhenie*, No. 46 (87), November 18, 1926, p. 15.

[7] *Ibid.* No. 49 (90), December 9, 1926, pp. 13–15.

[8] R. Scalapino, *Democracy and the Party Movement in Pre-War Japan* (Berkeley, 1953), pp. 331–332.

[9] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 177.

[10] G. Beckmann and Okubi Genji, *The Japanese Communist Party, 1922–1945* (1969), pp. 92–94; this was one of the organizations banned from the Workers' and Peasants' Party.

port throughout the movement. Borrowing extensively from Lenin, he dwelt on the need for a "correct" Marxist theory as the basis for political action, and was fond of quoting Lenin's injunction to "split in order to unite". While conceding the necessity for a mass proletarian party, he envisaged as the immediate objective a small disciplined communist party as the vanguard of a workers' movement.[11] Thought in Comintern circles in Moscow ran on different lines. The Japanese question was not discussed at the sixth IKKI which met in February–March 1926. But the two Japanese delegates who attended the session were summoned to a committee presided over by Brown, a British delegate, and consisting of Roy, Voitinsky, Heller and Katayama. This was the heyday of united front policies in Moscow; and the committee, after the end of the session, adopted a resolution on the Japanese question insisting that Japanese communists should "abandon our group form immediately, and concentrate on founding a party based on Comintern policies". Theses which accompanied the resolution laid stress on the recruitment of workers rather than on a demand for "100 per cent communism", proposed to base the party on factory cells, and condemned "the unfortunate tendency to make [party] publications academic". Before the next session of IKKI the Japanese communists were to hold "an inaugural convention for a new party".[12] These prescriptions were clearly designed to counter Fukumoto's intellectual and theoretical leanings. Nabeyama, the Japanese delegate to the seventh IKKI in Moscow in November–December 1926, was perturbed to discover that the Soviet leaders regarded Fukumoto's teaching as a form of Trotskyism.[13] It was, however, Fukumoto and his followers who were primarily responsible, at a secret meeting in December 1926 called (by way of claiming continuity with the earlier party) the "third party congress", for reviving the Japanese Communist Party, furnishing it with a programme, and electing a party central committee.[14]

Opposition to Fukumoto in Moscow was inspired by dislike of the prospect of a small sectarian party in a country with a large proletariat and a potentially powerful trade union movement, and

[11] *Ibid.* pp. 107–111.
[12] *Ibid.* pp. 105–106, 293–294.
[13] *Ibid.* p. 117.
[14] *Ibid.* pp. 111–116; R. Scalapino, *The Japanese Communist Movement, 1920–1966* (1967), pp. 26–28.

was perhaps reinforced by mistrust of so vigorous and independent a personality. The new central committee seems to have included none of the old leaders; and Yanson, who combined his position as head of the Soviet trade delegation in Tokyo[15] with the rôle of resident representative of Comintern, could avail himself of jealousies within the party to undermine Fukumoto's position. The illegal *Musansha Shimbun*, dependent on Comintern subsidies,[16] began to attack Fukumoto. The veteran leader Arahata, who was released from prison in January 1927, rejected an appeal from Sano Manabu, the president of the central committee, to join the new organization. It was now decided to send a representative delegation to Moscow to sort out these difficulties. Not only Arahata, but Yamakawa, formerly condemned as one of the "liquidators" of 1924 but now restored to favour as an adversary of Fukumoto, were invited by Yanson to join the delegation. Both refused but made written statements criticizing Fukumoto's views.[17] The delegation reached Moscow in time for the eighth IKKI which opened on May 18, 1927. Japanese affairs were relegated to a commission presided over by Bukharin, the other members being Murphy, Bela Kun, Yanson and Katayama, who, however, played little or no part. Of the Japanese delegates, only Nabeyama, schooled by six months' residence in Moscow, at first attacked Fukumoto. But gradually all the others went over, more or less decisively, to the Comintern view. The fatal shaft levelled against Fukumoto was the charge — the standard weapon at this time against any deviation from the party line — of Trotskyism; more plausibly, his views were associated with those of Lukács. He himself does not appear to have put up much of a fight. The meetings of the commission went on long after the session of IKKI ended on May 30, 1927. It was not till July 15, 1927, that theses, said to have been drafted by Bukharin and unanimously accepted by the commission, were formally approved by the presidium of IKKI.[18]

The theses opened with a long introductory disquisition on the external and internal situation of Japan, asserting that "the

[15] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 883.

[16] See *ibid.* Vol. 3, p. 892.

[17] *Kanson Jiden*, ii (1965), 156; Kanson was Arahata's pseudonym.

[18] G. Beckmann and Okubi Genji, *The Japanese Communist Party, 1922–1945* (1969), pp. 117–119; for Fukumoto's own account see R. Scalapino, *The Japanese Communist Movement, 1920–1966* (1967), p. 29, note 42.

Japanese imperialists play a particularly active rôle in preparing the coming war" and that "Japanese intervention in China is an accomplished fact". But they recognized "profound and ever-sharpening contradictions between Japan and the other imperialist Powers", and exhorted the Japanese party to "fight against Japanese intervention in China and against the preparation of war against the USSR"; this implicitly explained the importance of the party's rôle. Using a technique familiar in party and Comintern pronouncements, the theses purported to balance between two extremes, first denouncing a deviation which no longer seriously counted, and then dealing with the opposite deviation which was the real target. The "tendency towards liquidation" represented by the Yamakawa deviation was first disposed of. Then "another deviation, a counter-tendency" led by Fukumoto, came under attack. Fukumoto's "split in order to unite" slogan, which "differs most radically and decisively from Leninism", not only placed undue emphasis on pure ideology, but "leads to the tactical isolation of the party from the masses, and leads to the ruin of the communist party as a mass party". The party must be transformed into a workers' party, in aims and in composition. A series of minimum demands suited to the current situation and to the tactics of the united front (some of them borrowed from Fukumoto's party programme of the previous December) should be linked with the slogans of a worker–peasant government and a proletarian dictatorship.[19] Though Fukumoto was said in the theses to have "himself already rejected" the deviation associated with his name, the rift between him and the Comintern leaders was too great to be bridged. He and two of his associates were removed from the party central committee; among new appointments, Arahata was invited to rejoin the committee. The purpose of the change was ostensibly to increase the proletarian component in the party leadership at the expense of the intellectuals; a more important aim was perhaps to instal a committee which would be docile to Comintern guidance. The authority of Yanson, resting on his rôle as the dispenser of Com-

[19] A summary of the theses appeared in *Pravda*, August 19, 1927; the full text in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 1, January 3, 1928, pp. 15–18, No. 2, January 6, 1928, pp. 37–40; they were first published in Japan in February 1928. For an English translation made after checking with Japanese versions see G. Beckmann and Okubi Genji, *The Japanese Communist Party, 1922–1945* (1969), pp. 295–308. Yamakawa was referred to in the theses as "comrade Hoshi" and Fukumoto as "comrade Kuroki".

