A HISTORY OF SOVIET RUSSIA

E. H. CARR

SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY 1924-1926

VOLUME THREE-I

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by E. H. Carr

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*with R. W. Davies

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SOCIALISM IN ONE COUNTRY 1924-1926

BY
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VOLUME THREE—PART I

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PREFACE

THE present volume, which appears in two parts, is the third and last of the instalment of my *History of Soviet Russia* entitled *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*. Both the interval since the publication of volumes one and two, and the length of the present volume, have far exceeded my intentions and expectations. As the work proceeded, I have discovered more and more relevant material which it seemed impossible to ignore; and it became increasingly apparent that this period set a pattern, both in the external relations of the Soviet Government with other governments and in the integration of the policies of the Communist International with those of the Soviet Government, which persisted for many years and called for detailed investigation.

The handicap to which I alluded in the Preface to the first volume — that I was working in a field where I had " few predecessors and few signposts to follow " — has been no less acutely felt in this volume, and must once more serve as my excuse for any shortcomings in the handling of an unwieldy mass of facts. Since Louis Fischer's *The Soviets in World Affairs*, published in 1930, no major comprehensive work, and few monographs of serious value, have appeared on Soviet diplomatic relations in the nineteen-twenties. The Soviet, British and French official archives are still inaccessible. But, where so much is already available from other sources, few startling disclosures need be expected when the archives are opened; and it is not altogether a paradox to suggest that the gravest embarrassment for the historian of Soviet foreign policy in this period is the availability in photostat form of virtually the complete archives of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and of the personal papers of Stresemann, Brockdorff-Rantzau and several of the German military leaders. More than one decade is likely to pass before this mass of documents can be fully digested by scholars; and, until they can be placed side by side with similar documents from other countries, a certain distortion of perspective is inevitable. I cannot claim to have done more than skim this rich source. But, as the footnotes will show, I have drawn fairly fully from it for some aspects of Soviet–German relations. The corresponding Japanese archives are still virgin soil for the research worker.

Similar problems are raised by the history of the Communist International. Here, too, though the official archives are closed, a superabundance of available material has contrasted with a notable shortage of serious scholarly attempts in any language to deal with it. Borkenau's *The Communist International*, published in 1938, was a series of sketches of particular episodes rather than a connected history; and anything published since has been far inferior to it. The only two reasonably adequate histories of communist parties hitherto published have been

Mr. J. Rothschild's history of the Bulgarian party and Mr. Theodore Draper's of the American party; and these were not very important parties. In the nineteen-twenties — whatever may have been true later — the Soviet leaders were fully conscious of the enormously superior material power of the capitalist countries and deeply apprehensive of it. Relations with foreign communist parties, with foreign trade unions and with other groups in foreign countries in which sympathizers could be found or recruited, played in these years an important part in the defensive strategy of the Soviet Union. These are an essential part of the story, which cannot be fully understood without some knowledge of what went on in particular parties. It is this consideration which has led me to stray into what some readers may feel to be unnecessary detail on matters that now seem less important than they did then.

I have reluctantly abandoned the hope of furnishing a bibliography for this instalment of my history. Merely to list the very numerous sources quoted in the footnotes (where I have provided full references) would have been an unprofitable labour; to compile anything like a complete bibliography for these years would have been beyond my powers without a team of assistants. The student today is far better placed both to identify existing material and (since the coming of the microfilm) to obtain access to it than when I began this work fifteen years ago. The bibliography of the Communist International presents problems all its own. Virtually all its important documents were published in Russian and German, many of them also in French and English, though the French and English versions were sometimes abbreviated and generally less reliable, and I have as a rule used them only when no Russian or German text was available. The choice between Russian and German versions has been mainly a matter of convenience. For the congresses I have used the German records, since the proceedings were conducted for the most part in German; for the sessions of IKKI I have used the Russian versions, since some of the German versions were not accessible to me. Of the journal *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional* I have used the Russian version, which is much fuller than those in other languages; of *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz* the German version, for the same reason. Occasionally I have checked versions in different languages of the same document, and have recorded in a footnote substantial discrepancies between them. But it seems unlikely that anyone will ever undertake the enormous labour of systematically collating these various texts.

I should repeat one technical point from the Preface to the previous volume. References in footnotes to "Vol. 1" or "Vol. 2" relate to *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*; the two previous instalments of the History are quoted by their titles *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923* and *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*. When I began the History, it was decided that each section or instalment should be treated as a separate work divided into volumes, and that there should be no consecutive numbering of the volumes of the History as a whole. Some confusion has, however, arisen from the "unofficial" use of

such numbering, Vols. 1 and 2 of *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, being sometimes quoted or referred to as Vols. 5 and 6 of the History. The original decision was perhaps unfortunate. But it is difficult to change the numbering of the volumes now, and I hope therefore that the present volume may be referred to as Vol. 3, Parts i and ii, of *Socialism in One Country, 1924–1926*, and not as Vol. 7 or Vols. 7 and 8 of the History.

It remains for me to express my very warm thanks and appreciation to all those who have given me generous and indispensable help during the many years through which I have been engaged on this work. The list is so long that I cannot hope to include them all here, and must beg them to believe that lack of space alone, and not lack of a sense of my indebtedness to them, is responsible for the omission from this Preface of many names which should rightly have appeared in it. But there are some benefactions from institutions and outstanding kindnesses from individuals which I cannot fail to put on record.

The Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, of which I was a Fellow in the year 1959–1960, provided the most generous facilities of every kind, as well as the most congenial surroundings, for my work; and I am deeply grateful to it and to Ralph Tyler, its director, for a most fruitful year. The proximity to the Center of the Hoover Institution, whose library is still the richest repository in the west for the history of the Soviet Union in the nineteen-twenties, and especially of its external relations, was from my point of view particularly fortunate and rewarding; and my sincere thanks are due to the director, Dr. Glenn Campbell, the deputy-director, Dr. Witold Sworakowski, and to Mrs. Arline Paul and other members of the library staff for all that they did to help me in my quest for material. I am indebted for similar courtesy and assistance to the Russian Research Center at Harvard and its secretary, Mrs. Helen Parsons, and to the staff of the Houghton Library where I worked on the Trotsky archives in the summer of 1960. The American Philosophical Society made me a generous grant for two successive years to cover the cost of research assistance in the preparation of this volume; and I also received a grant from the Twentieth Century Fund which enabled me to purchase much-needed microfilms. I tender my warm thanks to both these institutions for their support of my work. In this country, I have once again made constant use of the libraries of the British Museum, the London School of Economics and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, and of the microfilm collection of Cambridge University Library; and I owe a special debt of gratitude to the library staff of my own college for their unfailing help in borrowing books for me from other libraries.

A few individuals whose willing help was particularly generous and valuable must also be named here. My ignorance of Asian languages was a serious handicap. Professor Yoshitaka Oka, of the University of Tokyo, has most kindly advised me on published Japanese sources for Soviet–Japanese diplomatic relations, and provided me with translations of salient passages. Dr. Chün-tu Hsüeh,

formerly of the political science department of Stanford University, and now lecturer in History in the University of Hong Kong, checked Chinese sources for me on many doubtful or controversial points. Professor Owen Lattimore has again given me the benefit of his unique knowledge of Mongolian affairs. Professor W. Appleman Williams, of the University of Wisconsin, has furnished me with a wealth of information on Soviet–American relations, and sent me copies of important papers in the Gumberg archives in the university library. Professor F. L. Carsten, of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, Mr. R. P. Morgan, of the University of Sussex, and Mr. John Erickson, of the University of Manchester, have all contributed to the arduous process of research into the German archives and drawn my attention to particulars which I should otherwise have missed. Mr. Stuart Schram's study of Franco–Soviet relations has been an invaluable guide, and he has supplemented it by further details and advice. Professor Ivan Avakumović, of the University of Manitoba, has enabled me to avoid some of the pitfalls which beset the untutored student of Yugoslav affairs, and also generously made available to me the results of his researches into the statistics of membership of communist parties in the nineteen-twenties. These I hope to incorporate in detail in a subsequent volume.

By far my largest debt in the writing of this volume has been to Mrs. Olga Hess Gankin. Her long period of work in the Hoover Institution gave her an unrivalled familiarity with the sources for the external relations of the Soviet Union in the decade after the revolution, and in particular with the early years of the Communist International. She not only placed this knowledge freely at my disposal, but also undertook on my behalf the most meticulous research into obscure or difficult points, and gave me the benefit of her judgment on many disputed issues. More than one chapter in this volume could not have been written — or not in its present form — without her close collaboration ; and it is with a specially strong sense of obligation that I record my thanks to her here. One other name must not be omitted. Miss Jean Fyfe, research associate of the Centre for Russian and East European Studies in the University of Birmingham, not only typed the major part of my manuscript, but earned my gratitude by reading the proofs and by discharging the particularly arduous task of making the index.

The next instalment of the History will, as has already been announced, cover the period 1926–1929 and bear the title *Foundations of a Planned Economy*. Work is in progress on the first volume of this instalment. I have been fortunate enough to secure the collaboration of Mr. R. W. Davies, Director of the Centre for Russian and East European Studies of the University of Birmingham, who will share with me the responsibility for the writing of this volume. With this help, I hope that it may be completed after a shorter interval than has separated the present volume from its predecessors.

E. H. CARR

October 5, 1963

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PART V

FOREIGN RELATIONS

A : *The Soviet Union and the West*

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CHAPTER 25

PRINCIPLES OF FOREIGN POLICY

THE conception of foreign policy as a special form of activity with rules and principles of its own was at the outset totally alien to Bolshevik thinking. " There is no more erroneous or more harmful idea ", wrote Lenin shortly before the revolution, " than the separation of foreign from internal policy." [1] In the first flush of the Bolshevik victory the unity of revolutionary policy presented no difficulties. To foster the consolidation and expansion of the revolution was the essence of all policy, at home and abroad. When, however, the immediate goal of the extension of the revolution to western Europe proved unattainable, and the end of the civil war marked the abandonment by the capitalist Powers of the direct and open attempt to overthrow the revolutionary government, this simple equation between domestic and foreign policy no longer sufficed. The constitution of the USSR of 1923, unlike the constitution of the RSFSR five years earlier, took cognizance of the special problem of international relations. It postulated the division of the world into " two camps : the camp of capitalism and the camp of socialism " ; it also spoke of " the skein of national contradictions threatening the very existence of capitalism ". The two basic principles derived from Marxist teaching remained unchanged. In the first place, class antagonisms were in the last resort the determining factor in international relations, so that a permanent reconciliation between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world was unthinkable. This meant that, even though Soviet military power was not invoked to spread the revolution to other countries, those countries were bound, in the estimate of the Soviet leaders, to fear the Soviet régime as the focus of the revolutionary movement which would ultimately and inevitably destroy the capitalist system ; they

[1] Lenin, *Sochineniya* (4th ed.), xxv, 67.

would therefore do all in their power to encircle and isolate it, and, if circumstances were favourable, take active military measures against it. The threat from the capitalist world was a constant factor of which Soviet foreign policy must take account. Secondly, the inherent contradictions of capitalism, so strikingly illustrated by the war of 1914, would continue to prevail, and to provide a barrier to the combined action of the capitalist world against the Soviet Union. Hence it must be a part of Soviet policy to encourage these contradictions, and to come to terms with, and support, the weaker and less dangerous of two capitalist countries, or groups of such countries, as a safeguard against the threat to the Soviet Union from the stronger and more dangerous.

The prevailing outlook in the Soviet Union in the spring of 1924 on relations with the external world contained an element of paradox. On the one hand, the expectation of an early extension of the revolution, already weakened after 1921, had irretrievably foundered in the German fiasco of October 1923, and been replaced by a widespread impression of defeat and frustration.[1] On the other hand, the recognition of the Soviet Government by the British and Italian Governments in February 1924, and the lesser recognitions which followed it,[2] accorded to the Soviet Union normal diplomatic status among the European Powers. This victory for the Soviet régime was of a different kind from the revolutionary victory which had been so confidently predicted, and on which all previous hopes had been pinned. But it was undeniably a victory, and it helped to shape a new attitude in the Soviet Union to the outside world. An element of stability had entered into the Soviet picture of the world — stability of the capitalist countries, which had unexpectedly survived the threat of immediate revolution, stability of the Soviet power, which was

[1] Bukharin admitted at the thirteenth party congress in May 1924 that "the psychological depression" due to the German defeat "had an extraordinary influence on our party ranks" (*Trinadtsatyi S"ezd Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)* (1924), p. 332). The IKKI report to the fifth congress of Comintern a month later noted that "the set-back of the German proletariat represented a set-back for many sectors of the Russian working masses and for the RKP, and its influence was felt in the party discussion" (*Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale vom IV. bis V. Weltkongress* (1924), p. 9).

[2] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 250-252.

no longer under direct and constant attack from enemies at home or abroad, and had achieved an assured international position; and this led inevitably to a certain stabilization of relations between the Soviet Union and capitalist countries. The seeming paradox consisted in the recognition of stabilization as a goal of policy — even a temporary goal — for a revolutionary régime. But this looked back, consistently enough, to the "breathing space" of NEP, and forward to the more durable conception of socialism in one country. Relations with the outside world were no longer seen, mainly or exclusively, through the prism of world revolution. Of the two complementary factors in the dual policy of the Soviet régime — the encouragement of world revolution and the pursuit of national security — which had been in potential conflict ever since the days of the Brest-Litovsk treaty,[1] the second seemed to have established a clear claim to priority.

It would be misleading to see in this change, as contemporary observers sometimes asserted, a victory of "*raison d'état*" over "principles".[2] It was a retreat from a long-term offensive policy, which was, in theory, never abandoned, to a short-term defensive policy, which had never, in practice, been ruled out. A stalemate had been achieved. Co-existence between the two worlds would continue, like NEP, "seriously and for a long time",[3] though not for ever. Nor was the parallel with NEP fortuitous. "Never", declared Zinoviev at the thirteenth party congress in May 1924, "has our international policy been so closely bound up with our domestic policy as it is now."[4] In the first place, the predominance of the peasantry, which had been the determining factor in the adoption of NEP, was also a compelling force in the reversion to a foreign policy concerned with the immediate interests of the Soviet polity and the Soviet economy rather than with the promotion of revolution elsewhere: this was one of the lessons of the Polish campaign of 1920.[5] Secondly, the establishment of continuity with the past, of a

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 58, and ch. 22 *passim*.

[2] See, for example, *Survey of International Affairs, 1924*, ed. A. J. Toynbee (1926), p. 172.

[3] For this formula see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 2, p. 276.

[4] *Trinadtsatyi S"ezd Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)* (1924), p. 50.

[5] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 215-216.

return to traditional ways, of which NEP was also the symbol,[1] had particular relevance to the field of foreign relations, where the Soviet Government had from the first been involved in the defence of state interests inherited from the Russian past. In its foreign policy, even more clearly than in its domestic policy, the new régime had not started with a clean slate. The desire to regularize foreign relations, which set in strongly after the recognitions of 1924, meant in large part a rebuilding on old foundations.

The entry of the Soviet Union into the community of nations required the taking up of an attitude to international law. The Marxist theory of law had proved a handicap rather than an asset to the Soviet jurists who were faced with the practical task of setting up a Soviet legal system.[2] No Marxist pronouncement applied specifically to international law, though the theory of law as part of the superstructure of society might have led the strict Marxist to hold that no law could cover two diametrically opposite social systems. But this drastic rejection of international law was never professed by the Soviet leaders, who from the outset offered to enter into treaty relations with capitalist Powers, and in fact did so at Brest-Litovsk,[3] and on many subsequent occasions. An initial reluctance to invoke rights accruing under treaties signed by former Russian governments, natural at a time when the debts of the Tsarist régime were being vigorously disowned, was gradually overcome. When the Soviet Government renounced the special treaty rights acquired by Tsarist Russia in China, Persia and Turkey, it used formulas implying a voluntary act of renunciation, not a situation in which rights had automatically lapsed. The first occasion on which it formally claimed rights conferred by a Tsarist treaty appears to have been its protest against the treaty signed by the western Powers in February 1920,

[1] See Vol. 1, pp. 23-27. [2] See Vol. 1, pp. 66-73.

[3] It would be as rash to draw any theoretical conclusions about the view taken of international law from Lenin's admission, in the closed forum of the seventh party congress, that the Brest-Litovsk treaty had already been violated "thirty or forty times" (see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 72) as from Germany's violations of the Versailles treaty. Similarly, Lenin's statement of 1916 that "not *every* acquisition of 'alien' territory can be considered as annexation", and that "only the acquisition of territory *against the will* of its population can be considered as annexation" (*Sochineniya*, xix, 60) is no more inconsistent with belief in international law than pronouncements by western politicians in favour of self-determination.

in the absence of Soviet Russia, to regulate the status of Spitzbergen.[1] In November 1924, in the course of a dispute about rights of access to Wrangel Island in the Arctic, Chicherin addressed a note to the principal Powers recalling a declaration made by the Russian Government in 1916 that the islands off the north coast of Siberia " form an inseparable part of Russian territory ", asserting that the islands now formed part of the RSFSR, and protesting in the name of the USSR against " the violation of its territorial rights by foreigners in respect of certain of these islands ".[2] NEP, and the development of commercial relations with the west inaugurated by the Anglo-Soviet trade agreement of March 1921, enhanced the importance of treaties in Soviet theory and practice. When Soviet Russia signed the treaty of Riga with Poland in the same month, all her European frontiers were covered by treaties with her neighbours with the single exception of the frontier with Rumania.[3] Chicherin, at the time of the Genoa conference, emphasized the protection for private property rights secured by the Soviet legal system, and at his opening speech at the conference urged that " economic collaboration between states representing these two systems of property is imperatively necessary for the general economic revival ".[4]

In 1924 Korovin, in a work entitled *International Law of the Transition Period*,[5] attempted the first serious Soviet analysis of international law in Marxist terms. Korovin noted, without attempting to resolve or explain, the inconsistency involved in rejecting international obligations assumed by former Russian governments and at the same time asserting rights on the basis

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 158.

[2] Klyuchnikov i Sabanin, *Mezhdunarodnaya Politika*, iii, i (1928), 331.

[3] Treaty relations covering the Asian frontiers were completed only by the Sino-Soviet treaty of May 31, 1924. When Stalin, in his famous " vow " on the morrow of Lenin's death (see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 347-348), undertook on behalf of the party not only to strengthen, but to " extend the union of the toilers of the whole world ", he was speaking the language not of diplomacy, but of world revolution, as the subsequent reference to Comintern showed.

[4] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 360-361, 373.

[5] E. Korovin, *Mezhdunarodnoe Pravo Perekhodnogo Vremeni* (1924); for earlier pronouncements of Soviet jurists on international law see J. F. Triska and R. M. Slusser in *American Journal of International Law*, lxii, No. 4 (October 1958), pp. 700-701.

of some treaty bearing "the seal and signature of an imperial ambassador".[1] Like all Marxists, and like most Russian jurists of all periods, he rejected any natural law approach, and derived law from the will of states. This principle was not affected by the Marxist doctrine that the state was the expression of the interests of a class. The doctrine led in theory to a class view of international law, from which, however, few, if any, practical deductions were drawn.[2] The "transition period" referred to in Korovin's title was the period of co-existence between socialist and capitalist states; and the international law of this period was necessarily a compromise between the two conflicting systems which enabled them to cooperate in certain limited ways for their mutual advantage. Treaties, according to Korovin, were the only true source of international law; the recourse to "custom" and to "the principles of international law" was characteristic of bourgeois jurisprudence and had no validity or importance for Soviet practice.[3] Though no general attempt was made for some years to contest Korovin's theory of international law, Sabanin, the legal adviser to Narkomindel, in a review of the book in the journal of the commissariat, thought that Korovin's insistence on the primacy of "treaties" over "custom" as a source of international law rested on "an evident misunderstanding", and pointed to treaties concluded by the Soviet Government in which custom or the general principles of international law were either specified or assumed.[4] The result of these discussions was to reduce almost to vanishing point the differences that could be

[1] E. Korovin, *Mezhdunarodnoe Pravo Perekhodnogo Vremeni* (1924), p. 5.

[2] What seems to be the sole survival of a class attitude to international law occurs in the decree on the citizenship of the USSR of October 1924 (*Sobranie Zakonov, 1924*, No. 23, arts. 201, 202); this provided that foreigners "living in the territory of the USSR and occupied in labour or belonging to the working class or to the peasantry which does not utilize the labour of others" enjoyed "all the political rights of citizens of the USSR", and that foreigners living abroad and possessing the same qualifications might be similarly naturalized by the competent authorities. But this in practice had little meaning. Any state is entitled in international law to naturalize foreigners living in its territory; and the naturalization of foreigners living abroad would be ineffective unless it were recognized by the state in which they resided.

[3] E. Korovin, *Mezhdunarodnoe Pravo Perekhodnogo Vremeni* (1924), p. 26.

[4] *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'*, No. 2, 1925, pp. 119-120; J. F. Triska and R. M. Slusser in *American Journal of International Law*, lxii, No. 4 (October 1958), pp. 703-704, list a number of Soviet treaties of the early period which refer to the principles or common practice of international law.

discerned between the Soviet theory and practice of international law and those of the capitalist world.

Among the matters which Sabanin mentioned in his criticism of Korovin as being ordinarily regulated by custom were the rights of diplomatic representatives. Much attention was given to these formal aspects of relations with the external world. The decree of June 4, 1918, abolishing the old ranks of ambassador and minister, and conferring on Soviet representatives abroad the uniform title of *polpred*,[1] reinforced by a decree of October 18, 1918 on the appointment of consular agents, who might be either Soviet citizens or, where such were not available, citizens of the countries concerned,[2] remained throughout the civil war period the foundation of the tenuous Soviet diplomatic service. Then, on May 26, 1921, a formal statute was issued on Soviet diplomatic agencies abroad. This placed the *polpred* in charge of all Soviet diplomatic, consular or commercial activities in the country in which he resided, subject to the proviso that he had no control over "special technical work conducted by Soviet agencies representing other branches of the government".[3] A corresponding decree of June 30, 1921, regulated the status of foreign diplomatic representatives in the RSFSR.[4] The flow of *de jure* recognitions of the Soviet Government in this year introduced a gradual change of attitude towards diplomatic relations. The first breach in the austere uniformity of the system of *polpreds* occurred when, following the conclusion of the Sino-Soviet treaty of May 31, 1924, the Soviet and Chinese Governments agreed to exchange representatives having the rank of ambassadors, thus assuring to the Soviet Ambassador in Peking the coveted status of *doyen* of the diplomatic corps.[5] But it may have been the current embarrassments of diplomatic relations with the government of Mussolini [6] which prompted the issue on

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 68-69.

[2] *Sobranie Uzakonenii, 1917–1918*, No. 78, art. 823.

[3] *Sobranie Uzakonenii, 1921*, No. 49, art. 261.

[4] *Ibid.* No. 53, art. 303; a special decree of November 4, 1921 (*ibid.* No. 74, art. 610), dealt with diplomatic couriers and mail — a thorny subject since the first days of the régime.

[5] Karakhan in making this proposal to the Chinese Government on June 17, 1924, explained that the Soviet Government "has renounced the division of nations into different ranks and conducts its policy on the principle of full equality" (for this note see p. 685 below).

[6] See pp. 168-169 below.

November 21, 1924, by the presidium of TsIK of a fresh instruction to Soviet diplomatic representatives abroad. The establishment of normal diplomatic relations with nearly all countries was said to represent an " important and valuable gain ", which, however, carried with it " certain specific difficulties resulting from the fundamental differences between the social order and practices of the Soviet state and of all other states ". Soviet representatives were to observe " the simplicity in form and economy in expenditure fitting the ideals of the Soviet régime ". It should not be regarded as " an act of propaganda or a political demonstration " if they refrained from participation in manifestations which were " monarchical or contradictory in general to the Soviet régime " ; equally it would not be resented if " diplomats of friendly states " refused to participate in " demonstrations of a revolutionary character ".[1] These formal distinctions could easily be drawn so long as both sides recognized them. But, though the desire to regularize diplomatic relations with foreign countries had come for the present to predominate in Soviet practice over the hope of promoting revolution in the near future, the long-term revolutionary element in the Soviet outlook was ineradicable, and provided a reason for continued mistrust where other considerations were not powerful enough to overcome it.

The institution which embodied for the outside world the revolutionary element in Soviet policy and outlook was the Communist International. In the first years of the revolution Soviet foreign policy and communist aims in foreign countries were inseparable and indistinguishable. In the summer of 1920 it would have been meaningless to ask whether the advance into Poland was undertaken in the interests of international communism or of Soviet policy ; and the congress of eastern peoples in Baku in September of the same year equally served both purposes. Article 14 of the 21 conditions of admission to Comintern drawn up in 1920 demanded of every party " unconditional support for every Soviet republic in its struggle against counter-revolutionary forces ".[2] The demand in this generalized form

[1] *Sobranie Zakonov, 1924*, No. 26, art. 223.
[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 103.

seemed unexceptionable. But, when after 1921 the need to defend the unique achievements of the proletarian revolution in Soviet Russia began to outweigh the hope of extending those achievements to other countries, the charge was soon heard that the cause of international communism was subordinated to the interests of the Soviet state.[1] The answer to this charge could be only that the two causes were in fact one and the same. On the eve of the fourth congress of Comintern in November 1922 *Izvestiya* propounded the principle in what seemed deliberately provocative terms:

> The Communist International rests on Soviet Russia . . . the mutual solidarity of the Soviet republic and of the Communist International is an accomplished fact. The spiritual, moral and material bond between them is based on a complete solidarity of interests.[2]

And the fourth congress substituted for the generalized precept of the 21 conditions the specific injunction to support Soviet Russia as the sole revolutionary power.[3] In an interview of March 1, 1923, Trotsky once more denied the possibility of "contradictions between the interests of the Soviet republic and those of the Third International", since "the working class throughout the world is interested in the strengthening of Soviet Russia" and "the national interests of Russia coincide with the interests of her ruling class, *i.e.* the proletariat".[4] The German fiasco of October 1923, by postponing the prospects of revolution in Europe to a still remoter future, merely underlined this identity. The development of the economic and military strength of the Soviet Union, now the primary task of the Soviet Government, was also the supreme interest of the proletariat throughout the world, since the Soviet Union was required to hold the fort till such time as the proletarian revolution could resume its triumphant advance elsewhere. No greater set-back could befall the

[1] The charge seems to have been first made by Martov at the Halle congress of the USPD in October 1920 and was repeated at the third congress of Comintern in June–July 1921 (see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 395-397).

[2] *Izvestiya*, November 7, 1922.

[3] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 445–448.

[4] *Manchester Guardian*, March 1, 1923.

proletarian cause all over the world than a disaster to the Soviet Union.

> The Russian question [said Stalin in July 1924] is of decisive importance for the revolutionary movement in the west as in the east. Why? Because the Soviet power in Russia is the foundation, the mainstay, the refuge for the revolutionary movement of the whole world. Thus, to overthrow this power would mean to overthrow the revolutionary movement throughout the world.[1]

Where a capitalist government did not adopt a hostile attitude to the Soviet Union, but on the contrary set itself in opposition to other capitalist governments adopting such an attitude, it might be the duty of the workers of that country to refrain from attacking their government, or even in certain circumstances to give it conditional and temporary support — a requirement which sometimes weighed heavily on communist parties suffering persecution from that very government.[2] The main function of the workers of other countries in the new period was no longer to make a revolution against their respective governments — a task already shown to be beyond their power — but to prevent those governments from engaging in hostile action against the Soviet Union; the greater the threat to the Soviet Union, the more imperative did this obligation become. Manuilsky, speaking at the tenth congress of the German Communist Party in July 1925, referred to "the new wave of aggression against the USSR" and of the task which it imposed:

> The chief task which now confronts Comintern in connexion with this new period of the development of post-war imperialism is to conjure up in the consciousness of the workers the bloody ghost of war in its full stature. . . . This work is no music of the future, it is the reality of today.[3]

But the argument could as easily be turned one way as the other. To serve the cause of the Soviet Government was equally to serve the cause of international communism.

[1] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vi, 265.

[2] The objections of the Italian Communist Party to official Soviet relations with Mussolini were an extreme example of this (see pp. 168-169 below).

[3] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), pp. 307-308.

While this fundamental identity continued to be asserted, its diplomatic implications were a source of constant embarrassment. When the Soviet Government undertook in the Brest-Litovsk treaty to abstain from propaganda against its treaty partner, nobody took the undertaking at its face value; breaches of it could easily be justified or excused; and the German Government itself collapsed at the moment when it was attempting to make its first effective protest against them. When, however, the Soviet Government gave the same undertaking in the Anglo-Soviet trade treaty of March 1921, the situation was altogether different. The treaty was directed to the serious purpose of improving the position of Soviet Russia in the world, economically and politically; and this purpose, as a long series of protests culminating in the Curzon ultimatum showed, was put in jeopardy by the continuance of anti-British propaganda. The Communist International was now a familiar and much publicized institution. Belief in the ultimate victory of the revolution, and in the duty to promote it by active propaganda among the workers, was the cornerstone of the existence of the Soviet régime; and Comintern was the main organ through which the Soviet leaders could hope to mobilize the support of the workers in capitalist countries in defence of the Soviet Union. The only way out of the dilemma was to dissociate Comintern as completely as possible from Narkomindel, and to maintain the thesis that the Soviet Government had no responsibility for Comintern, an independent international institution. At the outset no serious attempt had been made to maintain even a formal separation. Chicherin, as People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, had been directly concerned in the foundation of the Communist International.[1] But by about 1924 any overt connexion between the two institutions had been severed; and the assertion that Comintern enjoyed absolute independence, financial, organizational and ideological, of the Soviet Government became one of the most familiar commonplaces of Soviet diplomacy.[2]

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 118, note 3, 120.

[2] G. Besedovsky, *Na Putyakh k Termidoru* (Paris, 1931), i, 150-151, states that new regulations were laid down after the incident at the trade delegation in Berlin in May 1924 (see pp. 57-62 below) providing for a complete separation of functions; but one Comintern official was attached to every Soviet mission abroad to maintain liaison with the head of the mission.

The issue was particularly acute in the period from 1923 to 1925. The activities in Asia against which the Curzon ultimatum had been mainly directed continued unabated, though they had in fact little to do with Comintern; the activities of Comintern in Germany in 1923 seemed to portend a fresh outburst of revolutionary fervour in Europe. Throughout these years the Soviet Government was the recipient of innumerable protests against the proceedings of Comintern and the utterances of its leading spokesmen, especially Zinoviev. Sometimes the accuracy of the charge was denied; a few of the protests were indeed almost certainly based on forged documents, such as the Zinoviev letter or the alleged agreement between the Peasant International and the Croat Republican Peasant Party.[1] Where this resource was not available, the protests were met by the bland denial of responsibility for Comintern which had already been tendered, and rejected, in the reply to the Curzon ultimatum.[2] In a long discussion of the topic with Brockdorff-Rantzau, the German Ambassador, in December 1923, Chicherin embroidered the denial by arguing that no more conclusions could be drawn from the presence of the headquarters of the Third International in Moscow than from that of the headquarters of the Second International in the Brussels of Leopold II. Radek, who was present, quoted with approval an alleged remark of Seeckt which reflected the same dissociation between communism and foreign policy: "We must twist the necks of the communists in Germany, but go along with the Soviet Government". And Chicherin interjected: "Mussolini is now our best friend".[3] A few weeks later Brockdorff-Rantzau in a memorandum to Stresemann appeared eager to reconcile himself to this convenient fiction:

> The duplicity of Russian policy is a fact with which not only we, but all the Powers, have to reckon. The distinction

[1] See pp. 29-34, 231 below.

[2] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 169-170.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 6698/111754-63; G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), pp. 126-127. Rykov told an American correspondent in July 1924 that the relation of the Soviet Government to the Russian party was like that of Poincaré to the Bloc National (A. I. Rykov, *Stat'i i Rechi*, iii (1929), 179). A year later Chicherin capped the analogy of the Second International with a reference to the First International, which in its declining years had had its headquarters in the United States (*Izvestiya*, January 21, 1925).

between the Soviet Government and the Third International continues to exist.[1]

Assurances of a complete dissociation between the two institutions were part of a diplomatic game, and were taken no more seriously by those who gave them than by those who received them. When Chicherin in March 1925, on the occasion of one of these incidents, reported to TsIK that "we saw ourselves obliged to declare once more to the German Government that our government is not responsible for the activity of Comintern and has nothing to do with it", the remark was greeted, according to a German diplomat who was present, with "a peal of laughter".[2] When these assurances were accepted by the other side, they were accepted not because they were believed, but because it was convenient to accept them. Shortly after Brockdorff-Rantzau's conversation with Chicherin in December 1923, Wallroth, who had succeeded Maltzan as director of the eastern department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the end of 1922, and had discovered the activities of a member of the Soviet mission engaged in supplying arms to German communists, dwelt complacently on the importance of avoiding "a second Joffe case", i.e. the expulsion of a Soviet envoy.

> It would be an odd development in our Russian policy [he wrote], so carefully and laboriously built up over the years, if Germany broke off relations precisely at the moment when Chicherin would like if possible to strut across the stage with Mussolini on one arm and Poincaré on the other.[3]

In February 1924 the Soviet *polpred* in Tallinn protested against statements made in the press by the Estonian Minister for Internal Affairs identifying the Soviet Government with Comintern and Profintern, and alleging that communications with Estonian communists passed through "one of the diplomatic offices standing near to the Communist International". The Estonian Government duly expressed regret for statements based on unconfirmed reports; and the Soviet Government generously

[1] *Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass*, 9101/226799; for this memorandum see p. 54 below.

[2] *SSSR: Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 2 Sozyva: 3 Sessiya* (1925), p. 45; G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), p. 109.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 5265/318063-6.

regarded the incident as " liquidated ".[1] " I have hitherto exerted myself ", wrote Stresemann to the United States Ambassador on June 4, 1925, " to draw a sharp line of distinction between the Russian Government and the Third International." [2] But this was a piece of special pleading to suit the occasion; and on June 13, 1925, in conversation with Litvinov, Stresemann took a different line:

> In spite of the difficulties which communist propaganda makes for us at home, and although it is impossible for us to recognize the distinction beloved by Russia between the Third International and the Russian Government, we have stuck to the principle that the two countries are linked together, and must have a good relation with each other.[3]

While, however, few illusions existed about the responsibility of the Soviet leaders for the words and deeds of Comintern or about their ability to control the operations of that institution, another and subtler line of defence enjoyed greater success. Spokesmen of Narkomindel sedulously instilled into the receptive ears of foreign representatives the idea that a division of opinion existed among the leaders on the respective claims of Comintern and Narkomindel, which was sometimes dramatized by diplomatic wishful thinking into a clash between party and government. It was in this form that Brockdorff-Rantzau reported it in a letter to Maltzan a few days after the abortive communist coup in Germany in October 1923:

> It will come to a trial of strength between the party leadership and the Soviet Government; and I intend, if possible, to push the differences which have come unmistakably to light to the point of a split. A certain disappointment, especially over the proceedings in Saxony and the failure of the *putsch* in Hamburg, can already be noted here; whether a healthy sobering up will ensue, we must wait and see; if this occurred, it

[1] For the Soviet and Estonian notes see *Izvestiya*, March 2, 5, 1924.

[2] *Stresemann Nachlass*, 7133/148770.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155375; *Stresemann Nachlass*, 7129/147856: two days earlier Stresemann had noted in his diary the remark of a German industrialist that " to conclude a marriage with communist Russia would be like going to bed with the murderer of one's own people ", and added: " The fiction cannot in the long run be maintained that there is a Russian Government which pursues a Germanophile policy and a Third International which exerts itself to undermine Germany " (*ibid.* 7129/147850).

> would bring with it a substantial strengthening of the cautious tendency represented by the Foreign Commissariat. For the present, the hotheads of the party leadership, among whom, besides Zinoviev and Bukharin, Stalin must now also be counted (though he keeps his person in the background), appear to have the upper hand.[1]

The diagnosis revealed a profound misunderstanding of the way in which Soviet institutions worked. Friction could and did occur between Soviet representatives abroad and foreign communists. The Italian party protested loudly against amicable relations with Mussolini maintained by the Soviet *polpred* in Rome[2]; and conversely Chicherin during one of his sojourns in Berlin was embarrassed by an enthusiastic visit from 100 German communist workers.[3] Differences of opinion occurred within the party or within the Soviet machine, and sometimes led to the pursuit of apparently conflicting policies. In the early years Radek was allowed or encouraged to try out lines of approach in Germany which were not fully endorsed by the prevailing opinion of the party in Moscow. It was long before the administrative machine became efficient or powerful enough to impose anything like uniformity throughout its vast domain. But no question arose, or could have arisen, of a "split" in Moscow between "party" and "government", or between "hot-headed" party leaders and "cautious" officials of Narkomindel. The acute party dissensions of these years added to the illusion. It was widely believed that the defeat of Trotsky, which was assumed to mean the abandonment of "permanent revolution" in favour of "socialism in one country", was a victory for restraint in foreign policy. The proceedings of the fourteenth Russian party congress of December 1925 were commonly interpreted in western Europe as a struggle between "extremists" like Zinoviev, who insisted on a continuation of the revolutionary activities of Comintern even at the cost of embroiling the Soviet Union with the

[1] Letter of November 2, 1923 in *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, ii (1955), 341-342. While accident has made Brockdorff-Rantzau's despatches available to students, the reports of other foreign representatives in Moscow are still withheld; it is unlikely that they were better informed, or more perceptive, than Brockdorff-Rantzau.

[2] See pp. 168-169 below.

[3] G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), p. 110.

rest of the world, and " moderates " like Stalin, who supported a " realistic " policy of concessions to the capitalist countries ; and satisfaction was expressed that the view of the moderates had prevailed.[1] Yet this interpretation, as the sequel showed, was wholly misleading. To treat these struggles as the expression of a divergence of principle on Soviet foreign policy was a fundamental misunderstanding of their character. To assume that Narkomindel had a policy of its own or could exercise influence in its own right was even wider of the mark ; the policies which both Narkomindel and Comintern carried out were ultimately decided in the Politburo of the Russian party.

Whatever the underlying realities, however, it suited all concerned throughout this period to depict Narkomindel to the world as engaged in a struggle to carry out a moderate foreign policy in face of opposition from revolutionary hot-heads, and therefore deserving of the sympathy and respect of foreign governments. In May 1924 Brockdorff-Rantzau, after an " uninhibited, frank conversation " with Chicherin, cryptically reported that " the inability of the Soviet Government to assert itself against Comintern and the Russian Communist Party can be no more categorically affirmed than its opposite ".[2] In the following month *Pravda* published a caricature of Chicherin tearing his hair in the background while Zinoviev delivers a speech from what is no doubt a Comintern platform ;[3] and foreign publicists did not fail to reproduce the edifying picture of Zinoviev and Chicherin " consciously working against each other ".[4] A few months later the note changed, and it became fashionable to hint that Comintern had been successfully muzzled. In November 1924 the Italian commercial attaché reported that, while the Jews were ensconced in the commissariats of foreign trade and foreign affairs, " without counting Comintern, which is their stronghold ", the government under Rykov pursued a policy which was " more nationalist than socialist ", and " tends as much as it can to free

[1] See, for example, a series of articles in *Le Temps*, December 22, 1925, January 2, 4, 1926.

[2] *Auswärtiges Amt*, K 305/105724-6.

[3] *Pravda*, June 19, 1924 ; the cartoon is reproduced in L. Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (1930), ii, 471.

[4] *Survey of International Affairs*, 1924, ed. A. J. Toynbee (1926), p. 172.

itself from the influence of Comintern ".[1] Litvinov assured Brockdorff-Rantzau in January 1925 that interventions in German domestic affairs, like Stalin's and Zinoviev's recent letters to the German Communist Party, " need no longer be expected " ;[2] and Rakovsky told Austen Chamberlain on April 1, 1925, that there had been a " considerable change " in the Soviet attitude :

> In the early years after the revolution they had no doubt indulged in a good deal of propaganda just because they were a revolutionary government and not very secure ; but they had now other means of defence.[3]

A change had in fact occurred. But the change in aim and direction in Comintern from the active promotion of world revolution to the use of foreign communist parties as the spearheads of more cautious policies favoured in Moscow did not necessarily make the interventions of Comintern more welcome to the governments of the countries concerned ; nor did it loosen — it rather strengthened — the ties which united Narkomindel and Comintern in the execution of a single policy handed down to both by the party leadership. The endless diplomatic debate about propaganda had become by this time a symptom rather than a cause of the bad relations between the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries. Intervention in the affairs of these countries through the medium of their communist parties was maintained from the Soviet side as a means of embarrassing and weakening potentially hostile governments : the quarrel was kept alive by constant protests from the other side in order to embarrass and discredit the Soviet Government. The issue was essentially unreal. Soviet security and Soviet prosperity were the theme of Soviet diplomatic relations with the capitalist world. World revolution entered into the picture in so far as it contributed to the realization of these aims, and was now recognized as being

[1] *I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani : Settima Serie, 1922–1935*, iii (1959), 356 ; on May 9, 1925, Chicherin mentioned to the Italian Ambassador a rumour that the Italian Government, " on the initiative of England ", was about to demand " the adoption of a measure to dissociate the Russian Government from the Third International " (*ibid.* iii, 558).

[2] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/554713 ; for Stalin's and Zinoviev's letters see p. 116 below.

[3] *A Selection of Papers dealing with Relations between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government, 1921–1927*, Cmd. 2895 (1927), p. 38.

itself dependent on their realization. But the agents of Soviet diplomacy and of world revolution, of Narkomindel and Comintern, met on the common ground of an unbounded confidence in the eventual outcome of their efforts. It was Bukharin who at this time most eloquently expressed this faith in a national future which was also the future of socialism :

> The revolution has stirred to its depths a country with a population of 130 millions. It has awakened creative forces which in the next 20 years will astonish the world.[1]

This long-term confidence survived throughout this period unshaken by current apprehensions of danger.

[1] *Pravda*, October 4, 1925.

CHAPTER 26

DIPLOMATIC ANTI-CLIMAX

(*a*) *Great Britain*

THE Anglo-Soviet trade treaty of March 16, 1921, the first formal basis of Anglo-Soviet relations,[1] had been described in its preamble as preliminary to the conclusion of a general treaty: the claims of the parties against each other had been explicitly reserved for this eventual treaty. The letter of recognition of February 1, 1924, invited the Soviet Government to send representatives to London to draw up "the preliminary bases of a complete treaty to settle all questions outstanding between the two countries"; and Rakovsky's letter of February 8, 1924, notifying the British Government of his appointment as chargé d'affaires conveyed an acceptance of this invitation.[2] On February 11, 1924, MacDonald, after his first conversation with Rakovsky, sent him a letter outlining an agenda for the proposed conference. Four groups of questions were put forward for discussion — the review of existing treaties and the conclusion of a new "general treaty of commerce and comity"; governmental claims and counter-claims; credits; and private claims. It was indicated that the first and fourth group of questions were those on which the British Government desired that attention should be initially concentrated; work on the second and third could at the present stage remain "exploratory". MacDonald proposed to appoint as British negotiators "three or four senior officials of the Foreign Office or the Board of Trade working under my personal supervision or under the temporary supervision of some other minister".[3] The next two months were occupied in preparations

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 287-288.

[2] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 250-251.

[3] This letter will presumably be published in due course in the collection of British documents.

for the conference, which finally assembled in London on April 14, 1924. The Soviet delegation was headed by Rakovsky, and included Tomsky, the trade union leader, his future successor Shvernik, Litvinov, Joffe, Preobrazhensky and Sheinman, the president of Gosbank.[1] The British delegation consisted of the parliamentary under-secretary for foreign affairs, Ponsonby, and a number of important civil servants.

In the interval between recognition and the meeting of the conference the positions of the two parties had been tentatively defined. The Soviet Government would be prepared to make some concessions on private claims, but on no other issue of importance, in return for a substantial loan from Great Britain : this remained, from the Soviet point of view, the *sine qua non* of any agreement. The British position, owing to party divisions, was less clear cut. The Labour Party as a whole strongly desired an agreement, was not primarily interested in the claims, and would have been glad to see the Soviet Government obtain a loan, though it was reluctant to facilitate this by a British Government guarantee. The Liberal Party, on whose vote the government depended, did not feel its prestige involved in the conclusion of an agreement, and was more concerned than the Labour Party to uphold the canons of commercial and financial orthodoxy, but with these reservations acquiesced in the Labour policy. The Conservative Party had been unsympathetic to recognition, and was generally hostile both to a wholesale waiving of claims and to the granting of a loan. The opposition was most vocal in influential business and financial circles, though even here it was expressed for tactical reasons in the form of putting forward conditions which the Soviet Government was certain to reject. On the day when the conference met, a number of leading bankers presented a memorandum to the British Government and issued it to the press.[2] It demanded a recognition of debts, both public and private; restitution of private property to foreigners; the adoption of a "proper civil code" with "independent courts of law" (this was interpreted

[1] L. Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (1930), ii, 478, whose account of the conference is based on unpublished protocols shown to him by Rakovsky (*ibid.* (2nd ed. 1951) p. viii); see also F. D. Volkov, *Anglo-Sovetskie Otnosheniya, 1924–1928 gg.* (1958), pp. 34-35, also partly based on unpublished Soviet archives.

[2] *The Times*, April 14, 1924.

in some quarters as a return to the pre-Genoa demand for capitulations [1]); and access for foreign bankers, industrialists and traders to "similar private institutions in Russia" (this meant, at the very least, an abandonment of the monopoly of foreign trade). Even if these conditions were accepted, it expressed itself cautiously on the prospect of the Soviet Government obtaining credit in the city. The memorandum was regarded on the Soviet side as proof of the implacable opposition of the city to a settlement, and was denounced as such in the Soviet press. Two days later a letter appeared in *The Times* from McNeill, an authoritative Conservative spokesman, stating that, if MacDonald abandoned British claims against the Soviet Government, a future Conservative government would not be bound by his action.[2]

The first session of the conference on April 14, 1924, was devoted to formal declarations by MacDonald and Rakovsky.[3] Sessions on April 15 and 16 were occupied by discussions of the agenda, and the fourth session on April 25 set up four commissions to deal respectively with claims and credits, with the proposed commercial treaty, with fishing rights and territorial waters, and with existing treaties.[4] On May 6, 1924, Rakovsky protested to MacDonald against unauthorized disclosures to the press; [5] and it was announced that no information about the discussions would be given to the press except by agreement between the parties [6] — a sure sign of difficulties ahead. During May 1924, the second and third commissions made progress towards agreement on the drafting of a commercial treaty, and on fishing rights. The fourth commission on the retention, revision or abrogation of former Anglo-Russian treaties worked so smoothly that a report was submitted to a fifth plenary session on May 15, 1924, and duly approved by it, subject to a protest by the Soviet delegation in regard to the treaty of October 28, 1920, assigning Bessarabia to Rumania, which the British delegation refused to discuss. The

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 359.