intern funds, channelled through the Far Eastern bureau of Comintern in Shanghai, was also doubtless enhanced. When all the delegates had returned to Japan, the decisions taken in Moscow were ratified at a secret party meeting on December 2, 1927.[20] At the fifteenth party congress in Moscow a few days later Bukharin, referring to Fukumoto as "comrade K.", attempted a curious theoretical dissection of his views. Fukumoto had taken from Hegel the theory that the proletariat must "develop in contradictions"; this led to the "split and unite" policy. He had borrowed from Lenin's *What is to be Done?* the notion that a party of "revolutionary intellectuals" was required to "work out a socialist ideology". In a country which already possessed a mass movement of workers, this was "a sectarian doctrine, which for a long time hampered the development of the whole party".[21] Lozovsky at the same congress pointed the contrast between the "very small" communist party in Japan and the "fairly large mass movement" based on an industrial proletariat of 5 million workers.[22]

For reasons not directly related to these events, the Japanese elections of February 20, 1928,[23] proved a turning-point for the unhappy Japanese party. Instructions from Moscow to the party for its conduct in the elections were embodied in an open letter from Katayama which appeared in the press. The chief task of the party was "to appear before the masses with its banner unfurled", though rigid administrative restrictions prevented it from putting up its own candidates, and it must therefore vote for candidates of the Workers' and Peasants' Party. (It was not mentioned that several of these were communists.) On the other hand, the communist party must conduct its campaign as an independent entity, and must prove to the masses that the social-democrat leaders were "in fact social-imperialists and allies of the hangman Chiang Kai-shek".[24] The Japanese Communist Party did its best to carry

[20] *Ibid.* pp. 125, 138–139; Arahata refused to rejoin the party, partly through personal antipathy to members of the central committee (*Kanson Jiden*, ii (1965), 160).

[21] *Pyatnadtsatyi S"ezd VKP (B)*, i (1961), 685.

[22] *Ibid.* i, 695.

[23] See p. 99 above.

[24] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 10, January 31, 1928, pp. 199–200.

out these complicated injunctions. The communist party issued on February 1, 1928, the first mimeographed number of its own news-sheet *Red Flag*, which continued to appear during the election period as a vehicle for thinly veiled communist propaganda and attacks on other parties. The results of the election brought little comfort to the various Left groups, which secured only eight seats in all; of these the Workers' and Peasants' Party distinguished itself by winning two.[25] This provocation, however, spurred the Japanese authorities into action. Hitherto, the revived Japanese Communist Party had not been directly attacked, though members of an illegal organization were always liable to arrest if they clashed with the police. On March 15, 1928, the police in a massive operation rounded up all leading members of the party, occupied premises and seized documents. This brought the party to a complete standstill: only a handful of the leaders escaped — for the most part owing to absence abroad. The Workers' and Peasants' Party was banned, and the Hyogikai dissolved. The communist movement, patiently built up with the inspiration and support of Comintern, was thoroughly disrupted.[26] The Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat in Shanghai issued a proclamation to all trade unions on April 26, 1928, protesting against the suppression and mass arrests of Japanese workers.[27] On May 4, 1928, the political secretariat of IKKI adopted a resolution on the tasks of the Japanese Communist Party. The party was reproached, somewhat harshly, for having gone too far in the direction of a united front with other Left parties:

> In Japan, no less than in all other countries, ... a communist party can develop only through a struggle against social-democracy.

The enemies were "capitalism and *reformism*". The party was exhorted to build up and strengthen its illegal organization, and to form cells in factories and mines. It was to help to restore the

[25] G. Beckmann and Okubi Genji, *The Japanese Communist Party, 1922–1945* (1969), pp. 148–153, 414, note 22.

[26] For an account of these events from Japanese sources see *ibid.* pp. 148–160; a later party source, quoted in L. Kutakov, *Istoriya Sovetsko-Yaponskikh Diplomaticheskikh Otnoshenii* (1962), p. 85, note 2, put the number of those arrested on March 15 at 1600, with a further 300 on April 11.

[27] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 45, May 11, 1928, p. 805; the Pan-Pacific secretariat will be discussed in a later section of this volume.

shattered Hyogikai unions, and to promote by all possible means the defence of the interests of workers and peasants.[28] The publication of these instructions can hardly have made the position of the party any easier.

The disruption of the Japanese Communist Party left Comintern without means of action in this critical situation. The clash between Japanese and Chinese nationalist forces at Tsinan[29] provoked a flaming appeal from Comintern to the "workers, peasants and soldiers of Japan" to "compel the imperialists to listen to your demand that all forces should be immediately withdrawn from China and other colonies".[30] Some evidence exists of the unpopularity of the war among those mobilized for service in China. But to stir up popular revolt in Japan against the war was a task far beyond any resources of which Comintern disposed, or was likely to dispose. A depleted Japanese delegation to the sixth congress of Comintern in July 1928, all (except Katayama) appearing under pseudonyms,[31] strove to combine frankness with optimism. Sano Manabu, the leader of the delegation, drew a grim picture:

> In March of the present year the Japanese imperialists carried out a raid on the Japanese Communist Party, threw into prison a thousand activist workers and peasants, despatched to China 55,000 soldiers and 55 warships, and subjected Manchuria and Shantung province to their military rule, converting them *de facto* into colonies. In this way Japanese imperialism sought to strangle the Chinese revolution, and took the first step on the road to a world war. Beginning from the spring of 1928, Japanese and British imperialism moved closer together in order to crush the Chinese revolution and attack the USSR. The antagonism between Japan and the United States has sharpened, Japan has thrown off the mask of friendship with the USSR. Japanese imperialism is in truth the pillar of reaction in Asia.[32]

Confessions of the failures and weaknesses of the party fitted in

[28] *Ibid.* No. 55, June 8, 1928, pp. 1005–1006, No. 56, June 12, 1928, p. 1022.

[29] See p. 101 above.

[30] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 47, May 18, 1928, pp. 831–832.

[31] They are identified in G. Beckmann and Okubi Genji, *The Japanese Communist Party, 1922–1945* (1969), pp. 165–168.

[32] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 286.

with the turn to the Left in Comintern policy, and especially with one of the conclusions recorded in the resolution on "The Revolutionary Movement in Colonial and Semi-Colonial Countries":

> Special "worker–peasant parties", whatever their revolutionary character in particular periods, can easily be converted into ordinary petty bourgeois parties, and communists are not therefore recommended to organize such parties. A communist party can never build its organization on the basis of a fusion of two classes.[33]

Nobody suggested the application of this resolution to Japan. But its terms suggested a radical departure from the policy of active support of the Workers' and Peasants' Party pursued by the Japanese Communist Party, under Comintern auspices, during the past two years.

In Japan the party showed unexpected resilience in face of the blows which had fallen on it. In the autumn of 1928, Watanabe and Nabeyama attended a meeting of the Far Eastern bureau of Comintern in Shanghai in order to receive funds from Yanson and make plans, and also visited the Pan-Pacific Trade Union Secretariat. The first sequel was disastrous. Watanabe, making a detour on his way back to Japan, was caught by the police in Formosa and was shot, or shot himself, in the ensuing struggle.[34] Meanwhile Sano, elected by the sixth congress to IKKI under the name of Kato,[35] had remained in Moscow to participate in a Japanese commission of IKKI, which in October 1928 drafted fresh "Theses on the Immediate Tasks of the Japanese Communist Party". These reiterated the lessons to be drawn from the proceedings of the congress. The party was criticized for giving too prominent a rôle to the Workers' and Peasants' Party, which, being based on a fusion between two classes, could never become a leading revolutionary party. The duty of the communist party was to rebuild its own organization, to struggle to restore the

[33] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 858; for the resolution see pp. 218–219 above.

[34] R. Swearingen and P. Langer, *Red Flag in Japan* (1952), pp. 35–36; G. Beckmann and Okubi Genji, *The Japanese Communist Party, 1922–1945* (1969), p. 171. For eulogies of Watanabe see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 139, December 14, 1928, p. 2772, No. 142, December 21, 1928, p. 2850.

[35] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), vi, 198.

Hyogikai, while also working in reformist trade unions, and to form fractions in peasant unions in order to strengthen the Left wing. The theses were published in Japan, together with a statement of policy by Sano, in December 1928.[36] Defections had occurred in the ranks of the party. A group headed by Yamakawa advocated the abandonment of illegal activities, which would have meant the dissolution of the party; and Katayama, in an article published in Moscow, denounced Yamakawa as "the leader of the liquidators" and compared him with the Russian Mensheviks of 1905.[37] The decimated party ranks were replenished with young Japanese trained in the Communist University of Toilers of the East in Moscow;[38] and some revival of activity in Japan was achieved in the winter of 1928–1929. The nominally independent journal *Musansha Shimbun*, which in the spring of 1928 claimed a circulation of 35,000,[39] was closely geared to the party line, and the illegal party news-sheet resumed publication. The publication of a resolution of KIM, condemning the former Japanese youth league for its failure to denounce the social-democrats and for its misinterpretation of the policy of a united front of workers and peasants, led to a revival of the league, which managed to start a new journal in January 1929. The disbanded Hyogikai was replaced by a new trade union council (Zenkyo) which had its own press.[40] But these symptoms of renewed activity provoked the authorities to fresh reprisals. On April 16, 1929, several hundred party and Zenkyo militants were rounded up, and then or a few days later virtually all the leaders were caught in the net. Two months later Sano Manabu, who had been in Shanghai since his return from Moscow, was arrested by the Chinese police and

[36] G. Beckmann and Okubi Genji, *The Japanese Communist Party, 1922–1945* (1969), pp. 168–170. No Russian text has been available; the statement that Sano's report was published in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz* is incorrect.

[37] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 1, January 4, 1929, p. 21.

[38] R. Scalapino, *The Japanese Communist Movement, 1920–1966* (1967), p. 34.

[39] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 467; the incautious reference to it here as a party journal was rectified in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 80, August 7, 1928, p. 1461.

[40] G. Beckmann and Okubi Genji, *The Japanese Communist Party, 1922–1945* (1969), pp. 172–175. For the KIM resolution see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 6, January 18, 1929, p. 116; it is not clear whether the resolution was passed by the congress of KIM in August 1928 or by its central committee at a later date.

handed over to the Japanese authorities.[41] The *coup* was far more sweeping and effective than that of the previous spring. It was no great exaggeration to speak at the tenth IKKI in July 1929 of a "White terror" which had raged from March 15, 1928 "to the present day"; and the Japanese delegates had no achievements to record except some mild demonstrations at the Mikado's coronation in November–December 1928 and sporadic strikes and disturbances in other centres.[42] The party virtually ceased to exist; and for several months nothing could be done to reassemble the scattered fragments.

In Korea a further attempt to create a united communist party was made in the spring of 1926, when the party received recognition and apparently a modicum of funds from Comintern.[43] Its one achievement was to organize, in conjunction with a Korean communist youth league and Korean nationalists, large-scale demonstrations on June 10, 1926, on the occasion of the funeral of the last independent Korean emperor, deposed by Japan twenty years earlier. But "its innumerable political factions and inadequate contact with the masses"[44] prevented it from making any serious impact. The Japanese police, amply forewarned, broke up the demonstrations and arrested virtually all the active communists to the number of 101, so that the party once more ceased to exist. A Korean delegate at the seventh IKKI in November 1926 described Korea as "the weakest point of Japanese imperialism", and claimed that in the demonstrations of June 10 the party and the youth league stood "at the head of the revolutionary mass movement", but provided no further information about the party.[45]

[41] G. Beckmann and Okubi Genji, *The Japanese Communist Party, 1922–1945* (1969), pp. 180–181.

[42] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), 442–444, 525–527, 801–802.

[43] Dae-Sook Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement* (1967), pp. 77–81; this work offers, mainly from Korean sources, a bewildering mass of detailed information about conflicting Korean communist groups inside and outside the country. Recognition of a Korean Communist Party in 1926 was recorded in *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 523; for previous attempts to found a Korean party see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 894–895.

[44] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 105, August 13, 1926, pp. 1751–1752.

[45] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), i, 460–461.

At the Brussels congress of the League against Imperialism in February 1927, after Katayama had denounced Japanese imperialism, with special reference to Korea, as well as to China, India and Indonesia, a Korean delegate living in Paris delivered a lengthy indictment of Japanese rule; and a resolution of the congress demanded "complete independence" for Korea.[46] Early in 1927 Korean communists began to work within a newly founded nationalist organization called Shimkanhoe. The situation was reminiscent of the communist rôle in Kuomintang, and Comintern expressed its approval of the arrangement on the unrealistic condition that the party ended its internal strife and won the hegemony in the Shimkanhoe.[47] But this experiment also proved fruitless. The history of Korean communism continued to be one of incessant factional strife and arrests by a brutal and vigilant Japanese police. Early in 1928 the press reported the trial of the 101 communists and nationalists accused in connection with the affair of June 10, 1926, eighty-four of whom received prison sentences of varying duration.[48]

A congress held on February 27, 1928 — its meeting-place is not recorded — made yet another attempt to found a Korean Communist Party (the "fourth party"). It received a directive from Comintern to liquidate fractional differences, to recruit more workers and peasants, and to win over the revolutionary nationalist parties.[49] But this attempt proved as abortive as its predecessors. No Korean delegate was admitted to the sixth congress of Comintern in July 1928; and a Japanese delegate curtly remarked that the Korean party was threatened with "liquidationism", and that Korean communists were unable to "put an end to incessant fractional struggle".[50] Some wholly unrealistic injunctions to the party in the resolution of the congress on colonial and semi-colonial countries ended with a reference to "the absolutely indispensable

[46] *Das Flammenzeichen vom Palais Egmont* (1927), pp. 146–158, 261; for the congress see pp. 296–307 above.

[47] The Comintern directive is known only from a Japanese source quoted in Dae-Sook Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement* (1967), p. 96, note 16.

[48] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 19, February 24, 1928, p. 102.

[49] For a summary of the directive from a Japanese source see Dae-Sook Suh, *Documents of Korean Communism* (1970), p. 149; the full text has not been found.

[50] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), iv, 152.

liquidation of the noxious fractional spirit in its ranks".[51] In December 1928 the political secretariat of Comintern approved immensely long theses on the Korean question, which seemed to owe as much to current Comintern vocabulary and to Chinese experience as to any specific consideration of Korean conditions. It was noted that "the revolution in Korea can be no other than an agrarian revolution" and was "in this sense bourgeois-democratic"; on the other hand, the proletariat had "the task of securing the hegemony in the revolution". Japanese imperialists were likely to make conciliatory gestures towards the national bourgeoisie, which would encourage "national reformist tendencies". This made it all the more important to maintain the party's leading rôle in the national liberation movement. The party had hitherto consisted almost exclusively of intellectuals and students. The predominance of "petty bourgeois intellectuals" and lack of contact with the masses was "one of the important causes of the permanent crisis" from which the party had suffered. The theses ended with an appeal to the workers and peasants and an offer of help from IKKI:

> Without a rebuilding and strengthening of the communist party, a consistent and determined struggle for the liberation of the country from the yoke of Japanese imperialism, and for carrying out an agrarian revolution, is impossible.[52]

When these theses were adopted in Moscow, no Korean party existed to receive them. A group of Korean exiles in Manchuria met in January 1929 in an attempt to reconstitute the party, accepted the theses, and despatched an emissary to Korea. But, though the emissary himself appears to have escaped, those with whom he established contact were promptly arrested.[53] The party once more disintegrated. At the tenth IKKI in Moscow in July 1929 the head of the eastern section of the secretariat explained that, owing to incessant factional struggles instigated by the Jap-

[51] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 864.