[2] *The Times*, April 16, 1924.

[3] These were reported in the British press; Rakovsky's speech appeared in full in *Izvestiya*, April 16, 1924.

[4] F. D. Volkov, *Anglo-Sovetskie Otnosheniya, 1924–1928 gg.* (1958), pp. 43-44.

[5] *Russian Review* (Washington), June 15, 1924, p. 401.

[6] *The Times*, May 10, 1924; *Izvestiya*, May 10, 1924.

remainder of the session was devoted to contentious and inconclusive argument on the question of claims, governmental and private.[1] Here nothing seemed to have changed since the days of the Genoa conference two years earlier. As at Genoa, the mutual cancellation of inter-governmental claims was tacitly accepted in the form of their indefinite postponement, though neither side would at this stage admit even this measure of agreement. As at Genoa, the Soviet Government agreed in principle to some measure of compensation in respect of pre-war debts to private persons, i.e. the bondholders of former Russian loans, in the form of a lump sum to be agreed on between governments; but this was conditional on the granting of a loan. As at Genoa, the Soviet Government was willing to discuss in each individual case compensation in the form of fresh concessions to foreign owners of nationalized property, but refused to make this a matter for negotiation between governments.[2] Two further sessions of the conference on May 20 and 27, 1924, registered a deadlock on both these issues, and adjourned them for further consideration. On May 30, 1924, the British Government invited the Soviet delegation to enter into direct negotiations with British debtors and claimants.[3]

The conference did not meet again for two months. The interval was occupied by negotiations between the Soviet delegation and bankers, bondholders and concession-seekers — a clear recognition that the centre of gravity had passed from Whitehall to the city. Certain results quickly emerged from this practical approach. In the first place, the bankers returned a blank refusal to requests for a loan not guaranteed by the British Treasury: this made it unequivocally plain that the possibility of an agreement turned on the willingness of the Labour government to give such a guarantee. Secondly, some bondholders' representatives showed signs of thinking that half a loaf was better than no bread; and details of a settlement were very informally and tentatively discussed. But any settlement depended

[1] F. D. Volkov, *Anglo-Sovetskie Otnosheniya, 1924–1928 gg.* (1958), pp. 46-48.

[2] For the situation at Genoa see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 374-375.

[3] F. D. Volkov, *Anglo-Sovetskie Otnosheniya, 1924–1928 gg.* (1958), pp. 48-51.

on the realization of the loan. Thirdly, discussions took place with some, though by no means all, former owners of nationalized property: of those concerns which at this time indicated their willingness to consider a fresh concession in satisfaction of their claim the most important was Lena Goldfields, which had formerly worked extensive mines in Siberia.[1] The discussions with former owners of nationalized property were not, from the Soviet point of view, dependent on the conclusion of the agreement. But, from the British point of view, the conclusion of an agreement was dependent on progress being made in these discussions. Towards the end of July matters came to a head; and Rakovsky left for Moscow, evidently for final instructions. In his absence, and after a sharp division of opinion in the cabinet, the government decided to make agreement possible by guaranteeing a loan to the Soviet Government, the total figure named being £30,000,000. Rakovsky, apprised by telegram of this new turn of events, hurried back to London.[2] After two days in informal session in committee, a full meeting of the conference was convened for August 4, 1924. This was to prove decisive.

When the conference met on August 4, it quickly registered agreement on the proposed commercial treaty; its most significant clause was one which accorded diplomatic status and immunities to the head of the Soviet trade delegation and to a limited number (to be specified later) of his staff.[3] The conference also approved

[1] Succinct accounts of these discussions from Soviet sources are in L. Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (1930), ii, 482-488, and F. D. Volkov, *Anglo-Sovetskie Otnosheniya, 1924–1928 gg.* (1958), pp. 51-53; these can be supplemented from the British press. A full account cannot be written till both British and Soviet records are made available. The Soviet negotiators attached particular importance to the discussions about concessions, partly because this was a means of attracting foreign capital, and partly because they believed that the influence of the potential concessionaires would be decisive for the negotiations on the British side. A pencilled note passed by Krasin to Trotsky at a meeting in Moscow on July 12, 1924, and preserved in the Trotsky archives (T 827), expressed the opinion that the concessionnaires were "many times more influential" than the bondholders. But Krasin had always been a strong advocate of the concessions policy.

[2] L. Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (1930), ii, 483.

[3] The Soviet-Italian treaty of February 7, 1924 (see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 251), was the first to accord extra-territorial status to a Soviet trade delegation; thereafter this became accepted practice. The Soviet-Swedish commercial treaty of March 15, 1924, was exceptional in two respects: it did not accord extra-territorial rights to the Soviet trade delegation, and did

chapters one (validity of past treaties), two (fisheries) and four (mutual undertaking to abstain from hostile propaganda) of the proposed general treaty. The contentious issues were concentrated in chapter three (" Claims and Loan "), which in its final form amounted to little more than an agreement to agree. It provided for the conclusion of a " further treaty " which would embody terms of the settlement to be agreed on between the Soviet Government and the bondholders. This " further treaty " would, however, be concluded only when satisfaction had been given to former owners of nationalized property in their separate negotiations with the Soviet Government; and it was only when this treaty had been concluded that the British Government would at last " recommend parliament to enable them to guarantee the interest and sinking fund of a loan to be issued by the Soviet Goverment ". When everything else was settled, major trouble arose over the extent of the satisfaction which would have to be accorded to former property-owners before the " further treaty " could be concluded. No agreed formula on this point could be found. After sitting continuously for 20 hours, the conference broke up on the early morning of August 5, 1924, with an announcement of the failure of the negotiations.[1]

At this juncture a group of prominent British politicians of the Left — Morel, Lansbury, Purcell and Wallhead — intervened both with Ponsonby and with Rakovsky in an attempt to bridge the gap.[2] The conference met again on August 6, 1924, and this time agreement was reached on a formula by which the " further treaty " would include " an agreed settlement of pro-

not allow Sweden to claim m.f.n. treatment *vis-à-vis* countries which had recognized the Soviet Union *de jure* before February 15, 1924 (*SSSR : Sbornik Deistvuyushchikh Dogovorov, Soglashenii i Konventsii*, i-ii (1928), No. 92, pp. 267-270).

[1] For a Soviet account of this meeting see F. D. Volkov, *Anglo-Sovetskie Otnosheniya, 1924–1928 gg.* (1958), pp. 66-69.

[2] An account of these moves was given by Morel in *Forward*, August 23, 1924. The episode quickly became a legend. Kamenev, speaking a month later at a party meeting in Leningrad, claimed on the authority of a press report that Purcell and other trade union leaders had " an extremely stormy conversation with MacDonald, Snowden and Wallhead ", and that the treaty had been saved through " the intervention of the trade union leaders " (L. Kamenev, *Stat'i i Rechi*, xi (1929), 59-60); shortly afterwards he told the Komsomol central committee that the treaty had been signed " under the big stick of the workers " (*ibid.* xi, 91).

perty claims other than those directly settled by the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics ". This safeguarded the Soviet principle of direct settlement with former owners, and at the same time left the British Government free to reopen the issue in regard to any unsettled claim if it so desired. The treaty was signed in this form, together with the commercial treaty, on August 8, 1924.[1] The Anglo-Soviet conference ended with a formal session on August 12, in the course of which Rakovsky read a general statement on Soviet foreign policy. This emphasized the desire of the Soviet Government to maintain peace and remove the causes of war. For the Balkans, often a source of war in the past, a federal solution was advocated. As regards the Yugoslavs, Croatia, Slovenia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Dalmatia and Serbia should all enjoy autonomy within the federation. The Dobrudja should be restored by Rumania to Bulgaria, which should also obtain access to the sea. The frontiers of Hungary with Czechoslovakia and Rumania should be settled in accordance with the principles of self-determination. The Soviet Government categorically refused to recognize Rumania's annexation of Bessarabia:

> Bessarabia is and remains, first and foremost, from the standpoint of international law, a territory belonging to the Soviet Union; the Bessarabian people alone can change this historical fact.

Besides Bessarabia, " the population of Bukovina must be given the right to decide its own fate ". Finally, the statement protested against the Polish annexation of East Galicia in defiance of the wishes of the population, of which 70 per cent was Ukrainian.[2]

The signature of the treaty was received with relief and satisfaction in Moscow. A *communiqué* of Narkomindel welcomed it as " laying the foundations of a new relation between the *USSR and the greatest world-capitalist Power*"[3]. Kamenev in speeches of August 20, and August 22, 1924, described it as " indubitably a

[1] *General Treaty between Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, Cmd. 2260 (1924) (the final British draft on which negotiations broke down on August 5 had already been published as Cmd. 2253 (1924)); *Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, Cmd. 2261 (1924).

[2] For the text of the statement see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 113, August 26, 1924, pp. 1467-1469. [3] *Izvestiya*, August 10, 1924.

turning-point in the whole world situation of our union ", and as " an international act in which the full equality of rights of our political and economic system with the system of the greatest political world Power is guaranteed ".[1] In London the reception of the treaty was such as to throw immediate doubts on the prospect of ratification. The signature unloosed a flood of public protests from British financial and commercial institutions. More directly threatening obstacles were the division in the Labour Party itself on the desirability of a guaranteed loan, and the uncertain position of the Liberal Party. When the agreement on the treaty was announced in the House of Commons on August 6, 1924, Lloyd George, while not formally committing himself, appeared to be numbered among the critics.[2] The attitude of the Liberal Party remained in doubt till the latter part of September, when Grey and Asquith both declared against the treaty. An official Liberal motion to reject the treaty was handed in on October 1, 1924, the day after the House of Commons reassembled.[3] From this moment MacDonald could only ride for a fall and test the fortunes of his party at fresh elections. The treaty never actually came up for discussion, since the government was defeated on October 8, 1924, on a vote of censure condemning the withdrawal of a prosecution of Campbell, editor of the communist *Workers' Weekly*, for alleged incitement to mutiny in the army.[4] On the following day parliament was dissolved, the general election being fixed for October 29. TsIK, which sat in Moscow during this interval, kept the issue discreetly open. It pronounced the treaty to be " the limit of concessions on the side of the USSR, to which the Soviet Government consented because it was dealing with a government associated with the English working class ", and decided to adjourn the question of ratification and refer it to the presidium.[5]

[1] L. Kamenev, *Stat'i i Rechi*, xi (1929), 1, 3.

[2] *House of Commons : 5th Series*, clxxvi, 3031-3036.

[3] *The Times*, October 2, 1924.

[4] The appeal to soldiers in the *Workers' Weekly*, July 25, 1924, was " to let it be known that, neither in the class war nor in a military war, will you turn your guns on your fellow workers " ; the intention to prosecute was announced in the House of Commons on August 6, 1924, and abandoned a week later. The importance attached to the affair was clearly a reflexion of political excitement over the Anglo-Soviet treaty.

[5] *Postanovleniya TsIK Soyuza SSR* (1924), p. 4.

Four days before the election, a new element was injected into this already heated situation in the form of the famous "Zinoviev letter". A copy of this letter, which purported to have been written by Zinoviev as president of the presidium of IKKI to the central committee of the CPGB and was dated September 15, 1924, was received by the Foreign Office on October 10, the day after the dissolution of parliament. The recriminations about its authenticity which followed its publication were, as usual, inconclusive. It is unlikely that any official record of the source or sources from which it was obtained has been preserved, or will ever be published.[1] The balance of internal evidence is against its authenticity. Rakovsky drew attention to its use of the anomalous phrase "Third Communist International" (the institution was officially called the "Communist International" and was often popularly known as the "Third International", but the two designations were not normally combined), and to the non-existent title of "president of the presidium" conferred on Zinoviev. Zinoviev alleged that on the date of the letter, September 15, he had been on vacation in Kislovodsk.[2] A more substantial objection was that half the letter was devoted to exhortations to the CPGB to carry on subversive work in the army. These passages, which recalled the now notorious Campbell case, and repeated a familiar item in the programme of Comintern for foreign communist parties,[3] were naturally calculated to

[1] The document first reached the Foreign Office through the secret service. Joynson-Hicks spoke delicately of "the sources which this country has in foreign lands", and concluded that "it would be impossible, for reasons of safety to individual life, that the names of the people who produced this evidence should be given" (*House of Commons: 5th Series*, clxxix, 310-311). Austen Chamberlain openly referred to the secret service, and said of the document: "We know its whole course from its origin until it reached our hands"; he added that later three further copies reached the Foreign Office from unspecified sources (*ibid.* clxxix, 674). In March 1928 a certain Conrad Donald Im Thurn informed Baldwin that he was the person who had communicated the Zinoviev letter both to the Foreign Office and to the *Daily Mail* (see p. 30, note 1 below), and that he obtained it from an unnamed person "in close touch with communist circles in this country" (*ibid.* ccxv, 70-71).

[2] This and other points were made by Zinoviev in an interview given to representatives of the foreign press in Moscow on October 27, 1924 (*Pravda*, October 28, 1924).

[3] The injunction to carry on "persistent and regular propaganda and organizational work in bourgeois armies" had been repeated at the fifth congress of Comintern in July 1924 (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 417).

excite a maximum of prejudice against the supposed author of the letter, and would therefore appeal to an anti-Soviet forger. But, in a letter professedly designed to win support for the ratification of the Anglo-Soviet treaty, this emphasis lacked plausibility. If, as seems likely, the letter was a forgery, it does not follow that the British officials through whose hands it passed recognized it as such. The Russian section of the British intelligence service was staffed at this time mainly by British subjects formerly resident in Russia, whose desire to believe anything discreditable to the Bolsheviks often outran their critical faculty.

The letter reached MacDonald for the first time on October 16, 1924 in Manchester, where he was in the thick of his election campaign. It was apparently accompanied by minutes from the Foreign Office to the effect that, if the authenticity of the letter was established, it should be published and a protest sent to Rakovsky. MacDonald cautiously minuted that " the greatest care would have to be taken in discovering whether the letter was authentic or not ", but that, if authentic, it should be published, and that in the meanwhile a draft should be made of a note of protest to Rakovsky. On October 21, 1924, the draft was despatched from the Foreign Office to MacDonald's headquarters in Aberavon, where he received it on his return from a speaking tour in the early hours of October 23. On that day he made some minor corrections in the draft note, which, taking for granted the authenticity of the " Zinoviev letter " (a copy of which was to be enclosed), protested energetically against this " direct interference from outside in British domestic affairs ", and requested " the observations of your government on the subject without delay ". The draft returned to the Foreign Office on October 24, 1924, without specific instructions, but with MacDonald's amendments and MacDonald's initials in the margin. This was interpreted as a mark of assent. With a haste surprisingly at variance with the leisurely pace at which the previous exchanges had been conducted, the note with its enclosure was despatched to Rakovsky on the same day, bearing the signature of Gregory, the head of the northern department, on behalf of the Secretary of State.[1]

[1] The course of events leading up to the despatch of the note to Rakovsky was narrated in MacDonald's speech at Cardiff on October 27, 1924, i.e. before

Rakovsky replied on the following day denouncing the Zinoviev letter as " a gross forgery and an audacious attempt to prevent the development of friendly relations between the two countries ", and regretting that the Foreign Office had not approached him for an explanation before publishing the document.[1] Two days later Rykov gave an account of the incident to TsIK, denouncing the letter as a forgery but drawing no special conclusions.[2] On the same day Rakovsky handed to the Foreign Office a further note containing a direct message from Litvinov, deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. This demanded " an adequate apology and punishment of both private and official persons

the general election (*The Times*, October 28, 1924); for the text of the note and its enclosure see *The Times*, October 25, 1924, or *A Selection of Papers dealing with the Relations between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government, 1921–1927*, Cmd. 2895 (1927), pp. 28-32. MacDonald at this time treated the despatch of the note as an honest misunderstanding in the Foreign Office of his intention, which was to suspend action pending proof of the authenticity of the letter. The significance of initials in the margin in Foreign Office practice was that the official so initialing indicated his approval of a draft, but did not accept final responsibility (which was indicated by initials at the end), submitting it for final approval to some higher authority. Whether or not MacDonald was aware of this convention, the initial in a margin looks like the ambiguous and equivocal symbol of a divided mind: he failed to express himself clearly because he did not really know what he meant or intended. The Foreign Office could argue that the initial of a Secretary of State, wherever placed, was final, since there was no higher authority to whom the document could be submitted. On the other hand, no attempt was made to consult Ponsonby, who was in London; and, even in 1924, it was possible to telephone from London to Aberavon. Gregory was a Roman Catholic of marked Polonophile sentiments, and bitterly hostile to the Bolsheviks, though in this respect his attitude differed in degree rather than in kind from that of most of his colleagues; Crowe, the permanent under-secretary, subsequently accepted responsibility for the decision, referring to " my failure to interpret correctly what had been Mr. MacDonald's real intention " (F. Maurice, *Life of Haldane* (1939), ii, 174). It was afterwards said in extenuation of the haste shown by the Foreign Office that the *Daily Mail* had also obtained a copy of the Zinoviev letter, and had arranged to publish it on October 25. It is reasonable to guess that the *Daily Mail* obtained its copy from some source anxious to put pressure on the government to publish before the election; Marlowe, the editor of the *Daily Mail*, in a circumstantial account more than three years later, avowed this motive, and spoke of having received two copies (*The Observer*, March 4, 1928).

[1] *Anglo-Sovetskie Otnosheniya (1921–1927 gg.)* (1927), pp. 80-82; *A Selection of Papers dealing with the Relations between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government, 1921–1927*, Cmd. 2895 (1927), pp. 32-33.

[2] *SSSR: Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 2 Sozyva: 2 Sessiya* (1924), pp. 536-541; Chicherin had spoken at an earlier stage in the session before the Zinoviev letter broke, and did not speak again.

involved in the forgery ", and proposed " an impartial arbitration court for establishing the fact that the so-called Communist International letter of September 15 is a forgery ".[1] On the plea of the truculent tone of the note, MacDonald, on the advice of the Foreign Office, refused to receive it.[2] Rakovsky, in conversation with the French Ambassador in London, described MacDonald's behaviour as " a masterpiece of clumsiness, cowardice and disloyalty ", adding also the less convincing charge of " venality ".[3] But the " Zinoviev letter " had done its work. It was believed by all concerned to have made an important contribution to the sweeping Conservative victory at the general election of October 29, 1924. Both the Campbell case and the Anglo-Soviet treaty were prominent issues in the election ; to fan anti-Soviet feeling proved the surest way to discredit and defeat Labour candidates. *Izvestiya* described the result as " a deserved defeat for the Labour Party ", and attributed it to " the scandalous incident of the forged Zinoviev letter ".[4] The last act of the defeated Labour government before its resignation was to appoint a committee presided over by Haldane to enquire into the authenticity of the letter. In the brief time and with the limited evidence at its disposal, the committee failed to reach any " positive conclusion ", but brought to light one interesting fact. The original of the alleged letter had never been seen by any government department. The assertion of its authenticity was based exclusively on copies.[5] The editor of the *Daily Mail* was invited

[1] The text of the message is in *Anglo-Sovetskie Otnosheniya (1921–1927 gg.)* (1927), p. 82 ; a version issued in Moscow before the note was delivered appeared in *The Times*, October 27, 1924, the day of its delivery. *Pravda*, October 28, 1924, published an interview with Zinoviev (see p. 29, note 2 above) and an article by Radek alleging that " intriguers in the Foreign Office forged this document in order to hurl it at MacDonald like a bomb ".

[2] J. D. Gregory, *On the Edge of Diplomacy* (1928), pp. 224-228, gives a farcical account of the interview in which he returned the note to Rakovsky ; Rakovsky posted it back to the Foreign Office, which then officially mislaid it.

[3] Comte de Saint-Aulaire, *Confession d'un Vieux Diplomate* (1953), p. 764.

[4] *Izvestiya*, October 31, 1924 : Zinoviev a few weeks later conjectured that the letter had lost the Labour Party a million votes, and referred to it as " a classical example of the notorious ' freedom of the press ' in capitalist countries " (*Shestoi S"ezd Professional'nykh Soyuzov SSSR* (1925), pp. 26-27).

[5] *The Times*, November 5, 1924. Even the language of the original remains uncertain. It seems to have been assumed throughout the discussions that the letter was written in English ; but later a facsimile in Russian was circulated in " well informed " circles.

to appear before the committee, and refused.[1] A few weeks later a British trade union delegation on a visit to Moscow [2] made a perfunctory examination of Comintern records, and on its return to Great Britain issued a report concluding, "so far as a negative can be proved, that no 'Red letter' ever left the Comintern".[3]

The Conservative government, having returned to power on a wave of anti-Soviet feeling, shaped its attitude accordingly. After Austen Chamberlain's accession to office as Foreign Secretary, increasingly heated public pronouncements in London and Moscow culminated in two official Foreign Office notes to Rakovsky on November 21, 1924. The first stated that the government "find themselves unable to recommend" the treaties of August 8 "to the consideration of parliament". The second was a formal reply to Rakovsky's original note of October 25, and concluded that "the information in the possession of His Majesty's Government leaves no doubt whatsoever in their mind of the authenticity of M. Zinoviev's etter, and His Majesty's Government are therefore not prepared to discuss the matter". Finally, on the same day, lest any stroke of humiliation should be lacking, a third note, signed this time by Gregory, reverted to Rakovsky's rejected note of October 27. Rakovsky was informed that this note had not been found by the Secretary of State "among the records left in this office by his predecessor", being "one which His Majesty's Government cannot consent to receive".[4] On November 28, 1924, Rakovsky sent replies to the first and second of these notes. The first expressed regret at the decision to abandon the treaties. The second repeated at length the argument about the "Zinoviev letter", and reiterated in emphatic terms "the offer of arbitration as the only means to an impartial

[1] See his letter in *The Observer*, March 4, 1928.

[2] For this visit see pp. 570-572 below.

[3] *The "Zinoviev" Letter: Report of Investigation by British Delegation to Russia for the Trades Union Congress General Council, November–December 1924* (1925), p. 5; MacDonald, who at this time refrained from pronouncing on the authenticity of the letter, described it three years later as "a deliberately planned and devised concoction of deceit, fitted artfully for the purpose of deceiving the public and to influence the election" (*House of Commons: 5th Series*, ccxv, 53).

[4] The text of all three notes was published in *The Times*, November 22, 1924.

settlement ".[1] The government continued to repel every demand, whether from the Soviet Government or from the Labour opposition, for an independent enquiry. On December 10, 1924, Baldwin, the Prime Minister, announced that a sub-committee of the Cabinet, headed by the Lord Chancellor, had reached " the unanimous conclusion that there was no doubt that the letter was authentic " ;[2] and in an interview with Rakovsky on January 6, 1925, Austen Chamberlain once more refused to discuss the question.[3] In Moscow, the mood was one of mingled indignation and apprehension. " Chamberlain Outdoes Curzon ", was one of several alarmist headlines in *Izvestiya*.[4] Chicherin in a press interview rehearsed the grievances of the Soviet Government in the matter of the Zinoviev letter, and discerned " a sort of harmony between this behaviour of the English Government and the present rôle of English diplomacy throughout the world ", alleging in particular anti-Soviet intrigues in Turkey and Albania.[5] At the beginning of 1925 Anglo-Soviet relations had touched their lowest point since the Curzon ultimatum.

[1] *The Times*, November 29, 1924 ; the first note was also published in *Izvestiya*, November 29, 1924, the second in *Anglo-Sovetskie Otnosheniya (1917–1927 gg.)* (1927), pp. 84-87.

[2] *House of Commons : 5th Series*, clxxix, 183.

[3] *A Selection of Papers dealing with Relations between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government, 1921–1927*, Cmd. 2895 (1927), pp. 35-36 ; the same attitude was maintained when an attempt was made to reopen the matter in March 1928 after Gregory's dismissal from the Foreign Office for currency speculation. A summary of the evidence, including later disclosures, on the authenticity of the Zinoviev letter is in R. W. Lyman, *The First Labour Government* (n.d. [1958]), pp. 286-288.

[4] *Izvestiya*, November 26, 1924.

[5] *Ibid.* January 4, 1925 ; the version in *Anglo-Sovetskie Otnosheniya (1917–1927 gg.)* (1927), pp. 89-90, omits the concluding passage. A nationalist government under Fan Noli had been installed in Albania as the result of a *coup d'état* on June 11, 1924 ; in July 1924, by an exchange of notes (Klyuchnikov i Sabanin, *Mezhdunarodnaya Politika*, iii, i (1928), 313-314), it had been recognized by the Soviet Union, being the only Balkan state at this time to have official relations with Moscow. When, however, on December 14, 1924, a Soviet diplomatic mission arrived in Tirana, Fan Noli — allegedly under pressure from the Western Powers — withdrew recognition, and the mission left again four days later (*Mirovaya Politika v 1924 godu*, ed. F. Rotshtein (1925), p. 258) ; Austen Chamberlain in his interview with Rakovsky of January 6, 1925 (see note 3 above) denied that the British Government had promised recognition of the Albanian Government on condition that it expelled the Soviet mission. Fan Noli's change of front did not save him ; on December 28, 1924, he was overthrown by Ahmed Zog, and fled from the country. Later Soviet verdicts on this event varied ; according to one account, Fan Noli was

(*b*) *France*

The downfall of the Poincaré government as the result of the French elections of May 11, 1924, heralded the end of the intransigent attitude so long maintained by the French Government towards Germany and towards the Soviet Union. In French, as in British, foreign relations in the years immediately after the war, attitudes towards Germany and towards the Soviet Union tended to fall into the same pattern.[1] Now that the failure of the Ruhr occupation and fear of a breach with Great Britain dictated a milder policy in regard to Germany, a *détente* in Franco-Soviet relations was also to be expected. Poincaré, inspired by the prospect of British recognition of the Soviet Government, is said to have taken some tentative steps in that direction before his fall.[2] But the decisive moment came in June 1924, when Herriot, the Radical leader, formed a coalition of the Left to succeed Poincaré. Herriot's visit to Moscow in 1922, followed by that of his friend and fellow Radical De Monzie in 1923,[3] had been the first attempts to break the ice which had frozen Franco-Soviet relations since 1917. Herriot had been since that time personally pledged to recognition of the Soviet Government. De Monzie, though he did not enter the Herriot ministry, became the most fervent advocate of recognition.[4]

In these circumstances it is surprising that recognition should in fact have been delayed for more than four months after Herriot's assumption of office. But, unlike MacDonald, Herriot could count on no clear parliamentary majority for recognition; and,

overthrown by "lackeys of the Fascists, Mussolini and Pašič" (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 8, January 9, 1925, pp. 80-81), according to another, by Yugoslav agents on the ground that he was an "agent of Italy" (*Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 5-6, 1926, p. 95). What seems clear is that he paid for his brief flirtation with Moscow.

[1] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 243-244.

[2] The German Embassy in Moscow on January 26, 1924, reported soundings taken by Beneš in Moscow on behalf of Poincaré (*Auswärtiges Amt*, L 648/II/206226).

[3] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 24..

[4] De Monzie owed his first interest in Russia to his personal friendship for Rakovsky, who had been a student in France before 1900 and practised medicine there in the early years of the century: this friendship, which is described in A. de Monzie, *Destins hors Série* (1927), pp. 23-39, made De Monzie a valuable intermediary at a time when Rakovsky was the leading Soviet diplomat in western Europe.

once in office, he seemed resigned to follow the British lead rather than enthusiastic on his own account. Grounds for hesitation could easily be found. It was now perceived that recognition would offend or alarm the most important allies of France in eastern Europe, Poland and Rumania. The prospect, as a first result of recognition, of the surrender to the Soviet Union of the former Russian Black Sea fleet, interned since 1920 in the north African harbour of Bizerta, provoked acute apprehension in Rumania, which had recently been gratified by the French ratification of the treaty recognizing her annexation of Bessarabia, and whose relations with the Soviet Union had been further exacerbated by the breakdown of the Vienna conference on the Bessarabian question.[1] The signature on May 31, 1924 of the Sino-Soviet treaty, which was a severe blow to French financial interests in the Chinese Eastern Railway, and had encountered violent opposition from the French Minister in Peking,[2] provided another element of discord in Franco-Soviet relations. The delay in proceeding to recognition was attributed in Moscow to an undertaking given by the French Government not to recognize the Soviet Union without first seeking the concurrence of the State Department in Washington.[3] No such undertaking appears to have existed. But the hostility of Hughes to any recognition of the Soviet Government was notorious ; and Herriot, who hoped to achieve a favourable debt settlement with the United States, may well have desired to move cautiously in that quarter.[4] Not less formidable was the influence of several groups of French creditors or property-owners with claims against the Soviet Government. The most powerful of these were a general commission for the protection of French private interests in Russia, presided over by Noulens, French Ambassador in Petrograd in 1917 and a notorious enemy of the Soviet régime, and a national

[1] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 252.

[2] See pp. 682, 684, note 2 below.

[3] *Izvestiya*, June 26, 1924 ; L. Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (1930), ii, 573.

[4] An important article by S. Schram in *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, i, No. 2 (January–March, 1960), pp. 205-237 ; No. 4 (July–December, 1960), pp. 584-629, based in part on the De Monzie papers and other unpublished material, quotes (No. 2, p. 214) a letter from the French Ambassador denying the existence of " the slightest obligation " in terms so emphatic as to suggest that some unofficial pressure had been applied.

league of French interests in Russia. A series of meetings with representatives of these groups, of French industrialists and of the principal banks to discuss the condition of recognition began at the Quai d'Orsay on June 20, 1924.[1]

Delay and hesitation on the French side soon provoked impatience in Moscow. France was a less imposing figure than Great Britain in the Soviet picture of the capitalist world; and the failure of France to follow suit when Great Britain and other European countries had accorded recognition did not at first seem important. But France, though the most hostile and intransigent of the major European countries, never ceased to have a place in Soviet calculations. The ingenious Radek more than once canvassed the possibility of a *rapprochement* with France — mainly perhaps as a bargaining counter to be used in negotiations with Berlin.[2] Chicherin, in taking up this idea, gave it a subtler and characteristic turn. Accused by Maltzan at the height of the Ruhr crisis in February 1923 of conducting secret negotiations with French emissaries, he was not content to deny the charge, but turned the flank of the attack by advocating an " honourable solution " of the question of the Ruhr, and " an agreement between French and German workers and employers ", which would be welcomed in Moscow. He admitted that he had discussed such an idea with De Monzie, whose favourite dream was a Franco-German-Soviet bloc against Great Britain.[3] In April 1923, Admiral Berens, who had accompanied Chicherin to the Lausanne conference in the previous November as a naval expert, and had established friendly contacts with the French delegation, was sent to Paris to feel out the ground. According to the account which Chicherin gave to the suspicious German Ambassador in Moscow, Berens's task was " to discuss economic questions " and to see what could be done " to hold in check our amiable neighbours (Poles, Letts, etc.) ".[4] A few weeks later Chicherin told

[1] *Ibid.* i, No. 2, pp. 212, 214; among the banks represented was the Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas, the largest holder of French interests in China.

[2] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 375, note 2.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, K 281/096584-8; the conversation, as recorded by Maltzan, took place on February 9, 1923 (see *ibid.* 2860/554735-6 for a conversation of January 1923 between Chicherin and De Monzie).

[4] *Ibid.* 4562/154852-7; Rollin, a correspondent of *Le Temps*, married to a Russian wife, was said to have been the go-between who secured the consent of Poincaré and of the Quai d'Orsay to the visit (*ibid.* 2860/553008-9).

Haas, a German social-democrat who was on a visit to Moscow, that cooperation would be possible between Germany and the France of tomorrow, and added that " the France of tomorrow will be there when Loucheur and Stinnes have come to an agreement on the collaboration of the industries of the two countries ".[1] This conception, which fitted in with Chicherin's personal Anglophobe bias, was not widely shared in Moscow and had little practical influence on foreign policy. But throughout the latter part of 1923 suspicions of a potential Franco-Soviet *rapprochement* haunted the German embassy in Moscow ; and leading articles on three successive days by the editor of *Izvestiya* on the importance of Franco-Soviet relations did nothing to allay such fears.[2] When in the summer of 1924 disappointment set in at the meagre results of British recognition, and the first fears were felt in Moscow of a German reconciliation with Great Britain and the United States on the basis of the Dawes report, France again emerged as a significant figure on the Soviet horizon. To hasten French recognition became a preoccupation of Soviet policy. On June 19, 1924, a leading article in *Izvestiya* expressed concern at the lack of progress.

Throughout the summer of 1924, Herriot was primarily concerned with the German question, and had little attention to give to relations with the Soviet Union. Herriot's first action on assuming office had been to pay a visit to MacDonald.[3] But German, not Soviet, affairs were his main preoccupation ; and a meeting with Rakovsky during the visit seems to have been wholly inconclusive. Herriot promised recognition and the return of the Bizerta ships, but wished to postpone these acts till Senate and Chamber had adjourned for their summer recess : he also asked for " some guarantee for the French holders of pre-war Russian bonds " — apparently the first hint at a *quid pro quo*.[4] On July 15, 1924, Herriot telegraphed to Chicherin reaffirming his intention " to arrange for the resumption of normal relations " between the two countries " immediately after the London conference ", but complaining of difficulties placed in the meanwhile

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, K 281/ 09664-9.
[2] *Izvestiya*, December 6, 7, 8, 1923.
[3] He arrived at Chequers for the week-end on June 21, 1924.
[4] L. Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (1930), ii, 572.

on the entry of French citizens into the Soviet Union. Chicherin on July 18, 1924, expressed " deep gratification " at Herriot's assurance, but added somewhat coldly that any existing difficulties were " the inevitable result of the absence of normal relations ".[1] At the end of July 1924, Rakovsky gave an interview in London to a correspondent of *Izvestiya* on Franco-Soviet relations. The theme was indicated by a caption which appeared at the head of the report: " France will find its much desired security only in Soviet Russia ". Rakovsky harped on the need of France, now that she was about to abandon the Ruhr, for some tangible security against " the possibility of a military danger from German nationalism ", some counterweight to " the growing nationalist movement in Germany ". France could have no guarantee of peace so long as her present abnormal relations continued with the Soviet Union. Recognition was not simply " a question of debts and private property ".[2] In September 1924 Herriot appointed a commission of five to draft the terms of recognition. It was under the presidency of De Monzie, still the most stalwart advocate of Franco-Soviet friendship, though the presence in the commission of the formidable Noulens evoked anger and alarm in Moscow.[3] But it was now too late to impose conditions. On October 16, 1924, the commission reported unanimously in favour of unconditional recognition to be followed by negotiations about debts: the handing over to the Soviet Union of the ships at Bizerta seems to have been explicitly taken for granted as one of the consequences of recognition.[4] The final text of the act of recognition was negotiated between Rakovsky and De Monzie, who met at Dover for the purpose.[5] The official telegram was

[1] The telegrams are in *Russian Review* (Washington), September 1, 1924, p. 93; in the exchange of notes on recognition (see p. 40 below) Chicherin's telegram is dated July 19, 1924.

[2] *Izvestiya*, August 2, 1924; this interview at once provoked a protest from the German Ambassador (*Auswärtiges Amt*, L 648/II/206476).

[3] *Izvestiya*, September 21, 1924; De Monzie was expected at this time to be the first French Ambassador to the Soviet Union (*ibid.* September 16, 1924).

[4] *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, i, No. 2 (January–March 1960), p. 216.

[5] According to L. Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (1930), ii, 573, the words " *de jure* " did not appear in the original French draft; Rakovsky insisted on their insertion. The meeting at Dover is described in A. de Monzie, *Destins hors Série* (1927), p. 23.

despatched to Moscow on October 28, 1924. It announced recognition *de jure* of the Soviet Government as " the government of the territories of the former Russian Empire where its authority is recognized by the inhabitants ", and the readiness of the French Government to proceed to an exchange of ambassadors. It proposed that the two governments should open " negotiations of a general character and special negotiations of an economic character " in order to put their relations on a regular footing, and it concluded that mutual non-interference in internal affairs was " the rule governing relations between the two countries ". The text was read by Chicherin at the session of TsIK on the same evening, together with a draft reply welcoming recognition and agreeing to the French proposals, which was duly approved and despatched on the following day.[1] The French recognition took place three days after the publication of the " Zinoviev letter " in London, and on the eve of the British general election. The coincidence, widely remarked at the time, was probably accidental.[2] But the fact that the moment chosen by France for her recognition of the Soviet Union was also the moment when Great Britain exchanged a policy of qualified friendliness towards the Soviet Union for one of marked hostility was destined to have a certain influence on Franco-Soviet relations.

The first contact after recognition was made with Herriot by Rakovsky, who came to Paris on a visit from London on November 3, 1924 : it was agreed in principle to open negotiations for the projected agreement in Paris on January 10, 1925.[3] At this time Rakovsky apparently assumed that he would be the first Soviet Ambassador in Paris, especially as the " Zinoviev letter " débâcle might be thought to have ended his usefulness as an envoy in London.[4] Other counsels, however, prevailed in Moscow. On

[1] The exchange of notes is in Klyuchnikov i Sabanin, *Mezhdunarodnaya Politika*, iii, i (1928), 329-330; Chicherin's statement to VTsIK in *SSSR : Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 2 Sozyva : 2 Sessiya* (1924), pp. 565-569.

[2] The French Ambassador in London, suspiciously resentful of correspondence between Herriot and MacDonald behind his back, believed that the timing was deliberate (Comte de Saint-Aulaire, *Confession d'un Vieux Diplomate* (1953), pp. 745-746).

[3] *Survey of International Affairs, 1924*, ed. A. J. Toynbee (1926), p. 253, quoting the contemporary press.

[4] He expressed this expectation quite openly to the French Ambassador in London (Comte de Saint-Aulaire, *Confession d'un Vieux Diplomate* (1953), p. 764).

November 4, 1924, Chicherin informed Brockdorff-Rantzau in confidence that Rakovsky had been passed over in view of his recent indiscretion in *Izvestiya*, and that the appointment as first Soviet Ambassador in Paris would go to Krasin by way of emphasizing the predominantly commercial character to be given to Franco-Soviet relations.[1] In a press interview, Krasin stressed Soviet interest in French industry as a potential supplier of capital goods to the Soviet Union and in the French market as a potential importer of Soviet grain, oil and flax.[2] His political conception of his mission may be gleaned from a private note passed by him to Trotsky at this time during a meeting of STO :

> If only we could *hint* to France, that, given sincere friendship with us, given economic aid, and aid in settling the question of the Baltic, Poland, Bessarabia, etc., including even technical cooperation, she could *in fact* obtain from the east the non-aggression pact which she has been unsuccessfully soliciting since 1918 from England and the U.S.A., it might be possible to get some results.[3]

Chicherin about the same time, in conversation with Brockdorff-Rantzau, revived his favourite idea of " a Franco-German *rapprochement* and a continental policy ", with which the Soviet Union would by implication be associated, as " the surest guarantee of maintaining peace ".[4] On November 18, 1924, Herriot outlined the programme of Franco-Soviet negotiations in an optimistic speech to the Chamber of Deputies, in the course of which he publicly re-affirmed the intention to return the warships at Bizerta to the Soviet authorities. But Herriot was not the man to be tempted by an offer of a Franco-Soviet pact as a substitute for an Anglo-French alliance ; and from this point the climate changed, and the prospect of an agreement rapidly deteriorated.

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/5/554491-2 ; 9101/4/225752-5 ; for the *Izvestiya* interview of August 2, 1924, see p. 39 above. Rakovsky was a known supporter of Trotsky ; but this was at that time no bar to diplomatic employment and can scarcely have accounted for the refusal to transfer him to Paris.

[2] *Izvestiya*, November 6, 1924 ; L. Krasin, *Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli* (1928), pp. 326-327.

[3] The note, dated November 12, 1924, is in the Trotsky archives, T 847.

[4] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 5625/317849-51 ; for Chicherin's previous ventilation of this idea see pp. 37-38 above.

Krasin's arrival in Paris early in December coincided with a visit of Austen Chamberlain, fresh from his triumphs in London, to Herriot, which took place on December 5, 1924. Herriot's foreign policy had been marked from the outset by a strong desire to keep in step with British policy — a reaction against the constant and damaging friction with Great Britain under the Poincaré régime. This desire did not disappear with the change in the political complexion of the British Government. The strongest argument in favour of French recognition of the Soviet Union was that this step had already been taken by Great Britain. Now that a British Government was in power which all but openly admitted that recognition had been a mistake, those groups in France which had publicly or covertly opposed the recognition policy were encouraged to renew their attacks. The abortive communist coup of December 1, 1924, in Tallinn [1] added fuel to the flames. A campaign broke out in the French press against Soviet propaganda and intrigue; and Millerand, a former President, denounced the "criminal aberration" by which the Herriot government had installed in Paris "under the banner of the hammer and sickle the headquarters of revolution".[2] Direct incitements from the British side were evidently not lacking. The principal aim of Chamberlain's visit was no doubt to reassure Herriot that the policy of reconciliation with Germany inaugurated by the Dawes plan implied no cooling off in British friendship for France. But a subsidiary, if unconfessed, purpose was to obtain from Herriot a corresponding reassurance that French recognition of the Soviet Union did not portend closer ties with Moscow which would have cut across the lines of British policy: to insist on the danger of nefarious communist activities and on the need to avoid compromising entanglements with Moscow was the most obvious way to achieve this result.[3] The meeting was an unqualified success. Herriot's first action after it was directed against a school established by the French Communist

[1] See pp. 284-285 below.

[2] *Le Temps*, December 18, 1924.

[3] The Foreign Office informed the German Embassy that the purpose of the Chamberlain-Herriot talks was "not an anti-communist policy", but "an exchange of information to facilitate the struggle against communist propaganda" (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/554621); Soviet mistrust of the talks was expressed in a leading article in *Izvestiya*, December 7, 1924.

Party in the neighbourhood of Paris.[1] On December 22, 1924, an announcement appeared in the press that the Franco-Soviet negotiations, which were to have begun on January 10, 1925, had been postponed. A week later Herriot had a conversation with Herrick, the American Ambassador, in which echoes of Chamberlain's promptings could be plainly heard. Herriot did not intend, he now explained, to " repeat MacDonald's error " by attempting prematurely to negotiate a commercial treaty with the Soviet Government. He would " go slow " and see first whether the Soviet Embassy in Paris behaved in a decent way. He explained the prevalence of communist agitation by the influx of Italian and Spanish communists, and wished that French legislation gave the same possibility as American legislation of excluding " undesirable foreigners ". In order to impress public opinion, he had told the police to disperse " with some brutality " a meeting of " communist agitators " ; but the police had not been able to find a suitable meeting.[2] Nor was Krasin's own position (he had finally presented his credentials on December 12, 1924 [3]) altogether comfortable. On December 24, 1924, the " white " Russian newspaper *Posledniye Novosti*, had carried an article explaining that Krasin was a failure, and would soon be replaced by Rakovsky, who would be able to " establish good personal relations " ; the hand of Rakovsky's friend De Monzie was detected in the article.[4] Before Krasin had been in Paris a month, he was confiding his disappointment and his pessimism to the German Ambassador.[5]

It was in this atmosphere that Herbette, the newly appointed French Ambassador to Moscow, left Paris to take up his post in the first week of January 1925, presenting his credentials to Kalinin on January 14, 1925.[6] The initial cordiality of his reception in Moscow was soon tempered by disappointment at the changed attitude in France, which had followed the similar

[1] See p. 1020 below.

[2] Telegram of December 30, 1924, and despatch of January 7, 1925, from Herrick to State Department (National Archives, Record Group 59 : 751.61/34,36).

[3] *Izvestiya*, December 14, 1924.

[4] *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, i, No. 2 (January–March 1960), p. 226.

[5] *Auswärtiges Amt*, L 648/206732-6, 206105-8.

[6] *Izvestiya*, January 15, 1925.

deterioration in Anglo-Soviet relations. France, Chicherin complained to Brockdorff-Rantzau, by her rigid attitude on the debt question and by her propaganda against communism, was supporting " the attempts of London to isolate the Soviet Union ".[1] As recently as December 29, 1924, Herriot had informed the foreign affairs commission of the Senate that a Soviet naval commission was visiting Bizerta to discuss the date and procedure for the return of the ships, and had treated this as a matter of course.[2] Now, in conversation with Krasin, he retreated from the assumption that the return of the ships was an unconditional consequence of recognition, and declared it to be dependent on a settlement of the debt question.[3] In an article in the Soviet press Krasin attributed " the unfavourable atmosphere " to the weakness of Herriot's parliamentary position and to the pressure of Austen Chamberlain's attempts " to organize a new encirclement of Soviet Russia ".[4] In March 1925 a group of Soviet financial experts headed by Preobrazhensky arrived in Paris for the negotiations; and in the following month a joint Franco-Soviet commission of experts set to work. It came surprisingly near to agreement on the total of public debt involved in the dispute, which was put by the French experts at 10 5 milliards of francs and by the Soviet experts at 9 milliards.[5] But this did not resolve the fundamental deadlock, which was identical with that reached in the Anglo-Soviet negotiations of 1924. While the Soviet Government was prepared for a comprehensive recognition of debts, other than war debts, any arrangement to repay them was conditional on a long-term loan, which France was even less willing or able than Great Britain to accord.

The fall of the Herriot government in April 1925 and Briand's appointment as Minister for Foreign Affairs altered nothing. At the third Union Congress of Soviets in May 1925 Rykov admitted " certain disappointments in the hopes bound up with the resumption of diplomatic relations with France ", but still

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/554702-4.

[2] *The Times*, December 30, 1924.

[3] L. Krasin, *Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli* (1928), p. 331.

[4] *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn'*, January 30, 1925, reprinted in L. Krasin, *Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli* (1928), p. 330.

[5] *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, i, No. 2 (January-March 1960), p. 235; for a statement by Krasin see *Izvestiya*, June 21, 1925.

looked forward to a compromise on the question of debts and credits :

> If the French help us by one means or another in the reconstruction of our economy, we agree to pay something to France, but only provided that they help us in economic reconstruction, in our factories and farms.[1]

The familiar recriminations were exchanged with wearisome regularity. The French Government denounced the revolutionary propaganda of Comintern in France and in her colonies ; and point was added to the protest by the campaign conducted by the French Communist Party against the war now being fought in Morocco to put down the rebellion of Abd-el-Krim. The Soviet press, on the other hand, protested against the encouragement given by France to the border countries in eastern Europe to combine against the Soviet Union ; sometimes France was further accused of entering into an anti-Soviet bloc engineered by Great Britain. The demand for the return of the ships at Bizerta was revived on one side and evaded on the other. But, though the landscape was familiar, the underlying balance of forces had undergone a change since the previous year. In the first half of 1924 the Soviet Government, elated by British recognition and engrossed in the prospect of developing relations with Great Britain, had shown only a secondary interest in the attitude of France ; and the French Government, ill at ease at having lagged behind Great Britain and Italy in its recognition of the Soviet Union, was left to set the pace. A year later, France, already sceptical of the advantages of the step which she had taken, shrank cautiously from any further advance towards Franco-Soviet agreement, while the Soviet Government, disillusioned by the collapse of Anglo-Soviet relations, and confronted by the spectre of a Germany ready and eager to seek reconciliation with the west at the expense of an exclusive partnership with the Soviet Union, toyed with the prospect of an accommodation with the French Government which would lure France out of the threatened western bloc. These hopes were intermittent, and were perhaps not very seriously entertained in Moscow : they tended to rise and fall in response to the changing nuances in the balance of German policy between east and west. If Germany drew nearer to Great

[1] *Tretii S"ezd Sovetov SSSR* (1925), pp. 42-44.

Britain, the reaction in Moscow was to pay court to France. If Germany sought to hold the balance even between London and Moscow, Soviet diplomacy could balance between Berlin and Paris. Franco-Soviet relations, like every other international issue in Europe, were overshadowed during the greater part of the year 1925 by Locarno.

(*c*) *Germany*

Soviet relations with Germany were sharply differentiated from Soviet relations with other major European countries by the collaboration of which the Rapallo treaty was the symbol and embodiment. Questions of recognition and of debts did not arise, and a steady community of interest was recognized on both sides. But relations, being more intimate, were also infinitely more complex. The tradition of close commercial relations established in the Tsarist period had not been wholly extinguished by the revolution; and the secret military agreements, which enabled the Soviet Union to lay the first foundations for the building of a modern military power, and Germany to evade the most irksome restrictions of the Versailles treaty, constituted a deep and lasting bond, so that the often acrimonious disputes which troubled the surface of the Soviet-German alliance were less real and less important than they seemed. It is none the less true that after the end of 1923 the honeymoon period of Rapallo was over. What had first commended the Rapallo policy to both the participants was their common weakness and common isolation from the west. As both parties began slowly to regain strength and re-establish points of contact with the west — the year 1924 was a landmark in this process on both sides — a greater independence and freedom of manœuvre was restored to their foreign policies. Neither side was willing to neglect the alluring opportunities of improved relations with the western Powers or to sacrifice these opportunities to too rigid an interpretation of the Rapallo line. Germany and the Soviet Union were still bound together by strong ties of common interest. But these ties were less exclusive and less unconditional than in the days when the Rapallo policy was inaugurated.

While the events of 1923 in Germany which had attracted

public attention were those in which Comintern and the German Communist Party (KPD) had been actively concerned — the campaign against the French occupation of the Ruhr, and the attempted revolutionary coup in October — the most important contribution of the year to the development of Soviet-German relations was the consolidation of the secret military agreements. Here the personality of Brockdorff-Rantzau, who had taken up his post as German Ambassador in Moscow in November 1922, was to play a leading, though at first somewhat equivocal, part. Brockdorff-Rantzau combined in an unusual degree a keen intelligence with an overweening arrogance. When appointed to the post, he had stipulated that he should be entitled at any time to report direct to the President, thus avoiding the form, if not the substance, of subordination to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of which he had once been the head. One of the exacerbating factors in the quarrel between him and Seeckt which had preceded his appointment [1] was the insistence of the Reichswehr on keeping its secret negotiations and agreements with the Soviet authorities exclusively in its own hands. Brockdorff-Rantzau secured from Wirth, before consenting to leave for Moscow, a categorical assurance that " the whole policy with Russia will be conducted through your person " ; [2] he obtained a similar undertaking from Gessler, the Minister for the Reichswehr ; [3] and an item in the partial reconciliation achieved between Seeckt and the ambassador at the end of January 1923 was a repetition of the promise that no agreements would be made with the Russians behind the latter's back.[4] This promise was imperfectly and intermittently fulfilled. The Reichswehr had its own office in Moscow, known as Zentrale Moskau, or Z. Mo. ; and it was a significant symptom of the status of this institution that, before April 1924, its communications with Berlin passed, not through the German Embassy in Moscow, but through Narkomindel and the Soviet diplomatic bag.[5]

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 438-439.

[2] Record of Brockdorff-Rantzau's conversation with Wirth, October 16, 1922, in *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, ii (1955), 337-341.

[3] *Ibid.* ii, 312, note 58.

[4] *Ibid.* ii, 312, note 62 ; for Brockdorff-Rantzau's record of the conversation see *Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass*, 9105/237399-402.

[5] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4564/162613-20.

In these circumstances it is not surprising that chronic friction occurred between Z. Mo. and the embassy. Two Reichswehr missions came to Moscow, in February and April 1923. On both occasions the exacting ambassador complained that he was not informed of the details of the negotiations. He was particularly indignant with Hasse, who headed the first mission and had talked rashly of " a great war of liberation . . . in from three to five years ", and had even written an " extremely compromising " letter to Rozengolts, the chief Soviet negotiator. In general, the complaint was that the Reichswehr representatives showed too great eagerness, and were outmanœuvred when it came to bargaining. In Brockdorff-Rantzau's view, which the Reichswehr seemingly did not share, " the Russians need us more than we need them ".[1]

The hope of securing a promise of Soviet aid in the event of hostilities between Germany and Poland was never far from the thoughts of the German representatives. Though Soviet spokesmen in the early stages of the military negotiations had been ready enough to " play the Polish card ", discussions at the time of the French invasion of the Ruhr in January 1923 had revealed great reluctance on the Soviet side to assume specific commitments against Poland.[2] The military negotiations were resumed when a Soviet delegation headed by Rozengolts visited Berlin at the end of July 1923. Brockdorff-Rantzau, who had also made the journey from Moscow, and Cuno, the chancellor, took a leading part in the discussions. On the eve of the crucial meeting between Cuno and Rozengolts, Brockdorff-Rantzau submitted to Cuno a long policy memorandum with a note attached on his own previous conversations with Rozengolts in Moscow. The " basic idea " of German-Soviet collaboration, he wrote, had been sound, but its execution had been a failure: this was because the negotiations had been conducted by the Reichswehr without political control. In future, the political as well as the military aims of collaboration should be brought to the fore:

[1] Brockdorff-Rantzau's numerous reports of this period to Berlin are quoted by H. Gatzke in *American Historical Review*, liii, No. 3, April 1958, pp. 571-572; these incidents are also referred to in G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), p. 194.

[2] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 364, 371; *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 166.

> There can be no question of a political or military alliance. But we should try to secure ourselves against the most dangerous eventuality, an attack by Poland.

In the attached note Brockdorff-Rantzau explained that the Soviet negotiators were now pressing the military side: "gas production and orders for shells" were vital. At the same time, "there is an inclination on the Russian side, though perhaps less forthcoming than before, for political agreements, at any rate so soon, and in so far, as Poland comes into the picture". It would be a mistake "to throw away even bigger sums than hitherto (35 million gold marks)" without obtaining some equivalent.[1] Consciously or unconsciously, Brockdorff-Rantzau's insistence on the political aspects of collaboration was indubitably connected with his strong desire to wrest from the military authorities the control hitherto exercised by them over negotiations with Moscow. But the future pattern of these negotiations emerged plainly from Brockdorff-Rantzau's memorandum. On the German side, an uneasy compromise was struck between the insistence of the Reichswehr on the military aims of collaboration and the preoccupation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with political aims. On the Soviet side, military aims predominated; and this led Brockdorff-Rantzau to conclude that the Russians had hitherto gained more from the agreement than the Germans, and to seek compensation in the form of political guarantees — notably against Poland.

The meeting between Cuno, supported by Brockdorff-Rantzau, and Rozengolts, accompanied by Krestinsky, took place secretly in the apartment of Brockdorff-Rantzau's brother on July 30, 1923. When Cuno touched the political theme of guarantees against attack by Poland, Rozengolts countered by reproaching the German Government for its failure to take adequate defence measures on its own account, and Cuno replied that more was being done in secret "than is known even in informed quarters". The military discussions, which contemplated a far-reaching expansion of the manufacture of war

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4564/162539-49; according to Brockdorff-Rantzau's memorandum of February 20, 1924 (see p. 50, note 2 below), the German negotiators put forward two conditions: (1) security against Poland, (2) preference for German firms in the reconstruction of Soviet industry.

material in the Soviet Union for German account, passed off without a hitch and in a friendly atmosphere. At the end Brockdorff-Rantzau reiterated the demand that he should be placed in charge of the negotiations on the German side, and Cuno agreed to this.[1] Subsequent discussions with the Reichswehr showed that the new programme would involve an increase in the subvention already promised from 35 to 75 million gold marks. Brockdorff-Rantzau now seemed completely converted to the military policy, and declared, with his customary impetuosity, that he would "refuse to accept responsibility for political relations between Germany and Russia" if the increased subvention were not granted.[2]

The hitch which now occurred in the military negotiations was partly due to the change of government in Germany. On the Soviet side, preoccupation with the immediate prospects of revolution in Germany tended to thrust other policies into the background; and, while the turn to the west implicit in Stresemann's attitude may not yet have been clearly diagnosed in Moscow, the new chancellor was less likely than his predecessors to inspire confidence as a firm upholder of the Rapallo line.[3] On the German side, Cuno had enjoyed the full confidence of Seeckt and had been a whole-hearted supporter of Seeckt's military policy. The accession of Stresemann to power seemed at first sight to strengthen the hands of those who mistrusted German-Soviet cooperation, and who can hardly have failed to see a confirmation of their fears in the events of October 1923. Stresemann, when he learned on his assumption of office the full extent of the secret military agreements with the Soviet Union, reacted strongly against them, in part from personal antipathy to Seeckt (which was reciprocated), in part from a genuine fear that these compromising commitments might prejudice the policy of conciliation with the west which seemed to Stresemann the necessary consequence of the failure of passive resistance. This attitude was shared by Ebert, the president of the Reich, who had from

[1] For a report of this meeting made by Brockdorff-Rantzau and signed by him and Cuno see *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4564/162550-5.

[2] See a report by Brockdorff-Rantzau to Stresemann of September 10, 1923, *ibid.* 4564/162676-82, and a later memorandum of February 20, 1924, in *Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass*, 9101/226805-9.

[3] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 203.

the first been an opponent of the eastern orientation.[1] What was surprising was that Brockdorff-Rantzau at this moment himself underwent a sharp reaction against the policy of military co-operation. The motives behind his mood are difficult to decipher. Influenced perhaps by indignation at Soviet support of communist unrest in Germany, or perhaps by renewed friction with the Reichswehr, he reverted to his initial mistrust of far-reaching political commitments to the Soviet Union. When, therefore, on September 15, 1923, on the eve of returning to his post after a hectic two months in Berlin, he called on Ebert and Stresemann, and found them both critical of the secret military negotiations, he fell in readily with their mood.[2] Back in Moscow, he discovered fresh cause of annoyance in the proceedings of a German military delegation headed by Tschunke which had been negotiating with the Soviet authorities in his absence, and acute friction continued between the ambassador and Niedermayer, the moving spirit in Z. Mo., whose temperament and behaviour were as flamboyant as his own.[3]

It thus happened that the autumn of 1923, when the Soviet leaders had been thrown into confusion and dismay by the fiasco of the October coup in Germany, was also a period of disarray and ambivalence in German policy towards the Soviet Union. After the apparent progress registered in the summer in Berlin, the military negotiations in Moscow continued to flounder; and the ambassador's ostentatious lukewarmness about them provoked an angry and illuminating retort from Radek. The Soviet Union, Radek declared, could not be inveigled by "measly millions" of marks into a "one-sided political obligation" — meaning a Soviet promise to intervene on the side of Germany in a hypothetical German-Polish war. Nor was the Soviet Union

[1] For the attitude of Stresemann at this time see Brockdorff-Rantzau's memorandum of February 20, 1924 (cited p. 50, note 2 above). Ebert, like most of the German Social-Democratic Party, had always been lukewarm about the Rapallo policy; before 1923 he was deliberately kept in ignorance by Seeckt and Wirth of the secret military agreements with the Red Army (*Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, ii (1955), 307).

[2] The main source for this whole episode is Brockdorff-Rantzau's memorandum of February 20, 1924 (see preceding note).

[3] Sources for these occurrences are cited by H. Gatzke in *American Historical Review*, lxiii, No. 3, April 1958, pp. 575-576; for Niedermayer see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 363.

prepared to accord to Germany a monopoly in the matter of military supplies: aeroplanes had been purchased from France, and it was hoped to purchase some from Great Britain.[1] This conversation underlined the political basis of the endemic friction between the two countries. Each desired to draw the other into a firm commitment to intervene against Poland in case of war between itself and Poland, while itself avoiding the reciprocal commitment. Each desired to draw the other into an exclusive relation, while continuing to keep open for itself the alternative road leading to the west.[2] The aims were incompatible. Brockdorff-Rantzau, having no good answer to Radek's reproach, retaliated by the usual device of multiplying his complaints against the activities of Comintern. At the beginning of December 1923, Brockdorff-Rantzau vented his anger, in a conversation with Chicherin and Radek, by demanding that the Soviet Government should formally renounce the policies of Comintern; and Radek firmly replied that, if the choice had to be made, he would remain loyal to Comintern and resign his membership of TsIK.[3] These verbal duels, meaningless and without issue, were symptomatic of the tension in Soviet-German relations in the highest quarters in Moscow.

In Berlin, however, wiser counsels soon prevailed. Whatever the political motives of friction, the underlying common interest in military cooperation remained paramount; and Brockdorff-Rantzau's ready assumption that in this matter "the Russians need us more than we need them" was never shared by the Reichswehr or, perhaps, by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Stresemann's initial distaste for the secret Soviet-German agreements was soon overcome. Three years later Stresemann told a

[1] The conversation was recorded in Brockdorff-Rantzau's memorandum of February 20, 1924 (see p. 50, note 2 above).

[2] Hilger, after admitting that German officials constantly complained of the "ingratitude and lack of loyalty of the Soviet Government", continued: "Since Moscow for its part nourished against Germany the same suspicion of duplicity, the diplomats of both countries were constantly on the look out for indications of unreliability, and asked themselves which side would be the first to sell out its partner to Poland, England or France" (G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), p. 154). No evidence has been found that the German Government was aware of Radek's compromising overture to the Polish chargé d'affaires in Moscow (see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 218-219).

[3] For this conversation see p. 14 above.

group of social-democrats that the first practical decision required of him, and taken by him, in this question in the autumn of 1923 had been to disburse 30 million gold marks for payment to the Soviet Government (or, more probably, for the execution of orders on its behalf) on promises made by his predecessors. If, on the same occasion, Stresemann claimed that at the same time Ebert and he had decided that these military arrangements " must be considered as broken off once for all ", and that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had since that time not been concerned in them,[1] these statements merely illustrated the economy of truth habitually practised by German political leaders in speaking of this subject. In fact nothing was broken off. Stresemann was a man of common sense, and a statesman; and the requirements of Germany's desperate military situation came first. In a confidential letter to Brockdorff-Rantzau of December 1, 1923, Stresemann attempted to calm down the ambassador's excessive preoccupation with the misdeeds of Comintern. He foresaw the danger of an impending *rapprochement* between Soviet Russia and France, inspired by French fears " in connexion with a possible German-Russian understanding ". He dilated on the " gloomy picture " of Germany's internal situation. To this the Munich *putsch* and the communist disturbances had contributed. The financing of the latter by " Russian gold " introduced a precarious element into German relations with Soviet Russia. But Stresemann counted on the ambassador to turn this to good advantage by behaving in Moscow in such a way that " the already bad conscience of those in power there may become still worse ".[2] The military agreements remained for Stresemann, throughout his six-year tenure of office at the Ministry of Foreign

[1] *Stresemann Nachlass*, 7337/163463-5.

[2] *Ibid.* 7120/146305-11; the cryptic phrase about the " bad conscience " in Moscow, together with other significant sentences in this letter, are omitted from the version in *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, i (1932), 259-261. Such omissions are characteristic of this work, and show that the charge repudiated by the editors in the preface of suppressing " facts that were not agreeable to us " had some foundation. The editor of the English version (*Gustav Stresemann: His Diaries, Letters and Papers* (3 vols., 1935-1940)) has not expurgated the documents translated (though the translation is sometimes loose); but, by frequently omitting documents on aspects of Stresemann's policy unrelated to the *rapprochement* with the west, as being " of little interest to English readers or students ", he has further distorted the one-sided picture presented in the original German edition.

Affairs, the constant, though often unspoken, premiss of German policy towards the Soviet Union.

The volatile and emotional German Ambassador was less quickly appeased. In a memorandum of February 4, 1924, he accepted Stresemann's view of the need to discriminate between the Soviet Government and Comintern, and rejected any thought of a breach of relations.[1] But he continued to rage against the behaviour of the Reichswehr representatives in Moscow, and on February 20, 1924, sent to Stresemann a memorandum recounting the developments of the past six months. It ended with a recommendation " not to spend a penny of German money on war materials in Russia, to limit all orders to a minimum, and to use the credits granted by the Reich to support German industries in Russia, not for military purposes, but for industries which indirectly serve re-armament and can, in case of need, be transformed into war industries ". " Herr Brown ", described as " an outstanding business man ", was about to visit Moscow with a project on these lines.[2] But Brockdorff-Rantzau's personal idiosyncrasies were unlikely in the long run to prevail against the basic requirements of German foreign policy or, still more important, of the Reichswehr, whose interpretation of the national interest was paramount. The month of April 1924 saw a sharp reversal of Brockdorff-Rantzau's attitude. On April 3, 1924, after Brown's visit, he reported grudgingly to Stresemann that, owing to the " catastrophic and irresponsible " commitments undertaken in the past by the military authorities, " we cannot suddenly abandon this whole project without seriously endangering our political relations with Russia ".[3] Apparently on the following day, he had a long heart-to-heart talk with Niedermayer which did much to dissipate misunderstandings and clear the air.

[1] *Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass*, 9101/226797-804.

[2] For this memorandum see p. 50, note 2 above. Thomas Brown was a former Englishman settled in Hamburg, who had taken German nationality, served as commercial adviser on von der Goltz's staff in Turkey, and in 1913 joined the German firm of Wonkhaus, which had been established in Persia since 1904 (*Novyi Vostok*, xiii-xiv (1926), 89-90). In the early 1920s he built a ship to travel from the Baltic through the Russian canal system down the Volga, and thence across the Caspian to Enzeli, carrying German merchandise, especially chemical products, for the Persian market, and hoping for a return cargo (W. von Blücher, *Zeitenwende in Iran* (Biberach, 1949), p. 141).

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4564/162591-3.

Niedermayer endeared himself to the ambassador by putting the blame for past offences on other Reichswehr representatives and by roundly abusing his superiors. At the end of the conversation Brockdorff-Rantzau continued to express the view that the best course would be to annul the military agreements altogether, but that, since this was impossible, every effort should be made to transform them into primarily economic agreements.[1] It was during this month that Brockdorff-Rantzau — according to his own account — first discovered the full extent of the Reichswehr commitment to the Junkers aeroplane factory at Fili; and, though he expressed emphatic indignation at the concealment which had been practised,[2] he plunged with his customary vigour into a current crisis in the affairs of the concern, declaring that a liquidation of Junkers' Russian interests "must be avoided at all costs".[3] The change in Brockdorff-Rantzau's attitude was greeted with relief in Berlin, and Stresemann later in the same month wrote to congratulate him:

> It particularly interested me to learn more from you about your conversations with the gentleman of the friendly firm. I take it from your report that you no longer object to the activities of the gentleman in question [i.e. Niedermayer], since he has subordinated himself to your administration, and that this matter has been cleared up.[4]

From May 1924, when Thomsen came to Moscow, apparently as joint director with Niedermayer of Z. Mo.,[5] relations between the embassy and Z. Mo. rapidly improved. Brockdorff-Rantzau was henceforth concerned, not to transform or curtail the secret military arrangements, but simply to bring their execution under his own control. German policy towards the Soviet Union

[1] *Ibid.* 4564/162613-9 (memorandum of April 4, 1924, on conversation); 4564/162594-5 (report of April 9, 1924, to Stresemann).

[2] Letter to Maltzan of April 30, 1924, cited in *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, ii (1955), 324, note 142; for the Fili factory see pp. 1010-1011 below.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/553774, 553783-4.

[4] *Stresemann Nachlass*, 7168/155566-8.

[5] The obscure and conflicting evidence on their status is collected by H. Gatzke in *American Historical Review*, lxiii, No. 3, April 1958, p. 579, note 72; some formal ambiguities were probably necessary to appease Niedermayer. The Seeckt archives show that Thomsen first went to Moscow in November 1923 as chief of the air personnel (see article by F. L. Carsten in *Survey*, No. 44-45, October 1962, p. 124, note 34).

continued to suffer from inner uncertainties and ambiguities. But, after April 1924, it was no longer at the mercy of personal prejudices and animosities; and Brockdorff-Rantzau's energetic devotion to the cause of German-Soviet friendship caused his earlier vacillations to be forgotten. Nor were doubts any longer raised about the scope or importance of the military agreements.[1] These constituted the unbreakable bond which held the Rapallo partners together, whatever lesser divergencies of interest bred mutual suspicions between them or seemed at times to be driving them apart.

The development of Soviet-German commercial relations ran parallel to these military relations, and helped to provide a solid foundation for Soviet-German friendship. The system of " mixed companies " was invented, and mainly applied, for the development of Soviet-German trade.[2] Among the early foreign applicants for concessions in the Soviet Union Germany came easily first;[3] and the year 1923 saw the establishment of the largest of the German concessions — or of any concession hitherto granted — a timber concession known from the name of a tributary of the Volga as Mologales.[4] The treaty of Rapallo had provided for the negotiation of a Soviet-German commercial treaty. For more than a year after its signature little or nothing was done.[5] Then, on June 26, 1923, negotiations opened in Berlin, Brodovsky and Körner leading the Soviet and German delegations respectively; after a summer recess they continued regularly from September

[1] For evidence on the content and execution of the agreements see Note A: pp. 1010-1017 below.

[2] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 367-368.

[3] See Vol. 1, pp. 454-455.

[4] G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), pp. 171-174; Wirth was interested in this concession, which was sometimes spoken of as " a gratuity for Rapallo ".

[5] On the Soviet side the appointment was announced of a commission headed by Frumkin, Krasin's deputy at Vneshtorg, to prepare for negotiations (*Izvestiya*, August 17, 1922); on the German side Wallroth was placed in charge (W. von Blücher, *Deutschlands Weg nach Rapallo* (Wiesbaden, 1951), p. 166). Chicherin had a conversation in Berlin with the German economic expert Schlesinger on August 19, 1922 (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 4829/241595-8); in February 1923 Chicherin and Krasin were both in Berlin, and had a discussion with German representatives on the future negotiations (*ibid.* K 618/165594-502, 165960-8). Whatever pressure was exerted at this time came from the Soviet side. Two despatches from Brockdorff-Rantzau of May 7, 1923 (*ibid.* K 618/165920-5 and 4562/154859-61), replied to cautious and sceptical arguments advanced in Berlin about the utility of economic negotiations.

1923 to May 1924.[1] By that time agreement had been reached on a large number of points, and the initial German hope of securing some relaxation of the Soviet monopoly of foreign trade had been abandoned. But the controversial issues of most-favoured-nation treatment and the extra-territoriality of the Soviet trade delegation were still outstanding.[2] At the end of 1923 the Soviet delegation had introduced a fresh complication in the form of a request for an extradition treaty.[3] A year later desultory discussions on this subject were still in progress. But the German Government was dilatory and reluctant; and the Soviet negotiators eventually allowed the proposal to drop.[4]

When on April 16, 1924, Chicherin gave an interview to *Izvestiya* to mark the second anniversary of the Rapallo treaty, he detected no cloud on the horizon to obscure the benefits which the treaty had conferred on both partners. It seemed fair to describe it as " a guide to the future ", and to predict that " the full meaning of the political concepts on which it is based will be wholly revealed only in the future ". Early in May 1924, however, an incident occurred which seriously disturbed Soviet-German relations for three months. The way in which it was handled suggested that the Soviet authorities were less alarmed than their German counterparts at the prospect of a breakdown in these relations, or perhaps merely that they were more skilled in the art of bluffing. On May 3, 1924, a German communist under arrest was being escorted by two German policemen through the streets of Berlin. By some ruse he induced his guards to enter the premises of the Soviet trade delegation where he had previously worked. Once inside he called for help: the policemen were arrested, and the prisoner made good his escape. Presently the policemen were released, and reported to Berlin police headquarters. A force of police then invaded the trade delegation

[1] *Ibid.* 2860/553119-26, 555930-1.

[2] *Ibid.* 5265/316061-80; according to G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), p. 164, the Soviet Government originally wanted the German Government to set up a central trading agency to act as a partner of the monopoly of foreign trade in the conduct of Soviet-German trade, but the German Government refused to interfere with private initiative.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 5625/316071.

[4] *Ibid.* 2860/554602-4; 4484/096180.

building, and, while purporting to search for the prisoner, rifled its papers, and cross-examined its personnel, some of them being temporarily held under arrest.[1] So flagrant a violation of the diplomatic immunity conferred on the trade delegation by the agreement of May 6, 1921,[2] provoked an immediate and angry protest from the Soviet Ambassador. On the German side, while regret was expressed for the incident, it was argued that the immunity extended only to the persons of the head of the trade delegation and his senior officials, and not to employees or to the premises as such.[3] When prompt satisfaction was not obtained, Krestinsky ostentatiously departed for Moscow. Rykov announced in a press interview on May 9, 1924, that the " first steps " had been taken to curtail " our operations in Germany ".[4] Chicherin in a letter to Brockdorff-Rantzau suggested that the incident betokened " a complete reversal of German policy ", and in an official note of May 12, 1924, demanded a formal apology, compensation for damage done, and a declaration that the premises of the trade delegation were " an extra-territorial part of the embassy ".[5] This, after due consideration in Berlin, provoked a long and argumentative reply which was despatched to Brockdorff-Rantzau on May 20, 1924. It explained that regret had already been expressed and compensation promised in previous communications, but continued to deny the extra-territoriality of the trade delegation premises, and proposed that

[1] The facts were widely reported, with insignificant variations of detail, in the press; see also *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, i (1932), 401-404. According to P. Scheffer, *7 Years in Soviet Russia* (Engl. transl. 1931), p. 307, reflecting well informed contemporary opinion, the Prussian police acted " on its own responsibility "; M. von Stockhausen, *6 Jahre Reichskanzlei* (Bonn, 1954) attributes the order to a high police official Weiss, who was relieved of his post after the settlement of the incident (L. Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (1930), ii, 583). Some months later, at the session of TsIK in October 1924, Chicherin declared that the raid on the trade delegation had taken place " without the knowledge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but in close contact with German parties of the Right " (*SSSR : Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 2 Sozyva : 2 Sessiya* (1924), p. 65). The complicity of the Right seemed a plausible hypothesis; but the Prussian Government which controlled the police was a SPD government. This issue cut across party lines.

[2] For this agreement see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 339-340.

[3] For Krestinsky's visit to Stresemann see *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/553796-9; for the reply from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs *ibid.* 2860/553803-5.

[4] A. I. Rykov, *Stat'i i Rechi*, iii (1929), 56-58.

[5] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/553822, 553906-11.

this and other outstanding issues should be settled by negotiation.[1]

When Brockdorff-Rantzau handed this reply to Chicherin on May 23, 1924, the thirteenth party congress was in session, and provided a convenient platform for indignant utterances by the Soviet leaders. Zinoviev detected in German policy a temporary flirtation with France, but concluded consolingly that the German Government could not in the long run maintain an uncompromising attitude :

> Basic economic interests bind Germany to our country : the two countries are too closely linked to each other.

Krasin devoted the whole of his short speech to the incident, making the far-fetched charge that it had been organized " by way of provocation ", and that the arrested communist had himself been an *agent provocateur*. He, too, struck a confident note, maintaining that " in this conflict we are economically stronger than Germany ", and that " the Soviet Union will, if it so desires, find the road to Paris more quickly than the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs ".[2] The Soviet authorities apparently continued to believe that the affair had been a deliberate trick, and were convinced that it marked a cooling off in the German attitude to the Soviet Union, prompted by a desire to seek closer relations with the west. Economic reprisals were applied in the form of a cancellation of orders, the assumption being openly expressed that the Soviet Union could get on much better without German trade than Germany without the Soviet market.[3] The negotiations for a Soviet-German commercial agreement were sharply interrupted ; and steps were taken to close down the Soviet trade delegation in Berlin.[4]

While, however, Soviet reactions were emphatic and unanimous, it soon transpired that German official opinion was divided between two camps. The first, which centred on the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, applauded the action of the police, and wished to use the incident in order to curtail Soviet privileges on

[1] *Ibid.* 2860/553973-9.

[2] *Trinadtsatyi S"ezd Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)* (1924), pp. 62, 146-153. The unlikely theory that the arrested communist was a police agent became part of the official version of the incident (*Istoriya Diplomatii*, ed. V. Potemkin (1945), iii, 352).

[3] *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn'*, May 24, 1924.

[4] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/554116.

German territory. This view derived adventitious reinforcement from the surprise and alarm inspired by the result of the Reichstag elections of May 4, 1924, when 62 communists secured seats.[1] The second view was that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was indignant at the independent action taken by the police, tacitly recognized it as a breach of the Soviet-German agreement, and above all regarded the incident as a minor item which must at all costs not be allowed to damage German-Soviet relations. Brockdorff-Rantzau, now firmly established, after the alarms and excursions of the preceding eighteen months, as the protagonist of German-Soviet collaboration, ardently shared this view, and bombarded Stresemann with indignant letters.[2] It was also noted that German commercial interests " found the break very disadvantageous, and were pressing for a rapid settlement of the conflict ".[3]

In these circumstances, counsels of prudence ultimately prevailed on both sides. Kopp visited Berlin and discussed the question with Maltzan ; and a draft protocol for the settlement of the incident was drawn up, which was described by the German negotiators as the utmost limit to which they were prepared to go, and by Kopp as a possible basis for further discussion.[4] Meanwhile Trotsky, recently returned to Moscow from prolonged convalescence in the south, unexpectedly invited the German Ambassador to an interview.[5] It took place on June 8, 1924. It was not generally known at this time that Trotsky's effective control of military affairs was at an end ; and Brockdorff-Rantzau, always sensitive to the nodal point in Soviet-German relations, took advantage of the opportunity of addressing the People's Commissar for War. He began by telling Trotsky that he " saw

[1] See pp. 108-109 below ; a telegram from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Brockdorff-Rantzau treated this result as proof of " the moral and material support " received by the KPD from Moscow (*Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass*, 9101/227199).

[2] *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, ii (1955), 318, note 101.

[3] G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), p. 178.

[4] *Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass*, 9101/227182-6 ; Kopp was to have left Berlin for Moscow on June 5, 1924 (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 4829/241973), but postponed his departure and did not finally reach Moscow till June 17, 1924 (*ibid.* 4829/241988, 241992).

[5] *Ibid.* 2860/554133 ; for Trotsky's position at this time see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 361-366.

German-Russian friendship seriously endangered, and had to know whether relations with Trotsky's department were also threatened". Trotsky replied with emphasis that "a change in our attitude was not even to be contemplated", and that "the dispute had absolutely no bearing on this matter". Brockdorff-Rantzau professed to throw doubt on this assurance. He cited several recent occasions of coolness on the Soviet side. Visiting German officers had had a chilly reception; a Junkers aeroplane which had been flown to Moscow was not allowed to take part in a parade; the ambassador himself had not been invited to the parade, though other diplomats had been present. Trotsky fended off these and other complaints, and expressed the conviction that German-Soviet friendship would "continue for years — he corrected himself — for decades to come". Brockdorff-Rantzau ended by repeating a suggestion, which had, he said, already been made to Chicherin, that the two Powers should liquidate the Berlin incident in a protocol declaring their intention to forget the misunderstandings of the past and work together in the spirit of Rapallo.[1] A few days later, the ambassador handed to Chicherin the draft of a protocol approved by the German Government and no doubt drawn on these lines.[2] This did not at all satisfy the Soviet Government; and Chicherin replied on June 15-16, 1924, in a hand-written letter rejecting the proposals. Kopp now returned from Berlin, and had a long discussion with Chicherin on the night of June 19-20.[3] But several weeks of hard bargaining ensued before a solution was in sight.[4] The main stumbling-block was the demand for recognition of the extra-territorial status of the trade delegation; and the turning-point came in a conversation between Chicherin and Brockdorff-Rantzau on July 5, 1924, when Chicherin suggested that some part, if not the whole, of the trade delegation premises might be recognized as extra-territorial.[5] What was to be the final text was provisionally

[1] This account of the conversation was sent by Brockdorff-Rantzau on June 9, 1924, to Stresemann (*Stresemann Nachlass*, 7414/175334-40; a full translation is in G. Freund, *Unholy Alliance* (1957), pp. 254-258).

[2] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/554153; the text has not been traced.

[3] *Ibid.* 4829/241991-5.

[4] Hilger describes an all-night conversation between Radek, Brockdorff-Rantzau and himself which helped at one point to avert a breakdown (G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), pp. 178-179).

[5] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/554217-19.

agreed on at a meeting in Moscow on July 15, 1924, between Chicherin, Krestinsky and Kopp on one side and Brockdorff-Rantzau and Hilger on the other.[1] After the formal approval of both governments had been given, it was at length signed in Berlin by Stresemann and the Soviet chargé d'affaires on July 29, 1924. It represented an almost complete acceptance of the Soviet demands. The action of the police against the trade delegation on May 3 was admitted to have been arbitrary and unjustified; the German Government expressed its regret, promised to punish the guilty and undertook to make good the material damage. The Soviet Government reiterated that it had issued firm instructions to all officials and employees of the delegation to refrain from taking any part whatever in the internal political life of Germany. A definite part of the premises of the delegation was declared to enjoy diplomatic privilege and immunity; the remainder was to be subject to German law. Finally, the parties professed their undiminished mutual good will and announced their intention to conclude a regular commercial treaty within a year.[2] On July 31, 1924, Krestinsky left Moscow to return to his post. It was no mere coincidence that agreement had been reached at the moment when a German delegation under the leadership of Stresemann was about to leave for London to participate in the conference on the Dawes plan for reparations.[3] Before entering into further commitments to the west, Stresemann wished to reinsure his position by a demonstration of his friendly relations with the east. This pattern was repeated more than once in the course of the next two years.

When in December 1923 the reparations commission appointed two committees of experts, the first to examine ways and means of balancing the German budget and stabilizing the German currency, the second to deal with the flight of capital from Germany, American experts, with the agreement of the United

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/554242.

[2] The full text was published in *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* on July 30, 1924, and in the German press on July 31, 1924; for an abbreviated text see Klyuchnikov i Sabanin, *Mezhdunarodnaya Politika*, iii, i (1928), 313-314.

[3] The conference of the allied governments had opened on July 16, 1924; the German delegation joined it on August 5, 1924.

States Government, were appointed to both committees. General Dawes was thus appointed to the first committee (which was the effective body), and became its president. In April 1924 the committee propounded a scheme, henceforth to be known as the " Dawes plan ", the essential features of which were that German reparations payments were to be fixed in advance for a number of years, that the responsibility for the transfer of these sums over the exchanges rested with the allied authorities, and that a loan from allied sources should be made available to the German Government to assist it to become and remain solvent. The success of the plan was assured by the fall of Poincaré and the accession of the Left government to power in France in May-June 1924. After long negotiations, an agreement based on the plan was signed in London between the reparations commission and the German Government on August 9, 1924.

These proceedings did not at first excite particular concern in Moscow. At the fifth congress of Comintern, meeting shortly after the report of the Dawes committee had been approved by the reparations commission, Zinoviev called the plan " a halter round the neck of the German working class " ; and a German delegate, echoing this verdict, deplored the favourable reception of the plan by British and French workers.[1] The resolution of the congress referred to the Dawes report as " the gospel of contemporary ' pacifism ' and ' democracy ' ", and attributed the propaganda in support of it to " a strengthening of democratic-pacifist illusions ", but prescribed no specific action on it.[2] When at the end of July 1924 the incident of the attack on the trade delegation in Berlin was finally liquidated, Soviet-German relations resumed their normal course. Even the acceptance of the Dawes plan by the German delegation at the London conference did not at first seem to portend any untoward change. Kamenev admitted that, as a result of the plan, " a certain coincidence of

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 7 ; ii, 859-860 ; a conference of delegates of the French and German communist parties at Cologne on June 24, 1924, came out with a declaration against the plan (*Die Rote Fahne*, June 25, 1924).

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 397-398 ; a manifesto of IKKI issued shortly after the congress followed the same line in more strident language (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 99, August 1, 1924, pp. 1267-1268).

interest may be realized between the capitalists of Germany, England, France and America, and even a single economic front be formed against us ", and called the plan a bargain "struck at the expense of the German and the international proletariat ".[1] The spokesman of the German Communist Party in the Reichstag on August 29, 1924, maintained that the effect of the plan was to put the great German capitalists in power, side by side with those of the Entente, and sacrifice the workers, employees and middle classes to them.[2] But the mood of confidence in Moscow was not immediately shaken. In September 1924 Stalin, in an article which constituted his first major pronouncement on foreign policy, discovered four flaws in the proceedings of the London conference which would doom it to sterility. It had turned Germany into a colony — this was to reckon " without the German people " ; it had subordinated France to Great Britain — this was contrary to " the logic of facts " ; it recognized " the hegemony of America " — this would never be tolerated by British industry ; and it had done nothing to mitigate antagonisms between Europe and the colonial countries. Stalin stoutly denied the conclusion " that the power of the bourgeoisie has been made secure, that the ' era of pacifism ' must be regarded as lengthy, and the revolution in Europe as postponed to a remote future ". On the contrary, " pacifism leads to the destruction of the foundations of bourgeois power, and prepares conditions favourable for the revolution ".[3]

Soon, however, fresh implications of the new turn of German policy, more disquieting for the Soviet Union than the economic enslavement of the German proletariat, began to emerge. The Rapallo treaty was only a year old when fears began to be expressed in Moscow that Germany might seek an accommodation with Great Britain, inspired by common mistrust of France, at the expense of German friendship with the Soviet Union.[4] Such apprehensions had been stilled by the reconciliation between

[1] L. Kamenev, *Stat'i i Rechi*, xi (1929), 11-12, 62.

[2] *Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, ccclxxxi (1924), 1071.

[3] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vi, 282, 284-285. For further quotations from this article see p. 293 below.

[4] The existence of these fears was reported by Brockdorff-Rantzau, on the strength of " several conversations " with Chicherin, in a letter to Maltzan of April 29, 1923 (*Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, ii (1955), 325, note 145).

Great Britain and France after the downfall of Poincaré, and by the improved relations between both of them and the Soviet Union. But they now revived in a new form. Litvinov, in a conversation reported by the German chargé d'affaires in Moscow on September 13, 1924, did not disguise his anxiety that " the London conversations might have had a serious influence on our [i.e. Germany's] Russian policy ".[1] The British Prime Minister, in his speech to the assembly of the League of Nations on September 4, 1924, spoke of the " vacant chair " waiting to receive Germany.[2] Stresemann a few days later, while strenuously denying that Germany intended to seek admission, declared German willingness to enter the League on the condition of " our recognition by others as a Great Power with equal rights ". It was believed that the question had been discussed at length during Stresemann's visit to London for the Dawes plan negotiations in August.[3]

Any proposal that Germany should join the League of Nations raised delicate issues of Soviet-German relations. Such an act would mark a cleavage between the Rapallo partners, unless both joined the League simultaneously; and the potential obligations of a member of the League might, at any rate in theory, involve action against the Soviet Union under articles 16 and 17 of the covenant. Stresemann himself had been fully conscious of these issues in a confidential memorandum, written in February 1924, six months before the question of Germany's entry into the League was officially broached:

> From the German standpoint it is of particular importance that, when this question becomes acute, it should be raised by England not only for Germany, but also for *Russia*, for whose recognition the British Government has also taken the initiative. Our relation to Russia will always be of supreme importance for us, economically and politically. Any action of the League of Nations, which might be directed against Russia and might also be binding on us, would be a much heavier burden for us than for any other country.[4]

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/554349-50.

[2] *League of Nations: Fifth Assembly* (1924), p. 42; in a later passage MacDonald expressed the tentative hope that the Anglo-Soviet treaty might be a " first indication " of Soviet willingness to join the League (*ibid.* p. 43).

[3] *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, i (1932), 569, 573-575.

[4] *Ibid.* i, 314-315.

Now, however, since the admission of the Soviet Union was out of the question, it was precisely this isolated entry into the League of Nations which was being canvassed by the German Government. On September 23, 1924, the German Government announced that the Dawes plan had, in its view, created a basis for its future cooperation in the League of Nations. On the evening of the following day Stresemann met Krasin and Brockdorff-Rantzau privately at the house of Kriege, a former legal adviser of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, where Krasin made " a long speech " against any approach by Germany to the League. On September 29, 1924, a memorandum was despatched to the allied powers outlining the conditions on which the German Government was prepared " to seek the admission of Germany into the League of Nations without delay " : the most important of these were a demand for a permanent seat on the League Council, and a reservation to the effect that the obligations of article 16 of the Covenant could not be regarded as automatically binding on a disarmed nation.[1] Meanwhile, on September 26, 1924, the Soviet chargé d'affaires made a first informal enquiry of Stresemann about the proposed German move and the reported German memorandum, repeating the enquiry more formally and in greater detail in a further conversation of October 1, 1924. Stresemann explained that entry into the League of Nations, far from constituting an acceptance of the Versailles frontiers, opened up the possibility of revision through article 19 of the covenant ; pointed out that MacDonald, who was eager to bring Germany into the League, had also been the protagonist of the Anglo-Soviet treaty ; and denied that any change of policy towards the Soviet Government was intended.[2]

Neither side was content to let the matter rest. The Soviet leaders had long been obsessed with the view of the League of Nations as a combination of Powers hostile to the Soviet Union ; and a clash of policies was inevitable. In the middle of September

[1] *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, i (1932), 579-580 ; the German memorandum was first made public three months later, when it appeared as an enclosure in the German note of December 12, 1924, to the Secretary-General of the League of Nations (*League of Nations : Official Journal*, No. 3, March 1925, pp. 325-326).

[2] *Stresemann Nachlass*, 7178/157420-2, 157445-7 : the versions in *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, i (1932), pp. 586-589 are abbreviated.

Chicherin had received from a Berlin acquaintance, Professor Ludwig Stein, an invitation to participate in a discussion at the Mittwoch-Gesellschaft, a Berlin club of political intellectuals which he had addressed some years earlier,[1] on Germany's proposed entry into the League of Nations. On September 21, 1924, Chicherin declined the invitation, but included in his letter of refusal a statement of his views which he requested to have read at the meeting. He described Germany's entry into the League as equivalent to " a capitulation, a journey to Canossa, a renunciation of the future ", and went on:

> By entering the League of Nations Germany joins a definite coalition; Germany thus becomes a satellite, renounces her own political line, subordinates her policy to that of this coalition. German policy is thus brought into collision with the Rapallo policy. Germany, contrary to her own will and through the force of facts, will be drawn by this step into combinations and actions which will lead her into conflicts with us.[2]

Though Chicherin afterwards pretended that the letter was destined for a purely private audience, he can hardly have been otherwise than pleased at the publicity which it received, or surprised at the annoyance of the German Government.[3] He reverted to the theme in his speech to TsIK on foreign affairs on October 18, 1924, a lengthy passage of which was devoted to Germany. Germany had achieved "a certain stability", but "at the cost of the loss of all economic, and some degree of political, independence". Western tendencies in Germany "find expression in the eagerness of a large proportion of the ruling groups to gain admission to the League of Nations ". Having denied that the Soviet Union had any thought of joining the League of Nations (though this did not preclude the possibility of sending an observer), Chicherin went on:

> Entry into the present League of Nations means, in the opinion of our government, the surrender of an independent

[1] Chicherin had spoken in June 1922, after the conclusion of the Rapallo treaty, on " Bolshevism and pacifism "; his main theme is said to have been that Germany and Soviet Russia should adopt a common attitude to the League of Nations and only enter it together (L. Stein, *Aus dem Leben eines Optimisten* (1930), p. 238).

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 239-240.

[3] *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, i (1932), 588, 591.

policy and submission to the policy of the Entente Powers. We attach the same interpretation to the entry of Germany into the League. By the force of events Germany would then be drawn into combinations as a result of which she would become an adversary of the USSR.[1]

When Krestinsky on his return from leave at the end of October 1924 visited Stresemann, and " enquired in a lively way about Germany's attitude to the League of Nations ", Stresemann at once embarked on a diatribe against communist propaganda — a theme which he usually broached when he desired to stave off an offensive on other questions — and handed to the ambassador a protest against the liquidation of German property in the Soviet Union. Krestinsky countered with Soviet objections to Germany's entry into the League of Nations and received the previous replies. The conversation included a denial by Krestinsky that Chicherin's letter to Stein had been intended for publication.[2] Meanwhile an attempt was made to mobilize Left-wing opinion in European countries on similar lines. Early in October 1924 a conference of communist deputies and members of parliament from Germany, France, Great Britain and Czechoslovakia, meeting in Cologne, declared that the Dawes plan " makes the German proletariat the first and direct object of attack by the capitalist classes of all countries ", and denounced the League of Nations as " the new Holy Alliance against the proletarian revolution ".[3] A month later the usual manifesto of IKKI on the anniversary of the October revolution of 1917 appealed for support for the German proletariat " which will be plunged into the deepest gulf of political and social enslavement by the experts' report of the American bankers ".[4] At the sixth Russian trade union congress Lozovsky broadened the scope of the protest by calling the Dawes plan " the ' Morganization ' of Europe, i.e. the subordination of Europe to American capital " ;[5] and " the Dawesification of

[1] *SSSR : Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 2 Sozyva : 2 Sessiya* (1924), p. 65 ; for the general tenor of the speech see p. 248 below.

[2] *Stresemann Nachlass*, 7178/157522-6, abbreviated in *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, i (1932), 589-591.

[3] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 132, October 13, 1924, pp. 1755-1756.