[52] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 17, February 22, 1929, pp. 346–347, No. 18, February 25, 1929, pp. 374–375, No. 22, March 5, 1929, pp. 476–477, No. 23, March 8, 1929, pp. 497–498; a long summary appeared *ibid.* No. 143, December 28, 1928, pp. 2860–2862. According to a statement by Sano Manabu, the theses were drafted by himself, Ch'ü Ch'iu-p'ai, Mif and an unidentified delegate or official named Viltanen (Dae-Sook Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement* (1967), p. 108).

[53] *Ibid.* pp. 117–119.

anese police in the Korean Communist Party, the presidium of IKKI had been obliged to break off all relations with the party and its central organ, and to instruct Korean communists "to work directly among the masses, in the factories". The pious hope was expressed that these "harsh measures" had "quickly had a sobering effect", and that it would soon be possible to receive the party back into Comintern.[54] Seven Korean graduates of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East were despatched to Korea with this end in view, but quickly fell into the clutches of the police.[55] Meanwhile Korean communists in the Far East drew up a "Manifesto of the Korean Communist Party Re-establishment Preparation Association", and in December 1929 a lengthy programme professedly based on the decisions of the sixth Comintern congress and the theses of December 1928 made its appearance.[56] But these were evidently no more than academic exercises.

In the melancholy story of the bankruptcy of Korean communism in the nineteen-twenties, the efficiency of the Japanese police is generally acknowledged to have played a major rôle. Korea was a hot-bed of discontent, in which social and national factors can scarcely be distinguished. The Korean communists lacked neither courage nor pertinacity. But the absence of even the most rudimentary political tradition or training not only made them easy victims of repression, but prevented them from setting up any coherent organization. Comintern gave funds from time to time to one or other of the warring factions in the party, and received Koreans for training in the Communist University or other institutions in Moscow. But it had no insight into what was happening in Korea, or what divided the factions, which it tended to judge in the light of Chinese, or other more remote, examples. Its repeated injunctions to end factional strife fell on deaf ears. Korea, so long as it remained subject to firm Japanese rule, was a political backwater; and the interest of Comintern in Korean affairs remained as slender as its understanding of them.

[54] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 489–490.

[55] Dae-Sook Suh, *The Korean Communist Movement* (1967), pp. 119–120.

[56] Dae-Sook Suh, *Documents of Korean Communism* (1970), pp. 150–167.

NOTE A

SOVIET-GERMAN NAVAL COLLABORATION

THE German naval authorities did not share the enthusiasm of their military colleagues for links with the Soviet armed forces. It was not unnatural that both German and Soviet naval officers should have been more interested in a western orientation. The German Marineleitung declined a proposal to participate in 1924 in the creation of the training establishment for German aviation at Lipetsk.[1] Soviet interest in German naval *expertise* was concentrated mainly on submarines; and on April 25, 1925, the Marineleitung replied to a Soviet questionnaire on submarine operations, enclosing some naval manuals.[2] The first serious attempts to establish a collaboration between Soviet and German navies similar to that between their military forces were made in 1926, the initiative once more coming from the Soviet side. On March 26, 1926, the Soviet military attaché in Berlin, Lunev, accompanied by a Soviet naval officer named Oras, met high German naval officers to discuss possible German assistance in the reorganization of the Soviet navy and in the construction of new vessels, especially submarines. The German spokesman drew attention to the existence in the Netherlands of the Ingenieurskantoor voor Scheepsbouw (IvS), an ostensibly commercial concern sponsored by the German Government, which was engaged in designing and building submarines for Turkey and other foreign countries. Oras asked that German officers should be sent to the Soviet Union to discuss the whole problem.[3] In response to this request, a German naval mission headed by Admiral Spindler spent ten days in the Soviet Union from June 5 to 16, 1926. During this time they had conversations with Unshlikht, the deputy commissar for war, and Zof, the commander of the Soviet fleet, and visited naval shore establishments in Leningrad and the cruiser *Marat,* the destroyer *Engels* and the submarine *Batrak* in Kronstadt. First impressions were "unexpectedly favourable",

[1] K.-H. Völker, *Die Entwicklung der Militärischen Luftfahrt in Deutschland* in *Beiträge zur Militär- und Kriegsgeschichte,* iii (1962), 135, where it is suggested that the refusal may have been due to the substitution of Lipetsk for an earlier plan to set up an establishment at Odessa on the Black Sea.

[2] *Reichswehrministerium: Marineleitung,* 108/M 003872; for particulars of these defective archives see J. Erickson, *The Soviet High Command* (1962), p. 710, note 15.

[3] *Reichswehrministerium: Marineleitung,* 108/M 003873–6.

though the ships were out-of-date in many respects. On June 14, 1926, Spindler handed a note to Unshlikht in Moscow holding out hopes that the German navy might be prepared to communicate drawings of the German U-boats and to lend the services of three technical advisers — a naval commander and two engineers. In a later conversation Unshlikht expressed the desire for some more formal record of the offer. Zof dismissed the plans of the IvS (which Soviet officers had visited in the meanwhile) as scanty, and wanted "something concrete"; he hinted that offers of aid had been received from Italy. The visit ended in an atmosphere of cautious good will.[4]

A meeting of German naval officers held at the Marineleitung on July 1, 1926, to hear an oral report from Spindler subjected his proposals to some hostile criticism; it was evidently feared that he might have gone too far in his note to Unshlikht of June 14, 1926. It was agreed that there could be no question of having submarines built by Germans in the Soviet Union: this ruled out the military precedent. But Soviet submarines might be built on German plans, and technical advisers lent, provided these remained in German, not in Russian, pay. Some of those present were opposed even to these concessions, and wanted merely to refer the Soviet authorities to the IvS.[5] On the other side of the argument, an unsigned, undated memorandum is preserved in the German archives arguing the advantages of German–Soviet naval cooperation in the Baltic in the event of a war between either or both of them and Poland.[6] The only immediate decision was to communicate to the Soviet Government drawings of U-boats built during the war, which had already been delivered to the allies under the Versailles treaty; these were sent by courier on July 24, 1926, to be handed personally to Unshlikht.[7] The final verdict of the Marineleitung was recorded on July 29, 1926. It pronounced the future of the Soviet Union to be uncertain and unreliable. But the principal motive for the adverse conclusion was the hope of securing a relaxation of the Versailles restrictions by negotiation with "the Anglo-Saxons". The western orientation had, in naval terms, more to offer. Relations with the Soviet navy could not be concealed, and "contact with the English navy would be made much more difficult, if not impossible". It would therefore be prudent to restrict any dealings with Soviet representatives to discussion of the submarine question, and to send no further drawings.[8] In what form this intimation was conveyed to the Soviet authorities is not known. But on December 2, 1926, Mulkevich, who

[4] For Spindler's official report, dated July 27, 1926, see *ibid.* M 003901–24; he also made a briefer handwritten report on some technical points (*ibid.* M 003880–7). For his note to Unshlikht see *ibid.* M 003877–9.