[4] *Ibid.* No. 143, November 3, 1924, p. 1931.

[5] *Shestoi S"ezd Professional'nykh Soyuzov SSSR* (1925), p. 377.

Europe" became a familiar bugbear in current Soviet oratory. The improvement in German relations with the west aroused deep suspicions in the Soviet Union, and was soon to cast a lasting shadow on the Rapallo policy. The Dawes plan was the first step on the road to Locarno.

CHAPTER 27

COMINTERN: THE FIFTH CONGRESS

THE fifth congress of the Communist International was in session from June 17 to July 8, 1924, and was attended by 406 delegates from 41 countries, of whom 324 were full delegates with voting rights.[1] Its task was unusually complex. The third congress of Comintern in 1921, following on the introduction of NEP, had sounded a note of " retreat " in the march towards world revolution. This was intensified at the fourth congress in November 1922, which for the first time clearly faced the prospect of an indefinite prolongation of relations between the Soviet Union and the surviving capitalist world, and recognized the unique dependence of the hope of world revolution on Soviet power and prestige.[2] By far the most important event occurring within the orbit of Comintern between its fourth and fifth congresses was the failure of the attempted German revolution of October 1923. The fifth congress could hardly fail to reflect the widening gap between the one party which had a victorious revolution to its credit and the parties which had failed, or had not even made the attempt.[3] What had happened inevitably strengthened still further Russian prestige and predominance in

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1054. The report of the mandates commission (*Pyatyi Vsemirnyi Kongress Kommunistischeskogo Internatsionala* (1925), ii, 259-260) recognized 336 full delegates and 168 consultative delegates, including in the latter category 70 delegates from Profintern and 30 from other organizations ; 207 full delegates and 80 consultative delegates came from countries outside the USSR (*ibid.* ii, 235).

[2] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 384-386, 441-451.

[3] Rappoport put the point forcefully at the French party congress two years later : " You remember the famous farce : ' Nothing to Declare '. We had nothing to declare by way either of a victorious revolution or of original ideas. It happened, by force of events, that the authors of the first victorious revolution are in Russia " (*V^e Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), p. 405).

Comintern, and popularized the view that other parties, in order to qualify themselves for the same success, must above all follow the Russian model and submit to Russian guidance. This impression was enhanced by the official verdict on the German failure as a result not of objective conditions, but of the weaknesses, and especially of the opportunist leadership, of the German party. The moral of what had happened was not that belief in a proletarian revolution in the west was mistaken, but that the western parties had hitherto failed to learn from the Russian experience how to make a revolution.

The diagnosis of the German failure as the product of a Brandlerite deviation to the Right had been spontaneously adopted within the KPD itself, and was followed, with the active encouragement of Zinoviev and of IKKI, by the eviction of the existing leaders in favour of leaders of the party Left. Thus the other moral drawn in Comintern from the German events of October 1923 — side by side with the moral of the need to accept Russian leadership — was the need for a turn to the Left; and this fitted in with the lessons drawn from the Trotsky controversy, which had from the first been closely bound up with the German fiasco. Trotsky himself had been denounced as the author of a Right deviation in the Russian party. The groups in foreign parties — notably the German, Polish and French parties — which had shown most eagerness to support him were themselves under fire as Rightists. It became a regular pattern in communist parties to attribute any failure or any deviation from the official line to Rightist errors, and to seek a remedy in a return to the well-tried principles of the Left. The fifth congress of Comintern found no difficulty in bringing the main issues before it within this familiar framework.

The other major event which overshadowed the fifth congress was the advent to power of a Labour government in Great Britain and the *de jure* recognition of the Soviet Union.[1] Disillusionment had quickly set in with MacDonald and his ministers. But this did not alter the fact of recognition, or the belief that the rise of

[1] Manuilsky coupled the coming into power of the British Labour government with "the discussion in the Russian party" and the German defeat as the three events which "provoked the crisis in Comintern" (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 7, 1924, cols. 17-20).

the Labour Party to power was a symptom of the growing revolt of the British worker against the existing order. Here, too, the moment seemed ripe for a turn to the Left. Whether, therefore, from the point of view of the Soviet Government or of Comintern — and the interests of both were in Russian thinking indistinguishable — the situation in Great Britain gave ground for optimism, and fully compensated for the temporary German set-back. Zinoviev, in a circular letter to the parties of April 5, 1924, announcing the agenda for the forthcoming fifth congress, set the seal on this change of emphasis:

> For the first time in the history of the English labour movement conditions are now being created for the establishment of a mass communist party. In this sense what is now happening in the English labour movement is more important than the events in Germany.[1]

The theme of the substitution of Great Britain for Germany as the main hope and main preoccupation of Comintern was frequently heard in the following months.[2] Similar hopes were sometimes expressed about France; Radek, in a report to the Communist Academy of February 19, 1925, pointed to the growing strength of the French and British parties, and added: "In Germany the curve moves downward".[3] These conditions appeared to justify a qualified optimism. Zinoviev in his circular letter found it difficult to celebrate any notable achievement since the fourth congress eighteen months earlier. But he described Comintern as standing at the moment "between two waves of the proletarian revolution", one of which had passed and the other had not yet arisen.[4] Kamenev at this time claimed that, wherever

[1] *Pravda*, April 10, 1924; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 46, April 18, 1924, p. 536.

[2] "The chief task of the Communist International", said Zinoviev in his opening speech at the congress, "is now transferred to England in all fields" (*Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistichen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 77); the obsequious Pepper added that "the German October defeat and the victory of the English Labour Party, the Labour government in England, have transferred the centre of gravity of our present tasks from Germany to England" (*ibid.* i, 304).

[3] *Mirovaya Politika v 1924 godu*, ed. F. Rotshtein (1925), p. 27.

[4] For the letter see note 2 above. The revolutionary wave was a favourite metaphor of the period. Kamenev, at a Moscow party conference, admitted that it was still uncertain whether "the ninth and last wave of the proletarian advance on the bulwark of capitalism will come tomorrow or the day after

one looked in the capitalist world, the same diagnosis was everywhere confirmed: "Incurably sick".[1] Stalin in a speech to the school of party secretaries on the eve of the fifth congress found nothing but encouraging features in the international situation: the inability of the imperialist Powers to bring about a durable peace; the rise in the power and prestige of the Soviet Union; and the growing attraction of the masses in capitalist countries towards the Soviet Union. And he ended by saluting "the success of our foreign policy during this year".[2]

After the new cult of Leninism had been honoured by a solemn ceremony at the Lenin mausoleum,[3] Zinoviev opened the business proceedings of the congress with the customary report on the work of IKKI, which was in fact a statement of policy on the current situation. The main political diagnosis was hardly controversial. Everyone agreed that the cause of world revolution had suffered a set-back from its early hopes. Zinoviev repeated in almost the same words what Trotsky had already said to the third congress:

> We misjudged the tempo: we counted in months when we had to count in years.[4]

But the resolution of the fourth congress, having taken note of the rise of Fascism, had also contemplated an alternative development:

> This does not exclude the possibility that in the near future in some important countries the bourgeois reaction may be succeeded by a "democratic-pacifist" era. In England (strengthening of the Labour Party at the last elections), in France (an inevitable period of the rule of a so-called "Left bloc"), such a transitional "democratic-pacifist" period is

tomorrow" (*Pravda*, May 10, 1924); the formal instructions of the KPD to its delegation at the congress also described the current period as a trough "between two revolutionary waves" (*Die Taktik der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1924), p. 38).

[1] *Pravda*, May 10, 1924; in the congress manifesto on the tenth anniversary of the war drafted by Trotsky (see p. 85 below), it was boldly asserted that "there is not a single healthy spot in Europe".

[2] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vi, 235-239.

[3] See Vol. 2, p. 3.

[4] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 5; for Trotsky's speech at the third congress see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 384-385.

extremely probable, and this may in turn provoke a return of pacifist hopes in bourgeois and social-democratic Germany.[1]

Now that the British Labour Party and the French " Left bloc " were in power, and masses of German bourgeois and social-democratic voters were in process of succumbing to the illusions of the Dawes plan, this prophecy had been brilliantly fulfilled. The arrival of the democratic-pacifist era was hailed as " a sign of the collapse of capitalism ". The Dawes plan was " a halter round the neck of the German working class " ; and the longer the British Labour Party remained in power, the fewer illusions it would inspire. Attacks on social-democratic parties of all countries, varied by personal attacks on Radek, were the recurrent *leitmotiv* of Zinoviev's speech. " European social democracy as we know it is really, speaking objectively, now nothing but ' *a third party of the world bourgeoisie* ' " ; and the German Social-Democratic Party was described as " a wing of Fascism ". Denunciation of social-democrats was no novelty in Bolshevik theory or in Bolshevik oratory. But it had acquired from the German experience, when collaboration with the social-democrats had been tried and had failed, an emphasis which had been missing in the milder pronouncements of the third and fourth congresses. In the present context it seemed to indicate an unequivocal shift towards the Left, and provided an embarrassing commentary on the united front policy which had been a bone of contention between Zinoviev and Radek ever since it had been first proclaimed by IKKI in December 1921.[2] For what basis now remained for a united front with social-democrats ? Unfortunately the resolution of the fourth congress of Comintern had emphatically proclaimed " the indispensability of the tactics of the united front " and recommended support for " workers' governments ", these being defined in imprudent detail as including Left coalitions of all kinds. Zinoviev now attempted to explain away his previous acceptance of the crucial passages in that resolution, politely burying the united front in the guise of " the united front from below " (meaning a policy of splitting other Left parties against their leaders) and reverting to his original interpretation of a " workers' government " as a synonym

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 298.
[2] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 406-407.

for a Soviet government or the dictatorship of the proletariat. Past defeats were attributed to a false interpretation by the Right of the slogans of the united front and the workers' government, which was responsible for the German fiasco of October 1923, and which was subtly associated with the Trotskyist opposition in the Russian party. A brief reference to a so-called " Left " comrade who rejected united front tactics altogether led to the conclusion that " we, the genuine ' Lefts ' in Comintern ", must take in hand the campaign against the Right. These mild criticisms of the " ultra-Lefts " did not seriously affect the main tenor of the speech as an attempt by Zinoviev to stake out for himself and for Comintern a position well to the Left of that occupied at the fourth congress.[1]

Zinoviev's political report was immediately followed by a report from Varga, the economic expert of Comintern, on the world economic situation. The third congress of Comintern in 1921 had already diagnosed " an offensive against the working masses both on the economic and on the political front ". The fourth congress in November 1922, in a section of its resolution headed " the offensive of capital " admitted that the bourgeoisie had " strengthened its political and economic domination, and begun a new offensive against the proletariat ".[2] Before the fifth congress met in the summer of 1924, the success of this offensive had become menacingly apparent in the recovery from the first post-war economic depression, in the stabilization of the German currency, in the widespread support for the Dawes plan, and in the penetration of American capital into Europe. In May 1924, Varga had published a pamphlet under the title *Rise and Fall of Capitalism?* which concluded that " the acute social crisis of capitalism " after the war had been " by and large overcome ", and appeared to admit the likelihood of a long delay in its ultimate downfall. When Varga was called on to report to the fifth congress on the world economic situation, a less pessimistic note seemed appropriate. Nothing could, he now explained, alter the certainty of the downfall of capitalism, which had already entered its last stages. But, " within the general crisis of capitalism ",

[1] Zinoviev's speech is in *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 42-107.

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 166, 296-297.

variations could occur, in the form both of partial recoveries and of incongruities between different countries: capitalism was no longer a uniform world system. The present phase, though it offered no objective proof of the collapse of capitalism, did offer "*objective possibilities for successful struggles of the proletariat*".[1] This cryptic utterance sounded like a compromise between Varga's professional conscience and the need for a revolutionary platform which would satisfy the Left.[2]

The embarrassments of both Zinoviev's and Varga's positions were to emerge during the debate. Treint, the French delegate, supported Zinoviev with the argument that the principal danger came not from the Left, but from the Right. A German delegate, speaking under the name of Rwal, boldly declared that in October 1923 "the German party and the whole of Comintern was in a position to raise the question of the seizure of power in an acute form". Murphy, the British delegate, injected the first element of doubt by pointing out that the united front was the essential basis of the tactics of the British party.[3] Roy, the Indian delegate, while welcoming the attention now being belatedly devoted to Great Britain, set to work to dispel current illusions about the prospects of the CPGB. The British proletariat as a class was "distorted and penetrated through and through by the unconscious or conscious spirit of imperialism". Living on the super-profits of imperialism, it had not yet lost its faith either in the Labour government or in bourgeois democracy. Nothing could be achieved until the CPGB became a mass party active throughout the empire.[4] Nobody was inclined to take up Roy's masterful challenge. Radek spoke as the main dissentient from the official line, having obtained permission to state a personal view[5] — the last instance in the history of the Russian party of a licensed opposition. He attacked Zinoviev's attitude

[1] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 108-131.

[2] Trotsky later described Varga as a "theoretical Polonius" — a "useful and qualified worker", who "serves up economic arguments for somebody else's political line" (Trotsky archives, T 3129, p. 5).

[3] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 138, 142-144.

[4] *Ibid.* i, 149-153.

[5] For Radek's position at this time see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 235-239.

as " a liquidation of the decisions of the fourth congress ", and challenged Zinoviev to say whether he really rejected all coalitions with social-democrats. Turning on Varga, he read extracts from Varga's pamphlet of the previous month, contrasting them with the more bellicose passages of his report: at the congress, he declared, " the dove has roared like a lion ".[1] Radek was answered by Ruth Fischer. The instructions of the German delegation were decidedly guarded about the united front, and described the slogan of the workers' government as " obsolete "; [2] and the majority of the German delegation, under Ruth Fischer's forceful leadership, formed the Left wing of the congress, as the British delegation formed the Right. She declared that Radek and his supporters " *no longer believe in a German, in a European revolution* ", and predicted the imminence of " an acute revolutionary crisis ". The situation in the British party was quite different from that of " the more mature parties ": its weak attitude towards the Labour Party was the result of " inexperience ".[3] Brandler, who was not a member of the German delegation and had no vote, defended his past policies not without dignity, but without effect. A critical delegate alleged that Varga's theses had been deliberately framed in more optimistic terms than his analysis in order to justify " Left " policies. On the other hand a member of the German Left attacked the theses as reflecting the defeatist doctrines of the Right, and thought it dangerous to admit that capitalism could enjoy even a temporary recovery.[4] The tide was still setting strongly towards the Left. Togliatti, appearing under the pseudonym of Ercoli, who occupied a central position in the much divided Italian delegation, expressed the shrewd fear that the only result of the debate would be to replace ambiguous Right formulas by ambiguous Left formulas.[5] Bordiga appeared at the congress as the only spokesman of the " ultra-Left ", openly branding the resolution of the fourth congress as ill-considered, proclaiming " the united front from below and not from above ", and demanding " a third-class

[1] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale (n.d.)*, i, 162-190.

[2] *Die Taktik der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1924), p. 42.

[3] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 191-209.

[4] *Ibid.* i, 352-353, 388.

[5] *Ibid.* i, 377.

funeral " for the tactics and slogan of " a workers' government ".[1] Varga and Zinoviev replied to the debate. Varga defended himself a little awkwardly against the attacks on him, admitting a shade of difference between the pamphlet and the theses, but asserting that the situation in the capitalist world had deteriorated in the last two months.[2] Zinoviev summed up, noting that the debate had been " more extensive than ever before ", and that 62 orators had taken part in it. As in his opening speech, he leaned heavily towards the Left, using Radek and the social-democrats as his main targets, though Bordiga's intervention gave him an opportunity to hold the balance with some sharp sallies against the ultra-Left. In a passage which was afterwards frequently quoted, he safeguarded himself by canvassing the possibility of two alternative prospects: either a rapid ripening of the revolution in Europe within three, four or five years, or a slow and gradual ripening over a period of years. The gulf between Left and Right was straddled by this formula.[3]

In the political commission, which was charged with the task of drafting a resolution, the Right opposition seems to have remained silent. But Bordiga persisted in defending his position and submitted an alternative draft to that of the majority. The battle was renewed in the plenary session to which the commission reported. Bordiga once more complained that the resolution did not reject decisively enough the ambiguous formulas on the united front and the workers' government adopted by the fourth congress; and Bukharin retorted that Bordiga was an individ-

[1] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 394-406; Bordiga's rôle as leader of the ultra-Left was noted by the Polish leader Domski, who described him after the fifth congress in an article in *Nowy Przglad* (quoted in J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 116) as " one of the outstanding figures in the International ". The only other "ultra-Leftist" of comparable importance at this time was Korsch, a learned Marxist who had been a minister in the coalition government in Thuringia in 1923, and editor of the theoretical journal of the KPD, *Die Internationale*, who, unlike Bordiga, did not enjoy a large following in his party. Korsch did not speak at the congress except to interrupt one of the speeches with the taunt of " Soviet imperialism " (G. Hilger and A. Meyer, *The Incompatible Allies* (1953), p. 108; the passage is omitted from the German edition of this work, G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), but the fact is well attested). The charge of " Red imperialism " had already been made after Bukharin's speech at the fourth congress (see p. 1000 below).

[2] *Ibid.* i, 441-442.

[3] *Ibid.* i, 453-509.

ualist who did not understand the need for an approach to the masses. The draft resolution was then passed by an overwhelming majority, Bordiga's counter-draft receiving only eight votes.[1] The resolution, while purporting to reaffirm the decisions of the fourth congress, firmly rejected all attempts to make of the united front policy "anything more than a revolutionary method of agitation and mobilization of the masses", or "to utilize the slogan of the worker-peasant government, not for the purpose of agitating for a proletarian dictatorship, but for the purpose of creating a bourgeois-democratic coalition".[2] Varga's theses on the economic situation, which had been referred to an economic drafting commission, were adopted unanimously, though it was reported that, presumably as the result of pressure from the Left, they had been further modified in the commission in order to make them more favourable to the prospects of revolutionary action.[3] In their final form the theses dwelt on the exceptional character of capitalist prosperity in America, which contrasted with the misery and chaos of capitalism in Europe, and on the world-wide agrarian chaos. But the final conclusion seemed little more than a rhetorical platitude:

> If we succeed in finally breaking the influence of the social-democrats and national-fascist parties over the proletariat, in mobilizing a majority of the proletariat in its decisive strata under the leadership of communist parties for the struggle for state power, and in drawing into a fighting union against the landowners and capitalists the working peasantry which suffers from the agrarian crisis, then in the present period of the decline of capitalism these struggles will lead to successful struggles for power.[4]

Some of the same issues arose in the long resolution of the congress on "Questions of Tactics", which described the world as having entered a "democratic-pacifist phase": from Great

[1] *Ibid.* ii, 592-604, 617; of the eight dissentients, seven were members of the Italian delegation, the other a member of the French delegation associated with Italian refugees in France who had joined the French party. Bordiga's counter-draft does not appear to have been published.

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 393.

[3] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1004-1007.

[4] The resolution is in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 415-426.

Britain and France " ' democratic-pacifist ' illusions " had penetrated " even into Germany ". The resolution, defining the current period as " an epoch between two revolutions or between two waves of the revolutionary advance ", considered that such a period was likely to be particularly fertile in deviations. Professing to hold the balance between two extremes, it denounced " ' ultra-Left ' deviations " which had found expression both in trade union policy and " in a general denial ' in principle ' of the tactics of manœuvre ".[1] But this was only a prelude to the serious business of exposing the deviations of the Right. The united front might, or might not, declared the resolution, involve negotiations with leaders of other parties. But it could not be confined to such negotiations; " the united front from below " was an essential part of it. The " worker-peasant government ", far from implying a coalition, was simply " a translation into the language of the revolution, into the language of the working masses, of the slogan ' the dictatorship of the proletariat ' ". This led logically to a reference to " the bourgeois and anti-worker character " of " the so-called ' Labour government ' of MacDonald ".[2] When this resolution came before the congress at its final session, Bordiga took a new line. Though he still disagreed with some of its phraseology, it had moved so far from the position of the fourth congress and in the direction of his own views that he was prepared to vote for it. He had no objections to the attacks on the ultra-Left; for these were clearly irrelevant to any opinions held by the Italian delegation. The resolution was then passed unanimously.[3] Many subsequent ambiguities of policy and tactics were latent in these resolutions of the fifth congress. The attitude of Comintern towards united front tactics would continue to fluctuate between the two extremes; and these fluctuations would mirror changing attitudes in Soviet relations with the external world. To recognize the division between the " two camps " — Soviet and capitalist — as the only effective contradiction in the international scene meant to

[1] For the trade union question see pp. 553-558 below; the rejection of " manœuvre " was a reference to the Left intellectuals in the German party (see p. 110 below).

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 397-415.

[3] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1011-1012.

reject the united front as anything more than an incidental propaganda device. To recognize a rift within the capitalist world as one of the essential contradictions of capitalism, and to seek to exploit that rift in the interests of Soviet security and power, meant to treat the united front as an essential ingredient of foreign policy. Neither view could be unconditionally maintained to the exclusion of the other.

The same ambiguities were apparent in the special resolutions devoted to "The Labour Government in England" and to "Fascism". The embarrassments of the attitude to be adopted to the British Labour Party went back to Lenin, who spoke with scathing contempt of its leaders, and especially of MacDonald, but enjoined the CPGB to seek membership of it. By the time the fifth congress met in June 1924, the Labour government had revealed enough of its propensity for compromise, and of its half-heartedness in the Anglo-Soviet negotiations, to have forfeited anything that was left of its initial popularity in Moscow. Zinoviev boldly asserted that the communists were "the only force on the world stage that has not had dust thrown in its eyes by the 'Labour government'", and recalled Lenin's comparison with the support given by the rope to the man who is being hanged.[1] Under pressure of these considerations, the resolution took a strongly Leftist and revolutionary line:

> *The task of the Communist International and of its section, the Communist Party of England, is to snatch the workers' movement out of the hands of its reactionary leaders, to destroy the illusions, still existing among the masses,* that liberation is feasible by way of a slow process of parliamentary reforms, and to explain to the workers that it is only by way of an uncompromising class struggle and of the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie that they can free themselves from capitalist expropriation.

On the other hand, it was noticeable that hostility to the British Labour Party was less outspoken and unqualified in the British delegation to the congress than in the other delegations. Nor did anyone contemplate the abandonment or modification of the policy of seeking affiliation to the Labour Party: the injunction to support Left-wing minority movements implied an intention

[1] *Ibid.* i, 462-463.

to remain within the Labour Party and the trade unions.[1] For the CPGB the policy of the united front remained of capital importance. In this question, as in so many others, the fifth congress put a sharper revolutionary edge on its language without altering the familiar policy.

The issue of Fascism presented greater complexities. Mussolini's march on Rome had occurred a few weeks before the fourth congress of Comintern in November 1922. On that occasion Bordiga had argued that Fascism " has given nothing new to bourgeois policy ", and diagnosed it as " the embodiment of the counter-revolutionary struggle of all the bourgeois elements combined ".[2] But the subject had not been seriously discussed; and, except for a mention in the general resolution on tactics of the need for " illegal methods of organization " in the struggle against " international Fascism ", and for a passing reference to " the victory of Fascist reaction " in the resolution on the Italian Communist Party,[3] the fourth congress made no pronouncement on it. This task was reserved for the session of IKKI in June 1923, and was rendered the more delicate by Radek's proclamation of the " Schlageter line ".[4] The resolution eventually adopted described Fascism as " an expression of the disintegration of the capitalist economy and of the collapse of the bourgeois state ". It was the product of loss of faith in socialism and in the proletariat by formerly sympathetic sections of the petty and

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 445-448.

[2] *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1923), p. 341. The same line had been taken, before the seizure of power, in the theses adopted by the PCI under Bordiga's leadership at its Rome congress of March 1922 (see p. 158 below): these called Fascism " a natural and predictable stage in the development of the capitalist order, a specific expression of the functions and tasks of the democratic state " (quoted in *Tridtsat' Let Zhizni i Bor'by Ital'yanskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (Russian transl. from Italian, 1953), p. 143).

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 297, 358; for the latter resolution see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 456. Zinoviev, speaking at the third congress of KIM in December 1922 on receipt of the news of the assassination of Narutowicz, the Polish President, attributed the murders of Rathenau and Narutowicz to " Fascist bands ", and continued: " It will come to the point where we shall have to put our men in action and, if necessary, fight against the Fascist bands revolver in hand " (*Bericht vom 3. Kongress der Kommunistischen Jugendinternationale* (1923), p. 232). But such utterances were rarely heard from the Soviet leaders.

[4] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 179-181.

middle bourgeoisie and of the intelligentsia, due to the weakness and treachery of the social-democratic leaders. In these circumstances, " the bourgeoisie took Fascism into its service ", and replaced " the so-called ' non-political ' apparatus of bourgeois-state compulsion " by the openly terrorist organs of Fascism. By way of making room for the " Schlageter line ", the resolution added that " the confused — and unconscious — revolutionary elements in the Fascist ranks must be drawn into the proletarian class struggle ". Otherwise, though Fascism was declared to have an international character, it was treated primarily as an Italian phenomenon.[1] At the thirteenth Russian party congress in May 1924, Bukharin established a parallel between Fascism and the current turn to the Left in the capitalist world:

> Fascism and the coalition of the bourgeoisie with the socialists, i.e. Left bloc tactics and the tactics of Fascism, have . . . one and the same meaning, since Fascism is not direct violence and nothing more, as some people imagine, but a method which in some degree offers an alliance, and catches on its hook a certain part of the popular masses.

Like the Left bloc, Fascism was inspired by " the objective need of the bourgeoisie to win over a certain part of the masses in order to promote the revival of capitalism ".[2]

At the fifth congress of Comintern Bordiga once more initiated the discussion of Fascism, repeating the main lines of his diagnosis at the fourth congress. There had been no revolution in Italy, he declared, only " a change in the governing personnel of the bourgeois class ", which had involved no change of programme; Fascism was a continuation of bourgeois democracy, and represented nothing substantially new. He placed fresh emphasis on the parallel between Fascism and social-democracy:

> Fascism fundamentally merely repeats the old game of the bourgeois Left parties, i.e. it appeals to the proletariat for civil peace. It attempts to achieve this aim by forming trade unions of industrial and agricultural workers, which it then leads into practical collaboration with the employers' organization.

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1953), pp. 379-383.

[2] *Trinadtsatyi S"ezd Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)* (1924), p. 326.

Bordiga reiterated in this context his opposition to all united front tactics. The Italian party should aim at the liquidation of all other anti-Fascist oppositions and at " open and direct action by the communist movement ".[1] The only other speaker was a German delegate appearing under the name of Freimuth, who condemned the Schlageter line and the failure to take action in October 1923, and thought that in the past the KPD had allowed itself to appear " rather as the tail-end of social-democratic resistance to Fascism than as an active and directing force ". Fascism could be met only by force — " with the methods and battle techniques of revolutionary communism " : this was a part of the new Left tactics adopted at the Frankfurt congress of the KPD. The united front could come only " from below ". Fascism must be fought by fighting the reformists ; " social-democracy and Fascism are two different methods of attaining the same end ".[2] The only novelties in the resolution (much shorter than that of IKKI a year earlier) was the shift in emphasis from Italy to Germany, where Fascism had been " obliged to support and defend the rule of the big bourgeoisie ", and the pronouncement that " Fascism and social-democracy are two edges of the same weapon of the dictatorship of large-scale capital ".[3] The equation thus established between social-democracy and Fascism, which, by sharpening communist hostility to the social-democrats, appeared the natural corollary of the turn to the Left, was to prove increasingly popular in communist propaganda in the years to come.[4] On the other hand, the resolution prescribed " a

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 715-751 ; for the passages quoted see pp. 719-720, 745-749 ; the Russian version of the first of these passages (*Pyatyi Vsemirnyi Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), i, 687-688) has many variants from the German.

[2] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 765-767 ; the identity of Freimuth has not been established.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 448-449 ; the resolution on tactics also bracketed Fascism and social-democracy as alternative forms in which the bourgeoisie " strives to mask the capitalist character of its rule and to give it more or less ' popular ' features " (*ibid.* p. 401). The third congress of Profintern immediately afterwards pronounced still more sharply that " Fascism and democracy are two forms of the bourgeois dictatorship " (*Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), p. 144).

[4] Zinoviev in his report to a Leningrad party meeting of July 9, 1924, on the fifth congress of Comintern embroidered the theme that European capitalism was moving between the " two poles " of Fascism and social-democracy : both Fascism and Menshevism were symptoms of capitalism in decline (*Inter-*

striving for a united front of all working masses against Fascism" and "a struggle for a single international front of the peace-loving proletariat under the leadership of the Communist International". The direction of policy was broad enough to cover almost any interpretation which practice might dictate.

The other general political pronouncement of the congress was a manifesto on the tenth anniversary of the outbreak of war in 1914, which was drafted by Trotsky "on instructions from the presidium". Its phraseology leaned uncompromisingly to the Left. The war was attributed not only to the greed of the bourgeoisie, but to the betrayal of the workers by the social-democrats. The social-democrats were responsible no less than the imperialist governments for the "insane" peace treaty. The surge of revolution after the war had been beaten back "by the united efforts of Fascism and social-democracy". The experts' report on reparations — a "monstrous plan to enslave the European working masses by Anglo-Saxon capital with the help of French militarism" — had been approved by the parties of the Second International. The fight against militarism and the danger of war could be waged only by refusing to capitalist states the budgetary means to arm, and by revolutionary activities in armies and munition factories and on the railways. The antagonisms within the capitalist world were not neglected; and the clash of interests between the British Empire and the United States was marked out as the strongest of those antagonisms.[1] But, as befitted the revolutionary tone of the document, the greatest emphasis fell on the revolutionary campaign against the capitalist world. "Social-democracy must be cleared out of the way and the bourgeoisie overthrown; we have to seize power and guide it in socialist channels." The manifesto was adopted unanimously

nationale Presse-Korrespondenz, No. 104, August 11, 1924, p. 1335; the report also appeared in *Pravda*, July 22, 1924). Stalin repeated the diagnosis two months later with added precision: "Fascism is the fighting organization of the bourgeoisie buttressed on the active support of social-democracy. Social-democracy is objectively the moderate wing of Fascism" (Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vi, 282). Trotsky in his speech of July 28, 1924, made a sharper distinction between them: "The defeat of the German revolution opened a new period . . . of rule by the democratic-pacifist elements of bourgeois society. In place of Fascists come pacifists, democrats, Mensheviks, radicals and other Philistine parties" (L. Trotsky, *Europa und Amerika* (1926), p. 16; for this speech see p. 86, note 2 below).

[1] See pp. 469-470 below.

without discussion.[1] It set the tone for many Comintern activities in the latter part of 1924. In a speech to the Military-Scientific Society a few days after the congress ended, Trotsky opened with a long argument designed to show that objective conditions were ripe for revolution in Europe:

> What is lacking is the final factor, the subjective element: consciousness lags behind being.

He repeated his diagnosis of the German failure of 1923:

> Only one thing was then lacking. What was lacking in the communist party was that degree of insight, determination and capacity to fight which is necessary in order to bring about at the right moment an offensive and a victory.[2]

Four years later, in a letter to the sixth congress of Comintern, Trotsky described as "a false evaluation" the view adopted at the fifth congress "that the revolutionary situation was continuing to develop and that decisive battles were going to be waged shortly".[3] But at the time Trotsky himself wittingly or unwittingly contributed to this evaluation.

Neither the agrarian nor the national question was systematically debated at the congress. This was not altogether an accident, since neither fitted comfortably into the pattern of a turn to the Left. The commitment of the Russian party to the "link" with the peasantry, as well as the past pronouncements of Comintern,[4] dictated a policy of support for peasants seeking to acquire land and become peasant-proprietors. Yet this endorsement of the programme of agrarian parties everywhere in eastern Europe implied an attempt to strengthen capitalism rather than to over-

[1] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 619, 871; the text is in *Pyatyi Vsemirnyi Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), ii, 200-201, and in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 89, July 16, 1924, pp. 1118-1119. Profintern, at its immediately following third congress, also issued a proclamation on the tenth anniversary of the world war (*10 Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), pp. 149-151).

[2] L. Trotsky, *Europa und Amerika* (1926), p. 12; the speech, delivered on July 28, 1924, was originally published in *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, August 5, 1924. A few weeks later Trotsky extended the same diagnosis to the situation in 1918–1919 (see p. 568 below).

[3] L. Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin* (N.Y., 1936), p. 250; the Russian original of this letter is in the Trotsky archives, T 3117.

[4] The major pronouncement was a resolution of the second congress of 1920 (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 132-139).

throw it, and seemed inconsistent with any project of an immediate proletarian revolution. At the congress only Varga hinted at this problem ; [1] and, as Zinoviev pointed out, none of the 62 speakers in the general debate gave any serious attention to the agrarian question.[2] Bukharin, in a speech on the draft programme of Comintern,[3] while he insisted on the Marxist principle that large-scale cultivation was more progressive than small-scale cultivation, held that " the social weight of the peasantry " could not be ignored, and that it was urgent to free agriculture from " the yoke of industry " imposed on it by capitalism ; and Thalheimer, replying to Bukharin in the same debate, claimed that the demand for the partition of land among the peasants did not mean that Comintern had fallen into the past heresy of the German revisionists and preferred small-scale cultivation.[4] A single session was given to a debate on the agrarian question, opened by Kolarov, who rather perfunctorily touched on the relation of the united front to agrarian parties. The tactics of the united front from below could be applied to all such parties. But only a few — he instanced the Bulgarian Peasant Union and, more doubtfully, the Croat Republican Peasant Party and the American Farmers' Party — were sufficiently revolutionary for the application of the united front from above, i.e. agreements with the leaders.[5] None of the leading delegates took part in the debate, and no resolution on agrarian policy was proposed or adopted. A routine resolution welcoming the foundation of the Peasant International (Krestintern) exhorted communist parties to maintain continuous contact with organizations affiliated to it in their respective countries, and to " support all movements of working peasants calculated to improve their situation or to lead to a general struggle against the ruling classes ", and suggested that this might call for " the constitution of a worker-peasant bloc for a more or less prolonged period ".[6]

The " national and colonial question " fared somewhat better.

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistichen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 794.
[2] *Ibid.* i, 463 ; Varga also noted this general neglect (*ibid.* ii, 793).
[3] For this discussion see pp. 1005-1006 below.
[4] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.) ii, 528-530, 579-580.
[5] *Ibid.* ii, 786-788.
[6] *Thesen und Resolutionen des V. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1924), pp. 134-136.

Two paragraphs in the general resolution on the report of IKKI registered the importance of the right of self-determination and of support for " the liberation movement *of the colonial peoples and of all peoples of the east* " ; [1] and Manuilsky, at a later stage of the congress, made a special report on the question.[2] He skilfully distinguished between four types of problem. The first arose in the colonial and semi-colonial countries (such as China and Indonesia), where the duty of communist parties was to support national bourgeois parties in revolt against European imperialism : the British and French parties had been sluggish in supporting such movements of revolt. The second arose in Turkey and Egypt, where certain communists had assumed an unjustifiable obligation to support national bourgeois governments. The third type of problem had arisen in Germany and the Balkans, and concerned the old question who was the bearer of the right of self-determination.[3] Here two opposite errors had been committed. In Germany, Thalheimer had identified the cause of communism with that of bourgeois German nationalism in the struggle against the Versailles treaty.[4] In other countries, some communists had failed to recognize at all the validity of the grievances of bourgeois national minorities (e.g. the Slovaks, the Croats, the Slovenes). The fourth type of problem was presented by a national *irredenta* seeking reunion with its compatriots in another state (Germans in Poland or Czechoslovakia, Magyars in Rumania, etc.) : some communists in the countries concerned had been unwilling to recognize the validity of such claims. In the desultory debate which followed, delegates of various countries attempted to defend themselves against Manuilsky's strictures. Among the more vigorous participants in the debate were Roy, who pertinaciously repeated the arguments which he had used at the second congress in 1920, and Nguyen Ai-quoc, the delegate of Indo-China ; and some milder exchanges took place on the problems of nationalism in Turkey and Egypt.[5] Two

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 396.

[2] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 620-637.

[3] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 1, pp. 268-271.

[4] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 159-160.

[5] For these discussions see pp. 618-619 (Roy and Nguyen Ai-quoc), pp. 639-640 (Turkey), and pp. 650-651 (Egypt) below.

American delegates spoke at length on the negro question.[1] Nevertheless the impression prevailed that the leaders of Comintern were for the present concerned in the national question mainly as a means of imposing measures of discipline on recalcitrant groups in European parties. As at the third and fourth congresses, interest in movements outside Europe was still perfunctory.

This impression was confirmed when Manuilsky reported at the last session of the congress on the work of the commission set up to deal with the question.[2] The commission had divided into five sections: the colonial question, the Far East, the Near East, the Balkans and Central Europe, the negro question. But the resolutions said to have been prepared by the sections were not ready, and Manuilsky proposed to remit them to IKKI for eventual approval in the name of the congress.[3] The remainder of the speech was devoted to replies to detailed criticisms. Nothing more was heard of the resolutions of any of the sections, except the one on Central Europe and the Balkans, which was published by the presidium of IKKI some weeks later as a resolution of the congress. It referred to the creation by the treaties of Versailles and Saint-Germain of " new small imperialist states — Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Greece "; and it prescribed for the communist parties of central Europe and the Balkans " in the present pre-revolutionary period " the watchword: " National separation of the oppressed peoples of Poland, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Greece ". It required the communist parties, especially in Poland, Rumania and Hungary to carry on " a determined and energetic struggle against anti-Semitism ". It devoted a section to the " Ukrainian question " in Czechoslovakia (Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia), in Poland (Eastern Galicia) and in Rumania (Bessarabia and Bukovina). The goal was

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 666-669, 704-708.

[2] *Ibid.* ii, 999-1004.

[3] According to the French version of the proceedings (*V^e Congrès de l'Internationale Communiste* (1924), p. 327), Manuilsky presented a draft resolution on Central Europe, and proposed to remit the remaining questions to the enlarged IKKI. He also proposed to set up a commission, to deal with the " controversial questions ", which was presumably to report to IKKI; but this may be a confusion with the commissions set up by IKKI (see p. 90 below).

" the reunion in a Soviet workers' and peasants' republic of the Ukrainian lands now divided between Poland, Czechoslovakia and Rumania " ; and the parties were instructed " to support the consolidation of communist parties and organizations in these regions ".[1] The other aspects of the national question raised at the congress were disposed of by decisions of IKKI to set up a standing commission consisting of members of the British, Belgian and French parties and a representative of IKKI to follow the negro question and " organize propaganda among the negroes ", and a standing commission under the presidency of a member of the American party to deal with the national question and the revolutionary movement in the east.[2]

Behind the ambiguities of the " democratic-pacifist era " and of the tactics of the united front, behind the complexities of Right and ultra-Left deviations, lay the all-important question of the relation of the constituent parties of Comintern to its central organs, and of other parties to the Russian party which provided the hard core of the institution. Formally the Russian party was only one among the member parties ; its recent dissensions could not be a matter of less concern to Comintern than those occurring in other parties. The theory that the world congress of the Communist International was the highest court of appeal in all matters relating to the constituent parties was still upheld. Its application to the Russian party had by this time an air of unreality. Nobody supposed that anything the congress might do or say could affect the outcome of the split between the Russian leaders. But the majority group was anxious to obtain the formal endorsement of communist parties throughout the world for their action against Trotsky ; and the degree of readiness shown by leaders of other parties to accord this endorsement was treated by the central organization of Comintern as the acid test of their loyalty. When Trotsky appeared on the tribune at the opening session of the congress he was greeted with loud

[1] *Thesen und Resolutionen des V. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1924), pp. 129-131 ; for the sections of the resolution relating to particular parties see pp. 178, 198, 216, 227 below.

[2] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1030-1031.

applause, and was elected, together with Zinoviev, Bukharin and Stalin, to the presidium of the congress.[1] But, when the proceedings began, discipline prevailed. The leader of each important party in turn joined in the chorus of denunciation, and did his best to convict the opposition in his own party of Trotskyism; and none of those who spoke for the different party oppositions — not even Radek — dared to defend Trotsky. Rykov, after reporting to the congress on the economic situation in the Soviet Union, ended with a brief and comparatively unprovocative account of the "party discussion", and dwelt on the unanimity with which the opposition had been condemned at the thirteenth party congress.[2] Any danger that the verdict would be challenged at the congress of Comintern was removed by Trotsky's refusal of an invitation to state his case at the congress;[3] his only part in the proceedings was his authorship of the non-controversial manifesto of the congress on the tenth anniversary of the war. A commission was set up to discuss the affairs of the Russian party;[4] but, if it met, no mention was ever made of its activities. In the plenary session a resolution was adopted without discussion which, after eulogizing the achievements of the Russian party, noted that it had already condemned the opposition in its ranks as a product of "petty bourgeois influence"; that the representatives of the opposition had declined an invitation to state their case at the Comintern congress; and that the Russian opposition had received support from exponents of "a Right (opportunist) deviation" in other countries. The congress formally endorsed the resolutions of the Russian party conference and congress, and condemned the opposition platform.[5] Trotsky was not named in the resolution. When the elections to IKKI took place, in accordance with the new rule established by the fourth congress,[6] at the end of the congress, Trotsky and Radek were both dropped from the list. It was the first formal penalization of Trotsky, who was still a member of the central committee of the Russian party and of its Politburo; Radek had already lost his seat on the party

[1] *Ibid.* i, 2. [2] *Ibid.* ii, 561-569.

[3] See Vol. 2, p. 6.

[4] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1061.

[5] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 162-163.

[6] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 449.

central committee at the thirteenth party congress two months earlier. Stalin, who before the fifth congress had played no part in Comintern affairs, was elected to IKKI.[1] He had not spoken in the plenary sessions of the congress, being content to leave the limelight to Zinoviev. But he had been active in the commissions,[2] and had circulated freely among the delegates, making a good impression by his abstention from rhetoric and by his patient, matter-of-fact attention to everything that was going on.[3] Manuilsky came out clearly at the congress as a Stalin man, referring to " the Lenin-Stalin line " in the national question — a striking innovation in the summer of 1924.[4]

The controversy with Trotsky was also reflected in a new slogan which was introduced at the fifth congress into the armoury of Comintern : the demand for the " Bolshevization " of communist parties. In condemning Trotsky, the Russian leaders had proclaimed him to be no true Bolshevik and dwelt on the Bolshevism of the party. The cure for other parties threatened by heresies and deviations was an infusion of Bolshevism : they must follow the example of the Russian party and " Bolshevize " themselves. The word made its appearance in an article by Treint in the French party journal in March 1924 :

> Our motto is clear : no de-Bolshevization of the Russian party, but on the contrary Bolshevization of all the communist parties.[5]

Guralsky in the German party simultaneously broached the same theme in almost identical language ;[6] and in the same month a resolution of the Polish party conference spoke of " the task of the Bolshevization of the party ".[7] At the fifth congress of Comintern it was once more Treint who launched the phrase in the context of what had happened in the Russian party :

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1021.

[2] For the Polish commission see pp. 196-197 below.

[3] R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), pp. 404-405.

[4] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 622, 1002 ; Nguyen Ai-quoc (see p. 88 above) also quoted Stalin on the national question (*ibid.* ii, 686).

[5] *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 13, March 28, 1924, p. 322.

[6] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 241.

[7] *KPP : Uchwały i Resolucje*, ii (1955), 39.

> We are decisively *against* a de-Bolshevization of the Russian party, *for* the Bolshevization of the brother parties, *for* the creation of a Bolshevik world party, which the Communist International, inspired by the spirit of Lenin, must become.[1]

Thereafter almost every orator who sought to demonstrate his hostility to the Right and to Trotskyism spoke of the Bolshevization of his party.[2] Zinoviev embroidered the phrase in the peroration of his concluding speech ;[3] and the resolution on the report of IKKI called for " the Bolshevization of communist parties, faithfully following Lenin's injunctions, and *at the same time taking into account the concrete situation in each country* ". The resolution on tactics went into the question more thoroughly. It proclaimed " the Bolshevization of the parties and the formation of a single world party " as " the chief task of the contemporary period ". Bolshevization was not to be interpreted as " a mechanical transference of the whole experience of the Bolshevik party in Russia to all other parties ". But certain qualities and obligations were declared essential to a Bolshevik party. It was to be a mass party ; it was to be capable of " strategic manœuvres against the enemy " — its tactics were not to be " dogmatic " or " sectarian " ; it was to be a Marxist, revolutionary party, seeking the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie ; it was to be a centralized, monolithic party, not tolerating fractions ; and it was to engage in regular propaganda and organizational work in bourgeois armies. Briefly, Bolshevization meant " the transmission to our sections of everything that was and is international, and of general significance, in Russian Bolshevism " ; and another resolution of the congress on Comintern and party propaganda emphasized that Bolshevization could be achieved only by " implanting Marxism-Leninism in the consciousness of communist parties and of their members ".[4] The slogan of the Bolshevization

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 139.

[2] See, for instance, *ibid.* i, 209 (Ruth Fischer), 217 (Hrsel), 351 (Kuusinen), 363 (Hansen).

[3] *Ibid.* i, 508.

[4] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 411-412, 429. That the slogan was still new and unfamiliar is shown by the use in the Russian version of two alternative forms of the word (*Bol'shevizatsiya* and *Obol'shevichenie ; Bol'shevizirovanie* also occurred in an article in *Pravda*, January 20, 1925) ; later *Bol'shevizatsiya* became the accepted form.

of the parties had emerged almost automatically from the debates of the fifth congress. It was afterwards hailed as the keynote of the congress; the fifth congress, wrote Manuilsky, " put on the agenda the Bolshevization of the European communist parties ".[1]

It was therefore natural that the fifth congress should have devoted a large share of its attention to the affairs of individual parties. The four parties named in the general resolution of the fifth congress on tactics were the British, French, German and Czechoslovak parties: these were the most important. But, in addition to these, the congress passed specific resolutions on the Polish, Italian, Swedish, Norwegian and Icelandic parties; and commissions of the congress also considered the affairs of the Bulgarian, Austrian and Japanese parties. The demand for strict discipline and unquestioning acceptance of the decisions of the central authority was uniform; for all parties equally the watchword of Bolshevization was paramount. But other injunctions reflected the ambiguities and uncertainties of the general line and the different situations in the countries concerned. A study of the policy of Comintern at this time requires some examination of the policies enjoined on the principal parties and of the tactics adopted in dealing with them.

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 2 (39), 1925, p. 5.

CHAPTER 28

COMINTERN AND THE PARTIES (1)

(*a*) *The German Communist Party* (*KPD*)

THE complexities of Comintern policy in the first months of 1924 were primarily a product of the German situation; it was in the KPD that they first became apparent, and worked themselves out to their logical conclusion. The German failure of October 1923 proved the general need for a leadership in foreign communist parties more amenable to Russian example and guidance. It also proved the particular need, nowhere more obvious than in Germany, for a leadership imbued with the true principles of the Left. In the winter of 1923–1924 the emergence of Maslow, Ruth Fischer and Thälmann as the new leaders of the KPD seemed to meet all requirements, personal as well as ideological. Stalin, with his usual astuteness in such matters, saw a possibility of turning the situation to his advantage. He had hitherto played no personal part in the direction of Comintern, except for a brief restraining intervention in German affairs in July 1923.[1] He was perhaps more acutely aware than Zinoviev of the bleakness of the revolutionary prospect for the near future, in Germany and elsewhere. But he had no independent policy; and, though anxious to enhance his own power, he was not yet acting on lines explicitly inimical to Zinoviev. He now attempted a direct, though tentative, approach to the German Left. In December 1923 he made a strong intervention on behalf of Maslow in the Comintern commission which was investigating Maslow's record, and secured his tacit vindication.[2] At the turn of the year, Stalin had several private discussions with Maslow,

[1] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 187.

[2] R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), pp. 363-364, claims to have been present at the meeting; according to this source, Stalin had replaced Unshlikht as president of the commission. For the commission

or with Maslow and Ruth Fischer, who came to Moscow for the session of the presidium of IKKI, on the affairs of the German party; a final meeting took place on January 8, 1924, in his private apartment. Stalin discoursed on the theme of Bolshevik discipline; his interlocutors had the impression that he was offering them an alliance for the purpose of strengthening his own position in Comintern and of establishing their leadership in the KPD.[1] How Maslow reacted at the time to these overtures is not clear. But they had no sequel. Maslow, rehabilitated in Moscow, returned to Berlin; and Stalin, like most of the other Bolshevik leaders, afterwards exhibited a strong distrust of Maslow.

After this abortive excursion into the politics of the KPD, the cautious Stalin was once more content to let Zinoviev make the running. The KPD re-acquired legal status in Germany on March 1, 1924, though this did not guarantee the leaders against arrest on specific charges, and party activities continued to have a semi-clandestine character. At the beginning of April it was to hold a party congress in Frankfurt, which would confirm the new leadership in power and lay down lines for the future; for relations between Comintern and the KPD this would evidently be a crucial occasion.[2] In February or March 1924, Manuilsky was sent to Germany as delegate of Comintern. The choice was not altogether happy. Manuilsky was one of the few Russian officials in Comintern who had lived in western Europe. But his experience had been in France rather than in Germany; and the cynical, worldly tone which he affected jarred on the earnest and theoretically minded German communists.[3] He does not even

see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 208-209. Trotsky confirms that it was Stalin who, in agreement with Zinoviev, proposed to "take Maslow off the shelf and send him back to Germany"; Bukharin mildly objected, but was over-ruled (*Byulleten' Oppozitsii* (Paris), No. 19, March 1931, p. 15, where, however, the incident is misdated 1925).

[1] The meetings are described in R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), pp. 365-369; Ruth Fischer refers to "handwritten letters" sent to her and Maslow shortly afterwards by both Stalin and Zinoviev (*ibid.* pp. 399-400), but says nothing specific about their contents.

[2] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 242.

[3] R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 394; Trotsky later wrote of Manuilsky's "intellectual versatility", and described his gifts as being literary rather than theoretical or political (Trotsky archives, T 3129, pp. 5-6).

appear to have been fluent in German.[1] What was still more significant was that Manuilsky, who came to Germany as Zinoviev's spokesman, was soon to be recognized as an out-and-out Stalin man:[2] the clash of loyalties was not yet visible.

Whatever Manuilsky may have reported to Moscow, Zinoviev was now obliged to take a stand. In January 1924, when IKKI had discussed the lessons of the October fiasco, the Centre and Left groups in the KPD had combined, with Zinoviev's active encouragement, to bring about Brandler's downfall. Anxious above all to avoid an acute split in the KPD, Comintern had favoured the Centre; and this preference had been reflected in the composition of the party Zentrale elected in February 1924, which consisted of five representatives of the Centre and two of the Left.[3] But it soon transpired that the Centre lacked substance and support in the party, and that, once the Right had been overthrown, the effective control of the party had passed to the Left. This could not be undone.[4] It remained to square the circle by both recognizing the Left and placing it under restraint.

The gravest problem confronting the new leadership was that of the trade unions. The founding congress of the KPD in 1919,

[1] His speeches at the Frankfurt congress were translated by other delegates (*Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitags der KPD* (1924), pp. 206, 248); this was unusual at a time when most of the proceedings of Comintern, even in Moscow, were conducted in German.

[2] See p. 92 above.

[3] For these events see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 236-242.

[4] At a later stage the view was fostered that Comintern had been from the first opposed to the new leadership in the KPD. At the fourteenth party congress in Moscow in December 1925, Zinoviev gave the impression that Comintern and the Politburo, which "knew quite well the weak sides of Maslow and Ruth Fischer", had acquiesced in, rather than encouraged, the transfer of the leadership to them, "because there was no other way out", and Manuilsky claimed that "at the Frankfurt party congress we were against 'the transfer of power' to Maslow and Ruth Fischer, but two-thirds of the party congress were against us" (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), pp. 661, 697); a resolution of IKKI of April 1926 recorded that Comintern "was obliged . . . to agree to the transfer of leadership to the Left, in spite of the fact that it knew that Maslow, Ruth Fischer and Scholem were capable of committing the greatest ultra-Left errors", and that at the Frankfurt congress it "struggled against the mistakes of the said group" (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 545). These verdicts smack of hindsight. The new leadership was accepted as an inevitable corollary of the defeat of the Right and the collapse of the Centre. By March 1924 Zinoviev, and perhaps still more Manuilsky, had begun to have doubts of its reliability; but the most that could be done or attempted at Frankfurt was to moderate the sweeping character of its victory.

swayed by Rosa Luxemburg's view of the dying away of the trade unions under socialism,[1] had declared unanimously for a boycott of the existing trade unions, and had been divided only on the question whether it was necessary to create Red unions; and the reversal of the boycott two years later left the party a prey to divided counsels. The overwhelming majority of German trade unions were united in the General German Trade Union Federation (ADGB) which supported the SPD, and were affiliated to Amsterdam. Independent communist trade unions were at first encouraged, and later condemned, by the KPD; but, where such unions did not exist, German communist workers often preferred to abandon the trade union movement altogether rather than remain in unions controlled by the SPD. The acute economic stresses set up in Germany by the Ruhr crisis and its aftermath led to a rapid depletion of trade union ranks, and lowered the prestige of the unions.[2] The failure of the communist rising in October 1923 created an intense bitterness in the KPD, and especially among the leaders of the Left who now obtained control of the party, against the SPD and against the trade unions supporting it, which at the moment of crisis were felt to have deserted the cause of the workers for that of the capitalists. After October 1923, when many workers left the KPD, there was also an exodus of loyal communists from the trade unions, so that the strength of the KPD in the unions was doubly depleted. A conference of opposition trade unionists, of whom two-thirds were communists, met illegally at Erfurt on November 25, 1923 (for reasons of secrecy Weimar had been named as the place of meeting, and the conference was referred to as the "Weimar conference"). By a narrow majority it decided not to break immediately with the ADGB, as the extremists demanded, but to send a delegation to it demanding the convocation of a trade union congress.[3]

[1] For this view, which also had early Russian adherents, see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 2, p. 103, note 1; Vol. 3, p. 104.

[2] The membership of unions belonging to the ADGB stood at almost 7½ millions in the first quarter of 1923, and fell continuously till the end of 1924, when it was just below 4 millions: the largest single drop was in the last quarter of 1923 (*Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 3 (62), March 1926, p. 170).

[3] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitags der KPD* (1924), p. 64/2; *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 12 (35), December 1923, pp. 944-

A particular complication arose from the fact that Brandler, the now deposed and discredited leader, had been an active trade unionist and a firm supporter of a united front in the trade unions. It was difficult to dissociate this policy from Brandler's views and Brandler's supporters; and the old anti-union tradition was deeply rooted in the party Left. Maslow, then detained in Moscow, and manœuvring to secure for himself and Ruth Fischer the leadership of the KPD, conducted an active campaign against the German trade unions, and won the support of Tomsky, who, at the Petrograd provincial trade union congress on December 17, 1923, impulsively came out with a sweeping attack on the German trade unions:

> On this question I am speaking my own opinion. This is not an official opinion. I think that those comrades who say "Save the German trade unions!" are wrong. I think that what is needed is not save them, but to say to them: "Rest in peace: you lived in shame, and you have died in shame" (Hear, hear! Applause). Neither the communists nor anyone else can at this time restore the German trade union movement.[1]

In Germany the executive of the ADGB replied to the proceedings of the "Weimar conference" by a mass expulsion of communists from the unions and by voting, on January 17, 1924, to exclude from the unions affiliated to it anyone conducting communist propaganda,[2] so that a total breach between the KPD and the majority unions, with the tacit approval of the new KPD leaders, seemed imminent.

These developments, which seriously weakened communist influence in the German trade union movement as a whole, proved unwelcome in Moscow, where Tomsky's freak opinion enjoyed little support. The session of the presidium of IKKI in January 1924, which diagnosed the lessons of the October

946. The real meeting-place was divulged in *Mezhdunarodnoe Rabochee Dvizhenie*, Nos. 1-2, January 7, 1924, p. 5.

[1] M. Tomsky, *Stat'i i Rechi*, iv (1928), 109. This was probably the meeting referred to in R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 370, to which Stalin is said to have sent Lozovsky to controvert Maslow's views; Tomsky's remark was later quoted by a German trade union delegate at the fifth congress of Comintern (*Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 862).

[2] Quoted in *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitages der KPD* (1924), p. 64/8.

defeat,[1] devoted a special resolution to work in the trade unions. In a statement doubtless intended to be read in the hortatory rather than the indicative mood, it announced that the KPD " continues to struggle with complete determination against the slogan of an exodus from the trade unions ". The " policy of splitting " was again fathered on the social-democrats, and trade union unity declared to be especially important " in the period of the offensive of capital and of the growth of reaction ". Those excluded from reformist unions, or not members of any union, must be organized in whatever form proved most convenient in order to carry on the policy of opposition to leaders " who are in fact allies of the bourgeoisie and of Fascism ", and the tactics of the united front from below. The slogan " Save the trade unions " was declared to be false, but only in the sense that in order to " save " the unions, it was necessary to transform them. Preference was given to the factory councils as a form of organization of the dissidents : it should be possible " to make the factory councils the starting-points and support-points for the whole work of the party among the masses, especially against the reformist trade union leaders ".[2] The most significant point of the resolution was the absence of any mention of Profintern or of the formation of independent Red trade unions : this was clearly to be discouraged. These exhortations had, however, little effect. Owing to " a false interpretation and execution of the resolution ", German communist workers continued the attempt to organize themselves outside the existing unions.[3] What a later party report called " the anti-trade union fever " [4] continued to rage : and voluntary resignations, as well as expulsions, of party members from the unions were a regular occurrence.[5]

Preparations were now in train for the ninth congress of the KPD which was to meet in Frankfurt early in April 1924. The

[1] For this session see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 236-241.

[2] *Die Lehren der Deutschen Ereignisse* (1924), pp. 110-113.

[3] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitags der KPD* (1924), p. 64/17.

[4] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), p. 24.

[5] O. K. Flechtheim, *Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik* (Offenbach, 1948), p. 115. In March 1924 it was estimated that not more than 20 or 30 per cent

anxiety felt in Moscow about the turn of events in the KPD was revealed by no less than three communications addressed to it by Zinoviev in the name of IKKI. The first was a letter of March 24, 1924, on the trade union question. It appears to have been inspired by a visit to Moscow of two members of the Centre group in the KPD, who besought Zinoviev not to declare against " the ultra-Lefts " in this question, since " the German workers were all in favour of coming out of the trade unions " and nothing could be done to prevent it.[1] Zinoviev none the less decided to proceed. The letter recited the January resolution of IKKI, attacked the policy of " parallel trade unions ", once more invoked Lenin's dictum of 1920 in favour of remaining in the unions, and insisted on " trade union unity " in the sense of the participation of communists in the social-democratic unions.[2] The second letter, dated March 26, 1924, and devoted to general party policy, was designed to breathe a note of caution both about immediate prospects and about the credentials of the new leaders :

> It is quite possible and very probable that the decisive struggles may set in considerably sooner than many now believe. . . . But another prospect is also not excluded, namely that events may develop rather more slowly.

The conclusion followed :

> The victory of the Left wing of the KPD has an immense significance for the destiny of the German revolution. This victory undoubtedly represents a reflexion of deep-seated processes which are developing in the working class or at any rate in its vanguard. . . . But woe on us, if we should

of party members were then enrolled in the unions as against 70 per cent a year earlier (*Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitags der KPD* (1924), p. 332); a year later it was calculated that, whereas before October 1923, 6000 communist fractions existed in various organizations, only 300 now remained (*Der Organisatorische Aufbau der Kommunistischen Partei* (1925), p. 63), the difference being due to the exodus from the trade unions.

[1] This was related by Zinoviev three months later at the fifth congress of Comintern (*Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 52); Lozovsky said on the same occasion that a majority of KPD members of trade unions went to the Frankfurt congress desiring to make a complete break (*ibid.* ii, 862-863).

[2] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitags der KPD* (1924), pp. 71-77; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 48, April 24, 1924, pp. 565-568 (where it is referred to as the " second letter ").

over-estimate these symptoms, if we should regard the wish as something already achieved, if we should suppose that the majority of the German proletariat is already prepared, under the leadership of the Left wing of the KPD, to throw itself into the battle. That is not yet the case.[1]

Even this qualified testimonial to the Left was modified by the third document addressed by Zinoviev to the congress. This bore the same date, March 26, 1924, and was also at first described as a " letter " ; but Manuilsky, at the congress, apologetically called it not a letter but an " article ", and explained that it had been intended only for confidential communication to delegates.[2] The article was a critique of the Left wing. Zinoviev discerned within the Left two time-honoured " tendencies ". One represented " devoted *workers* ", who were the best hope of German communism, the other " a group of leaders from the intelligentsia ", some of whom were " unripe elements, without Marxist training, without serious revolutionary traditions ". Zinoviev noted no less than five recent utterances by members of the KPD Left or ultra-Left as incompatible with the Comintern line. Scholem had misrepresented Comintern policy about the united front ; Rosenberg had misleadingly invoked the authority of Rosa Luxemburg ; an unnamed " ' Left ' comrade " [3] had declared that united front tactics served only the narrow interests of Soviet Russia ; another Leftist of Russian origin, Samosch by name, had proposed a resolution which amounted to a liquidation of the whole practice of Comintern ; and — this was " particularly sad " — Ruth Fischer had proposed a resolution, which was adopted on March 2, 1924, at a meeting of the Rhineland-Westphalia party district, and which " altogether rejects the tactics of the united front ". The article continued with a dissertation on major items of party policy — the united front, the trade union question (on which, as Zinoviev gloomily admitted, " the majority of our comrades from the Centre group share . . . the errors of the Left ") and party organization — and concluded by invoking

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 48, April 24, 1924, pp. 562-565 ; *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitags der KPD* (1924), pp. 65-71.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 207.

[3] He is identified as Boris (for whom see pp. 1005-1006 below) in R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 395.

two alternative prospects. The first was that the new leadership would learn from the errors of its predecessor, abandon factional struggles within the party, and observe " real, serious proletarian discipline *vis-à-vis* Comintern ". The other was that it would become intoxicated with success, pursue the factional struggle against the Right, and bring the KPD into conflict with Comintern. The article ended on this warning note.[1]

After these unpromising preliminaries, the congress assembled in Frankfurt on April 7, 1924. In view of the fear of police action against the leaders, the congress met in secret, changing its meeting-place daily.[2] In the records, German delegates were identified only by constituency or party function: Brandler was tactfully described as the " spokesman of the Brandler group ". Manuilsky and Lozovsky appeared as Iwanov and Schwartz respectively. They had an uphill task, and the memory rankled. Two years later Bukharin recalled Ruth Fischer's " outright unwillingness to discuss with us the question of the tactics of the united front and the trade union question ".[3] Maslow put forward a set of theses on tactics and prospects which incurred the bitter censure of the delegates from Moscow as an attempt to " de-Bolshevize " Comintern. The theses were said to exaggerate the significance of the Ruhr crisis as a turning-point in world politics, to ignore the rôle of Soviet Russia as " the most important driving force of world revolution ", and to accuse Comintern of sacrificing principles to tactics in the question of the united front. Their adoption by the congress would constitute

[1] It was published after the congress in *Pravda*, April 19, 1924, and in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 48, April 24, 1924, pp. 559-562; it also appeared in the KPD journal with a tart rejoinder from the Politburo of the KPD, which suggested that a struggle against the party leadership was being waged under the guise of an attack on the ultra-Left (*Die Internationale*, vii, No. 6, April 28, 1924, pp. 239-250), and was eventually included in the proceedings of the congress (*Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitags der KPD* (1924), pp. 78-85). Lozovsky later accused the Left of having " for a whole week not wanted to publish this letter " (*Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 936); but the implied censure is difficult to reconcile with Manuilsky's statement (see p. 102 above) that it was not intended for publication.

[2] O. K. Flechtheim, *Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik* (Offenbach, 1948), p. 104.

[3] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 207.

" a declaration of war on Comintern ".[1] At the congress, Ruth Fischer spoke at length for the Left, Guralsky *alias* Kleine (who had long served as Comintern agent with the KPD, but whose reputation had been somewhat tarnished by the October defeat [2]) for the Centre, and Brandler for the rump of the Right. But it was clear that the Left had the support of an overwhelming majority of the delegates. Manuilsky was on the defensive. He began by saying that IKKI " will not tolerate an assault on the authority of the new leadership ", and was in general careful not to provoke the Left.[3] But, now that the Right had disappeared (Brandler did not win a single vote at the congress), it was no longer feasible to maintain the authority of the Centre by holding the Left in check. The Left, though described as the " opposition ", was in a clear majority ; and its exultant mood was sourly commented on by Lozovsky :

> At the congress I have had the impression that some delegates imagine that the communist movement in Germany begins with this congress. . . . A fairly large number of comrades at this congress represent the opinion that to be Left means to change our tactics radically and in all circumstances, independently of whether this appears necessary or not, or whether this will further the interests of the development of the party or not.[4]

The clash could not be avoided. Rival resolutions on future party tactics were submitted by the Centre and the Left. They differed substantially in their formulation of united front tactics ; and the Left resolution described the existence of the Centre group as " unjustified ".[5] When the vote was taken the resolution of the Left received 92 votes, that of the Centre 34.[6]

[1] The statement of the IKKI delegation was published 18 months later in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 148, October 31, 1925, pp. 2212-2213 ; the theses do not appear to have been published.

[2] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 211, 219.

[3] For the speeches see *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitags der KPD* (1924), pp. 206-207 (Manuilsky), pp. 220-248 (Fischer, Guralsky and Brandler), pp. 248-254 (Manuilsky).

[4] *Ibid.* p. 331.

[5] For the resolution of the Left, see *ibid.* pp. 112-121 (and, as adopted by the congress, pp. 370-380) ; for that of the Centre, pp. 154-165. A draft resolution was also submitted unofficially by the delegates of IKKI ; but little notice seems to have been taken of it, and it was first published 18 months later (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 148, October 31, 1925, p. 2212).

[6] *Ibid.* pp. 340-341.

The other major debate of the congress was on the vexed trade union question. Here the only new feature was a long report prepared by the trade union department of the party secretariat, and accompanied by an unusual letter addressed to the congress by a number of officials of the department, pleading for " a struggle in all circumstances and by all means for the unity of the trade union movement " and for the slogan " Into the unions ".[1] Lozovsky, intervening in a confused debate, denounced the " sentimental " approach of those who said : " I cannot remain in a trade union run by the reformists ". Any communist party had the right to say to its members : " You will work in the reformist, you in the Christian, you in the Fascist, you in the Hirsch-Duncker [i.e. company] trade unions ". Lozovsky, turning his shafts directly against the Left, concluded that " our ' Left ' comrades are very temperamental ".[2] After what was evidently vigorous discussion behind the scenes, the Centre, now clearly in a minority, withdrew its draft resolution on the trade unions, and the draft of the Left was referred back to the drafting commission to serve as the basis for a final text.[3] The resolution as eventually approved was less uncompromising in tone than Lozovsky's speech, but covered the main points.

> *The party congress declares with all emphasis* [ran the key paragraph] *that a party member may not of his own volition and without permission of the party authorities leave a trade union. On the contrary, every member of the party must also be a member of a trade union, in order to bring the organized workers into action against the Amsterdamers and lead them to a revolutionary policy.*

[1] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitags der KPD* (1924), pp. 61-64/18, 97-103. The department was already in existence in February 1922 (*Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 4 (15), April 1–22, pp. 315-316). It was criticized for being divorced from the political work of the party ; after the Frankfurt congress its staff was reduced, and it was combined with the cooperative and land departments (*Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), pp. 59-60). According to R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), pp. 441-442, it included several Russian experts from Profintern, and had a divided allegiance, reporting to Lozovsky as well as to the Zentrale of the KPD.

[2] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitags der KPD* (1924), pp. 332-334.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 345. The Centre and Left drafts do not appear to have been published ; mention is also made of a draft of the Brandler group (*ibid.* p. 324).

To leave a trade union was described as " desertion in battle " : only where the Amsterdamers had already brought about a complete split, so that the full responsibility would rest on them, could the formation of separate trade unions be undertaken.[1] After the congress, an " action committee of revolutionary trade unionists " was created — evidently on the model of the NMM in Great Britain — to organize the activities of the communist minorities in the unions.[2] The patched-up truce at the Frankfurt congress did not last ; and the sequel showed that party opinion and practice continued to diverge very widely from the decisions of the congress. As a party spokesman later admitted, " the ideological conversion of the party " proceeded slowly, and many members still hoped that the decisions would be changed at the forthcoming congresses of Comintern and Profintern in Moscow — at least to the extent of encouraging those who left, or were expelled from, the Amsterdam unions to create " their own revolutionary trade unions ".[3] An energetic party member named Schuhmacher, who was engaged, in defiance of the party policy, in organizing a number of such unions in the Berlin region, enjoyed considerable popularity and support.

The strongest feeling was aroused over the elections at the end of the congress. Here, in what were evidently hard-fought battles behind the scenes, Manuilsky intervened, as Radek had intervened at the previous congress of the KPD in 1923,[4] to prevent the total exclusion of the defeated minority from party offices. This was the traditional attitude of Comintern towards differences in foreign parties not involving a breach of Comintern discipline ; and it had been reinforced by the appeal to the victorious Left in Zinoviev's pre-congress article not to pursue the factional struggle against the Right. But the Left treated the intervention as an act of hostility, and suspected, perhaps not without some foundation, that Comintern favoured a lack of

[1] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitags der KPD* (1924), pp. 389-393.

[2] *L'Activité de l'ISR : Rapport pour le III^e Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), p. 309 ; R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 395, claims that, in spite of its " relatively small membership ", it proved " of immense help " to the party.

[3] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), p. 383.

[4] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 158, note 5.

homogeneity in party organs which could make them more easily amenable to discipline from Moscow. For a supplementary list of party candidates for the Reichstag, in addition to those already adopted locally, the Left put forward 24 names, only two of them not belonging to the Left. When the closure was imposed against the 34 votes of the Centre and the list approved, the minority appealed to the Comintern delegation " to bring about a modification of this decision " — a petition which apparently fell on deaf ears. Then came the election to the party Zentrale. The Left proposed a list of 15, of whom 11 were from the Left and 4 from the Centre. This was already a compromise. Lozovsky now took the floor (Manuilsky remained in the background) to propose an alternative scheme. The Zentrale would comprise 19 members, including Klara Zetkin, a figure of international importance, and another member of the Right,[1] and 10 candidates who would be drawn exclusively from workers. These proposals were supported by the Centre, but rejected with indignation by a spokesman of the Left, who pointed out that, in the January session of IKKI in Moscow, Zetkin had voted with Radek in support of Brandler. A formal motion of the Centre was then rejected by 92 votes to 32, and the Left list adopted. The new KPD leadership had placed itself in open opposition to the central authority of Comintern.[2]

The consequences of this muted clash did not develop immediately. For the moment the Left leaders seemed to be riding the crest of the wave. By way of celebrating the emergence of the party from the shadow of illegality, it was decided to create a legal para-military organization, the Roter Frontkämpferbund, a counterpart of the SPD Reichsbanner and the Right-wing Stahlhelm, with the popular demagogue Thälmann as its leader.[3]

[1] According to R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 399, Manuilsky wanted to have either Brandler or Thalheimer or Walcher (a trade unionist) in the Zentrale.

[2] For these debates see *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitags der KPD* (1924), pp. 348-357.

[3] For a tendentious account of the demonstrations of May 1, 1924, with " bombs and pistols " in order to " make it quite Russian ", see W. Zeutschel, *Im Dienst der Kommunistischen Terror-Organisation* (1931), pp. 83-86; a few months later the German Communist Youth League followed suit by creating a similar organization, the Roter Jungsturm (*Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), p. 83). A remark of Ruth Fischer that " the

Thälmann was a Hamburg dock worker, whose gifts were those of an orator and agitator, not of a political theorist or a maker of policy. He developed a considerable personal vanity, and was ill at ease with intellectual leaders like Ruth Fischer and Maslow, personifying the distinction drawn by Zinoviev in his article before the congress [1] between "devoted *workers*" and "leaders from the intelligentsia". He already enjoyed sufficient popularity to be placed by the Frankfurt congress at the head of the list of party candidates for the Reichstag.[2] Two significant events occurred in May 1924. The first was the arrest of Maslow in Berlin on a charge of high treason.[3] Though he was able, while in prison awaiting trial, to write freely on party and political affairs and to communicate with other members of the party, his rôle as an active leader was at an end. His last pronouncement before his arrest was an article published in *Pravda* on May 25, 1924, in which he restated the case of the party Left against Brandler's retreat in October 1923:

> The communist party had on its side a majority of the population; it could and should have fought, and had all the chances of success.[4]

The other event was the holding, on May 4, 1924, of elections to the Reichstag — the first since June 1920. At the previous elections the still weak and unorganized KPD had secured only two seats: the SPD held 180. But the defection of the USPD majority to the KPD later in 1920 had altered the balance of forces within the Left; and the SPD had also lost ground to the Centre Party and to the Right. In the elections of May 1924 the SPD obtained only 99 seats, and the KPD 62 (representing

masses are running away from day-to-day work and playing at soldiers" was afterwards quoted against her in the "open letter" of August 1925 (see p. 329, note 3 below), and repeated by Zinoviev in his report of October 10, 1925 to the Russian party central committee (see p. 330, note 4 below).

[1] See p. 102 above.

[2] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des IX. Parteitags der KPD* (1924), p. 350.

[3] R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), pp. 400-401, suggests that the arrest took place at the instigation of the Soviet authorities: such collusion is highly unlikely at this period.

[4] It appeared over the initials A. M.; Trotsky in his memorandum of 1928 on the draft programme of Comintern somewhat disingenuously quoted it as a pronouncement of *Pravda* (L. Trotsky, *The Third International after Lenin* (N.Y. 1936), p. 93; the original of this document is in the Trotsky archives, T 3119).

3,500,000 votes). Though the previous figures were not strictly comparable, this was a striking victory for the KPD and for its new leadership, which had been unexpectedly successful, after the Frankfurt congress, in breaking through the bitterness of old divisions in the party and presenting a united front to the German electorate and to Comintern. What had happened at Frankfurt cannot have been altogether agreeable either to Zinoviev or to Stalin. But for the moment nothing could be done to reverse or modify it. Strengthened by their victory over the Right and Centre groups in the party, and by the good showing of the party in the Reichstag elections, the Left leaders of the KPD could approach the fifth congress of Comintern with confidence, in the well-grounded belief that it would applaud their policies and their leadership.

Two developments on the eve of the congress gave passing cause for anxiety: both, though independent of each other, involved attacks on the Comintern line from positions further to the Left. The first was the growing dissatisfaction in the KPD with the policy of remaining in the "reformist" trade unions. The interval between the Frankfurt congress of the KPD and the fifth congress of Comintern in Moscow had been marked by the much-applauded initiative of the British representatives in the central committee of IFTU, who, at its session in Vienna at the beginning of June 1924, had demanded and secured a continuation of negotiations with the Russian trade unions.[1] This led to further complications in the KPD, most of whose leading members, far from endorsing the British move, took a negative view of any approach by the Russian trade unions to IFTU, as constituting treason to Profintern. Immediately after the debate in IFTU, Lozovsky published in *Pravda* an article entitled *The Russian Unions at the Congress of the Amsterdam International* which rehearsed at length the official arguments for the unity campaign; and this article appeared in a German translation, with some supplementary comments, both in *Inprekorr* and in the *Rote Fahne*.[2] Though it said nothing that was not now familiar

[1] See pp. 551-552 below.

[2] *Pravda*, June 7, 8, 1924; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 69, June 17, 1924, pp. 849-850; No. 72, June 20, 1924, pp. 891-893; No. 75, June 25, 1924, pp. 921-922; *Die Rote Fahne*, June 24, 25, 27, 1924.

doctrine in Moscow, it excited dissent and indignation on the Left wing of the KPD, where it was regarded as a deliberate provocation. Ruth Fischer, already under fire from the Left in her own party, described it in her speech at the fifth congress of Comintern later in the same month as a plea for reconciliation with the " yellow " Amsterdam International. The Berlin party organization formally protested against the " liquidationist tendencies " of the article.[1] The attitude of the German Left to the trade union question at this time was as suspect in Moscow as that of the British Left was popular.

The second development of ill omen for the KPD leaders was the extension of an ultra-Left campaign in the KPD against the policies of Comintern and especially against the tactics of the united front. Neither Boris nor Samosch, against whom Zinoviev had uttered warnings in his article for the Frankfurt congress,[2] carried much weight. But the movement was not confined to a few isolated party intellectuals. The German youth league, at its congress in Leipzig on May 10–11, 1924, rejected by a majority the united front clauses of a resolution proposed by the delegation of KIM from Moscow.[3] At the beginning of June 1924 Korsch published in the party theoretical journal an article which, under the guise of an orthodox attack from the Left on Brandler and the Right, by implication denounced the whole united front policy and the current Comintern line as a surrender of the Marxist dialectic of revolution to pragmatism and expediency.[4] This powerful article seems to have caused some stir in Moscow. Its long-term implications were significant. In Moscow, it opened the eyes of the leaders to the fact that the greater danger to their authority in the KPD might come from the Left rather than from the Right. In Germany, it cut the ground from beneath the Left leaders of the KPD by challenging their credentials to be regarded as Leftists at all, and thus paved the way for the eventual disintegration of the Left. But these consequences still lay in the future. For the moment, the new threat obliged Comintern to lend even stronger support to the existing leaders of the KPD ; eventually

[1] For this incident see *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 923-924, 928.

[2] See p. 102 above.

[3] See p. 990 below.

[4] *Die Internationale*, vii, No. 10-11, June 2, 1924, pp. 320-327.

it would bind those leaders even more firmly to the Comintern line. In a manifesto on the eve of the congress, Ruth Fischer concentrated mainly on the danger of " Right deviations ", and issued a warning against such deviations in the British, French, American and Czechoslovak parties. Her defence of united front tactics was noticeably lukewarm ; and the slogan of the workers' government was justified as a convenient synonym " in some countries " for the dictatorship of the proletariat.[1]

The delegation of the KPD to the fifth congress of Comintern was 40 strong instead of the usual 20. A majority of the delegates were said to be " workers from the bench " ;[2] but all sections of party opinion, from Brandler to Korsch, were represented. It was perhaps more than a coincidence that Zinoviev's first mention of the KPD in his opening report should have been an attack on the ultra-Left, both in its anti-trade union manifestation (where he professed to believe that " this danger no longer exists in the German party ") and in the persons of Korsch and Boris. But he soon returned to the more familiar theme of " Radek and Brandler " and the sins of the Right. Since a large part of the debate on the united front revolved round the KPD, it no longer seemed necessary to keep " the German question " as a separate item on the agenda. But the proposal to remove it was accompanied by another warning against the ultra-Left :

> If many people thought that the executive would without more ado hand over the German party to the " ultra-Lefts ", they will now see that they were wrong. The executive did not do it, and never will do it. We shall struggle for Leninism in the KPD.[3]

The passage was noteworthy both for its incautious reference to the power of IKKI to " hand over " a foreign communist party to this or that group, and for the clear notice served by it that the present leadership of the KPD would receive support so long as

[1] *Ibid.* vii, No. 12, June 15, 1924, pp. 383-386 ; this was, however, followed in the same issue (*ibid.* pp. 395-401) by another assault from a writer of the ultra-Left, who argued that the slogan of a workers' government, which, *pace* Zinoviev, could only mean a coalition between communist and other Left parties, had become impossible for Germany.

[2] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), p. 24.

[3] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.) i, 52-53, 66-67, 97-98.

it fought effectively against the ultra-Left as well as against the Right. Throughout the congress Ruth Fischer was indefatigable. She vigorously supported Zinoviev in the general debate on the issues of the united front and the workers' government; as president of the political commission she did yeoman service in repelling the ultra-Left onslaughts of Bordiga; and she manœuvred delicately on the trade union question, making it uncomfortably clear that nobody in the KPD delegation really liked the final resolution.[1] Thälmann joined in the debate against Bordiga, and at the subsequent session of IKKI acted as *rapporteur* on the Swedish question, leading the attack on Hoeglund.[2] He evidently attracted favourable notice at headquarters as a rising star; it is possible that the Russian leaders may already have come to look on him as potentially a more promising mouthpiece of Comintern policy in the KPD than the mercurial Ruth Fischer.[3]

In spite of Zinoviev's anxieties about the ultra-Left, the decisions of the fifth congress of Comintern were confidently interpreted in the KPD as a turn towards the Left. The claim seemed all the more genuine in that the debates of the congress on the united front and the workers' government had been largely inspired by the German experience of the previous autumn, which had ended in the overthrow of Brandler and the installation of Left leaders in his place. A statement issued by the German delegation at the end of the congress dwelt on its significance as a final judgment on the Right; it noted that the congress had also condemned the " ultra-Leftists ", but added that " their rôle and importance can in no circumstances be compared with those of the Rightists ".[4] A session of the central committee of KPD in Berlin on July 19-20, 1924, enthusiastically acclaimed the work of the congress with strong emphasis on its slant to the Left. The resolution adopted at the end of the session was evidently designed to play down the slogans of the united front

[1] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 920-925; for the resolution see pp. 557-558 below.

[2] See p. 235 below.

[3] According to the account in R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 405, friction between Thälmann and herself developed during the fifth congress, at which " everyone in the Russian party . . . flattered Thälmann "; but some details in this account seem to anticipate later developments.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 84, July 9, 1924, p. 1061.

and the workers' government, describing " the democratic-pacifist phase " as a new manœuvre of the bourgeoisie to " put the masses of the workers to sleep and deter them from the revolutionary struggle " : the proletarian revolution was firmly restored to its place of honour.[1] A pamphlet containing this resolution together with the major resolution of the fifth congress on tactics was provided with an introduction which spoke of " the sharp course set by the fifth congress against all Right tendencies ", and grouped together Brandler, Klara Zetkin, Radek, Trotsky, Souvarine and Hoeglund as Rightists.[2]

Only the embarrassments of the trade union question cast a temporary shadow over the triumphs of the Left-wing leadership of the KPD in the summer of 1924. The turn to the Left proclaimed at the fifth congress should logically have meant a turning away from cooperation with the social-democratic trade unions — the now discredited policy of Brandler and of the Right. In fact, it meant nothing of the kind. The resolution of the central committee of the KPD, in recording its formal approval of the decisions of the fifth congress of Comintern, expressed grave misgivings about what had been done in the trade union question :

> The committee . . . emphasizes the serious doubts and warnings uttered by the German delegation against the proposed step in the question of international unity with the Amsterdamers (arrangement of a unity congress by negotiations between leaders). The demands of the English trade union Left, which spring from honest pressure by English workers to bring about a unification of the trade unions on an international scale, can be accepted by Profintern only on the hypothesis that the revolutionary trade union programme of Profintern is taken as the basis of the unified organization.
>
> . . . The campaign for international unity of the trade unions will lead to a strengthening of the communist ranks and to the defeat of their enemies only if it is conceived as a *mass mobilization* for a revolutionary programme.[3]

[1] *Die Taktik der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1924), p. 46 ; for an account of the session see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 97, July 29, 1924, pp. 1257-1258.

[2] *Die Taktik der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1924), p. 3.

[3] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 94, July 23, 1924, pp. 1211-1212 ; when this resolution was passed, the third congress of Profintern was still in session (see pp. 560-566 below), but added nothing of substance to the proceedings of Comintern.

This was far from the Comintern line. The assumption that unity could be realized only on the basis of the programme of Profintern was an assertion of intransigence which provoked an angry retort in an article by Lozovsky: "So to understand the resolutions of Profintern and Comintern is not to understand them at all".[1] Maslow carried on the controversy in an article published as an expression of his personal view in the party journal. He accused Lozovsky of basing his policy on two false premises: belief in the cessation of the capitalist offensive against the proletariat, and belief in the growth of a Left wing in IFTU. The unity of the trade unions was a good slogan in itself, but should not be interpreted as a surrender of Profintern to the Amsterdam International.[2]

But this intransigent position could not be maintained. On August 17, 1924, Ruth Fischer and Heckert, now converted to the official line or submitting to party discipline, piloted a resolution on the trade unions through a largely attended party conference in Berlin. The resolution, which was adopted with only one dissentient vote, skirted delicately round the question of relations to IFTU, but unequivocally proclaimed the duty of party members to enter the "free" trade unions, even though these were controlled by the SPD and affiliated to IFTU.[3] At the same time a conference of trade union officials of the German Communist Youth League issued an instruction to its members to enrol in the "free" unions before October 1, 1924, and to form fractions in them, and the central committee of the league set a highly optimistic target of 100,000 for young communist membership of trade unions.[4] But bitterness continued to be widely felt

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 105, August 12, 1924, pp. 1350-1352.

[2] *Die Internationale*, vii, No. 15, August 1, 1924, pp. 488-494; this view was partially retracted in an article in the following issue (*ibid.* vii, No. 16, August 15, 1924, pp. 501-510).

[3] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 111, August 22, 1924, pp. 1433-1434; *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 11 (46), November 1924, pp. 176-177; *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), p. 61. Two months later the central committee of the KPD took a solemn decision that, after February 1, 1925, only members of recognized trade unions could be members of the party (*ibid.* p. 27); but this, too, remained a dead letter.

[4] *Die Jugend-Internationale*, No. 1, September 1924, pp. 25-26; for the letter of the central committee see *Geschichte der Arbeiterjugendbewegung in Deutschland: Eine Auswahl von Materialen* (1956), pp. 152-154.

in the KPD on this issue: many party members objected to the "suddenness" with which they had been confronted with this issue at the fifth congress, and complained of "the English orientation" of Comintern which meant a turning away from the German revolution.[1] Schuhmacher continued to agitate against the decisions of the Moscow congresses and of the Berlin party conference, and compelled the party to expel him together with his supporters, apparently to the number of "several hundred".[2] But this blood-letting did not alter the hostility to the trade unions still widely felt in the ranks of the KPD. The Communist Youth League, which in this as in other issues leaned towards the Left, was especially hostile; and a number of members of the Hamburg branch were expelled for refusing to submit to discipline on this question.[3] For a moment, however, party strife died down; a session of the central committee of the KPD in October 1924 was largely devoted to demonstrations of loyalty to Moscow. It passed a resolution of protest against the Dawes plan, congratulated IKKI on its victory in Sweden, and expressed suitable anxiety over the trend in the Czechoslovak Communist Party.[4] In November and December 1924 the KPD hastened to play its full part in the campaign against Trotsky provoked by *Lessons of October*.[5] The theme that Brandler and the Right wing of the KPD were German Trotskyites figured prominently in the indictment.

The Dawes plan had been approved by the Reichstag in August 1924 by a majority of 248 to 175. Elections to the Reichstag, which were expected to turn largely on this issue, were fixed for December 7, 1924. At the end of October rumours began to circulate of an intention of the government to place all com-

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 115, September 2, 1924, pp. 1497-1499; this was an article by Maslow, who had moved still further towards recognition of the cause of national and international unity in the trade union movement, and was now on the defensive.

[2] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), p. 25. Schumacher had evidently made himself impossible, and even the ultra-Left wing of the KPD approved his expulsion; see an article by Rosenberg in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 127, September 30, 1924, pp. 1694-1695.

[3] *Die Jugend-Internationale*, No. 6, February 1925, p. 162.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 139, October 24, 1924, pp. 1846-1847; for events in the Czechoslovak and Swedish parties see pp. 179-181 and 236 below.

[5] See Vol. 2, pp. 25-26.

munist deputies, officials and editors under arrest for the period of the election campaign: this produced an appropriate protest from IKKI.[1] A curious document of this campaign was a letter addressed on November 16, 1924, by Stalin, as general secretary of the Russian party, to the central committee of the KPD, which was widely publicized in the Russian and German party press. It commiserated with the KPD on being assailed by " the united forces of international capital, of the national bourgeoisie, of the *Junker* class and of social-democracy ", and declared that the German proletariat would not " speak its last word " at the coming Reichstag elections. But it touched on none of the current controversies either in the German or in the Russian party.[2] The outlook in Germany was bleak. A week before the elections Ruth Fischer in a pessimistic article admitted that the KPD campaign of protest against the Dawes plan " for the moment simply goes ' against the stream ' ".[3] A few days later, a letter from Zinoviev to the central committee of the KPD breathed the same note of anxiety about the results of the elections, and deprecated any fresh outbreak of discord within the party: the dissent which he explicitly envisaged was from Brandler and Thalheimer, whose renewed attack on Maslow and Ruth Fischer had recently been published in *Pravda*.[4] The apprehensions about the elections were justified. The KPD lost almost a million of the votes gained in the elections of May 1924, while the vote of the SPD increased by more than a million and a quarter. The number of KPD deputies in the Reichstag fell from 62 to 45. This defeat, which was attributed to the impression made by the Dawes plan and the conciliatory attitude of the western Powers, had no immediate

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 140, October 28, 1924, pp. 1851-1852.

[2] *Pravda*, November 18, 1924; *Izvestiya Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)*, No. 8 (13), November 24, 1924, pp. 1-2; *Die Rote Fahne*, November 27, 1924. It apparently provoked a protest from the German embassy in Moscow (G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), p. 157); it is not reprinted in Stalin's collected works, but is recorded in the biographical chronicle attached to them (*Sochineniya*, vi, 426), where it is said to have been written on the instructions of the party central committee.

[3] *Die Internationale*, vii, No. 23-24, December 1, 1924, p. 676.

[4] *Pravda*, December 9, 1924. For the statement of Brandler and Thalheimer in *Pravda*, November 29, 1924, see Vol. 2, pp. 25-26; a reply from Geschke attacking Brandler and Thalheimer as " German Trotskyites " and " *émigrés* from Germany " appeared in *Pravda*, December 7, 1924.

consequences for the party. But it naturally impaired confidence in the party leaders, both among the rank and file and in Moscow.

(*b*) *The British Communist Party* (*CPGB*)

Next to the massive KPD, the small CPGB was the party which loomed largest in the preoccupations of Comintern in the first months of 1924. The importance of the CPGB could be attributed principally to the recognition of the arrival of " an era of democratic pacifism ", of which the coming to power of the British Labour government was the most conspicuous symptom, and to the campaign for trade union unity, of which the British Left was the main champion outside the Soviet Union. For a short time the CPGB began to figure, somewhat to its own surprise, as the model communist party. But, while the KPD served as the prototype of other leading European communist parties, and revealed problems already familiar in other countries, the CPGB almost from the first exhibited peculiar features of its own. These idiosyncrasies related both to its organization and to its policy.

In the first place, the CPGB had never been prone in anything like the same degree to the fissiparous tendencies which had marked the growth of other European parties. Unlike them, it had been created not through a split, but by an amalgamation ; and, as it developed, though individuals left the party, the party as such never split. It was also noteworthy, and at first sight surprising, that the CPGB showed itself more directly amenable than the major European parties to the directions of Moscow. In October 1922 a reorganization of the party on lines laid down by Comintern had been effected, with some individual secessions, but once again without a split.[1] In some respects, this apparent docility and acceptance of discipline could be seen as the reverse side of the lack of mass support, the failure to appeal to the masses of workers, which the reorganization of 1922 had been designed to remedy. Yet this inherent weakness of the party was in part offset by the unique position of the trade unions. In Great Britain the trade unions had been the pioneers of the workers' movement, and formed its hard core. They enjoyed greater

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 422.

influence and prestige than any political organ of the movement, being in fact the dominant power within the Labour Party; and the trade unions had shown more practical sympathy with the Russian revolution than any other important British organization. Hence the prestige of the trade unions was high throughout the British political Left, and not least in the CPGB. In 1922 the British bureau of Profintern, now established in London, displayed considerable activity, especially among the miners, 180,000 adherents of Profintern being claimed in Welsh and English coalfields and 150,000 in Fife.[1] A monthly journal *All Power* began to appear in January 1922 as the organ of the British bureau of Profintern. All in all, the CPGB seemed in Moscow a puzzling and elusive phenomenon; and Zinoviev, at the fourth congress of Comintern in November 1922, deploring the slow advance of the movement in Great Britain, concluded:

> We must begin to study England; we do not yet know the causes of this slow development.[2]

By the time the fourth congress of Comintern, followed immediately by the second of Profintern, met in Moscow, it was clear that a frontal attack in the name of Profintern would fail to break the serried ranks of British trade unionism or shake the loyalty of the overwhelming majority of the unions to IFTU. On the other hand, from the moment when the united front had been proclaimed, the prospects of winning trade union support for Moscow on the plane of policy, though not of organization, and thus gradually infiltrating the existing trade union structure, were more promising in Great Britain than in any other country. The spread of unemployment in the first post-war economic crisis increased the possibility of organizing quasi-revolutionary opposition groups within, or on the fringes of, the trade union movement. The annual trade union congress of 1922 in Southport was the first occasion on which communist delegates attempted for the first time to "work in an organized manner inside the congress".[3] This was the starting-point of what came

[1] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 12 (23), December 1922, pp. 876-879; the last figure is certainly exaggerated.