[5] *Ibid.* M 003890–8.

[6] *Ibid.* M 003931.

[7] *Ibid.* M 003899, 003932.

[8] *Ibid.* M 003925–8.

had succeeded Zof as commander of the Soviet fleet,[9] told a German military representative that the German U-boat plans communicated earlier in the year were obsolete, and that no funds were available for the building of submarines. He enquired, however, why a joint naval station, parallel to the establishments at Kama and Lipetsk, could not be set up on the Black Sea.[10] The question was perhaps rhetorical. It was already clear that the German navy wanted no such cooperation. The embarrassment caused a few days later by the disclosures in the Reichstag and in the press of Soviet–German military cooperation[11] must have made the Marineleitung glad that it had been warned off this treacherous course.

The available German naval archives for 1927 and 1928 are blank on the subject of Soviet–German relations. Whatever discussions may have been held, no significant results emerged. In February 1929, Niedermeyer on instructions from Berlin reopened the question of naval cooperation with Voroshilov, who reacted favourably and thought that personal contacts would help.[12] In March 1929 the Marineleitung was prepared to send another naval mission to the Soviet Union, primarily in order to obtain information about the Soviet navy;[13] but this project did not materialize. A visit of Mulkevich to Germany was planned for the summer of 1929. Presently, however, V. Orlov, a high-ranking admiral, was substituted for Mulkevich — a change which did not suggest great eagerness on the Soviet side. Visits of Soviet ships to Swinemünde and Pillau were also planned. But the experience of 1918 made the German naval authorities wary of contacts with communist crews.[14] The visit to Swinemünde duly took place in August 1929; and a few months later a social-democratic deputy gave an ironical account in the Reichstag of the fulsome toasts exchanged between Soviet and German admirals.[15] But further contacts provoked only polite assurances, and it was soon apparent that prospects of naval collaboration had evaporated on both sides.

[9] *Izvestiya*, September 4, 1926; Mulkevich, formerly a textile worker and an old Bolshevik, is described in A. Barmine, *One Who Survived* (1945), p. 123, as "fat and sturdy and round-faced".

[10] *Reichswehrministerium: Marineleitung*, 108/M 003937–8.

[11] See pp. 38–40 above. In the flurry of the moment the German embassy in London reported that Berens, the Soviet naval attaché, was so hostile to Germany that he refused to speak German, the language of his parents; it even suspected him of a share in the *Manchester Guardian* revelations. He was recalled to Moscow, perhaps as the result of German protests (*Reichswehrministerium: Marineleitung*, 108/M 003942–3).

[12] *Ibid.* M 003945.

[13] *Ibid.* M 003946–8.

[14] *Ibid.* M 003947–51.

[15] *Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, ccccxxviii (1930), 5827.

NOTE B

CELL ORGANIZATION

THE demand for the organization of communist parties on the basis of cells in factories or places of work, assiduously preached by Comintern since 1922, had encountered widespread resistance; and the sixth IKKI in March 1926 had sounded a cautious retreat by recognizing the admissibility, side by side with factory cells, of "street cells", which fitted more readily into the western tradition of territorial organization.[1] But this concession was little to the taste of the Orgburo of IKKI, headed by the narrow and stubborn Pyatnitsky, who kept up an incessant pressure in support of factory cells. Loyal party leaders attempted from time to time, in face of opposition or indifference from their followers, to comply. An IKKI resolution on the organizational tasks of the CPGB deplored the failure of factory cells to play any significant rôle in the general strike: they had "not yet become the basic units of the party".[2] The CPGB, in a flurry of preparation for its forthcoming congress in October 1926, issued a set of Draft Statutes and Rules "for submission to the eighth congress" which enunciated the principle with unexceptionable precision:

> The basic unit of the party is the group. These must be organized in all factories, mines, railway depots and all other industrial, commercial or agricultural undertakings where three or more party members are employed. It is compulsory for all party members to join the group at their place of work when such a group is in existence. All party members in a given residential area, provided they are not members of, or attached to, a factory group, must be organized in street or area groups.[3]

A party pamphlet on Factory Groups apparently published at the same time outlined the functions of the groups, and betrayed some of the embarrassments arising out of relations between the groups and the regional or local party committees. The official record of the eighth congress gives no indication of any discussion or approval of the

[1] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 916–936.

[2] *Communist Review*, No. 6, October 1926, pp. 252–262. In the terminology of the CPGB, "cells" were called "groups" or sometimes "nuclei"; the word "nucleus" was also current in the American party.

[3] *Draft Statutes and Rules* (1926), p. 5; a further touch of unreality was added by a provision for "village groups".

draft statutes by the congress. The "thesis" on the international situation submitted by the party central committee to the congress noted briefly, among the symptoms of progress since the previous congress, "increasing concentration on factory groups", and included among its recommendations "continued concentration on factory groups as the basis of the party, improvement of the party apparatus in the locals (especially industrial departments and factory group departments)".[4] The question does not seem to have been mentioned in any other congress document. But at an organization conference which followed the congress it was claimed that 240 factory groups had been registered.[5] The issue was not raised at the succeeding congresses, and played no part in the acrimonious dissensions of 1928 and 1929.

Similar and simultaneous efforts were made in the French party. At the fifth congress of the PCF in June 1926, Thorez in his report on organization paid lip service to the factory cell as the unit of party membership, and asserted boldly that "we must cease to create factory cells on paper and only on paper"; he attributed the slow progress hitherto achieved to "the still abnormal social composition of our communist party", i.e. to its low proletarian content. Factory cells had facilitated the approach to the workers in small and medium-sized factories. But the party had always been weak in the larger factories; and cells of two or three members tended to become detached from the mass of workers, especially where they functioned as clandestine organizations. The solution was therefore not only to create street cells for sympathizers, but to recruit more members in large-scale enterprises. Renaud Jean pointed out that the street cells comprised mainly petty bourgeois elements in the party, and feared a cleavage between them and the workers. But the brief discussion turned on trivial points, and a resolution which recommended the transfer to factory cells of members "who ought not to belong to street cells" was adopted with two abstentions.[6] It is doubtful whether the vote did much to change the régime of "factory cells on paper, and only on paper".

In Germany an article in the KPD journal early in 1927 conveyed the assurance that the party had effected the change to cell organization "*without loss of members*" and with an increase in efficiency.[7] Pyatnitsky in an article in the Comintern journal in the spring of 1927 boasted

[4] *The Eighth Congress of the CPGB* (1927), pp. 35–36.

[5] Quoted from party archives in J. Klugman, *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain*, ii (1969), 339, note 6.

[6] For the report, debate and resolution see p. 472, note 33 above; an opposition delegate alleged that factory cells were composed of militants who did not understand the day-to-day demands of the majority of workers (*V Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), p. 80).