[2] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 456.

[3] Pollitt's subsequent statement on this point may be taken as authoritative: "The first attempt to work in an organized manner inside the congress

to be known as the National Minority Movement (NMM). The second congress of Profintern in November 1922 criticized the lack of organization in the NMM, which at that time consisted of scattered and uncoordinated groups, and declared in its resolution that what was required was a "national conference of the opposition" to bring about the union of all opposition groups under "a single centre".[1] The British bureau of Profintern, refurbished by the election of five new members, was instructed to give effect to this decision.[2]

Simultaneously with the rise of the NMM within the trade unions, the National Unemployed Workers Movement (NUWM), also inspired and manned primarily by members of the CPGB, began an attempt to organize the unemployed.[3] The need for such an organization was widely felt; and rapid progress was achieved by the NUWM, whose representatives were received in January 1923 by the general council of TUC for negotiations on the unemployment problem.[4] A proposal of the NUWM for affiliation to the TUC was rejected; but agreement was reached on the establishment of a joint advisory council consisting of three representatives of the general council and three of the NUWM, and on joint local action by the two organizations on behalf of the unemployed.[5] Several joint meetings were held during 1924. This toleration was due to two special causes. The TUC felt itself vulnerable in the eyes of the workers on the crucial issue of unemployment, and was anxious not to expose itself to the charge of neglecting any opportunity for action; and the NUWM, working exclusively among the unemployed, offered no challenge to trade union leadership within its own sphere. Profintern read this success as a propitious omen for communist

was made at Southport last year. Our tiny communist fraction did not do badly at all. . . . At the Plymouth congress [1923] our numbers were slightly increased, and there was a greater appreciation of the importance of our work. . . . But we have to do much better next year" (*Communist Review*, iv, No. 6 (October 1923), p. 260).

[1] *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), p. 99.

[2] *L'Activité de l'ISR : Rapport pour le III^e Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), p. 406.

[3] Both the NMM and the NUWM were mentioned at the fourth congress of Comintern as "forms" of party work in Great Britain (see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 406).

[4] For an account of this meeting see W. Hannington, *Unemployed Struggles* (1936), pp. 120-121.

[5] *TUC : Fifty-fifth Annual Report* (1923), pp. 184, 284.

activity in the trade union movement, and sought to galvanize its supporters into fresh efforts. On February 27, 1923, the executive bureau of Profintern heard a report on the British bureau, which claimed to have been active among the unemployed, among the transport workers and in the ports. A month later, Borodin, just returned from Great Britain, reported on the successes of Profintern, especially among the Welsh and Scottish miners. On April 15, 1923, the executive bureau decided to set up a commission consisting of Lozovsky, Borodin and a representative of Comintern, to examine relations between the CPGB and the British bureau of Profintern, as well as the tactics of the CPGB in the trade unions and methods of organization of the minority movement. It was decided to invite a group of British party trade union delegates to attend the forthcoming session of the central council of Profintern in Moscow.[1]

The invitation from Profintern coincided with a decision of Comintern to invite a large delegation of the CPGB to attend the session of the enlarged IKKI which was to meet in June 1923, just before the session of the central council of Profintern. Early in June no less than ten members of the central committee of the CPGB, including Pollitt and Gallacher, arrived in Moscow: Pollitt for some unexplained reason returned immediately to London and reappeared only with the Profintern delegation at the end of the month.[2] The session of IKKI concerned itself largely with German affairs,[3] and little attention was paid in public to the problems of the CPGB. But behind the scenes what was afterwards called a "British conference" took place, and the tactics and organization of the party were critically examined. In the course of the discussions Pollitt and Palme Dutt, who had been responsible, together with Borodin, for the original report on which the reorganization of October 1922 had been based, were clearly shown to possess the confidence of Comintern, and were in this sense marked out as the future

[1] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, Nos. 5-6 (28-29), May–June 1923, p. 576.

[2] The participants are named, and the proceedings briefly described, in the report of the central committee of the CPGB to the sixth party congress in the following year (*Speeches and Documents : Sixth Conference of the CPGB* (1924), pp. 50-51).

[3] For this session see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 177-181.

leaders of the party.[1] But here, too, procedure in the CPGB differed from that of other parties. No formal change was made. The prominent figures of the first years — MacManus, Bell, Murphy, Gallacher — were not censured, and did not disappear from the scene: they continued to serve the party in conspicuous and important positions. Bell, MacManus, Dutt, Gallacher and Pollitt were (apparently on the spot, since almost the whole central committee was in Moscow) elected to the Politburo, to which Horner was coopted on behalf of the British bureau of Profintern and Hannington on behalf of the NUWM. MacManus, who had resided in Moscow for a year as British delegate to IKKI, was replaced by Stewart. Before his departure MacManus was invited to join Bukharin and Zinoviev on a holiday in the Caucasus to discuss " differences in the British party ".[2]

When the trade union delegates, accompanied by Pollitt, arrived in Moscow on June 30, 1923, the session of the central council of Profintern was approaching the end; and a formal resolution was passed empowering the executive bureau to conduct discussions with the British delegates after the session.[3] In the second " British conference " which ensued (it is not clear from the records how far it overlapped the first), the British delegates had to face complaints of failure to make any substantial progress in matters of organization. The general sense of the indictment may be gleaned from the report of the central council of Profintern to its congress in the following year, which enumerated the shortcomings of the British bureau: failure to build up any national organization of the " revolutionary minorities " in the trade unions; failure even to make any statistical survey of these minorities; friction and lack of contact with the trade union section of the CPGB.[4] At the session of the central council which preceded the arrival of the British delegates Lozovsky had proposed to abolish the British bureau of Profintern, which he described as an " absolutely unsuitable " form of organization,

[1] See the revealing remarks in J. T. Murphy, *New Horizons* (1941), pp. 196-197; Pollitt and Dutt came out top of the poll in the elections to the executive committee at the party congress of October 1922.

[2] For this invitation see *Communist Papers*, Cmd. 2682 (1926), p. 48.

[3] *Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrats der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (1923), pp. 71-72; this report appeared as a supplement to *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 7 (30), July 1923.

[4] *L'Activité de l'ISR : Rapport pour le III^e Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), p. 246.

and argued that " the opposition itself must in the course of its development create a centre ".[1] This suggestion was not, however, immediately taken up. At a meeting on July 7, 1923, Pollitt admitted that the revolutionary minorities in the trade unions still lacked " firm organizational forms ", but thought that interest in Profintern was growing. At further meetings on July 9 and 10, the slogan " Back into the trade unions " was agreed on with the British delegates, and the composition of the British bureau of Profintern, which was now to consist of eight members, was changed, Gallacher and Campbell being appointed joint secretaries. Gallacher, presumably as the member of the delegation with the longest trade union experience, was made responsible for " directing the work in connexion with the minority movement ". A special commission was appointed to draw up " general directions for the revolutionary opposition ".[2] What was presumably the substance of the instructions given to the British bureau was contained in the report of the following year already quoted :

> The essential aim of the British bureau is not to organize independent revolutionary trade unions, or to split revolutionary elements away from the existing organizations affiliated to the TUC, and through it to the Amsterdam International, but to convert the revolutionary minority within each industry into a revolutionary majority. Thus the British bureau is not an organization of trade unions, but only of revolutionary minorities. In cases where whole regions detach themselves from the existing unions, the bureau takes all measures to liquidate these secessions and to persuade the seceding elements to re-enter the mass organizations.[3]

The frank rejection of the policy of splitting and the restriction of the functions of Profintern in Great Britain to the fostering of

[1] *Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrats der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (1923), p. 65.

[2] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 8 (31), August 1923, pp. 758-759 (" June 7 " is a misprint for " July 7 ", and in *L'Activité de l'ISR : Rapport pour le III^e Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), p. 246, " August 10 " is presumably an error for " July 10 "); *Speeches and Documents : Sixth Conference of the CPGB* (1924), p. 51. W. Gallacher, *The Rolling of the Thunder* (1947), pp. 39-40, gives a brief and vague account of the discussions.

[3] *L'Activité de l'ISR : Rapport pour le III^e Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), pp. 406-407; the last sentence referred to the formation in January 1923 of a rebel miners' union in Fifeshire with local CPGB support.

minorities in existing unions completed the transition from the initial stage of Profintern policy — the building up of rival organizations to the Amsterdam International and the Amsterdam unions — to the second stage of penetration into the Amsterdam unions through the development within them of revolutionary minorities.

After the return of the British delegates to London, a meeting of the new Profintern bureau was held to ginger up the minority movement and prepare for action at the forthcoming trade union congress, which was to meet at Plymouth on September 3, 1923. At this point, however, a serious error was made, which bore witness either to lack of understanding at Profintern headquarters or lack of experience in the British group. The bureau proposed in the name of Profintern to send a delegation to the congress — a proposal which was promptly rebuffed with the comment that it would be better to hear " the Russian point of view . . . from whatever representatives the Russian trade union movement sends, and not from those who speak for them in London ".[1] It was a hint that resentment against Profintern as a rival trade union organization was not dead. The NUWM fared better. The congress approved the action taken to set up a joint advisory council, and received a NUWM delegation, which pleaded for " more close contact " between the movement and the TUC. Hannington's speech urging support for the unemployed was politely, even enthusiastically, applauded. But the congress, while passing a general resolution on unemployment, significantly refused to accept an amendment calling for " the closest co-operation between the general council and the national unemployed workers' organization ".[2] On the whole, the Plymouth congress of the TUC was a disappointment for the Left; and Profintern in Moscow drew the conclusion that the minority had come to it with insufficient preparation.[3] Failure to proceed with the organization of the NMM brought criticism on the head of Gallacher, who, according to his own account, " had quite a bit of trouble with one of my trade union pals in Moscow ". When a large public meeting was finally convened in London to launch

[1] *TUC : Fifty-fifth Annual Report* (1923), p. 298.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 184, 284, 343-350.
[3] *L'Activité de l'ISR : Rapport pour le III^e Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), p. 246.

the NMM, it was announced that Pollitt was to take over from Gallacher and become its secretary.[1] Pollitt, an active trade unionist, was both an abler organizer than Gallacher and more skilful in interpreting the behests of Moscow. His feet were by this time firmly set on the ladder of party promotion.

The maintenance of solidarity in the leadership of the CPGB, which distinguished it so markedly from other communist parties, reflected the traditional empiricism of British politics. The leading British communists were indifferent to the issues of doctrine and theory which divided the leaders of the German, French, Italian and other parties, and had little or no understanding of what these issues involved: Palme Dutt was in these early years almost the only exception to this rule, and the only leader who, for this reason, found it easy to speak the current language of Comintern. In the winter of 1923–1924, when the KPD was in the throes of its post-October crisis and the first campaign against Trotsky was raging in Moscow, the CPGB remained calm and unruffled. It was the one major European communist party to feel itself unconcerned in the Trotsky controversy and to have no inkling of what was on foot. In February 1924, a month after Trotsky's formal condemnation by the thirteenth party conference in Moscow, Bell, who was a member of the political bureau of the CPGB and the editor of its one theoretical journal, wrote in its pages:

> It was especially *Trotsky* who brought this discussion to the front, which is proof enough for all who have the slightest acquaintance with the Russian party that this "crisis" did not represent any danger for the unity of the party.[2]

Delegates at the sixth party congress which met in May 1924 found no reason to mention Trotskyism or the opposition in the Russian party. When the controversy provoked by *Lessons of October* broke out in the autumn of 1924, the CPGB dutifully made its inconspicuous contribution to the avalanche of denunciations of Trotskyism by foreign communist parties;[3] and six

[1] W. Gallacher, *The Rolling of the Thunder* (1947), pp. 46-49.

[2] *Communist Review*, iv, No. 10 (February 1924), p. 435; by way of contrast, the issue of the KPD journal *Die Internationale* for January 1924 (vii, No. 1) was devoted entirely to documents and articles relating to the Trotsky dispute.

[3] *Izvestiya*, December 3, 1924.

months later, when Bell introduced a resolution on Trotskyism to the seventh congress of the CPGB, he had come to realize " how serious the position was for the party as a result of the discussions raised by comrade Trotsky ".[1] But this was routine business. While sympathy for Trotsky was certainly not lacking among party members,[2] no Trotskyite group arose to threaten party unity, and the significance of the dispute was never seriously discussed. It appeared to have no practical meaning or relevance for the British party.

The other important singularity of the CPGB was its relation to the issue of the united front. The decision that the CPGB should seek affiliation to the British Labour Party was taken, with Lenin's backing, at the second congress of Comintern in 1920 and endorsed by a majority vote at the founding congress of CPGB in August of that year.[3] United front tactics may therefore be said to have been applied by the British party even before they had been generalized by decision of Comintern in December 1921.[4] Every year since 1920 an application for affiliation had been regularly made to the Labour Party, and every year it had been regularly rejected. Yet, notwithstanding these repeated snubs, united front tactics had been the key to the not inconsiderable influence wielded by the CPGB among the workers in this period. The impression made on the local organizations and on the rank and file of the Labour Party was far stronger than on its leaders; in the general election of November 1922 one communist was returned to parliament as an official Labour Party candidate, and another with tacit Labour support. Throughout this period the number of communist sympathizers in the ranks of the Labour Party far exceeded the puny number of communist party members;[5] the main strength of the CPGB lay in its

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 116-118.

[2] As late as April 1925, when making a declaration against Trotskyism on behalf of the CPGB at the session of the enlarged IKKI, Bell described Trotsky as " a very good comrade " and " a wonderful leader, a wonderful champion of the revolution ", and admitted that " in England and everywhere in the west, and especially among the intellectuals of our parties, there is a feeling that he ought to have special privileges, a certain right of criticism " (*Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 398).

[3] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 196, 226.

[4] See *ibid.* Vol. 3, pp. 406-407.

[5] At the seventh congress of CPGB in 1925 membership had " just topped the 5000 mark ". The turn-over was, however, large: a delegate observed

power to win and influence such sympathizers. The trade unions were a particularly fruitful field for these tactics; and organizations like the NUWM and NMM, which aimed at cooperation between party and non-party workers under party leadership and inspiration, were the most effective vehicles of communist propaganda and policy. The CPGB was the only party which applied united front tactics fully and whole-heartedly and made sense of the policy of working for party ends within reformist trade unions. At a time when errors of united front tactics were being denounced as the root of all evil in the KPD, and when a mass exodus of German communists from the trade unions was in progress, the united front remained the firm foundation of all the effective work of the British party.

The issue was brought to a head by the sweeping Labour gains in the general election of December 1923 (though these involved the elimination of the two communist MPs), by the formation of a Labour government under Ramsay MacDonald in the following month, and by the *de jure* recognition of the Soviet Government which was its first act of foreign policy. Even the trade union movement appeared to move towards the Left. The three members of the general council of the TUC who resigned to become members of the Labour government — Gosling, Thomas and Margaret Bondfield — were all moderates whose departure helped to strengthen the Left wing of the council. These events focussed the limelight on the British Left, and on the rôle of the CPGB, which in spite of its numerical weakness was now seen to occupy a position of cardinal importance in communist strategy. The acclaim with which the advent of the Labour government was at first hailed in the Moscow press

" that over a period of five years the membership has remained practically the same numerically, but that of that numerical strength the percentage of members who were in the party five years ago is very small " (*CPGB : Report of the Seventh National Congress* (1925), pp. 35, 39). Zinoviev later consoled himself with the reflexion that " the tradition of mass parties does not exist in England " (*Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 94), and that small parties were characteristic of British politics : " the party of MacDonald " had numbered only 20,000 in 1924 (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (*B*) (1926), p. 655). Zinoviev had stumbled on the correct observation that the strength of British parties resided not in their registered membership, but in their appeal to the floating voter ; but this was never fully understood in Comintern, and no conclusions were drawn from it.

was echoed in the journal of the CPGB:

> When the workers are in action it is the duty of all to help in the common fight. . . . Our guiding principle must always be *the workers against the capitalists.* On that principle we are with the Labour Party in taking office.[1]

But this apparently consistent pursuit by the CPGB of the united front tactics inculcated by Comintern for the past two years soon led to difficulties, especially at a moment when the KPD was being loudly denounced for its equivocal application of the united front. An IKKI resolution of February 6, 1924, put the matter in a very different light, and provided an antidote to the enthusiasm created by the official recognition of the Soviet Government. The Labour government, declared the resolution, though it " reflects the awakening to class consciousness of more and more of the working masses ", was " not a government of the proletarian class war ", but was seeking to bolster up the bourgeois state by reforms. Its accession to power had the advantage that " if, as is to be expected, the Labour Party government betrays the interests of the proletariat ", it would complete the disillusionment of the masses with capitalist democracy. Meanwhile the CPGB, while proposing to the " ' Left ' political organizations of the Labour Party " common demonstrations and other forms of common action, must adhere to its " historical rôle ".[2] Thus admonished, the CPGB quickly found occasion to retrace its steps. Far from displaying any inclination to adopt revolutionary ends or revolutionary means, the Labour government showed itself a model of bourgeois conformity, partly because it was a minority government dependent on Liberal support, but partly also because the moderates rather than the " militants " were predominant in its ranks. It was recalled that Lenin, at the time of the foundation of Comintern in 1919, had replied to an attack by MacDonald on the new institution in terms of biting contempt.[3] An incautious expression by MacDonald of loyalty to the crown now provoked the comment in the journal of the CPGB that it would be " intolerable " if the Labour ministers thought themselves " responsible

[1] *Communist Review*, iv, No. 10 (February 1924), pp. 423-424.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 21, February 16, 1924, pp. 235-236.

[3] Lenin, *Sochineniya*, xxiv, 382-399.

only to King George, i.e. to 'the country', to the ruling capitalist class", rather than to the workers;[1] and the succeeding issue spoke of "disillusionment rapidly coming over large masses of workers".[2] The "colonial" policy of the government also came under fire. *Pravda* of March 1, 1924, carried on its front page some caustic comments over the initials N. B. (Bukharin was editor of *Pravda*) on MacDonald's attitude to political prisoners in India. "The conciliationist government of MacDonald", wrote Trotsky at this time, "reveals its bankruptcy to an even greater extent than could have been expected."[3]

By the time the sixth congress of the CPGB (the first since October 1922) met in May 1924, the atmosphere both in Moscow and in London was one of chilly suspicion of the Labour government — more particularly since the first signs of intransigence had begun to appear in the Anglo-Soviet treaty negotiations.[4] Gallacher, from the chair, propounded what was now the official version of the united front:

> The Communist Party does not attack the Labour Party. The Communist Party strives all the time to make the Labour Party a useful organ of the workers in the struggle against capitalism, but we do attack the leadership of the Labour Party, and will go on attacking it until the Labour movement has forced it either to prosecute a working class policy or to make way for a leadership that will do so.[5]

Bell voiced "our firm opinion" that "the policy of the government is that of treason and treachery to the organized working class in this country".[6] Petrovsky, the Comintern delegate to the congress, who worked in Great Britain under the name of Bennett,[7] made a still more outspoken attack on the Labour

[1] *Communist Review*, iv, No. 11 (March 1924), p. 467.
[2] *Ibid.* iv, No. 12, April 1924, p. 507.
[3] L. Trotsky, *Pyat' Let Kominterna* (1924), p. xviii.
[4] For these see pp. 23-24 above.
[5] *Speeches and Documents: Sixth Conference of the CPGB* (1924), p. 11.
[6] *Ibid.* p. 4.
[7] According to Trotsky, Petrovsky was "a Bundist-Menshevik of the American, i.e. the worst, school", who had returned to Russia from the United States in 1917, become a Bolshevik and been employed for a time in military work: his main characteristic was an "organic opportunism" (Trotsky archives, T 3129, p. 12). He doubtless owed his position with the CPGB to his knowledge of English.

government, whose members he ironically dubbed "*socialist ministers of His Majesty the King; ministers of labour who brag of the glory of the empire; ministers who preach confidence between labour and capital*".[1] This was, however, not incompatible with the course laid down in the resolution on relations with the Labour Party:

> The Communist Party considers it its duty to enter into the ranks of the Labour Party in order to strengthen the militant and fighting elements of the labour movement and to unmask the treacherous elements in the Labour Party and to free the workers from their influence. The Communist Party does not aim at a united front with MacDonald, Snowden, Thomas, etc., but at the organization of the mass front of the workers.[2]

This was the classic version of the "united front from below", renouncing all attempt at agreement with leaders in favour of a policy of splitting the party against its unworthy leaders. But how far this really represented the mood of the rank and file is not certain. Ruth Fischer, who, fresh from the campaign against Brandlerism in the KPD, attended the congress of the CPGB as fraternal delegate, detected in its proceedings "the loyal attitude of a Left wing within the Labour Party itself rather than the attitude of a communist party really fighting against the government", and thought that the attempt to secure election of communist candidates to parliament with open or tacit Labour support was necessarily compromising.[3]

Disillusionment with the Labour government and with the Labour Party leaders was, however, compensated by progressive belief in the rising strength of the Left in the trade unions. The election of Cook in April 1924 as secretary of the Miners' Federation meant that a key position had passed into the hands of the Left. Fresh optimism was engendered by what appeared to be increasing sympathy in the trade unions for the Soviet cause. On May 14, 1924, the general council of the TUC entertained

[1] The speech was published in full in *Communist Review*, v, No. 2 (June 1924), pp. 42-56, where it was described as "Comintern's Message to the CPGB"; the name of the speaker was not given.

[2] *Speeches and Documents: Sixth Conference of the CPGB* (1924), pp. 32-33.

[3] *Die Internationale*, vii, Nos. 10-11 (June 2, 1924), pp. 356-360; her visit to the congress and narrow escape from arrest is described in R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 400.

at dinner Tomsky and the other trade union members of the Soviet delegation engaged in the negotiations with the British Government ; [1] and about the same time the council had a more formal meeting with the same group.[2] The hint given in the previous September that, while delegates of Profintern were unwelcome, the congress would be not unwilling to hear spokesmen of the Russian trade unions,[3] now bore fruit. An invitation was extended to the Soviet trade unions to send delegates to the next annual trade union congress, to be held at Hull in September 1924. In the short interval between the sixth congress of the CPGB and the fifth congress of Comintern, another unexpected event strengthened the general conviction that the British Labour movement was turning rapidly towards the Left : the intervention of the British delegation at the International Federation of Trade Unions in favour of the admission to the federation of the Russian unions.[4] Zinoviev in his main report to the fifth congress was encouraged to assert that " the chief task of the Communist International is now transferred to *England* in all fields ".[5] This became one of the key-notes of the congress. " The more we in Comintern speak English ", said Petrovsky *alias* Bennett, " the more we shall spread the language of Comintern among the English-speaking workers." [6] Zinoviev showed how high expectations were running in some Comintern circles by invoking another of those deceptive parallels dear to the heart of the early Bolshevik leaders : MacDonald was the British Kerensky.[7] But the implications of the parallel were not taken up by the British, or indeed

[1] For an account of this occasion and the speeches delivered, see M. Tomsky, *Getting Together* (n.d.), pp. 13-42, a pamphlet issued by the Labour Research Department. The date March 14 is a misprint for May 14.

[2] *Report of the Fifty-sixth Annual Trades Union Congress* (1924), p. 244.

[3] See p. 123 above. [4] For this see pp. 551-552 below.

[5] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 77; see also p. 72 above. [6] *Ibid.* i, 146.

[7] *Ibid.* i, 94 ; for earlier parallels in the same vein see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 175-176. Trotsky in a speech a few weeks later refused to regard MacDonald or Herriot as a Kerensky, since Kerenskyism was " a regime in which the bourgeoisie, having abandoned the hope of victory in open civil war, agrees to the most radical and dangerous concessions and hands over power to the extreme Left elements of bourgeois democracy " : things had not gone so far as this in Great Britain or France (L. Trotsky, *Europa und Amerika* (1926), pp. 18-19). This did not deter Zinoviev from reverting to the point at the fifth enlarged IKKI in March 1925 (see p. 295 below).

by any other, delegation. The main theme of the British delegates MacManus and Murphy was to insist on the necessity of the united front: though the Labour government "had become simply a capitalist and imperialist government", it was indispensable to remain and work within the Labour movement. The "growing and developing minority and opposition movements" within the existing Left were the only means through which a mass party could come into existence in Great Britain. MacManus drew a somewhat optimistic picture of these movements. The congress, he declared, must "openly and decidedly maintain that the united front is to be regarded as a slogan for mobilizing the working masses for revolutionary action under the leadership of the Communist Party".[1] The anomaly of the situation was that emphasis on the united front, which elsewhere, and especially in the KPD, was the patent of the Right, was here treated as the instrument of a move to the Left. The German delegation was plainly sceptical, and showed impatience at the new pre-eminence accorded in Comintern to the British party. As Ruth Fischer sardonically observed, "every English comrade has two party tickets in his pocket, the Labour Party ticket in his right pocket, the Communist Party ticket in his left"; they were "members of the Labour Party on weekdays, and communists in a mild way on Sundays for recreation".[2]

Ruth Fischer's scepticism was not entirely unjustified. The necessity of keeping one foot within the Labour Party fold, which was the essence of the united front policy in the CPGB, reflected the strong conservative strain in the British Labour movement; a party which stood openly and unreservedly for revolution and refused to cooperate with the constitutional Left was unlikely to count for much in Great Britain, even among the British workers. Zinoviev in his final speech at the congress conceded that the members of the British Left were "no revolutionaries" and "at present no better than the 'Left' German social-democrats".[3]

[1] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.) i, 141-144, 364-372.

[2] *Ibid.* i, 208; a delegate of the CPGB at the organization conference in Moscow in March 1925 (for this see pp. 925-928 below) explained that every member of the CPGB was expected to carry three membership cards — of the party, of a trade union and of the Labour Party (*Der Organisatorische Aufbau der Kommunistischen Partei* (1925), p. 93).

[3] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 913.

But this was understood by few other delegates at the congress, and the British question gave little trouble. The CPGB figured first among the four parties honoured with a special mention in the general resolution on tactics. This passage referred in general terms to the need " to support and promote the further growth of the Left wing of the Labour Party ", and " to struggle against the so-called ' Labour government ' of MacDonald by clearly exposing to the masses its bourgeois and anti-worker character ".[1] The separate resolution on " the Labour government in England " described it as " a government of the imperialist bourgeoisie ", " the faithful servant of his majesty the king of the empire of capitalists ", and " a coalition of leaders of the Second International, who betrayed the working class in the war, with Liberal politicians and Conservative lords ". Having dwelt on the continuance of policies of imperialism and colonial exploitation, and failure to remedy the grievances of the workers, it concluded :

> All these questions are merely a part of the chief problem of the struggle of the toiling masses for their liberation from the yoke of capital. This victory cannot be achieved, the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be established, till a mass communist party is created which will weld the masses together on the basis of an untiring struggle against the bourgeoisie and unmask the social-traitors in the ronks of the warking class.
>
> *A mass party of fighting communists* — such is the *correct* answer of the working class to a bourgeois Labour government.[2]

In the meanwhile, an attempt was made to galvanize into life the NMM which, while purporting to function as a spearhead for the penetration of the trade unions, had hitherto failed to acquire a comprehensive national organization.[3] The sixth congress of the CPGB in May 1924 referred to its growth in terms which partially obscured the communist influence behind it, but accurately described its sporadic character :

> The bankruptcy of the [trade union] bureaucracy has brought into existence fighting groups of workers in all parts of the country, all battling for a fighting policy for the trade union movement. These groups are gradually being co-

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 412.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 445-448; see also p. 81 above. [3] See p. 123 above.

ordinated into what has come to be known as " the minority movement ".[1]

And the congress passed a resolution which, while welcoming these " signs of the awakening of the workers ", affirmed that " the various movements cannot realize their full power so long as they remain sectional, separate and limited in their scope and character ", and that, consequently, " the opposition movements can go forward only under the leadership of a powerful communist party which can unite its forces and carry through the struggle to its revolutionary goal ". On the other hand, another resolution protested against the heresy of identifying the party with the minority movement and other similar organizations. The party must work in the minority movement, and inspire its activity, but remain distinct from it.[2] This attitude was symptomatic of the ambiguous status of the NMM. In Moscow, the movement was assumed to consist of communists or active adherents of the communist cause. At the third congress of Profintern, Kalnin had referred to the forthcoming conference of the NMM as " the national conference of our supporters in Great Britain "; and Lozovsky drew a sharp distinction between the Left wing as a whole, " formed by all those who are dissatisfied with the official policy ", and the members of the minority movement, " who have a definite political platform, i.e. all those who stand on the platform of Profintern ".[3] In fact, the distinction was largely fallacious. The NMM, though its organization was the work of the CPGB, drew its numerical strength mainly from rebels within the British trade union movement whose support of Moscow was tempered by an underlying residual loyalty to the move-

[1] *Speeches and Documents : Sixth Conference of the CPGB* (1924), p. 12.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 34, 38 : an article in the party journal forecast that the " minority groups " would " come together in a national minority movement in the near future " (*Communist Review*, v, No. 1 (May 1924), p. 16).

[3] *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), pp. 188, 195. It was probably during this congress that the unrecorded decision was taken to abolish the British bureau of Profintern, which ceased to exist in August 1924 (*Malaya Entsiklopediya po Mezhdunarodnomu Profdvizheniyu* (1927), p. 168); the last issue of the journal of the bureau *All Power* appeared in July 1924. In the words of a British participant, the bureau was " transformed into the minority movement " (J. T. Murphy, *Preparing for Power* (1934), p. 215); in the following year the executive bureau of Profintern in Moscow was sending instructions direct to the executive of the NMM (*Communist Papers*, Cmd. 2682 (1926), pp. 51-52).

ment as a whole. The first annual conference of the National Minority Movement met on August 23-24, 1924, and was attended by 271 delegates claiming to represent 200,000 organized workers. The chair was taken at the conference by Tom Mann as president of the NMM; Pollitt was its general secretary. The most important resolution was one defining the aims and objects of the movement. These were in brief to organize the workers for the overthrow of capitalism and " the establishment of the socialist commonwealth "; to " work within the existing organizations of the workers " to popularize " the principles of the revolutionary class struggle ", and to fight against " the present tendency towards social peace and class collaboration "; to maintain " the closest relations " with Profintern, and at the same time " to work for the unity of the international trade union movement ". A manifesto was addressed on behalf of the NMM to the forthcoming trade union congress. It boldly announced that " for the first time in the history of the congress a definite and organized opposition within the existing unions faces the existing leadership, and raises unreservedly the banner of revolutionary working class politics in British trade unionism ". It declared that the greatest need of the trade union movement was " to organize the workers for common action against the capitalists ", and put forward a nine-point " programme of action " in which economic and political demands were judiciously combined.[1] The aim was clearly to act as the vanguard of a Left opposition at the forthcoming trade union congress. The communist inspiration of the NMM was not formally proclaimed, but was unmistakable. As a CPGB delegate boasted a few months later in Moscow, " membership of the minority movement has been organized round our fractions ", and " our fractions work inside the trade unions for the creation of a minority movement ".[2]

The fifty-sixth annual trade union congress met at Hull on September 1, 1924, Purcell being chairman for the year. Though it produced many demonstrations of pro-Soviet sentiment, it also

[1] The documents of the conference were published by the NMM in a pamphlet *Report of the National Minority Conference Held August 23 and 24, 1924* (n.d.); for an account of the conference see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 113, August 26, 1924, pp. 1472-1474. For the resolution on trade union unity see pp. 567-568 below.

[2] *Der Organisatorische Aufbau der Kommnistischen Partei* (1925), p. 94.

revealed the deep underlying divisions in the British trade union movement on this issue. The attitude towards the NUWM remained ambivalent. Eleven meetings of the joint advisory committee during the past year were reported: an "unemployed workers' charter" voicing the demands of the unemployed had been drawn up and distributed in 700,000 copies. Hannington, the able secretary of the NUWM, and an active member of the CPGB, addressed the congress, and was duly applauded. But the congress once more firmly rejected the application of the NUWM, "a body composed largely of non-union workpeople", to affiliate to the TUC.[1] The debate on the discussions in IFTU on the theme of trade union unity was more outspoken, and produced some bitter attacks on Profintern and on the Soviet Government. Nobody proposed to reopen the question of principle, but a motion by Pollitt instructing the general council to "work for the convening of an international conference of all trade union organizations" was rejected as redundant in spite of the evident desire of the chairman that it should be accepted.[2] It was after these proceedings, on the fourth day of the congress, that the floor was given to the fraternal delegates of other organizations. Tomsky's speech was a model of tact and good humour. He ended with an appeal for "international working class unity" and for action by "the British and Russian workers" to bring it about. He received an ovation.[3] On the following day a motion urging the ratification of the Anglo-Soviet treaties signed a month earlier was adopted "with considerable fervour".[4] On the other hand, no resolution was passed on the Dawes plan;[5] and little or

[1] *Report of the Fifty-Sixth Annual Trades Union Congress* (1924), pp. 158-159, 330-332, 343-346; a resolution supporting the NUWM had been passed at the NMM conference in August 1924 (*Report of the National Minority Conference* (n.d.), pp. 11-12).

[2] *Report of the Fifty-Sixth Annual Trades Union Congress* (1924), pp. 311-319, 366-369.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 395-400.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 434-437.

[5] Purcell criticized the plan in his presidential address, and a delegate asked that time might be given to discuss it (*ibid.* pp. 69-70, 290); but the request was shelved. This omission contrasted with the importance attached to the question in Moscow; an appeal for international trade union unity issued jointly by IKKI and by the executive bureau of Profintern in September 1924 turned largely on denunciation of the Dawes plan (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 127, September 30, 1924, p. 1693). The CPGB ran a campaign against the British Labour government for its support of the Dawes plan, but without much

nothing was said in criticism of the attitude or policies of the Labour government.

The enthusiasm for the Soviet cause, still powerful in the Left wing of the trade unions, was waning in the Labour Party as a whole. When the Labour Party met in London for its annual conference on October 7, 1924, a marked chill had set in. The defeat of the Labour government in the House of Commons was now inevitable and imminent, and occurred while the conference was in session. The fact that it was due, directly or indirectly, to the Anglo-Soviet treaty and to the notorious Campbell case helped to fan resentment against communism and desire to dissociate the party from Moscow.

> Communism as we know it [observed MacDonald at the conference] has nothing practical in common with us. It is a product of Tsarism and of war mentality, and as such we have nothing in common with it.

The existing bans on the affiliation of CPGB to the Labour Party, and on the adoption of communists as Labour candidates, were reaffirmed by overwhelming majorities. By a narrow majority of 1,804,000 to 1,540,000 it was resolved for the first time " that no member of the Communist Party be eligible for membership of the Labour Party ".[1] This last prohibition proved difficult to enforce since both trade unions and other bodies affiliated to the Labour Party continued to admit communists as members. But it clearly showed the mood of a majority of the Labour Party, and threw a disconcerting light on the instructions issued to the CPGB by IKKI on October 10, 1924, while the conference was in progress: communists at the forthcoming general election, while "engaging in principle in sharp criticism of the MacDonald government", were in practice to " support Labour candidates ".[2]

success (*Report of the Seventh Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), p. 25); the plan was also denounced in a resolution of the NMM conference of August 1924 (*Report of the National Minority Conference held August 23 and 24, 1924* (n.d.), p. 24).

[1] *Report of the Twenty-fourth Annual Conference of the Labour Party: London 1924* (n.d.), pp. 109, 131.

[2] *Communist Papers*, Cmd. 2682 (1926), facsimile between pp. 48-49. An article by Roy was evidently intended as an exposition of the Comintern line: communist candidates were put to be put up only where no danger existed of splitting the Labour vote; elsewhere Labour candidates were to be supported;

The official Labour attitude made it difficult to believe that a united front with the Labour Party would prove compatible with a move by the CPGB towards the Left. The strength of the Left in the trade unions and the drive for trade union unity helped to maintain the illusion for another year. In November 1924 a large British trade union delegation attended the sixth Soviet trade union congress in Moscow, was received with acclamation and unbounded hospitality, and was regarded as proof of the continuing enthusiasm of the British worker for the Soviet cause.[1] In January 1925 a special conference of the NMM was held in London to celebrate the return of the delegation.[2] But these demonstrations had no political repercussion. After the autumn of 1924 the hostility of the Labour Party leadership, and of a majority of the rank and file, to communism, and its imperviousness to penetration by the CPGB, were not seriously in doubt. MacDonald's eloquent indecision might well have seemed to qualify him for the rôle of the British Kerensky. But the downfall of the British Kerensky and his government opened the door not to revolution, but to reaction.

(c) *The French Communist Party (PCF)*

The French Communist Party (PCF), as it emerged from the Tours congress of December 1920, was a conflation of two elements: former members of the French Socialist Party, whose conscious or unconscious background was that of the Second International, and a miscellaneous group of former anarchists, syndicalists and war-time adherents of the Zimmerwald Left, who had gathered in 1919 round "the committee for adhesion to the Third International".[3] The two groups could be conventionally distinguished as Right and Left; the latter, far more than the former, represented an active revolutionary outlook. For two years after the Tours congress, the party was led by Frossard,

neither abstention nor the slogan "Down with the MacDonald Government" was admissible. At the same time the election must be "fought clearly on the basis of the class struggle" (*International Press Correspondence*, No. 75, October 23, 1924, pp. 839-840; it did not appear in the German edition).

[1] For this visit see pp. 570-572 below.

[2] For this conference see p. 573 below.

[3] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 142.

a spokesman of the Right, and Souvarine, a stout champion of the Left, was representative of the PCF in IKKI. The incessant party strife of these two years [1] was a struggle between a majority clinging to the old traditions and methods of social-democracy and a minority enjoying, through Souvarine, the powerful support of Moscow. The struggle in the party was intensified by the foundation of the CGTU in June 1922. Commanding, in the number of organized workers affiliated to it, a clear majority in the French trade union movement, and itself affiliated to Profintern, this body embraced both communists and syndicalists. Both PCF and CGTU were involved in the turn of events in Moscow when the fourth congress of Comintern and the second congress of Profintern were held successively in November and December 1922. Frossard was now at length ousted from the leadership of the PCF ; and the CGTU, under the influence of the syndicalist wing which had always mistrusted the link with communism, forced on Profintern a formal severance of its link with Comintern.[2] These events appeared to mark a decisive turn to the Left both in the PCF and in the trade union movement, and drew an involuntary tribute from Zinoviev :

> After we have had a communist party in France for two years, we have nevertheless to admit that a large number of communists, who will be the best elements in our future communist party, are at present still outside the communist party in the ranks of the trade unions.[3]

Frossard's place as secretary-general of the party was taken by two secretaries, Treint, a school teacher and an intellectual of the party Left, and Sellier, a trade unionist ; Cachin, a veteran of the Zimmerwald Left, was the senior party member of the Chamber of Deputies.

The year 1923 was the year of the Ruhr occupation. The PCF, which enjoyed at this time a high rating in Moscow,[4] collaborated with the KPD in protests against this flagrant exhibition of imperialism at the expense of the German worker ;

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 416-420.

[2] For these developments see *ibid.* Vol. 3, pp. 457-458, 460-461.

[3] *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1923), pp. 37-38.

[4] Zinoviev, in a letter of February 11, 1923, called the PCF " our most important section ", which " up to a point holds the destiny of the Communist International in its hands " (Humbert-Droz archives, 0401).

and a number of French communists were arrested and imprisoned in the Rhineland. But, while the party machine worked " better than in the time of Frossard ", strife within the party was not stilled. Treint, in prison during the early months of 1923, soon obtained his release, and showed evident ambitions to emerge as the leader of the party with the approval of Moscow. But tact was not his outstanding quality. Humbert-Droz, who was at this time Comintern representative in the Latin countries, reported to Zinoviev that " the presence of Treint at the general secretariat of the party is a danger which will grow if he does not modify his methods of work and administration ", and accused him of exercising " a kind of continuous blackmail against other members of the Politburo ".[1] Souvarine in Moscow was also a source of discord. Chafing impatiently under the united front tactics reaffirmed at the fourth congress of Comintern, he denounced united front proposals put forward by the PCF and CGTU as " too conciliatory ", and " by his insults rendered the whole tactics sterile ".[2] Moreover he used his authority as a member of IKKI to criticize the leaders of the PCF, and in particular Treint, whose pedestrian talents excited his contempt.[3] But for the moment the political line still held. In September 1923 IKKI drew the attention of the PCF to the importance of adopting united front tactics at the crucial parliamentary elections due to be held in the following year. The existing national bloc and so-called Left bloc must be opposed by " the bloc of the working class in town and country ". The one proviso was that the party must " have nothing whatever to do with any form of parliamentary reformism ", and that not " the slightest attempt " must be made " to build a bridge between the party and the Left bloc ".[4] The national council of the PCF took the cue, and at its session of October 13-14, 1923, obediently proposed a Bloc

[1] Reports from Humbert-Droz of April 21, June 14, 23, 1923 in Humbert-Droz archives, 0007, 0277, 0278. Humbert-Droz (see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 194-195, 417, note 1) was appointed to the secretariat of IKKI with Rakosi and Kuusinen in 1921, and served for many years as head of its Latin section, covering Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Latin America (Humbert-Droz archives, 0001). [2] *Ibid.* 0007.

[3] For an example of these attacks see *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 34, August 23, 1923, pp. 504-507; for earlier resentment of Souvarine's dictatorial attitude see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 416-417.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 149, September 21, 1923, p. 1290.

Ouvrier et Paysan to match the Bloc National and the Bloc des Gauches.[1] This was an empty gesture, since the French Socialist Party had already adhered to the Bloc des Gauches. The PCF was, however, not deterred from the pursuit of united front tactics, however unfruitful. On December 17, 1923, it addressed an open letter to all other workers' parties offering to form a common front at the forthcoming elections against all bourgeois blocs or parties, whether of the Right or the Left.[2] Meanwhile the syndicalists in the CGTU had sustained a crushing defeat. Encouraged by their victory in Moscow in the previous December, they continued to agitate throughout 1923 against any association of the CGTU with Moscow and wished to disaffiliate from Profintern. At the annual congress of the CGTU at Bourges in November of that year, they made a formal proposal for secession, but were heavily defeated.[3] The course seemed set both in the PCF and in the CGTU for moderation and orderly discipline under the eye of Moscow.

At this point a serious crisis, which could be traced to a variety of causes, once more broke out in the party. The most conspicuous disturbing factor was the return from Moscow in the autumn of 1923 of Souvarine, the delegate of the PCF to IKKI, and his resumption, from November 1, 1923, of the active editorship of the party journal, *Bulletin Communiste*, which he had founded in 1920. Humbert-Droz reported to Zinoviev that this step, which had been taken against his advice, had led to "a series of painful incidents". Souvarine, "a young intellectual who does only what he pleases", had offended nearly all the party leaders, and was on the worst of terms with Treint.[4] But, beside these personal animosities, political issues soon raised their head. The defeat of the October rising in Germany had played into Souvarine's hand by throwing doubt on the tactics of

[1] *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 43, October 25, 1923, p. 775.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 1, January 2, 1924, pp. 3-4.

[3] The congress was preceded by a protest from the PCF against the secession proposal (*Bulletin Communiste*, No. 43, October 25, 1923, pp. 776-778), and by an appeal from the executive bureau of Profintern which denounced "schism in the CGTU as a crime, as the greatest betrayal of the interests of the international proletariat" (*Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 12 (35), December 1923, pp. 1011-1014); for accounts of the congress, the results of which were hailed with great relief in Moscow, see *ibid.* pp. 948-951, 968-970.

[4] Report of November 23, 1923, in the Humbert-Droz archives, 0285.

the united front. Souvarine seems to have seen the opportunity of making Treint responsible, as Brandler had been held responsible in the KPD, for united front errors, and of attacking him from the Left. The third congress of the PCF was to meet at Lyons in January 1924. In articles appearing in the *Bulletin Communiste* on the eve of the congress, Souvarine attacked the " weakness " of the party leadership during the past, thought that the central committee had left too much of the work to its Politburo, and accused Treint of having claimed that the Politburo was " directed " by him; Treint was also blamed for having failed to put the question of the united front on the agenda of the congress.[1] Humbert-Droz reported to Moscow a " latent crisis " in the party which might break out at the congress.[2] A letter from IKKI of January 12, 1924, dwelt on the need to " work for the conquest of the masses ", and to " struggle against the militarist fever ", but warned the PCF of the danger of carrying united front policies too far:

> *Determined and inexorable struggles against the bloc of the Left and against the National bloc!* No concessions, no compromises. . . . *He who is for the bloc of the Left is against the working class.*[3]

Though this did little more than reiterate what had been said in the previous instruction of September 1923, the emphasis seemed to reflect the greater caution in pursuing united front policies inculcated by the lessons of the German defeat. Otherwise, neither the IKKI letter nor the report to the congress on the work of the Politburo, drawn up by its secretary, Treint,[4] touched on the contentious issues which had arisen in the autumn of 1923 in the German and Russian parties. These were still *sub judice* in Moscow; and the decisions on them, though actually taken before the congress met on January 21, 1924,[5] were apparently not known in Paris or referred to at the congress. In these circumstances the congress passed off peacefully and uneventfully,

[1] *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 1, January 4, 1924, pp. 1-3, No. 3, January 18, 1924, pp. 65-67.

[2] Humbert-Droz archives, 0008.

[3] *3e Congrès National: Adresses et Résolutions* (1924), pp. 5-6; it was also published after the congress in *Pravda*, February 7, 1924.

[4] *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 1, January 4, 1924, pp. 21-36.

[5] The Russian decision was taken by the thirteenth Russian party conference on January 18, 1924 (see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 338-339), the German decision by IKKI on the following day (*ibid.* p. 239).

adopting resolutions on the Ruhr, on an election programme for the Bloc Ouvrier et Paysan, on the colonial question, and on trade union unity.[1] Lozovsky, who attended the congress in person, persuaded a reluctant and sceptical majority of delegates to recognize that it was not enough to concentrate on the trade unions belonging to the CGTU, and that party work in the CGT unions was also necessary.[2] The resolution on "tactics and organization" contained some barbed shafts apparently planted there by Souvarine. The congress, indulging in a tactful measure of self-criticism, referred in its resolution to "numerous grave errors" which had occurred in the process of correcting the excessive "federalism" of the first years of the party. These included "excessive centralism", "too mechanical a discipline", and a tendency for the Politburo to absorb all the major functions of policy-making to the exclusion of the executive committee.[3] Though the congress had been careful to apply these criticisms "not only to the leadership, but to the whole party", Souvarine afterwards treated them in the *Bulletin Communiste* as proof of general lack of confidence in the party leadership and in the Politburo, and referred to them as having denounced "the bureaucratization of which Treint is the incarnation".[4] A minor incident of this period arose out of the attitude to be adopted to the British Labour government. Carried away by the same wave of enthusiasm which at first engulfed the CPGB,[5] the executive committee of the PCF on February 5, 1924, adopted the text of an open letter to the Labour government, drafted by Rosmer, promising it virtually unconditional support. Treint and Suzanne Girault, the secretary of the Paris organization, voted against the resolution approving it.[6]

Souvarine's campaign against Treint might have been success-

[1] *3e Congrès National: Adresses et Résolutions* (1924), pp. 33-48, 66-76; no other official record of the congress was published.

[2] Lozovsky's account of these proceedings is in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 27, February 26, 1924, p. 294.

[3] *3e Congrès National: Adresses et Résolutions* (1924), pp. 27-32; the results of the congress were formally approved by IKKI on February 4, 1924 (*Pravda*, February 7, 1924).

[4] *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 7, February 15, 1924, pp. 177-178; No. 10, March 7, 1924, p. 250.

[5] See p. 127 above.

[6] *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 14, April 4, 1924, pp. 250-251; the letter appeared in *L'Humanité*, February 8, 1924.

ful if he had not rashly involved himself with Trotsky and the opposition in Moscow. While Souvarine's long residence in Moscow gave him a unique interest in, and understanding of, the affairs of the Russian party, Trotsky enjoyed a personal prestige throughout the PCF. During his sojourn in Paris in 1914–1916 he had met most prominent members of the French extreme Left, and since the foundation of the PCF he had been regarded as the expert on its affairs in Comintern.[1] The campaign against Trotsky in Moscow was received with mixed feelings in the French party. Since *Pravda* had thrown open its columns to articles and speeches of the contending factions,[2] nobody could complain if the *Bulletin Communiste*, under Souvarine's editorship, did likewise. But, while *Pravda* increasingly played down the utterances of the opposition, *Bulletin Communiste* appeared to treat Trotsky's articles as by far the most important contributions to the debate; and it was not long before Souvarine tempered his professed neutrality with eulogies of Trotsky and criticisms of the official line. In the issue of December 27, 1923, which published Trotsky's letter of December 8, he ventured the opinion that the letter expressed "great communist truths, which have only one defect, i.e. that they are not sufficiently developed"; and in the next issue he added that "those who accuse the opposition of forming a 'fraction' are momentarily blinded by polemical passion".[3] A month later, when tension had increased on all sides, Souvarine once more proclaimed a magisterial impartiality which nobody was now prepared to accept:

> We defend the majority against the minority when the latter is mistaken or talks nonsense, and we defend the minority against the majority when the latter is unjust.

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 2, 142-143, 417-419, 457. As late as March 1925, Treint, who led the campaign against Trotskyism in the PCF, said at the fifth enlarged IKKI: "Comrade Trotsky enjoyed very great prestige in France. In the years of the war he struggled side by side with our fighting revolutionaries and had a profound influence on our French communist movement in its infancy. From that time on comrade Trotsky always actively helped us to deal with difficulties as they arose. This explains his great authority in our movement" (*Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 104).

[2] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 301-302, 316-319.

[3] *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 52, December 27, 1923, pp. 945-948; No. 1, January 4, 1924, pp. 4-5; for Trotsky's letter see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 310-311.

In substance this was a declaration of support for the opposition: Souvarine excused himself for having failed to print an important article of Stalin on the ground that it was of purely Russian interest and confined to "personal amenities".[1] When the question came up for discussion in the executive committee of the PCF in February 1924 (a month after Trotsky had been censured at the thirteenth Russian party conference in Moscow [2]), Souvarine proposed a resolution expressing the conviction that all those who had participated in the November–January discussions in the Russian party were "inspired by anxiety to facilitate the realization of the historical tasks of the party of the proletariat, and animated by an equal desire to work for the greatness of the party", and ending with an appeal for party unity. Though Souvarine had few personal followers, the crisis had brought into being a new group in the PCF which shared both his loyalty to Trotsky and his dislike of the present party leadership: its leaders were Rosmer and Monatte, who had participated in the foundation of Profintern, and now stood well to the Left in the PCF. After a debate in the executive committee lasting over "several meetings", Souvarine's resolution was carried against the adverse votes of Treint, Suzanne Girault and Sémard — a lone trio of faithful supporters of the official line against Trotsky.[3]

Treint, whose authority was thus gravely threatened, now opened his counter-attack. With or without explicit backing from Moscow, he was still able to control the party Politburo. On March 6, 1924, that organ decided to recommend to the executive committee that Souvarine should return to his post as French member of IKKI in Moscow, and should be replaced as editor of the *Bulletin Communiste* by a party member named Calzan.[4] Treint, in the name of the Politburo, now proceeded to exercise a hitherto dormant right of control over the editor of the *Bulletin Communiste*. The issue of March 14, 1924, became a battleground. An article calling for a united front solely "from below"

[1] *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 6, February 8, 1924, pp. 145-151; for Stalin's article of December 15, 1923, see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 315-316.

[2] For this decision see p. 141, note 5 above.

[3] *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 14, April 4, 1924, p. 251.

[4] *Ibid.* No. 12, March 21, 1924, p. 309; No. 14, April 4, 1924, p. 353. The recommendation was endorsed by the executive committee, apparently at its meeting of March 18 (see below).

and " without or against the leaders " appeared with a note from the party secretariat expressing disagreement and promising a rectification in the next issue. Treint sent an article answering Souvarine's past attacks and demanded its insertion. Souvarine complied. But, when the proofs of the issue reached the Politburo, it was found that Treint's article was followed by a crushing editorial rejoinder. Souvarine was instructed to remove this, and again complied. But, when the issue finally appeared, the centre of the blank space beneath Treint's article was occupied by a note from the editor complaining that the party secretariat had forbidden him to make " the slightest correction of the inexact statements of the author of the present article ", and curtly adding that " those who are afraid of communist criticism disqualify themselves ".[1] After this, no quarter was given or expected on either side. A meeting of the executive committee, reinforced by the secretaries of the regional party federations, on March 18, 1924, confirmed Souvarine's removal from the editorship ; and the Politburo transferred the argument from the personal to the political ground by putting forward a set of political theses. These condemned the too tolerant attitude to the British Labour government adopted in the " open letter " ; criticized the attitude of the Right wing of the KPD, and declared that the new leadership had saved the unity of the party ; and entirely approved the decisions of the thirteenth conference of the Russian party (which condemned Trotsky). Souvarine submitted counter-theses which, while admitting that errors had been made in Germany, affirmed that these had not discredited united front tactics ; claimed that the members of the Russian opposition had all been " artisans of the Russian revolution " and appealed for " reciprocal effort " to maintain unity ; and asserted that the function of communists in Great Britain was to " support the Left wing of the Labour Party without ever merging in it ". The theses of the Politburo were carried, Souvarine, Rosmer and Monatte voting against them. Monatte made a declaration accusing the party leaders of " mechanical centralism ", and refusing to take sides in the Russian dispute.[2] The issue of the *Bulletin Communiste* of March

[1] *Ibid.* No. 11, March 14, 1924, pp. 289-291, 302.

[2] *Ibid.* No. 13, March 28, 1924, pp. 323-327 ; No. 14, April 4, 1924, pp. 352-353 ; No. 15, April 11, 1924, pp. 364-367.

21, 1924, appeared under the new editorship. Souvarine's last editorial coup was a " letter to subscribers " protesting against the circumstances of his dismissal, which was published in *L'Humanité* of March 27, 1924, with a reply from the executive committee,[1] denouncing the letter as a further breach of discipline. Souvarine completed his defiance by publishing a French translation of Trotsky's collection of recent articles *The New Course* with a preface, dated April 15, 1924, in which he alleged that Trotsky had been " subjected to criticisms of a crying injustice and to almost unbelievable personal attacks ", and described him as " a master of communist thought whom history will know as the authentic continuer of the work of Marx and Lenin ".[2]

After this washing of dirty linen, the PCF settled down to fight the elections of May 11, 1924. Everything else in the results was overshadowed by the landslide in favour of the Bloc des Gauches ; the Bloc National everywhere sustained a crushing defeat. The PCF secured nearly 900,000 votes and increased the numbers of its seats in the Chamber of Deputies from nine to 25. But its success was concentrated in the region of Paris, which provided 14 of the seats, and a few other large cities, and was eclipsed by that of the socialists.[3] Souvarine, back in Moscow, burned his boats by delivering a speech in defence of Trotsky at the thirteenth congress of the Russian party in the latter part of May. He declared that Trotsky's name was " a synonym for revolution ", that the attacks on him had been " a grievous blow to the RKP and, with it, to Comintern ", and that it was " impossible to discern any differences of principle in this struggle ".[4] He claimed to have been authorized, by a vote of 22 to 2 in the executive committee of the PCF, to intervene in the debate in order, not to support the opposition, but to put an end to the polemics in the Russian party and in Comintern.[5]

[1] These documents also appeared in *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 14, April 4, 1924, pp. 354-355.

[2] L. Trotsky, *Le Cours Nouveau* (1924); for *The New Course* see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 125.

[3] Trotsky, who knew French conditions well, noted that " the communists with a far stronger party organization and party press obtained far fewer votes than the socialists " (L. Trotsky, *Pyat' Let Kominterna* (1924), p. xv).

[4] *Trinadtsatyi S"ezd Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)* (1924), pp. 371-373.

[5] *Ibid.* pp. 371-373.

This intervention sealed Souvarine's fate when the fifth congress of Comintern opened in June 1924. At a session of the enlarged IKKI held in advance of the congress, the French delegation denounced Souvarine's breaches of discipline in the PCF and proposed that he should be deprived of his vote in IKKI, this curious half-way house being motivated by doubt whether a party delegation was entitled to propose the revocation of an appointment made by IKKI. Souvarine then asked for half an hour to reply to the charges against him: this was refused on the motion of Radek. After a legalistic argument, it was decided not to withdraw Souvarine's right to vote, but to set up a commission of the congress to consider his case.[1] Zinoviev in his main speech at the congress spoke critically of Souvarine and Rosmer, and described the PCF as " the second most important party of the Communist International " after the British — perhaps a tribute to the coming into power in France of a Left government, or a deliberate snub to the KPD. Not much attention was given to French affairs. But the section on the PCF in the principal resolution instructed the party to improve its organization, to pay more attention to regions outside Paris, including rural areas, and to apply united front tactics " in an appropriate form ".[2] The commission set up to consider " the Souvarine affair " reported to the session of IKKI which immediately followed the congress in favour of Souvarine's expulsion from the party on three charges of breach of discipline: his " declaration " in the *Bulletin Communiste* (meaning, presumably, his comment on the refusal to permit publication of his reply to Treint's article), his " letter to subscribers ", and his unauthorized publication of the French version of Trotsky's *New Course* " with a preface directed against the party and against the Communist International ". The recommendation was endorsed by the enlarged IKKI, only five members of the Italian delegation voting against it on the plea of extenuating circumstances. A significant rider was added to the resolution to the effect that an open letter should be addressed to

[1] *Bulletin du V^e Congrès de l'Internationale Communiste*, No. 1, June 15, 1924, p. 1; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 70, June 18, 1924, pp. 857-858; a slightly different version appeared in *V^e Congrès de l'Internationale Communiste* (1924), pp. 341-342.

[2] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 51, 95; *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 413-414.

all members of the PCF " in order to remind them of the true meaning of party discipline ".[1] The letter, sent after the congress in the name of IKKI, while congratulating the PCF on its progress, complained of insufficient cooperation with the trade unions (the CGTU was not mentioned), and of the prevalence of errors of the kind for which Souvarine had just been expelled. It concluded that " a certain individualist, petty bourgeois, anarchist spirit has dominated some leading comrades ", and denounced the cult of " personal " and " private " opinions and unwillingness to submit to discipline.[2] *L'Humanité* celebrated Souvarine's downfall by accusing him of having regarded himself as " a personal force ", and by preaching a sermon on the evils of individualism :

> In our party, which the revolutionary struggle has not yet completely purged of its old social-democratic deposit, the influence of personalities still plays too great a rôle. . . . It is only through the destruction of all petty bourgeois survivals of the individualist " I " that we shall form the anonymous iron cohort of French Bolsheviks.[3]

The purpose of the resolution and of the letter was evidently to improve discipline in the PCF and to instal the faithful Treint firmly in the leadership : it was no coincidence that Treint, whose position depended mainly on the support of Moscow, was the earliest and most enthusiastic advocate in any foreign party of Bolshevization.[4] It was decided that Treint should confine himself to the major task of directing party policy in the Politburo ; and Sémard succeeded him as secretary of the party. But jealousies within the party were strong, and discipline difficult to enforce. Bolshevization implied both a strengthening of the central organs of the party at the expense of individual members, which Souvarine had already denounced, and a strengthening of the influence of Paris at the expense of the provinces ; even *L'Humanité*, the party organ, was said to cater exclusively for

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.) i, 132 ; ii, 1032-1034 ; *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1932), pp. 471-472.

[2] A copy of the letter is in the Humbert-Droz archives, 0296 ; no published version has been traced.

[3] *L'Humanité*, July 19, 1924.

[4] See pp. 92-93 above.

Parisian readers. In defence of the current line, it was claimed that the Parisian workers formed the hard core of the party, that the number of workers in the party was growing, and that the opposition was confined to a small group of intellectuals. At a conference of party secretaries in September 1924, Rosmer and Monatte openly attacked the decisions of the fifth congress of Comintern and defended Trotsky and Souvarine.[1] Nevertheless, authority gradually began to make itself felt. The last issue of the old *Bulletin Communiste* with its eclectic tradition came out on November 14, 1924; and a week later a new party journal *Cahiers du Bolchevisme* made its first appearance. Its rôle as the custodian of party orthodoxy was emphasized. The introductory manifesto in its first issue, after mentioning the progress made in the reorganization of the party on a cell basis,[2] declared that something "infinitely more important" was now required — "the ideological Bolshevization of the party". The second issue described the present ideological composition of the party as "20 per cent of Jauressisme, 10 per cent of Marxism, 20 per cent of Leninism, 20 per cent of Trotskyism and 30 per cent of confusionism"; in order to make itself "capable of leading the proletarian and peasant masses to the decisive battles", the party must achieve "100 per cent of Leninism".[3] A test of this new display of firmness was soon to come. On November 22, 1924, Rosmer, Monatte and another party dissident named Delagarde, complaining that their previous protest had been boycotted by the party press, issued an open letter in the form of a broadsheet to members of the party. They coupled a denunciation of the bureaucratic régime in the PCF with a defence of Trotsky: "We think that it is Trotsky who at the present time thinks and acts in the true spirit of Lenin, and not those who pursue him with their attacks while draping themselves in the mantle of Leninism". The party leadership could hardly fail to react to this challenge. The open letter was published in the *Cahiers du Bolchevisme* together with a long reply by the party Politburo; and on December 5, 1924, a hastily summoned party conference expelled Rosmer, Monatte and

[1] A. Ferrat, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français* (1930), p. 164.

[2] For this question see pp. 924, 928 below.

[3] *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 1, November 21, 1924, p. 1; No. 2, November 28, 1924, p. 67. Every issue carried at its head the famous quotation from Lenin: "Without revolutionary theory, no revolutionary movement".

Delagarde from the party.[1] Other episodes followed which showed that Treint and his lieutenants did not always temper zeal with discretion. After Purcell's return from the Soviet Union with the British trade union delegation [2] he was invited, together with Fimmen, to address a meeting in Paris in support of trade union unity; and the meeting was duly announced for December 19, 1924. But, when Purcell discovered that it was sponsored exclusively by the PCF, the French Communist Youth League and the CGTU, and was, as a matter of course, boycotted by the CGT, he withdrew his acceptance.[3] This disagreeable incident was crowned by a further *gaffe* on the part of the PCF, which published in *L'Humanité* of December 24, 1924 an open letter, proposing a united front with the British trade unions, in which not only the CGTU and CGT, but also the CPGB, were ignored. Indignation was aroused on all sides; Purcell once more had occasion to pray to be saved from the ill-judged enthusiasm of his friends.

Preparations were now in hand for the fourth annual congress of the PCF to be held in January 1925. As the time for the congress approached, increasing anxiety about the position in the PCF began to be felt in Moscow.[4] In the first place, Comintern

[1] *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 4, December 12, 1924, pp. 210-225. The texts of a declaration read by Rosmer at the conference and of the expulsion decision are in *La Révolution Prolétarienne*, January 1925, pp. 23-24: this was a "communist-syndicalist" monthly journal founded by Rosmer and Monatte after their expulsion. [2] For this visit see pp. 570-572 below.

[3] Loud complaints against these compromising proceedings by the PCF were voiced in letters from Herclet, the CGTU representative in Moscow, to CGTU leaders in Paris; the letters were published some months later by the French party opposition in *La Révolution Prolétarienne*, October 1925, pp. 11-12, and *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 3, November 6, 1925, pp. 47-48.

[4] The principal sources for the views of Comintern on the PCF, and for Treint's summons to Moscow, are Herclet's letter of January 3, 1925, to Rosmer (*Bulletin Communiste*, No. 5, November 20, 1925, pp. 75-77) and letters of January 12, 1925, to Monatte and to another member of the opposition, Tommasi (*La Révolution Prolétarienne*, No. 10, October 1925, pp. 10-12). Herclet, who was not a party member, had expressed his sympathy with Monatte and Souvarine in April 1924 before the expulsion of the latter from the party (*ibid.* pp. 9-10); he is not an impartial witness, and his account is probably exaggerated. But the main facts are substantiated. Herclet soon recanted, and published in *L'Humanité*, September 11, 1925, an article attacking the opposition; the publication by the opposition of his earlier letters was a reprisal for this act.

at this time constantly assumed the rôle of moderator of disputes in foreign communist parties, and disliked the arrogation to themselves by these parties of disciplinary functions. A French commission set up by IKKI censured the Politburo of the PCF for having provoked the insubordination of Rosmer and Monatte by refusing to publish their original protest of October 5, 1924; and Zinoviev made overtures for their reinstatement.[1] Secondly, the party was severely taken to task for its clumsy mismanagement of the trade union unity campaign.[2] Thirdly — and this was perhaps the greatest, though least openly avowed, matter of concern — the recent turn to the Left, in supposed obedience to the dictates of the fifth congress of Comintern, of the leadership of the PCF, had begun to prove compromising. On November 24, 1924, the transfer to the Panthéon of the ashes of Jaurès was the occasion of a mass demonstration of the workers of Paris on a scale not seen for many years; and this orderly tribute to a dead leader, whose appeal for international proletarian solidarity had had marked national overtones, was widely acclaimed by the extreme Left as a symptom of the revolutionary fervour of the masses. It was at this moment, after the collapse of the Labour government in Great Britain, and the gradual disintegration of the Left coalition in France, that Treint launched, apparently without prompting from Moscow, a vigorous campaign against the dangers of Fascism, which he detected in all other parties, discerning "a fundamental identity between Fascism, social-democracy and anarchism".[3] The impulsive Doriot, the leader of the communist youth league, made things worse by a speech in

[1] This is indirectly confirmed by Treint, who accused Humbert-Droz of having intrigued in Moscow to secure the reinstatement of Rosmer and Monatte (see p. 152, note 2 below).

[2] See p. 150 above.

[3] This theme was developed in "theses on the international situation" prepared by Treint for the forthcoming party congress and submitted to the Politburo of the party at the end of November 1924 (*Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 2, November 28, 1924, pp. 89-101). The line was not new (see pp. 82-84 above), but seems to have been adopted in the PCF quite suddenly. Theses on the international situation in *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 43, October 24, 1924, pp. 1013-1015, treated the democratic-pacifist era as still in being, and did not mention Fascism; nor did an article by Treint published in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 8 (37), December 1924, cols. 131-148, but probably written not later than October. At the end of the year the CGTU issued a strongly worded warning "against Fascism and against the passivity of the government in regard to Fascism" (*L'Humanité*, January 3, 1925).

the Chamber in which he allowed himself to be provoked by taunts from the Right that communists supported a policy of violence:

> The rising class has the right to employ violence against the class which is declining. Against the decadent bourgeoisie proletarian violence is legitimate.[1]

This rhetoric caused serious alarm in Moscow, both for a general and for a particular reason. In general, the increasingly unfavourable international situation in the autumn and winter of 1924, and the recurrent nightmare of a coalition of European Powers against the Soviet Union, imposed a cautious policy, and rendered obsolete the Leftist attitudes adopted at the fifth congress of Comintern. The Estonian rising of December 1, 1924, once more illustrated the dangers of premature action; a repetition of this fiasco on a larger scale elsewhere was not to be thought of. In particular, the recognition of the Soviet Union by the French Government in October 1924 had inspired fleeting hopes in Moscow of detaching France from the incipient Anglo-German *rapprochement* set on foot by the London agreement of August 1924. At such a moment, the revival of visions of the PCF as an actively revolutionary party preparing to seize power in the name of the proletariat and of Comintern was highly inconvenient.

These preoccupations led to a summons to Treint to appear in Moscow in the new year of 1925. "Never", reported an unfriendly observer, "has Treint had so complete a head-washing as he received these last days in Moscow."[2] The three items in the indictment were the expulsions from the party, the "atmo-

[1] *L'Humanité*, December 10, 1924.

[2] For the discussions with Treint see p. 150, note 4 above. Previous friction between Treint and Comintern headquarters is amply documented. Humbert-Droz, who mistrusted him from the first (see p. 139 above), had had a disagreement with Treint at the time of the first Trotsky crisis at the end of 1923; after Monatte's and Rosmer's expulsion from the party in December 1924, they wrote an article referring to this disagreement, and alleging that Humbert-Droz at that time shared Trotsky's views. Humbert-Droz replied in *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 10, January 23, 1925, pp. 678-680, denying that his difference with Treint had had anything to do with the Trotsky crisis; this provoked a disagreeable retort from Treint, implying that Monatte's and Rosmer's allegations were in substance correct, and accusing Humbert-Droz of having since used his influence in Moscow in an attempt to secure the reinstatement of Monatte and Rosmer in the party (*ibid.* No. 12, February 6, 1925, pp. 738-740).

sphere of *putschism*" created in the party and the question of trade union unity. On the first item, Zinoviev told Treint firmly that no more expulsions could be tolerated, and that "the régime established in the French party cannot last". On the second item, Treint's concentration on the Fascist danger came under attack. Bukharin jested that, since Treint had unearthed social-fascists, anarcho-fascists and a Fascist Senate, nothing remained but to discover communist-fascists.[1] Zinoviev declared that Treint's theses on the international situation, as well as Sellier's still more violently anti-Fascist theses on the national situation, were nothing but "bad journalistic articles". But Zinoviev's remark, if correctly reported, was perhaps not intended to be taken seriously; for, while Sellier's theses appear to have been dropped,[2] a compromise was evidently worked out which enabled Treint to maintain his theses and save his face at the forthcoming party congress. Treint is said to have welcomed the strictures passed on him in Moscow as "cordial criticisms", and returned, chastened but edified, to Paris.

The third item in the indictment of the PCF, the question of trade union unity, recalled the Purcell fiasco of December 1924, and was complicated by relations with the CGTU. On January 9, 1925, during Treint's stay in Moscow, Zinoviev at a session of the presidium of IKKI exhorted the PCF to institute a campaign for national and international unity in the trade unions; and the CGTU was simultaneously prompted by Profintern to address a proposal to the CGT for a joint conference in September 1925 (when the CGT was to hold its annual congress) with a view to the unification of the French trade unions. Faced with these demands, the PCF, on the eve of its fourth congress, held a special

[1] The Right opposition in the PCF, which at first denied the existence of a Fascist danger, later leaned heavily on it to justify its demand for a united front of all parties opposed to Fascism, so that undue insistence on the Fascist danger became a deviation of the Right (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 3 (40), March 1925, pp. 140-141); but at Moscow in January 1925 it was a deviation of the ultra-Left.

[2] The theses had been published in *L'Humanité*, December 15, 1924, and in *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 6, December 26, 1924, pp. 412-424; they announced the end of the "democratic-pacifist period", dwelt long and loudly on the imminent Fascist danger ("we are not moving towards Fascism, it is already here"), and demanded "a broad single front against Fascism". So far as the imperfect records show, they were ignored at the congress in January 1925.

conference on the trade union question. This, evidently after some divided opinions, " marked its agreement with the unity proposals made by Profintern and by the CGTU, while demanding the greatest vigilance on the capital question, so that we may find ourselves . . . in the vanguard of the proletariat and not towed along by it " ; and it drafted a resolution for submission to the congress. The crucial point of the resolution was that communists should encourage " *the maintenance in the old CGT of trade unions a majority in which had pronounced in favour of the CGTU* ", thus preventing a split and working to obtain a position of " majority and control " in the CGT itself.[1] The policy of peaceful penetration of the " reformist " unions, originally adopted for countries where a large majority of workers were enrolled in these unions, was thus declared applicable to countries where the Red unions already commanded a majority of organized workers.

The fourth congress of the PCF met on January 17, 1925, at Clichy in the suburbs of Paris in a confused and tense atmosphere. It coincided with the publication of Zinoviev's circular letter on the Bolshevization of the parties, which demanded the creation in France of " a mass revolutionary party " ;[2] it was headlined in *L'Humanité* as " the congress of Bolshevization ". Two sets of theses on behalf of the opposition, signed by Berthelin and Loriot, were published in advance. The economic theses denied that the democratic-pacifist era had come to an end, and predicted that American economic hegemony might delay for some time longer the collapse of capitalism. The political theses protested against the régime of " *blind obedience* " in the party which was equivalent to dictatorship.[3] The congress was attended by 239 delegates, of whom 224 were described as workers.[4] Sémard made

[1] Sémard's original theses on trade union unity appeared in *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 6, December 26, 1924, pp. 425-428 ; for reports by Sémard on the discussions in Moscow and Paris see *ibid.* No. 11, January 30, 1925, pp. 700-702 and *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 20, February 3, 1925, pp. 263-264.

[2] For this letter see p. 294 below.

[3] *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 2, January 9, 1925, pp. 555-558.

[4] No official record of the congress or of the resolutions adopted by it was published. *L'Humanité*, January 18-23, 1925, carried fairly full daily reports of its proceedings, and some of its resolutions were published *ibid.* January 25, 1925 ; the account of the congress which follows is derived from this source except where other sources are indicated. Many of the theses on which the resolutions were based were published in advance in *Cahiers du Bolchevisme.*

the main report on party affairs. But the sensation of the first day's proceedings was the reading by Treint of an intercepted letter of November 26, 1924, from Souvarine in Moscow to Rosmer in Paris, which had probably been communicated to Treint in Moscow; Souvarine had called the Russian party "a party with necks bowed", and continued:

> Salvation would be found in a great crisis imperilling the revolution. Then the whole party would turn to Trotsky.

Dunois and Loriot, as the principal spokesmen of a Right opposition, dissociated themselves from Trotsky and Souvarine, but protested against the recent expulsions and against the growth of centralization and dictatorship in the PCF; only Loriot openly attacked the resolutions of the fifth congress of Comintern on the united front and on the reorganization of the parties. On the second day Cachin put forward theses on the application of united front tactics to the forthcoming municipal elections in May 1925: at the first ballot on May 3 the Bloc Ouvrier et Paysan sponsored by the party was to put forward its own list of candidates, at the second ballot a week later it would be prepared to negotiate a common list with any other party on the basis of immediate demands in cases where failure to do so might mean a victory of the Right.[1] On the following day, January 19, 1925, Treint presented his theses on the international situation, maintaining that "the democratic-pacifist era has passed", and that "we are witnessing a veritable 'Fascization' of social-democracy".[2] This seemed to confirm the view of a turn to the Left as the logical result of the ending of the "democratic-pacifist" era after the defeat of the British Labour government and the weakening of the Bloc des Gauches in France. Humbert-Droz, the delegate of IKKI to the congress, dwelt on the need for the Bolshevization of the PCF, denied that any differences of opinion had occurred

For summary accounts of the congress see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 27, February 20, 1925, pp. 400-402 (Treint's account); *Die Internationale*, viii, No. 2, February 1925, pp. 60-62; *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 3 (40), March 1925, pp. 130-144.

[1] The programme of the Bloc Ouvrier et Paysan and theses on the application of these tactics to the municipal elections had already been published in *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 45, November 7, 1924, pp. 1055-1058; *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 4, December 12, 1924, pp. 254-259. The policy was explained in detail by Treint after the congress *ibid.* No. 13, February 15, 1925, p. 789.

[2] For Treint's theses see p. 151, note 3 above.

since the fifth congress of Comintern between IKKI and the French party Politburo, and launched the slogan of the " normalization " of the PCF, which was intended to imply a cessation of the procedure of the expulsion of dissidents, but was repeated without any clear or consistent meaning for several months. On the major tactical issue, Humbert-Droz admitted that the masses still supported the Bloc des Gauches, but declared that they must be wooed away from it " before they become Fascist " — an injunction which was compatible with a " from below " interpretation of the united front, and did not contradict the hypothesis of a turn to the Left in Comintern policy.

The congress ended on January 22, 1925, with the adoption of resolutions and the election of a central committee. The critical issue of party discipline was solved by a compromise. The previous expulsions were confirmed, but nobody else was to be expelled ; the right of the opposition at the congress to oppose was thus tacitly confirmed. A new central committee was elected unanimously, the first three names (in that order) being Sémard, Treint and Suzanne Girault. Suzanne Girault was the most powerful figure in the Paris organization of the party, and her rise to power indicated the growing predominance of Paris in the party councils. Treint's theses on the international situation were approved in principle. But it was pointed out that they were two months old ; and the central committee was instructed to bring them up to date. The two main points on which they were said to require modification were the intensification of the campaign of the imperialist Powers against the Soviet Union and the need to counteract it, and the development of national liberation movements among the colonial peoples of North Africa.[1] A separate resolution on colonial questions attracted little attention, and seems to have been adopted without debate.[2] Finally the congress adopted a party statute which firmly established organization by cells as the basis of the party, and a resolution prescribing that the reorganization should be completed by April 1, 1925 ;[3] and this encouraged Treint, in his subsequent account, to describe

[1] No publication of a revised version of the theses has been traced.

[2] See p. 352 below.

[3] The text of the statute is in *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 6, December 26, 1924, pp. 429-436 ; for the resolution on reorganization see p. 924, note 3 below.

it as " a genuine party congress of Bolshevization ", and to proclaim that " the Bolshevized party will Bolshevize the proletariat and the working masses of France and the colonies by strengthening its apparatus and its organization ".[1] The outcome of the congress had been unexpectedly satisfactory. The required steps towards the Bolshevization of the PCF had been taken. No further measures of discipline had been imposed. The resolutions had been carried unanimously. But the tradition of uninhibited freedom of dissent in the party had been scotched rather than killed.

(*d*) *The Italian Communist Party (PCI)*

The Italian Communist Party presented a baffling problem. In a country where industrial development was limited to a few special regions, and the workers were not strongly organized, the parties of the Left had throughout the period of their growth been dominated by intellectuals, and questions of theory had loomed larger than questions of organization. In this respect the Italian Left stood at the opposite extreme to the British Left. Both Marxism and syndicalism had their enthusiastic adherents; and this division still further weakened the Italian Left as a political force. Moreover, the Marxists disputed among themselves. The Italian Socialist Party (PSI) which joined Comintern in 1919 embraced several different *nuances* of Marxist doctrine; and Serrati, who led its delegation at the second congress of Comintern in 1920, did not hesitate to cross swords with Lenin in the name of Marxist orthodoxy.[2] When the split came at Leghorn in January 1921, the newly-born Italian Communist Party (PCI) achieved an unwonted doctrinal purity, but at the cost of losing such mass support as the PSI had enjoyed.[3] At the third congress of Comintern in June–July 1921 Terracini, the spokesman of the PCI, had opposed the tactics of the united front; and Lenin denounced Terracini's opinions as " ' Leftist ' follies ".[4] Once the doctrine of the united front had been proclaimed by IKKI,[5] the attitude of the PCI was patently unaccept-

[1] For Treint's account see p. 154, note 4 above.
[2] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 140-141, 256-257.
[3] See *ibid.* Vol. 3, pp. 225-226. [4] Lenin, *Sochineniya*, xxvi, 441.
[5] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 406-407.

able to Moscow; and it was rendered untenable when, at a congress of the PCI at Rome in March 1922, Bordiga, who had led the Left minority at the Leghorn congress, and had since been the secretary-general and leading personality of the PCI, put forward theses which became the official programme of the party. These denied the view that it was necessary for the party, in order to make a revolution, to have under its leadership "a majority of the proletariat", and rejected the policies of the united front and of the formation of communist fractions in non-party workers' movements.[1] From this moment it became clear in Moscow that the only hope of gearing the PCI to the Comintern line was to oust Bordiga from the leadership. But the fissiparous tendencies of the Italian Left soon brought about another change. At its congress in Rome in October 1922, the PSI again split in two, shedding its Right wing. At the fourth congress of Comintern in Moscow in the following month, at the moment when Mussolini was consolidating his seizure of power in Italy, both PCI and PSI were represented; and a proposal was adopted to negotiate a fusion between the PCI and the main body of the PSI led by Serrati.[2]

But this was the beginning, not the end, of the Italian embarrassments of Comintern. On January 6, 1923, the presidium of IKKI resolved that the "fusionists" in the PSI should call for

[1] For a summary of the theses see *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 7 (44), July 1925, pp. 115-117; they were several times referred to at the fifth congress of Comintern (*Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 101, 155-157, 256; ii, 600). In spite of the efforts of Humbert-Droz and Kolarov, who attended the Rome congress as delegates of IKKI, Bordiga's theses were carried by an overwhelming majority (report of March 26, 1922, in the Humbert-Droz archives, 0003).

[2] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 456; Bordiga, who consistently opposed all plans for a united front with other parties against Fascism (see p. 84 above), later claimed that Lenin had been opposed to this decision — an imputation which Zinoviev indignantly denied (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 444). According to *Die Kommunistische Partei Italiens* (German transl. from Italian, 1952), p. 43, a majority of the Italian delegates accepted the decision, and Gramsci replaced Bordiga as leader of the delegation; Humbert-Droz recalled later that, after the fourth congress, Comintern "was obliged to remove Bordiga from the leadership of the party and open a campaign in the party against the ultra-Left ideology" (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 2 (51), February 1926, p. 86). But Bordiga remained in effective control of the party throughout 1923, while Gramsci was in Moscow, and in 1924 still retained the support of a majority of the rank and file (see p. 163 below).

a party congress ; if this were not realized within six weeks, they should declare themselves the only true representatives of the PSI and carry out the amalgamation with the PCI.[1] At this point the persecution of all Left parties by the newly installed Fascist régime made further progress difficult. But, when the PSI contrived to hold an illegal congress in Milan in April 1923, it soon transpired that the difficulties were not purely external. Though it was claimed that 40 per cent of the delegates were in favour of fusion with the PCI, the majority was uncompromisingly hostile, and carried a resolution stating that its delegates who had agreed to fusion at the fourth congress of Comintern in the previous November had exceeded their mandate. It also refused to elect any " fusionists " (now commonly referred to as " Terzi-Internazionalisti " or " Terzini ") to the party central committee.[2] The congress represented the final defeat of Serrati by Nenni in the ranks of PSI. Serrati, who had been arrested after his return from Moscow in February 1923, was released from prison, and became the recognized leader of the Terzini. He was hailed in Moscow as the prodigal son who had repented of his error at the Leghorn congress of 1921, when he had prevented the accession of the PSI to Comintern by his refusal to accept the 21 conditions.[3] But trouble also arose from the communist side. Though some supporters of fusion had been introduced into the central committee of the PCI in April 1923 under pressure from IKKI,[4] the rank and file of the PCI showed little enthusiasm for the fusion which its delegates had been induced to approve in Moscow ; and dissension occurred between the two Comintern representatives in Italy at this time, Manuilsky and Rakosi, on the tactics to be followed.[5]

The session of the enlarged IKKI in June 1923, which was attended by delegates both of the PCI and of the PSI, attempted to grapple with this confused situation. Zinoviev, still whole-

[1] Humbert-Droz archives, 0006.

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 389-390 ; see also a report on the congress by Humbert-Droz from Paris (Humbert-Droz archives, 0007), commenting unfavourably on the attitude of Nenni.

[3] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 225-226.

[4] *Tridtsat' Let Zhizni i Bor'by Ital'yanskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (Russian transl. from Italian, 1953), p. 641.

[5] Humbert-Droz archives, 0007.

heartedly committed to the policy of the united front, attacked Bordiga and the central committee of the PCI for their intransigence. He minimized hostility in the PSI to the fusion, attributing it to the conditions of " white terror " which had made the Milan congress not truly representative; he proposed that the PSI should be admitted to Comintern as a sympathizing party, and that the PCI and the PSI should then establish a united front under the Comintern aegis.[1] This proposal pleased neither side. After an Italian delegate had protested against Zinoviev's attacks on the PCI, representatives of the PCI and the PSI both accepted the proposal in principle, the former with an open lack of enthusiasm.[2] During the session a letter was received from the central committee of the PSI dated June 10, 1923, accepting " the principles that lay at the foundation of Comintern ", but declaring that the fourth congress had given to these principles " an extreme authoritarian character ". The letter made it plain that the PSI refused to abandon either its name or its autonomy, and that Comintern must accept it as it was without further discussion or not at all; failing this, the party would be obliged to take action against the Terzini, who agitated for fusion at all costs.[3] Notwithstanding these discouragements, the enlarged IKKI was anxious to leave no stone unturned to demonstrate its desire for union, and adopted a resolution providing for a bloc for common action between the PSI and the PCI; the PSI was invited to send delegates to Moscow as soon as possible to bring about " its adhesion to the Communist International ".[4] By way of easing the situation in the PCI it also recommended that two representatives of the party minority should be added to the central committee; and this was accepted under protest by the majority, whose spokesman, in voting for the main resolution, made no secret of his dislike of almost everything in it.[5]

This compromising and ambiguous conclusion made the worst of both worlds. A majority of PCI, including the whole of its Left wing, was outraged by the proposition that an invitation to

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1923), pp. 22-25.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 48-49, 72-73, 78.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 264-265.

[4] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 389-390.

[5] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1923), pp. 265-267.

Moscow should be extended over its head to its long-standing enemy and rival. On the other hand, the suggestion that the PSI should " adhere to " Comintern rather than negotiate with it on equal terms affronted the leaders of the PSI, who proceeded to break off negotiations with Moscow and to expel the Terzini from the party,[1] thus ending any hope of a compromise. But the intransigence of the PSI merely produced a corresponding phenomenon on the other side. The central committee of the PCI, still dominated by Bordigists, far from holding out a welcoming hand to the Terzini, rigidly insisted on the principle of " individual adhesion " to the PCI.[2] Personal jealousies no doubt also played their part. Serrati, in view of his past record, is said to have enjoyed no confidence in the PCI, and not even among the Terzini.[3]

This total defiance by the leaders of the PCI of united front policies continued to excite annoyance in Comintern circles ; and Humbert-Droz, who at this period divided his time between Paris and Rome, set to work to shake Bordiga's unwelcome predominance in the party. Gramsci, who, after attending the fourth congress of Comintern in November 1922, had remained in Moscow throughout the greater part of 1923, became the pivot of a centre group, which sought to establish a half-way house between Bordiga's extreme Left position and the now discredited Right. In September 1923, Togliatti, Gennari and Tasca, who had been present with Gramsci at the enlarged IKKI in Moscow in the previous June, were arrested on their return to Italy. Three months later they were released ; and Togliatti became the principal collaborator of Gramsci, who had meanwhile moved from Moscow to Vienna, in building up the centre group in the PCI.[4] On December 26, 1923, Humbert-Droz reported to Zinoviev that Bordiga's majority was " far from homogeneous ", and hoped to encourage " the moderate wing of the majority " to be more critical of current policies. Within the next few months

[1] *Ibid.* p. 467.

[2] Letter of Humbert-Droz to Zinoviev, December 26, 1923 (Humbert-Droz archives, 0008).

[3] *Ibid.* 0020.

[4] F. Bellini and G. Galli, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano* (Milan, 1953), pp. 101-106. For the Turin group to which Gramsci and Togliatti originally belonged see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 141 ; *Ordine Nuovo* was suppressed in October 1922.

the centre group apparently secured control of the central committee. On January 26, 1924, Humbert-Droz concluded with somewhat premature optimism that " the extreme group of Bordiga is being reduced to a small minority, and the majority forms a centre which still hesitates, but, after discussion, ralliies to a policy more realistic and more advantageous for the party ".[1] On the other hand fears were felt that, if matters were pressed too far, Bordiga might come out in open revolt.[2] Arrangements were made at this time to start a new party journal in Milan under the title *Unità*; and since it was to be financed, initially at any rate, from Comintern funds,[3] it could be taken for granted that it would conform to the Comintern line. Gramsci was to be its editor; and its first issue appeared on February 12, 1924. A few weeks later Humbert-Droz reported once more that Gramsci was consolidating a centre position independent of Tasca on the Right and of Bordiga on the Left.[4]

This did not, however, dispose of the problem of the Terzini. On February 8, 1924, a somewhat cryptic instruction was sent from the presidium of IKKI to the central committee of the PCI. " Complete fusion " with the PSI was declared to be still the goal; failing this, " the conquest of the largest possible number of members of the PSI ". But an open split in the PSI and the formation of a separate party of Terzi-Internazionalisti was deprecated.[5] This could be read as an endorsement of Bordiga's insistence on " individual adhesion ". The reluctance of IKKI to give clear directives in disputed questions of tactics was once again in evidence. Meanwhile it was symptomatic of the toleration of democratic forms still shown by the Fascist régime that, at the elections of April 10, 1924 (the first to be held under the régime), the PCI and the Terzini were able to form a joint workers' bloc and put forward candidates. The result was an unexpected success. The joint list received 268,000 votes and secured 19

[1] Both these reports are in the Humbert-Droz archives, 0008, 0012.

[2] *Ibid.* 0014.

[3] On February 1, 1924, Humbert-Droz reported that he had drawn 50,000 lire from Comintern funds to enable the contract with the printer to be signed (Humbert-Droz archives, 0013); in spite of this benefaction, however, the party leaders complained a few weeks later of a cut in their budget (*ibid.* 0027).

[4] *Ibid.* 0034.

[5] *Ibid.* 0017; for a further letter from IKKI of February 29, 1924, attempting to clarify the tactics to be adopted, see *ibid.* 0028.

seats, of which 15 went to members of the PCI.[1] Gramsci was one of those elected. Relying on the immunity of a deputy, he now returned to Italy to take an active part in the affairs of the PCI.[2]

The issue in the PCI came to a head at a meeting of party secretaries (which took the place of an enlarged central committee) held at Como in the latter part of May 1924.[3] Three groups now took the field. The centre group led by Gramsci and Togliatti commanded a majority in the central committee, and stood between the Right group of Tasca, and Bordiga's Left group. All three put forward draft resolutions. Bordiga's draft accepted the united front only with workers, not with other political parties, proposed to pursue the struggle against the PSI, including the Terzini, in so far as these formed an organized group, and demanded absolute independence of action for the PCI, including independence of Comintern. Tasca's draft gave unconditional support to the policies of the united front and the worker-peasant government, and specifically rejected the theses adopted under Bordiga's leadership at the Rome congress of 1922.[4] Togliatti's draft professed to welcome the Left orientation manifested at the conference, but supported the principle of the united front, though it suggested that a more precise formulation was required than that of the fourth congress of Comintern in order to counteract the misinterpretations which had occurred in the KPD. It strongly emphasized the need to keep in step with Comintern and the fatal consequences for the party of a break with Moscow. Bordiga's skill, eloquence and determination completely carried the day. His resolution secured 41 votes against 10 for Tasca's and 8 for Togliatti's. But this rude rejection of Togliatti's tactful attempt at compromise did not alter the situation, since the centre group apparently retained its majority in the central committee. In effect the whole issue was transferred to

[1] For a preliminary report of April 11, 1924, estimating the number at 18 seats with 13 communists see Humbert-Droz archives, 0045. In February Humbert-Droz had hoped only for 8 seats with 5 communists (*ibid.* 0014).

[2] F. Bellini and G. Galli, *Storia del Partito Comunista Italiano* (Milan, 1953), pp. 110-111.

[3] An account of the meeting in *Lo Stato Operaio*, May 29, 1924 (which has not been available) was summarized in the KPD publication *Materialen zum V. Weltkongress der Komintern* (1924), pp. 54-58.

[4] See p. 158 above.

the fifth congress of Comintern which opened in Moscow in the following month. On the eve of the congress an event occurred in Italy which proved to be a turning-point in the history of the régime and in the attitude of other parties towards it: the murder of Matteotti on June 10, 1924. The PCI issued an appeal to workers and peasants, which was published in *Unità* five days later, to unite under the slogan "Down with the government of Fascist murderers". But little attention was paid to this event by Comintern, which was preoccupied by the internal problems of the PCI.

All three groups in the PCI were represented at the congress. Gramsci remained in Italy, and Togliatti, under the pseudonym of Ercoli, spoke for the centre; Bordiga appeared in person and under his own name.[1] Zinoviev in his opening report approached the Italian question in a conciliatory mood. The PCI must admit the Terzini to the party and even to the leadership; the door must be left open for other members of the PSI. As for the three fractions in the PCI, Zinoviev tactfully refused to enquire which was in a majority; but "Bordiga and his friends", though they were "good revolutionaries", must "shed their dogmatism" in order to render greater services to the Italian revolution.[2] As the congress proceeded, Bordiga emerged as the spokesman of the ultra-Left on all major issues,[3] but left the affairs of the Italian party to his lieutenant "Rossi", who referred openly to "differences of opinion between us and Comintern", defended the Rome theses, declared that the slogan of the "workers' government" was acceptable if, but only if, it were a synonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and argued that the united front could mean only "*unity of the working masses under the single leadership of the communist party*".[4] Tasca, appearing as "Rienzi", who frankly admitted that he represented a minority of the party, expressed complete solidarity with Zinoviev; but even he believed

[1] Since nearly all the members of the Italian delegation used pseudonyms, it is rarely possible to identify individuals; Tasca, who appeared as "Serra" at the enlarged IKKI of June 1923 (*Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolnitel'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1923), pp. 234-235), spoke at the fifth congress under the name "Rienzi"; "Rossi" may have been Grieco (see p. 367 below).

[2] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 100-102.

[3] See pp. 77-78 above.