[7] *Die Internationale*, vii, No. 5, March 1, 1927, pp. 142–143.

that "in a majority of industrial districts and in the large towns [of Germany] ... the old organizations on a residential basis have disappeared, and in their place factory and street cells have been established". But even these pious aspirations rested on the fallacy of a radical distinction between street cells and the old "residential basis"; and subsequent experience did little to confirm them. Still less realistic was Pyatnitsky's belief in the extension of factory cells in the United States, and "in the Argentine, Brazil, Uruguay etc." The claim that the new system of organization had replaced the old in Poland and Italy had some plausibility inasmuch as these parties survived as illegal underground organizations; such contacts as they were able to maintain with workers must have been through small groups in the factories. But both parties had been reduced to impotence, and the extent of these operations is dubious.[8] Nor were the leaders of KIM, who had been the earliest and most ardent advocates of the principle,[9] any more successful in imposing cell organization on youth leagues than was Comintern on communist parties. In 1926 only "isolated cells" remained "side by side with the old territorial organizations".[10] After a period of relative quiescence, the organization conference of January 1928 once more drafted elaborate instructions for the organization of cells.[11] These injunctions seem to have enjoyed no more success than before. Figures issued in the middle of 1928 showed that only 7·1 per cent of members of the German league, 7·6 per cent of the French league, and 10·8 per cent of the Czechoslovak league were organized in cells.[12]

The issue was not allowed to go by default. Early in 1928, when Comintern was putting pressure on the PCF to adopt more radical policies,[13] Vasiliev, a member of the Comintern secretariat, attacked

[8] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 16 (90), 1927, pp. 18–30. The same article contained admissions which became more significant as parties were split by increasing pressures for unconditional submission to decisions handed down from Moscow. In the PCF "too much attention is paid in the factory cells to internal party disputes", and new members were "obliged to listen to the continuous chatter about organization and discipline"; in the KPD "newly joined members attended heated meetings of the Berlin organization and turned their backs on the party".

[9] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 917–923.

[10] See *ibid.* Vol. 3, p. 935; the German delegate to the sixth IKKIM in November 1926 reported a serious fall in the number of cells in the German youth league (*Pravda*, November 23, 1926).

[11] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 39, April 20, 1928, pp. 707–709; *The Young Communist International: Between the Fourth and Fifth Congresses* (1928), pp. 134–137. For this conference see p. 264 above.

[12] *Ibid.* pp. 145–146; according to this source, the number of factory cells reached its peak in March 1926 and thereafter progressively declined.

[13] See pp. 502–506 above.

the weak organization of the party and especially of its factory cells.[14] When, however, in the recriminations which followed the French elections of May 1928, three members of the Paris organization of the PCF protested against the attempt to substitute factory cells for trade union organs in the factories, they received a reassuring reply from the party secretariat that the question was open to discussion.[15] Renaud Jean attempted without success to ventilate it at the party conference in June 1928.[16] But in the following month the factory cells were again a target of criticism at the meetings in the Latin secretariat during the sixth congress of Comintern. Renaud Jean once more asserted that "as a general rule the creation of factory cells has been a failure". Only Lozovsky attempted to defend the cells, claiming that what they needed was "a more intense life". Costes, the secretary of the Paris region, said that in one important district of the region out of 155 worker members of the party only thirty-eight were employed in factories of over 1000 workers and only fourteen were organized in cells; and a delegate of the Nord region caustically remarked that "the party has been cut up into a series of small pieces called 'cells' ".[17] It was noticeable that both Sémard and Humbert-Droz avoided the issue. At the sixth congress itself, Vasiliev seized the occasion of the debate on the danger of war to expose the failure of the principal parties to organize factory cells. The PCF, which had had 2500 such cells at the time of its fifth congress in 1926, now had only 1000, which embraced barely 30 per cent of party members. In the United States, a report from industrial Springfield said that "*there have never been factory cells, and no question of them has been raised*"; the total number of party members there had fallen recently from thirty-six to sixteen. An enquiry in the KPD undertaken after the eighth IKKI in 1927 on the work of factory cells revealed that they were "very weak, and count their members in single figures or at most in tens".[18] Nobody else seems to have raised the question in the congress. But the revised statute of Comintern adopted at the congress maintained without challenge the unqualified demand (introduced into the statute at the fifth congress in 1924) for "the cell in the enterprise" as the basis of a communist party.[19]

No issue revealed so sharp a divergence between the pronouncements of Comintern and of party leaders who obsequiously repeated them, and

[14] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 3 (129), 1928, pp. 31–40.

[15] *Humanité*, June 4, 1928.

[16] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 61, June 29, 1928, p. 1103; for this conference see pp. 512–513 above.

[17] *Classe contre Classe* (1929), pp. 132, 140, 144, 199.

[18] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), ii, 133–134.

[19] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 921.

the stubborn failure of party members to give effect to them, as that of the organization of the party in factory cells. At the sixth congress of the PCF which opened on March 31, 1929, the *rapporteur* on organization admitted that "the transformation of our party in this respect has not yet begun", and that "a dangerous indifference to factory cells prevails";[20] the theses adopted by the congress protested against "the abandonment of factory cells", and explained that what was required was to remedy their weaknesses and improve their working.[21] When the indomitable Pyatnitsky presented a round-up of the situation to an indifferent audience at the tenth IKKI in July 1929, he drew a picture of almost total failure. Varying, and not very impressive, proportions of party members were enrolled in cells, and factory cells were yielding ground to "street cells", which, as Pyatnitsky now realized, "are no different in their work from the old local organizations by place of residence". The KPD in 1926 — the best year — had 2243 factory cells and 1928 street cells; in 1928 the respective figures were 1556 and 2461. An increasing number of party district organizations had no factory cells at all. The American party in 1927 had 166 factory cells with 1638 members and 452 street cells with 8115 members; in 1928 111 factory cells with 1224 members and 468 street cells with 9461 members. (The total membership of the party was at this time about 13,000.) In 1927 15 per cent, in 1928 12 per cent, of Czechoslovak party members belonged to factory cells; in 1927 47 per cent, and in 1928 42 per cent to street cells. In the PCF in February 1928 only 31 per cent of its 56,000 members belonged to factory cells; in April 1929 only 24 per cent of its 45,000 members. Moreover, of the members of factory cells, 21 per cent did not work in the factory and had only a formal attachment to the cell.[22]

Nobody attempted to counter Pyatnitsky's indictment; and, except for conventional references in Kuusinen's reply to the debate and at the end of the resolution on the economic struggle,[23] the question was silently ignored. The tenacity with which western parties clung to the territorial basis of organization familiar to the bourgeois democratic tradition was perhaps less remarkable than the obstinacy with which Pyatnitsky and his colleagues struggled, in spite of this deeply rooted resistance, to impose on these parties a system based on an exclusively proletarian conception of the party and hallowed by the tradition of

[20] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 34, April 19, 1929, p. 799.

[21] *VI Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français: Manifeste, Thèses et Resolutions* (n.d.), pp. 44–45.

[22] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 245–250.

[23] *Ibid.* p. 617; *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 908.

the revolution of 1917.[24] But the question was not merely one of organization. Parties which insisted on the territorial principle were geared to parliamentary elections, and regarded themselves as parties competing constitutionally with other parliamentary parties. Factory cells, unlike territorial units, were clandestine and revolutionary. The prejudices of western parties against them showed that these parties were not yet truly revolutionary. To transform their organization was, in the view of the Comintern hierarchy, the only way to instil into them the revolutionary spirit in which they were still deficient.

[24] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 916.

NOTE C

"SOCIAL-FASCISM"

THE term "social-Fascists" appeared casually and inconspicuously in the Soviet press within a few weeks of Mussolini's seizure of power, being applied to Italian socialists who were prepared to support the new government.[1] At the fourth congress of Comintern, which met on November 5, 1922, Zinoviev, without using the term, discussed the new and disturbing phenomenon. Referring to "this Fascist syndicalism", he went on:

> It is the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie, which is actually not so far removed from that of social-democracy as is sometimes thought. ... Modern Fascism in Italy is not so far removed from Noske's social-democracy, adapted to existing Italian conditions.[2]

The main resolution of the congress described Fascism as "the last card in the game of the bourgeoisie". The resolution on the Italian question more guardedly called the reformists, i.e. the Right socialists, "the true precursors of Fascism".[3] The analogy between conditions in Italy and Germany became still more apposite when Radek launched his dramatic appeal to the German Fascists (the so-called "Schlageter line") in the summer of 1923,[4] and when a few months later the disastrous failure of the German communist rising was diagnosed, in a KPD resolution of November 3, 1923, as "the victory of Fascism over the November republic".[5]

The bitterness of the German defeat, and the exigencies of party politics, militated against the acceptance in Moscow of a potential alliance of the KPD with a social-democratic Weimar republic against Fascism. When the presidium of IKKI met two months later to deliver its verdict, Zinoviev rejected this diagnosis, and reverted to his theme of November 1922, describing Pilsudski and Turati among others as "Fascist social-democrats", and concluding that "international social-democracy has become a wing of Fascism"; and the resolution

[1] *Izvestiya*, November 10, December 28, 1922.

[2] *Protokoll über den Vierten Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1923), p. 920.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 297, 357.

[4] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 177–181.

[5] See *ibid.* p. 232.

adopted by the presidium denounced the leaders of the SPD as "a sector of German Fascism in a socialist mask".[6] This manoeuvre was designed primarily to discredit Brandler, Radek and the policy of the united front with social-democrats; and no great theoretical importance was attached to it. At the fifth congress of Comintern in June 1924 Zinoviev described the SPD and the French socialist party as "the Left wing of the bourgeoisie", though this did not deter him from again calling social-democracy "a wing of Fascism".[7] The resolution of the congress on Fascism recorded a firm pronouncement:

> As bourgeois society continues to decay, all bourgeois parties, especially social-democracy, take on a more or less Fascist character. ... Fascism and social democracy are the two edges of one and the same instrument of the dictatorship.[8]

Three months later Stalin, in one of his first major excursions into international affairs, echoed Zinoviev:

> Social-democracy is objectively the moderate wing of Fascism ... They are not antipodes, but twins.[9]

But it was in the KPD, where the Left was now dominant in the leadership, that the thesis was greeted with most enthusiasm. The establishment by the SPD in 1924 of its own para-military organization, the Reichsbanner, evoked from the KPD journal the ironical comment that, if the SPD continued its present line, the Reichsbanner would soon be transformed into a "Fascist troop"; and a few months later Rosenberg, then a spokesman of the Left wing of the KPD, wrote still more explicitly:

> Ludendorff Fascism had to be replaced by Marx-Stresemann Fascism; the black-white-red shock troops had to be replaced by black-red-gold shock troops.[10]

The years 1925 and 1926, marked in Comintern by a shift away from the extreme Left and a return to united front policies, also witnessed an eclipse of the identification of social-democracy with Fascism. Zinoviev at the fifth IKKI in March 1925 once more referred to social-democracy as "a wing of Fascism" and "a wing of bourgeois

[6] *Die Lehren der Deutschen Ereignisse* (1924), pp. 69–70, 105–106; for the speech and resolution see *The Interregnum 1923–1924*, p. 238.

[7] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 67; for this speech see *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, pp. 73–75.

[8] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 448.

[9] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vi, 282.

[10] *Die Internationale*, vii, No. 13, July 1, 1924, p. 419, No. 24, December 1, 1924, p. 681.

'democracy' ".[11] But nothing of this appeared in the resolutions of the session. In the same month Domski, ploughing a belated ultra-Left furrow in the KPP, is said to have applied the term to the PPS.[12] At the sixth IKKI a year later, Zinoviev, now tottering to his fall, still attempted to equate social-democracy with Fascism, but was rebuked by Zetkin, who protested that it made no sense to say to a social-democratic worker: "Come to my arms, brother proletarian, a united front with you in the trade unions," while the ultra-Lefts said to him: "You Fascist, you traitor, I'll smash your skull." A distinction must be drawn between leaders and "misled masses".[13] The reaction of the Polish communists to the Pilsudski coup in May 1926 led to a vigorous repudiation by Comintern of any tendency to attach importance to the petty-bourgeois elements in Fascism, or to seek an alliance with them, and the temporizing attitude of the PPS was roundly denounced.[14] But, when at the seventh IKKI in November 1926 Zinoviev, speaking for the opposition, reminded an unsympathetic audience that at the fifth congress in 1924 he had stigmatized social-democracy as "a wing of Fascism", he was heard in stony silence.[15] Thereafter for many months, even in bitter polemics against social-democracy, nothing was heard in Moscow of its identity or alliance with Fascism. In the KPD the eviction of Maslow and Ruth Fischer from the leadership in August 1925 was followed by a period of reaction against the Left, during which united front policies with the SPD were assiduously preached, and opposition within the party came exclusively from groups of the so-called ultra-Left. But this interlude was short-lived; and when, especially after the seventh IKKI in November 1926 and the exploitation by the SPD of the secret arms traffic between the Soviet Union and Germany,[16] violent onslaughts on social-democracy became once more the current coin of the leaders of the KPD, the bogey of Fascism soon revived. In the spring of 1927 an article in the party journal bracketed the "Hitler guards" with the "Noske guards"; and a few months later the term "social-Fascism" reappeared in the title of an article on "Social-Imperialism and Social-Fascism in the Trade Unions".[17]

Early in 1928 pressures from the Left manifested themselves at the

[11] See *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, Vol. 3, p. 288.

[12] See *ibid.* Vol. 3, p. 382.

[13] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internationala* (1927), p. 228.

[14] See pp. 564–566 above.

[15] *Puti Mirovoi Revolyutsii* (1927), ii, 76.

[16] See pp. 40–41, 44 above.

[17] *Die Internationale*, x, No. 8, April 15, 1927, p. 253, No. 16, August 15, 1927, pp. 492–498.

ninth IKKI and the fourth congress of Profintern. In May 1928 elections to the German Reichstag, at which the KPD increased its vote, resulted in the formation of a "great coalition", in which, as the KPD journal noted, "the representatives of German Fascism sit side by side with the SPD".[18] Pieck in an article in the *Rote Fahne* of May 12, 1928, headed "Social-Fascism or Class War?", embroidered the theme that the essence both of Fascism and of social-democracy was the reconciliation of classes and renunciation of class warfare. The preparation of a draft programme of Comintern for submission to the forthcoming sixth congress stimulated the discussion. The passage on Fascism in the draft programme approved by a commission of IKKI on May 25, 1928, and assumed to have been the work of Bukharin, bracketed social-democracy with Fascism, but did not use the term "social-Fascism".[19] More uncompromising views were expressed by Lenz, the KPD expert on the programme. Before the publication of the draft he observed in the KPD journal that "the tendencies in the direction of social-Fascism" in the SPD had "certainly not simply a momentary, but a permanent, character"; and, when the draft appeared, he explicitly demanded a strengthening of the text, arguing once again that "the development of social-democracy into social-Fascism" was not an occasional but a regular phenomenon.[20] Stalin in his speech to the party central committee on July 5, 1928, resisted a proposal to transfer from one chapter to another of the draft a passage concerning "the counter-revolutionary rôle of social-democracy"[21] But, whether or not he remembered his dictum of 1924, he now displayed no interest in the relation between social-democracy and Fascism, and never at any time used the term "social-Fascism". The impetus behind this particular terminology did not come from him. When the congress opened, Thälmann in general debate, repeating Lenz's formula, spoke of "the development of reformism into social-Fascism",[22] and in the debate on the programme Dengel referred to the "transition of social-imperialism to social-Fascist methods". On the other hand, Sémard deprecated the use of the term "social-Fascism" as tending to replace "an exact analysis of the real political situation".[23] Bukharin in his cautious reply confined himself to admitting "social-Fascist tendencies" in social-democracy.[24] The

[18] *Ibid.* xi, No. 12, June 15, 1928, p. 439.

[19] For this draft see pp. 224–225 above.

[20] *Die Internationale*, xi, No. 11, June 1, 1928, pp. 354–358, No. 12, June 15, 1928, pp. 430–435.

[21] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, xi, 144; for this speech see p. 226 above.

[22] *Stenograficheskii Otchet VI Kongressa Kominterna* (1929), i, 303.

[23] *Ibid.* iii, 45, 93.

[24] *Ibid.* iii, 144.

term did not appear in the final text of the programme, or of Bukharin's theses. It may be inferred from these proceedings that the KPD delegates, perhaps with some encouragement within the Comintern hierarchy, were eager to obtain authority to brand their SPD opponents as social-Fascists, that Bukharin, in common with some foreign delegates, disliked the term, that Stalin was personally indifferent, and that Bukharin's authority was still adequate to win the day on issues on which he was not overruled by Stalin.

In spite of this partial set-back, the campaign in the KPD against Rightists and conciliators in its ranks, conducted in this period with the unreserved endorsement and support of Comintern, relied heavily on the identification of social-democracy with Fascism.[25] Two events occurring in Germany in the first half of 1929 helped to drive home the lesson. The first was the anti-Fascist congress held in Berlin in March. Its promoter was Münzenberg, with Barbusse the French writer as president of the organizing committee and principal figurehead. Though it was designed on united front lines, and had a good deal of non-communist support, Heckert, the delegate of the KPD, left no doubt about the attitude to be adopted to social-democrats; and a resolution of the congress declared that "the social-Fascist policy of the reformists leads directly to the victory of Fascist reaction".[26] The second event was the massacre of communists parading in the streets of Berlin on May 1 in defiance of a police prohibition.[27] Since the chief of police was a social-democrat, the adoption by the SPD of Fascist policies and Fascist methods seemed incontrovertibly demonstrated. A mammoth campaign of protest in every organ of Comintern proclaimed the equation between social-democrats and Fascists.

From this moment the last hesitations and inhibitions that had hitherto delayed acceptance of the complete identity of social-democracy and Fascism, and of the term "social-Fascism" which embodied the assumption, melted away. The KPD journal commented on the Magdeburg congress of the SPD in May 1929 under the title, "The Party Congress of Social-Fascism"; and in the following issue Remmele once again identified the social-democrats as "social-Fascists".[28] It was a recurrent theme, linked with the threat of war

[25] See pp. 461–462 above.

[26] For the congress see pp. 310–314 above; an article by Koenen, a communist Reichstag deputy, published on the eve of the congress, concluded that "social-Fascism becomes more and more the open form of expression of the SPD" (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 22, March 5, 1929, p. 464).

[27] See p. 458 above.

[28] *Der Internationale*, xii, No. 10–11, June 1, 1929, pp. 354–358, No. 12, June 15, 1929, pp. 387–391; the fortieth anniversary of the Second Inter-

against the Soviet Union, of the twelfth congress of the KPD, held in June 1929 in Berlin, not far from the scene of the May 1 massacre.[29] At the tenth IKKI in July 1929, every major delegate, including Molotov, applied to the social-democrats the now fashionable label of social-Fascists; and the example was followed in the main resolution of the session.[30] Neumann called Germany "the classic land of social-Fascism"; Manuilsky asserted that "the question of social-Fascism today comes out most strongly in the KPD"; Thälmann added that "the German trade unions provide the best example of the Fascization of the trade unions".[31] The decision, unswervingly applied during the next four years, to equate social-democrats with Fascists, branding them as social-Fascists, was to have fateful and dramatic consequences in Germany. But it is fair to record that, from 1923 onwards, this attitude was advocated, and the label applied, mainly in a German context, and mainly by members of the KPD, and was regarded with scepticism and dislike in other major foreign parties till its use was standardized and imposed by Comintern. Both in its origins and in its consequences, social-Fascism remained predominantly a German concept.

national was celebrated in an article, "From Opportunism to Social-Fascism" (*ibid.* No. 14, July 18, 1929, pp. 449–457). A further article, entitled "The Face of German Social-Fascism" (*ibid.* No. 15, August 1, 1929, pp. 481–491), repeated Thälmann's warning at the twelfth KPD congress in June 1929 (see p. 458 above), drawing attention to the hitherto neglected rise of National-Socialist groups in several parts of Germany.

[29] See pp. 458–460 above.

[30] See pp. 250–252 above.

[31] *Protokoll: 10. Plenum des Exekutivkomitees der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), pp. 474, 582, 641.

NOTE D

THE COOK–MAXTON "MANIFESTO"

THE following document appeared in the ILP journal *New Leader* on June 22, 1928:

To the Workers of Britain

For some time a number of us have been seriously disturbed as to where the British labour movement is being led. We believe that its basic principles are 1. An unceasing war against poverty and working class servitude. This means an unceasing war against capitalism. 2. That only by their own efforts can the workers obtain the full product of their labour.

These basic principles provided the inspiration and the organization on which the party was built. They were the principles of Hardie and the other pioneers who made the party. But in recent times there has been a serious departure from the principles and policy which animated the founders. We are now being told that the party is no longer a working class party, but a party representing all sections of the community. As socialists we feel we cannot represent the views of capitalism. Socialism and capitalism can have nothing in common.

As a result of the new conception that socialism and capitalism should sink their differences, much of the energy which should be expended in fighting capitalism is now expended in crushing everybody who dares to remain true to the ideals of the movement. We are convinced that this change is responsible for destroying the fighting spirit of the party and we now come out openly to challenge it. We can no longer stand by and see 30 years of devoted work destroyed in making peace with capitalism and compromises with the political philosophy of our capitalist opponents. In furtherance of our effort we propose to combine in carrying through a series of conferences and meetings in various parts of the country.

At these conferences the rank and file will be given the opportunity to state whether they accept the new outlook, or whether they wish to remain true to the spirit and the ideals which animated early pioneers. Conditions have not changed. Wealth and luxury still flaunt themselves in the face of poverty-stricken workers who produce them. We ask you to join in the fight against the system which makes these conditions possible.

Yours fraternally,
A. J. Cook,
James Maxton