[4] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 154-157.

that the united front formulas of the fourth congress needed modification in the light of the changed circumstances.[1] The rising star of the Italian party at the congress was Togliatti, whose strategic position as the leader of a centre group seeking to mediate between the followers of Bordiga and the minority Right wing brought him nearest to the standpoint of Comintern. He himself, as at the Como conference in May 1924, leaned to the Left rather than to the Right, being unwilling to make further concessions in order to admit members of the PSI.[2] The Italian commission of the congress wrestled for four days with the party differences. It succeeded in drafting a " programme of action " for the Italian party. But when Manuilsky, as president of the commission, presented the programme to the congress, he was obliged to admit that the Left had refused to accept the programme, or to participate in the party central committee. The commission had considered that two further documents were also required: an appeal by Comintern to the Italian workers for fusion with the PCI, which would bring about, first of all, a split in the ranks of the PSI, and then a concentration of all revolutionary forces in the PCI; and an open letter to the members of the PCI insisting, in view of the long-standing attitude of the Left, on the necessity of real (and not merely formal) discipline in the party. Manuilsky proposed that the drafting of these documents, and any further consideration of the Italian question, should be left to the session of the enlarged IKKI which would follow the congress. Togliatti, while accepting the conclusions of the commission on behalf of the centre group, frankly declared that the clause in the programme which repeated the invitation of June 1923 to the PSI would in no way help to win over " the socialist masses in Italy ", and constituted an obstacle to acceptance of the standpoint of Comintern by the majority of the PCI.[3]

What happened in the next few days is not clear. But, when the Italian question came up again at the immediately following session of IKKI, a certain relaxation of tension was apparent. Bordiga, at the concluding session of the congress itself, had adopted a comparatively tolerant attitude to the general resolution on tactics;[4] and the Left group in the Italian delegation informed

[1] *Ibid.* i, 253-257.
[2] *Ibid.* i, 375-379.
[3] *Ibid.* ii, 1012-1014.
[4] See p. 80 above.

the Italian commission that it would " cooperate in carrying out the decisions of the congress in a disciplined manner ". Manuilsky now stated that, while resignations were not permitted by the statutes of Comintern, it would be prudent in the interests of unity to accept the resignation of the four Italian Leftists from the central committee of the PCI ; and the commission recommended that the central committee of the PCI should be composed of 9 members of the centre group, 4 members of the Right, and 4 Terzini. Manuilsky admitted that this decision constituted " a serious intervention in the inner life of the party ", but argued that there was no alternative. Nobody contested this view. Bordiga in turn declared that the members of the Left would " not merely submit to the decisions of the International and of IKKI as a matter of discipline ", but would do everything to carry them out.[1] On this surprising note of concord the " programme of action " was accepted unanimously, and the proceedings ended. The programme declared that the PCI, while supporting " all steps of constitutional opposition designed to weaken and defeat Fascism ", could never be merely a Left wing in such an opposition, and must become " the indispensable core round which a class opposition must be formed ". The invitation of June 1923 to the PSI could no longer be considered as addressed to its " present counter-revolutionary leaders ", but to the " worker-socialists " who formed the mass of the party. The central committee of the PCI must work for " cooperation with the so-called ' Left ' (the group of Bordiga) ", and a party congress should be convened within six months.[2] Both the appeal to the Italian workers and the open letter to members of the party recommended by the Italian commission were duly despatched on July 23, 1924 — apparently without further discussion.[3] Bordiga and Togliatti were both elected members of IKKI ;

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1028-1029; this did not deter Bordiga and his friends from voting, later in the same meeting, against the expulsion of Souvarine (see p. 147 above), or Bordiga from recording his protest against the trade union resolution (see p. 556 below).

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 464-469.

[3] The date is given in A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *10 Let Kominterna* (1929), p. 331. The appeal was published in *Pravda*, July 30, 1924 ; the open letter has been traced only in *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 33, August 15, 1924, pp. 792-794.

and Togliatti was further rewarded for his share in bringing about the settlement by being elected to its presidium in the place of Bordiga.[1] The third congress of Profintern which immediately followed contributed to the spirit of compromise by simultaneously recommending both a policy of infiltration of the Fascist trade unions and a policy of calling on the workers to abandon the Fascist unions and form proletarian unions.[2]

These proceedings led to a certain *détente* in the PCI. The revulsion against the Matteotti murder temporarily strengthened the opposition to Fascism ; but the advantage of this accrued rather to the PSI and to the bourgeois opposition than to the PCI, though the latter gained some new members.[3] The Communist Youth League, a majority of which had supported Bordiga's views at the fifth congress of Comintern and at the ensuing fourth congress of KIM, now rallied to the official line.[4] The formal decision of the Terzini to merge with the PCI was taken on August 15, 1924.[5] On September 27, 1924, Maffi on behalf of the Terzini informed Zinoviev that " the fusion operations are now complete everywhere ", and asked for 21,000 lire to liquidate the financial obligations of the group — a request which Humbert-Droz supported.[6] A report from the central committee of the PCI to IKKI of October 7, 1924, claimed that the numbers of the party had increased from 12,000 before fusion to 20,000 after, and reported that all the district party congresses, except Naples (where Bordiga still had a majority), had endorsed the resolutions of the fifth congress.[7] But uneasiness was still rife in all sections

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1021. Bordiga had been elected to the presidium after the enlarged IKKI of June 1923 (A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *10 Let Kominterna* (1929), p. 317), but told Humbert-Droz in February 1924 that he refused to " play the rôle of a marionette in the presidium of IKKI " (Humbert-Droz archives, 0020).

[2] For these resolutions see p. 562 below.

[3] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 185.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 189.

[5] *Tridtsat' Let Zhizni i Bor'by Ital'yanskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (Russian transl. from Italian, 1953), p. 642.

[6] Humbert-Droz archives, 0057, 0060.

[7] *Ibid.* 0064 ; *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 185, claimed only 2500 new members from the fusion. According to an article in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 1 (38), January 1925, p. 122, the PCI had 30,000 members at this time, the youth league 10,000, and *Unità* a daily circulation of 40,000 ; but all these figures are probably exaggerated.

of the party. Bordiga continued to agitate against the decisions of the fifth congress and the current party line, and to win extensive support. Tasca refused a mandate from the executive committee to take charge of trade union work, and proved as intransigent on the Right as Bordiga on the Left. Maffi, the leader of the Terzini, protested that he was being treated in the PCI as a fifth wheel of the coach.[1]

Meanwhile a fresh embarrassment arose. Criticism of Bombacci's favourable references to Mussolini at the time of the Soviet-Italian negotiations in January 1924[2] had been symptomatic of an incompatibility between party principles and the exigencies of Soviet diplomacy. But for some time it seemed possible to keep them in separate compartments. Trotsky in May 1924 gave an interview to an Italian correspondent which was devoted to attacks on the Versailles treaty and French imperialism, and to the potential value of Soviet-Italian economic relations, and avoided ideological issues.[3] But the Matteotti murder sharpened all animosities and appeared to raise an issue of principle; and scandal broke out anew in the party when in July 1924, a few weeks after this event, Yurenev, the new Soviet Ambassador, gave a banquet for Mussolini.[4] It was intensified when it became known in October 1924 that Yurenev intended to invite Mussolini to the reception of November 7 on the anniversary of the revolution. This produced a protest from the central committee of the PCI to the presidium of IKKI and two indignant letters from Humbert-Droz, who complained that "workers who try to demonstrate will be beaten up and arrested in the streets, and on the same day Mussolini will be the guest of the Russian Ambassador"; he thought that "the communist party and the Russian revolution will be completely compromised among the Italian proletariat" by these proceedings, and urged

[1] Humbert-Droz archives, 0056, 0062, 0066.

[2] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 249, note 2; at the fifth congress of Comintern Togliatti demanded the removal of Bombacci from all responsible party posts (*Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.) i, 376).

[3] *Pravda*, May 10, 1924.

[4] Humbert-Droz archives, 0065. According to A. Barmine, *One Who Survived* (1945), p. 155, instructions were sent from Moscow to cancel the banquet, but Yurenev persisted; this sounds an unlikely story. Barmine was not in Italy at the time, and misdates the episode.

that Yurenev should be replaced by " someone who does not pay court to Fascism ".[1] But diplomatic proprieties took precedence over the susceptibilities of the PCI. A dispute whether or not to boycott the Fascist parliament was settled by a decision to send a single communist deputy to the opening session on November 12, 1924, to read a declaration of protest.[2] At the end of 1924 Humbert-Droz was relieved at his own request of his post as peripatetic Comintern representative in the Latin-speaking countries of Europe, and returned to Moscow. He complained that he had become too familiar a figure to the Italian police. He recommended that he should be succeeded by Manuilsky: the appointment of Rakosi would be " very badly received ".[3] Manuilsky never resided for any length of time in Rome, but during the next few years was a frequent visitor to the communist parties of western Europe. Humbert-Droz retained his position at the head of the Latin section of the secretariat of IKKI.

(e) *The Czechoslovak Communist Party*

The foundation of the Czechoslovak Communist Party took place in Prague in December 1920[4] as the result of a split in the Czech Social-Democratic Party which carried half its members into the new party. A similar split occurred in the social-democratic party of the German minority, and produced an independent communist party. At the third congress of Comintern in July 1921, which admitted the Czechoslovak party to membership, pressure was brought to bear to effect a fusion;[5] and from November 1921 onwards a single Czechoslovak Communist Party, containing Czech, German, Slovak, Magyar and Ruthene sections, carried the banner of communism in the Czechoslovak republic. Its leader was Šmeral, a former Czech social-democrat who during the war had headed the anti-war and anti-nationalist section of

[1] Humbert-Droz archives, 0065, 0066.

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 1 (38), January 1925, p. 125.

[3] Humbert-Droz archives, 0059, 0061, 0071, 0075.

[4] For an abortive attempt to found a party in Moscow in 1918 see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 73, note 2.

[5] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 165; the German party was invited to send delegates to the congress (*Protokoll des III. Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1921), p. 12), but apparently failed to do so.

the party and was thus regarded as belonging to the extreme Left. Like the KPD, the Czechoslovak Communist Party was a mass party, claiming 170,000 members in 1922.[1] Like the KPD, it included in its membership a high proportion of former social-democrats, and a high proportion of industrial workers.[2]

The development of the Czechoslovak Communist Party was in some respects analogous to that of the KPD. Its origins accounted for some social-democratic leanings. But, unlike the KPD, it had never lived through a period of illegality and systematic persecution by the authorities, and therefore had more respect for legal and constitutional forms; it was ready to interpret the slogans of the united front and the workers' government in the broad sense of cooperation with social-democrats and other Left parties for specific ends. In the heyday of the united front this line met with full approval in Moscow. At its session in July 1922 the enlarged IKKI condemned a dissentient group in the Czechoslovak party, led by one Jilek, for its opposition to united front tactics and to centralized discipline in the party, and endorsed the policy of "the creation of a united front to win over a majority of the Czechoslovak proletariat".[3] A crisis occurred in September 1922, and Jilek and his immediate followers were expelled from the party.[4] The issue came before the fourth congress of Comintern in November 1922, where the discussion ran on parallel lines to the debate on German affairs.[5] Šmeral's leadership, like that of Brandler in the KPD, received a vote of confidence. The opposition charge against Šmeral of having attempted to "draw the workers into a government coalition with Left elements of the bourgeoisie" was dismissed as "completely

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923*, Vol. 3, p. 451. In 1924, the first year for which detailed figures were available, the total was 136,726; of these 61·56 per cent were Czechs, 20·95 per cent Germans, 7·57 per cent Slovaks, 5·4 per cent Magyars, 3·57 per cent Ruthenes and 0·95 per cent Poles (*Československý Časopis Historický*, iii (1955), No. 4, p. 578; cf. *ibid.* p. 586, note 72, where the number of paying members is said to have been just under 100,000).

[2] Of the total membership in 1924, 73 per cent were said to have been former social-democrats; of those who belonged to trade unions 45 per cent were affiliated to Profintern (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 4, January 6, 1925, p. 51: for the trade union question see pp. 171-173 below).

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 281-284.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 360.

[5] For the latter see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 452-453.

unfounded ". On the other hand, as in the KPD, reprisals against the Left were not in order. The expulsion of Jilek and his supporters was described as " inopportune ", and was revoked ; and the attribution of party shortcomings to " the transition from a social-democratic party to a communist party " left the impression that the opposition case had after all had some justification or excuse.[1] The policies of the united front and the workers' government were whole-heartedly endorsed by the first congress of the Czechoslovak party,[2] held in Prague on February 2-5, 1923. The congress followed immediately on the KPD congress at Leipzig, where the issue had been fiercely contested between so-called Right and Left factions, and victory had gone to the Right.[3] The principal resolution of the Prague congress corresponded so closely to that of Leipzig that it was reasonable to assume direct imitation or a common inspiration.[4] The main result of the congress was to confirm Šmeral's cautious leadership and to set the seal on the interpretation of the united front approved at the fourth congress of Comintern.

Disputed issues in the Czechoslovak party, as in other parties, soon became interwoven with trade union problems, which were here particularly complex. The split between communists and social-democrats at the end of 1920, which had led a year later to the formation of a united Czechoslovak Communist Party, was reproduced in the trade union movement, when a large number of unions joined Profintern. The last trade union congress in which both social-democrats and communists participated was held in January 1922, and was hopelessly divided in questions of policy, the social-democrats and their sympathizers commanding some 238,000 votes and the " Red " trade unions affiliated to Profintern 220,000. A complete break was now unavoidable. During 1922 communists and communist trade unions were expelled from trade unions and federations affiliated to Amsterdam ; and in

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 360-362.

[2] The founding congress, which in most parties was treated as the first, remained in the Czechoslovak party outside the numbered series.

[3] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 157-158.

[4] Zinoviev, at the fifth congress of Comintern, when Rightist tendencies were under attack, made play with the similarity and implied that Radek had been responsible for both resolutions (*Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 85 ; for an account of the Prague congress see *Ceskoslovensky Časopis Historicky*, iii (1955), No. 4, pp. 557-561.

October of that year the Red unions held a separate congress, and decided to create an organization of their own, known as the Multinational General Trade Union (the term " multinational " referring to the diverse nationalities of Czechoslovakia). This came into being in January 1923.[1] Throughout the nineteen-twenties the number of Czechoslovak trade unionists affiliated to Profintern seems to have exceeded the number affiliated to Amsterdam ; but a large number of unions remained independent of either body, so that the Red unions did not at any time represent an absolute majority of the organized workers.[2] Even within the Red unions obstinate divisions persisted. National animosities still kept Red Czech and Red German unions apart, even in the same industry : some of the German unions, though affiliated to Profintern, maintained a separate organization of their own at Reichenberg, which was a rival to MOS. In general MOS proved unpopular throughout the movement ; and many Red trade unions, in defiance of injunctions from Moscow, at first refused to join it.[3]

Nor were the leaders of the Red unions easily persuaded to adapt themselves to the growing pressure from Profintern to pursue united front tactics with the social-democratic unions, and to maintain trade union unity by instructing communist workers to remain in these unions. One of the charges brought against the Jilek opposition by the enlarged IKKI in July 1922 was that it had " helped to strengthen the tendency to splitting operations in the trade unions, thus putting a brake on the systematic and planned conquest of the trade unions ".[4] When expulsions of communists from the social-democratic unions affiliated to Amsterdam became common, and the Red

[1] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 6 (41), June 1924, pp. 353-357 ; the new organization was known in Russian as Mezhnatsional'nyi Obshche-professional'nyi Soyuz (MOS, or, by its German initials, IAV).

[2] Statistics for 1924 showed about 230,000 trade unionists affiliated to Profintern and 220,000 to Amsterdam out of a total of 867,000 (*ibid.* No. 7-8 (42-43), July–August 1924, p. 15).

[3] These difficulties were aired at the session of the central council of Profintern in June–July 1923 (*Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrats der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (1923), pp. 69-71), and were frequently discussed in the literature of the period ; friction between Czech and German textile unions was particularly acute (*Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internatsionale vom IV. bis V. Weltkongress* (1924), p. 30).

[4] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 282.

unions set up their own organization, the fourth congress of Comintern so far relented as to issue the injunction "to unite into strong trade union organizations all workers excluded from the Amsterdam trade unions".[1] But the immediately following second congress of Profintern repeated the warning to the Czechoslovak unions against "the creation of new organizational forms"; [2] and the policy of refusing to countenance voluntary defections from social-democratic to Red trade unions remained in force. On April 2, 1923, the executive bureau of Profintern instructed MOS, in conjunction with the communist party, "to do everything possible to preserve the unity of those reformist federations which are not yet split, by the ideological organization of its partisans within the reformist organizations".[3] But in Czechoslovakia, even more than in France, the preponderance of Red over Amsterdam unions made these cautious tactics of compromise seem pointless and pusillanimous. To strengthen the Red unions by drawing into them the minority of communists and communist sympathizers still left in the Amsterdam unions was the only policy which made obvious sense; and, in spite of warnings from Moscow, it was freely pursued.

The first serious crisis which disturbed the even tenor of Czechoslovak party affairs occurred in the winter of 1923–1924, when the party, by analogy rather than through any direct interest, became involved in the controversies in the German and Russian parties. The policy and outlook of Šmeral closely resembled those of Brandler; and, when Brandler, after the German failure of October 1923, succumbed to attacks from the Left wing of the KPD, Šmeral became automatically vulnerable to similar attacks in the Czechoslovak party. Moreover, Šmeral not only took no sides in the controversy about Trotsky, but evidently regarded the campaign against him with disfavour.[4] A party conference

[1] *Ibid.* p. 362.

[2] *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), p. 100.

[3] *L'Activité de l'ISR: Rapport pour le III^e Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), p. 35; "ideological organization" meant that Red unions belonging to reformist federations were not formally to join Profintern, but to confine their loyalty to it to the ideological plane.

[4] Trotsky had, however, a low opinion of Šmeral, whose opinions he compared to "a spot of melting grease": "consistency is to Šmeral what sincerity was to Tartuffe, or disinterestedness to Shylock" (Trotsky archives, T 3129, pp. 9-10).

met at Brno on May 4-5, 1924. The Left wing was formed mainly by Slovak and German-speaking delegates and by the representatives of the Communist Youth League.[1] The predominantly Czech Right was still firmly entrenched. But Šmeral continued to steer a middle course ; and once again an attempt was made to reach a compromise. The resolution of the conference endorsed the pronouncements of IKKI on the situations in the Russian and German parties, and declared that the maintenance of unity in the Russian party was essential. But it refrained from any direct condemnation of Trotsky, and expressed surprise at the " sharp forms " taken by the controversy.[2] Now that the German and French parties had been called to order, this amounted to a gesture of defiance. The conference also adopted resolutions on the trade union question and on the reorganization of the party in factory cells.[3] On the latter issue, the party Right, represented by Bubnik, Hula and Muna, fought a delaying action, seeking to maintain the existing party " fractions " in the factories, and to relegate the introduction of a " cell " system to the distant future.[4]

In these circumstances, the fifth congress of Comintern, meeting six weeks after the Brno conference, found in the Czechoslovak party one of the most awkward obstacles to the much advertised " turn to the Left " in policy and leadership. The 19 voting members of the Czechoslovak delegation were drawn from every wing of the party.[5] The sniping began at once in the opening report of Zinoviev, who detected opportunist errors in articles by Hula, a recognised spokesman of the Right, and by Vanek, described as an " incurable centrist ", and called for " fresh *proletarian* forces " in the leadership. Zinoviev drew an explicit parallel between Šmeral and Brandler, and accused the Czechoslovak party of neglecting the peasant and of following

[1] *Ceskoslovensky Časopis Historicky*, iii (1955), No. 4, p. 569.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 53, May 9, 1924, pp. 636-637 ; *Materialen zum V. Kongress der Komintern* (1924), pp. 43-44.

[3] For these resolutions see *Založeni Komunisticke Strany Československa* (1954), pp. 160-168.

[4] *Ceskoslovensky Časopis Historicky*, iii (1955), No. 4, pp. 569-570.

[5] *Pyatyi Vsemirnyi Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), ii, 244-245 lists 20 Czechoslovak delegates of whom 19 had voting rights. The list may not be reliable ; Bubnik appears on it, though there is no other evidence of his presence at the congress, and Vasiliev (see p. 177 below) does not.

Brandler's interpretation of the slogans of the united front and the workers' government.[1] Šmeral, in the name of the majority of the Czechoslovak delegation, cautiously admitted that " our party is in truth not a perfect Bolshevik party, inasmuch as outside the Russian party no such party exists in the Communist International ", but repelled Zinoviev's specific strictures against it.[2] This provoked a curt retort from Ruth Fischer, who accused Šmeral of practising " diplomacy ", and once more compared him with Brandler.[3] Two dissentient Left-wing groups in the Czechoslovak party made declarations criticizing the party leaders; and Neurath, who was beginning to emerge as the leader of the party Left and the faithful spokesman of the Comintern line, supported Zinoviev and attacked Šmeral and Radek in terms which had by now become familiar.[4] Kreibich spoke with more frankness, but less discretion, than Šmeral in defending the decisions of the fourth congress on the united front and the workers' government against Zinoviev's present interpretations of them. On one point, however, in spite of a challenge from Ruth Fischer (" Talk about Russia! "), he remained obstinately silent.[5] The Czechoslovak Right was still guilty of the unforgivable sin of seeking to escape into neutrality on the issue of Trotskyism.[6] After another Czechoslovak delegate of the Left had accused the majority of following " the road of parliamentarianism and the bourgeois constitution ", and alleged that " all mention of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the conquest of power has disappeared from the propaganda lexicon of the Czechoslovak Communist Party ",[7] Zinoviev, in his speech at the end of the debate, summed up heavily against Šmeral and Kreibich, accusing them of " diplomacy ", lack of frankness and opportunism. But he was forced to admit that " the chief responsible political leader of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is comrade Šmeral on the strength of the preponderant influence which he enjoys in the movement ". Kreibich was more sharply attacked for balancing

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 68-70, 85-86, 98-99.

[2] *Ibid.* i, 159-162.

[3] *Ibid.* i, 207-208.

[4] *Ibid.* i, 209-211, 214-217, 300-304.

[5] *Ibid.* i, 385-390.

[6] Šmeral and Neurath were the Czechoslovak delegates on the Russian commission set up by the congress (*ibid.* ii, 1061), which apparently never met (see p. 91 above).

[7] *Ibid.* i, 408.

his extreme Leftist errors of the past with Rightist errors in the present.[1] The political commission, which drafted the resolution of the congress on the work of IKKI, added to the original draft clauses criticizing the behaviour of the Polish and Czechoslovak parties. The Czechoslovak party was " not free from opportunist errors and deviations ", and had failed to " combine parliamentary action with mass action " in such a way as to prepare the proletariat for revolution.[2] The main resolution on tactics, also drafted by the political commission, reiterated the charge of " Right tendencies " in the Czechoslovak party, similar to those which had led to " bankruptcy " in the KPD, and called on the party to recognize its past mistakes and " struggle against Right deviations ". It concluded with the ominous recommendation that " fresh forces " should be drawn into the party central committee, and that the leadership should " meet the just demands of the minority in a comradely and unprejudiced manner ".[3] But the comparative mildness of the language, and the absence of names, showed that no alternative leaders, over whom Comintern could cast its mantle, had yet emerged in the party. Šmeral's authority was still unbroken.

The policy of sapping and mining was continued in the discussions of the national question. This was a subject on which communist parties in the newly-formed states were notoriously vulnerable. Earlier in the year Kreibich had written an article in the Comintern journal on the minorities in Czechoslovakia, denouncing the policy of " national oppression " pursued by the Czechoslovak Government, but not saying a word about self-determination or the right of secession ;[4] and Sommer, a member of the KPD from Bohemia, had criticized the Czechoslovak party on this score in the German party journal.[5] A more crucial problem was that of Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia,[6] a region at the

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 498-500.

[2] *Ibid.* ii, 594 ; for the final text see *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 394.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 415.

[4] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 3, 1924, cols. 91-122.

[5] *Die Internationale*, vii, No. 9, May 20, 1924, pp. 308-312.

[6] This was its official Czechoslovak name ; in Russian it was known as Sub-Carpathian Russia (*Rus'* not *Rossiya*, the ethnographic, not the political, term), in Ukrainian as Carpatho-Ukraine.

easternmost tip of Czechoslovakia, more closely allied by linguistic and religious affinities to the Ukraine on its eastern, than to Slovakia on its western, frontier: its incongruous status in the Czechoslovak republic had been recognized by a promise of autonomy, which was not fulfilled. The first elections held there in the spring of 1924 had resulted in a triumph for the communists who, in spite of prohibitions on meetings and arrests of agitators, had won 40 per cent of the votes (100,000 out of 250,000) and emerged as by far the largest party — a victory doubtless to be attributed mainly to the agrarian discontents of a poor peasant population.[1] Zinoviev, in his report at the fifth congress of Comintern, referred to the elections in Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia, and, though admitting that "many Czech comrades" had "worked heroically" with the local communists, seized the occasion to accuse the party leaders of indifference to the peasant — and, by implication, to the national — question. Šmeral attempted, not very whole-heartedly, to rebut the charge;[2] and the subsequent attitude of Czechoslovak delegates, who were either silent on the issue of Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia or contented themselves with perfunctory references, suggested that it had some justification. In the middle of the proceedings a delegate arrived from the communist party of the region (a section of the Czechoslovak party), Vasiliev by name. In the still unfinished debate on Zinoviev's report he expressed effusive sympathy with Zinoviev's criticisms of the Czechoslovak party, and himself attacked it for failure to take an interest in the agrarian question, or to come out openly in favour of the incorporation of Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia in the Soviet Union.[3]

The attack was continued in the debate on the national

[1] For descriptions of the election see *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 3, 1924, cols. 393-410; *Krest'yanskii Internatsional*, No. 2, May 1924, pp. 40-42. According to Vasiliev's speech at the fifth congress of Comintern (see below), "not a week passes without workers' and peasants' blood flowing in Sub-Carpathian Russia"; this was no doubt a picturesque exaggeration, but extensive repression of peasant discontent and of communist propaganda was certainly practised.

[2] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 74, 160.

[3] *Ibid.* i, 429-431. Vasiliev's precise status is obscure; he spoke on behalf of the communist party of Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia, and said in the course of his speech: "We love our Czechoslovak Communist Party". But he arrived in Moscow late, and apparently alone; his name did not appear in the list of members of the Czechoslovak delegation (see p. 174, note 5 above).

question at a later stage in the proceedings. Manuilsky, in his introductory speech, noted the desire of the people of Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia to join the USSR, and referred wistfully to the *irredenta* of 3,500,000 Germans in Czechoslovakia.[1] Kreibich rashly attempted to reply for the party. He supported the cession of Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia to the Soviet Union, but refused to accept the same case for the cession of German Bohemia to Germany. Whether on the assumption that the proletarian revolution in Germany would precede that in Czechoslovakia, or on the converse assumption, such a solution would be damaging to the revolutionary cause. Lenin had made it clear that to recognize the right of secession did not necessarily mean to advocate secession in particular cases.[2] The argument left things as they were, and exposed the Czechoslovak Right to the damaging charge of resisting national policies likely to disrupt the bourgeois republic. The party Left maintained a masterly silence on the issue.[3] The subsequent proceedings in the commission of the congress were, as usual, unreported. The failure to present an agreed draft to the congress was evidence of the difficulties encountered. The resolution eventually issued by the presidium of IKKI,[4] with its reference to Czechoslovakia as a " new small imperialist state " and its apparently unqualified advocacy of " national separation ", was an implied criticism of the party leaders, and injected a new element of bitterness into the party struggle. But the Right stood its ground. At the last session of the congress, Šmeral, Muna and Neurath, two Rightists and one Leftist were elected to IKKI ; and even the stubborn Kreibich was appointed to the international control commission.[5] When the new IKKI met on July 8, 1924, immediately after the end of the congress, Šmeral was elected to the presidium with Neurath and Muna as candidate members of that body.[6]

[1] For this speech see p. 88 above.

[2] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 661-666.

[3] Skrypnik later accused the Czechoslovak party of " ' legalistic ' prejudices " in the national question, meaning apparently that it feared legal sanctions if it came out for the cession of Czechoslovak territory (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), p. 686).

[4] See pp. 89-90 above.

[5] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1022.

[6] *Pravda*, July 9, 1924.

The proceedings of the fifth congress, while they had driven a rift into the Czechoslovak party and prepared the way for future action, did not destroy Šmeral's ascendancy in the party or establish the full rigours of Comintern discipline over it. But scarcely was the ink dry on the decisions of the congress when sniping was resumed between Kreibich and Neurath in the party press on the question of the united front.[1] Pressure from Moscow, fortified by the decisions of the congress, soon made itself felt. When the party executive committee met on July 31 and August 1, 1924, to hear reports from Šmeral and Neurath on the congress, 17 votes were cast for the resolution proposed by Neurath against 13 votes for the alternative resolution of Hula, the spokesman of the Right. Both texts professed to accept unconditionally the resolutions of the congress. But the Left resolution proposed to postpone the party congress, originally planned for the end of September, by a month in order to permit of a large-scale party discussion; and the acceptance of this proposal was a moral victory for the Left.[2] Kreibich sharpened the issue in a defiant article entitled *What is at Stake?* in which he argued that, if the fifth congress of Comintern had in fact called for a change of policy, a change of leaders was inevitable.[3] Zinoviev now intervened in person with an article, which, though moderate and correct in tone, challenged the cautious Šmeral, in terms which could not easily be evaded, to come out openly and declare where he stood.[4]

Šmeral responded to the challenge in a long and carefully considered speech at a party conference in Kladno on September 28, 1924, which was symptomatic of the embarrassments of the original leaders of quasi-autonomous communist parties when faced with the demand for " Bolshevization " on monolithic lines. In a desperate bid to retain the leadership, he attributed the friction in the party to the fact that everyone was over-worked and over-tired, and claimed that the danger of a split was now past. The

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 86, July 11, 1924, pp. 1094-1095; No. 90, July 17, 1924, pp. 1134-1136. The discussion turned on the hypothetical question whether the Czechoslovak Communist Party could conceivably form a united front with Masaryk and Beneš.

[2] *Československy Časopis Historicky*, iii (1955), No. 4, p. 577; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 107, August 15, 1924, pp. 1382-1383.

[3] *Ibid.* No. 120, September 16, 1924, pp. 1598-1599.

[4] *Ibid.* No. 120, September 16, 1924, pp. 1583-1585.

workers, he significantly added, had taken no part in these discussions. He admitted that he had been personally unwilling to sit in judgment on Trotsky, and that some elements in the party, while condemning the Russian opposition, would have preferred to see the conflict played down and softened. Subject to a reservation about the final resolution on the national question (he thought it absurd to advocate the cession of Magyar districts of Czechoslovakia to Horthy's Hungary), he repeated over and over again that he accepted unconditionally the decisions of the fifth congress. But he drew attention to the apparent inconsistency between the attitude of the fourth congress, which had allowed freedom for manœuvre on the issue of a "workers' government", and of the fifth congress, which had recognized it only in the form of a dictatorship of the proletariat. His speech was full of barbed shafts at the expense of the Left: some members of the party, he acidly remarked, had begun to make conversion to the Left "a sport or sometimes *even a career*". The immediate reply came in an article from Neurath, who once more accused Šmeral of "too much diplomacy" and of not honestly accepting the resolutions of the congress, and openly raised the question of his fitness for the leadership.[1] Manuilsky, in a broadside from Moscow, wrote that the question was one not of declarations of allegiance, but of concrete policy. Šmeral had emptied the discussion of political content and "turned it into a kind of Talmudic discussion of revolutionary texts". He had been silent in the German controversy, and again in the controversy about Trotsky: such silence was unworthy of the leader of a great party.[2]

Preparations were now in train for the party congress which was to meet at the end of October 1924. The debate raged in the party press throughout October, covering the whole field of policy from the national question and the question of the worker-peasant government to party organization. Šmeral afterwards recalled "the frenzied fractional activity" supported by IKKI against himself and the other Right leaders which had preceded

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 130, October 7, 1924, pp. 1726-1734; No. 133, October 14, 1924, pp. 1769-1772.

[2] *Ibid.* No. 137, October 21, 1924, pp. 1822-1825; for Šmeral's reply see *ibid.* No. 141, October 30, 1924, pp. 1871-1873.

the congress.[1] Feelings were exacerbated by a division on national lines. A majority of the Czech members of the party were apparently supporters of Šmeral or of the Right; the Left received the solid support of Germans, Magyars, Slovaks and Ruthenes. Bubnik was reported as describing the campaign of the Left as "an attack by Germans, Slovaks and Magyars on the Czechs in the Czechoslovak Communist Party".[2] The presidium of IKKI, recognizing that the resolution of the fifth congress on "national separation" was a sore point, and anxious not to alienate the Czech element in the party, issued an "authentic explanation". The party, while committed to an unconditional right of self-determination and secession, could also support movements of national minorities for autonomy. But it must also argue that, even on the assumptions of bourgeois democracy, autonomy was only a half-way house to a federation of national republics; and the ultimate revolutionary demand could only be for a "union of workers' and peasants' republics".[3] Zinoviev, in the usual letter from IKKI to the party on the eve of the party congress, attacked both Šmeral, who was implicitly put on the same footing as Brandler, and Zapotocky, the secretary of the party, who had said that the resolutions of the fifth congress must be accepted "on grounds of discipline";[4] and the KPD obsequiously passed a resolution expressing concern over the affairs of the "Czechoslovak brother party", expressing regret that its "influential leaders" had failed to take a clear line on the decisions of the fifth congress of Comintern, and hoping that its forthcoming congress would "elect a leadership which provides a guarantee against any opportunist theory and practice".[5]

It was in these conditions that the Czechoslovak Communist Party held its second congress from October 31 to November 4, 1924; the congress was attended by 145 voting delegates, 146

[1] *Ibid.* No. 67, April 24, 1925, p. 905.

[2] *Československy Časopis Historicky*, iii (1955), No. 4, pp. 580-581. Some exaggeration must be suspected here, since Czechs formed 61 per cent of the party membership (see p. 170, note 1 above); but the general picture is confirmed by a supporter of the Left (see p. 183, note 3 below).

[3] "This "explanation", dated October 15, 1924, is in *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1052-1053.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 144, November 4, 1924, pp. 1942-1943.

[5] *Die Internationale*, vii, No. 21-22, November 1, 1924, p. 660.

delegates with consultative rights and 86 guests.[1] The guests included Manuilsky as delegate of Comintern, and Treint and Katz as representatives of the French and German parties. The leaders had forestalled attack by accepting in advance the draft theses submitted by the Left opposition to the executive committee: these included the admission that "the congress regards as justified and well-founded the criticism directed against the Czechoslovak Communist Party at the fifth congress".[2] Šmeral observed the same caution on the vexed issue of the trade unions. He was all in favour of trade union unity, though he added that "in practice this is far more complicated than in other countries" owing to the existence in Czechoslovakia of a strong revolutionary trade union movement. Manuilsky argued that, after the fall of the British Labour government, "the mood among the British workers offers to Comintern the possibility of giving reality to its principles and methods", and that "the advance of Comintern in England must . . . to a certain extent also influence our line in trade union matters". The leaders of Red trade unions were warned not to "seek salvation in a peculiar kind of organizational fetishism", which sought "to maintain these unions at any cost", but to put trade union unity and the penetration of the social-democratic unions first.[3]

Since Šmeral had declined battle on any major question, the congress passed off without serious political conflict; and the main contested issue of the congress was the composition of the executive committee. It was clear from the sequel that Manuilsky had come with instructions to support the Left, but not to carry his support to the point of splitting the party. In a cunning speech, he made a direct attack on Kreibich, the most vulnerable member of the Right, accusing Šmeral only of "exaggerated caution" and excessive leniency towards Right deviations; he professed to be "insufficiently informed on inner relations in the party" to offer advice on the elections. Treint denounced

[1] The account in *Ceskoslovensky Casopis Historicky*, iii (1955), No. 4, pp. 586-593 is based on the published protocol of the congress, which has not been available.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 133, October 14, 1924, pp. 1768-1769; No. 137, October 21, 1924, pp. 1817-1822.

[3] These speeches were summarized in *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 12 (47), December 1924, p. 255.

Kreibich and Zapotocky in more violent terms; and Katz also took Kreibich as his main target.[1] Kreibich made things easier by withdrawing his candidature for the executive committee, and a compromise was reached on a list consisting of 18 members of the Left and 14 of the Right; both Šmeral and Zapotocky were included. Manuilsky intervened at the last moment with a speech asking for a unanimous vote in favour of this list, which was adopted with only two adverse votes and one abstention. The new Politburo was composed of six Leftists and five Rightists.[2] Cautiously and with some personal concessions, the Czechoslovak Communist Party had been brought into line, but not without the prospect of further struggles ahead.[3]

(*f*) *The Polish Communist Party (KPP)*

The Polish Communist Party (KPP), which had been outlawed early in 1919 within a few weeks of its foundation,[4] continued as an illegal or semi-legal organization to play an active rôle in Polish political life. Under the leadership of a group of three, Warski, Walecki and Wera Kostrzewa, the so-called "three Ws", it profited by the period of economic stresses and political discontents through which Poland was passing, and won new adherents from other Left groups. The united front policy proclaimed by IKKI in December 1921 presented particular difficulties in Poland, where relations between the illegal KPP and the legal Polish Socialist Party (PPS) had been marked by acute mutual jealousies and rivalries; and it became the subject of

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondez*, No. 145, November 7, 1924, pp. 1960-1969; only the speeches of the three visiting delegates were printed in this journal.

[2] *Ibid.* No. 145, November 7, 1924, p. 1969; No. 154, November 28, 1924, pp. 2100-2102. Zapotocky afterwards said of the decision to give the Left a majority in the party executive committee: "This was pushed through by Manuilsky. There was a great struggle. We submitted" (*ibid.* No. 56, April 11, 1925, p. 777).

[3] An account of the congress by a supporter of the Left in *Die Internationale*, vii, No. 23-24, December 1, 1924, pp. 691-696, made the significant admission that the Left drew its adherents from the Slovak, German and Ruthene rather than from the Czech regions, and was "weak in ideology as well as in organization"; the influence of the former leaders had been "in no way broken", and the position of the new executive committee would be far from easy.

[4] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 145; its official name down to 1924 was the Polish Communist Workers' Party (KRPP).

fierce controversy at the third conference of the KPP in April 1922. The opposition was led by Sluszarski, whose position was described as quasi-syndicalist, anti-parliamentarian and similar to that of the KAPD in Germany.[1] He attacked the united front as a policy of compromise, an emanation of NEP, which represented an irreversible trend in Soviet policy:

> When Lenin says: "We go no further", I readily believe that this is his sincere opinion. But unfortunately it is impossible. The economic dictator of Russia is the peasant.
>
> The question of the relation of the Communist International to this policy confronts us. The Soviet republic would like to use any means to support its policy. In this respect the influence of social appeasers and opportunists can have a great influence on the policy of governments. The tactics of the united front create a contact with the opportunists, and permit the utilization of this influence.

Warski denounced Sluszarski's view as "a pseudo-revolutionary trend which has nothing in common with Comintern, which is completely alien to it".[2] After what was evidently a bitter debate, a resolution submitted by Warski on the united front, requiring the KPP to "address itself to the socialist parties and class trade unions with proposals for a common struggle", was carried by 26 votes to 9 with 4 abstentions.[3] A resolution on the trade unions reflected the unity campaign now being assiduously preached from Moscow: the KPP warned its members to "defend the unity of the class trade union movement", and in its struggle against the Amsterdam International "not to seek to

[1] For the KAPD see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 138.

[2] The records of the conference have not been available, but were quoted in two articles by Warski in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 23 (November 4, 1922), cols. 6105-6120; No. 24 (April 5, 1923), cols. 6601-6634. The passage from Sluszarski's speech was quoted textually by Zinoviev at the fourth congress of Comintern (*Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1923), p. 210).

[3] J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 59; this history, written by a police agent working in the KPP, reflects official bias, and understates the importance and the independence of the party in the nineteen-twenties, but is generally reliable on matters of fact. Besides the majority led by Warski and the minority led by Sluszarski, an intermediate group headed by Krajewski approved the principle of the united front, but rejected any approach to the PPS (*Voprosy Istorii*, No. 7, 1960, p. 85, quoting unpublished archives). The united front resolution is in *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, i (1953), 141-143.

tear away from it unions affiliated to it in order to annex them to the Red International of Trade Unions ".[1] No agreement was arrived at on the agrarian question, where three conflicting views were propounded, " none of which ", according to a later verdict, " genuinely adhered to the Bolshevik line ".[2] Theses advocating the confiscation of land without compensation and its distribution to the peasants were eventually accepted only as a basis for discussion; their substantive adoption was successfully opposed by a Left group which desired the conversion of land confiscated from the landowners into state or collective farms.[3] No resolution was passed on the nationalities question — a further symptom of actual or potential discord. In spite of these divisions, however, the year 1922 was marked by a signal advance in party tactics. In August 1922 a Union of Urban and Rural Proletarians, which was no more than a legal cover-name for the party, put forward a list of candidates for the forthcoming elections to the Polish diet, and issued a manifesto to " the toiling people of Poland ".[4] At the elections of November 5, 1922, the union, notwithstanding police repression, secured 130,000 votes, 27,000 in Warsaw, 15,000 in the Dombrowa basin, the rest in other industrial and mining centres: this gave the union two seats in the diet.[5]

This measure of success did not save the KPP from criticism at the fourth congress of Comintern in Moscow in the same month. Zinoviev in his first speech cited the questions on which differences existed in the central committee of the party — " the agrarian question, the question of nationalities, and partly the question of the united front "; a small minority had even been against the united front altogether.[6] In the course of the debate,

[1] *Ibid.* i, 170.

[2] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 352.

[3] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, i (1953), 144-167; *Voprosy Istorii*, No. 7, 1960 p. 85.

[4] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, i (1953), 284-292.

[5] *Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale vom IV. bis V. Weltkongress* (1924), pp. 46-47; J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 67.

[6] *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1923), pp. 48-49; in reporting on the congress to the third congress of KIM, Zinoviev also spoke of " a group of Polish comrades " who " came out against the united front " (*Bericht vom 3. Weltkongress der Kommunistischen Jugendinternationale* (1923), p. 233).

Domski, a veteran critic of the official line,[1] while professing to dissociate himself from Sluszarski (who, though present at the congress, did not speak), had denounced both the Polish party leaders and Radek, and attacked the slogans of the workers' government and the united front;[2] and Zinoviev in his reply took a sharper line, quoting with indignation Sluszarski's attack on NEP and on the Soviet Government at the Polish party conference, and warning supporters of such views that they were treading a slippery path.[3] No commission to deal with the affairs of the Polish party was set up by the congress, and no resolution was adopted by it. But a commission appointed by the presidium of IKKI examined the question after the end of the congress, heard representatives both of the majority of the central committee of the KPP and of the opposition, and recorded its conclusions in a letter of December 19, 1922, addressed to the party as a whole.[4] The charges brought by the opposition against the central committee of "opportunism" and "liquidationism" were pronounced "devoid of all foundation"; and indignation was expressed at the attacks on the Soviet Government made by "the chief representative of the opposition" at the party conference of the previous April. In the agrarian question, it was conceded that the party, though "with a certain delay" and in face of opposition, was now proceeding on the right lines. In the

[1] Domski's prominent rôle as an independent critic in the KPP dated from an article by him which appeared in the Berlin *Rote Fahne* on July 22, 1920, welcoming a report that the Soviet Government was prepared to enter into peace negotiations with Poland, and arguing against a continued military advance: "The struggle of Soviet Russia against Polish reaction is *not purely military*, it rather has a frankly *political* aim: the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This dictatorship can, however, be lasting only if it comes from within. Only people in the mass who — like the Russian people — have made their own revolution are able and willing to bear and to survive all the privations and struggles connected with social revolution. On the other hand, a Soviet régime introduced from without by foreign troops would meet with far stronger resistance from the possessing classes, and find far weaker support in the working masses". In his reply to the debate at the fourth congress, Zinoviev reminded Domski of this "error"; Domski retorted, in a written declaration, that he had merely warned the Russian party against an error which had later been recognized by Lenin as such (*Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1923), pp. 208, 983).

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 164-168. [3] *Ibid.* p. 210.

[4] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, i (1953), 179-188 (no Russian text of the letter has been traced); Kuusinen, Unshlikht and Varga were members of the commission (*Voprosy Istorii*, No. 7, 1960, p. 87).

national question, the party was reminded, with pointed reference to the Luxemburgist heresy,[1] that "the traditional views of Polish communists" still persisted in some quarters, and that national issues must be solved "in accordance with the real interests of the revolution".

The result of this verdict was to confirm the cautious leadership of the "three Ws" who were convinced upholders of the united front policy. During the following months, with a Right coalition in control of the Polish Government, hostilities against the PPS were avoided; and a certain amount of tacit collaboration was practised. But the bitterness of the struggle within the party over the issues of the united front was not extinguished. It may be assumed that some members of the KPP were impatient for a more forward policy; and similar divisions occurred among the leading Poles in the Russian party, of whom Dzerzhinsky and Radek supported the "three Ws", and the less influential Unshlikht appears to have wanted more active measures.[2] When, however, the second congress of the KPP assembled at a villa in Bolshevo on the outskirts of Moscow at the end of August 1923, the situation was well in hand. The congress was attended by 49 Polish delegates (others had been prevented by the police from making the journey). Besides Zinoviev, Radek and Lozovsky, who were present as representatives of Comintern and of the Russian party, Brandler, Cachin, Šmeral, Kuusinen and Skrypnik represented the German, French, Czechoslovak, Finnish and Ukrainian parties; Dzerzhinsky visited the congress and had an enthusiastic reception.[3] The policy of the united front was cemented by a general resolution on "The Political Situation and the Tactics of the Party" and by a manifesto issued as the congress ended "to the whole toiling people" of Poland. The resolution, as befitted a moment when the hopes of communists centred on the impending German revolution, placed the main emphasis on foreign policy, the theme being that the aim of party

[1] For the "Polish heresy" in the national question see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 1, p. 422.

[2] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 223, note 1.

[3] For the reminiscences of a participant see *Z Pola Walki*, No. 2, 1958, pp. 133-148; the proceedings of the congress are published *ibid.* No. 3, 1958, pp. 127-199; No. 4, 1958, pp. 129-201; No. 1 (5), 1959, pp. 143-166; No. 3 (7), 1959, pp. 183-224; No. 4 (8), 1959, pp. 69-171.

action should be to disrupt the links which bound Poland to the capitalist Powers, and to hasten the revolution in Germany which could alone end German dependence on the west. The manifesto spelt out the domestic application of the united front in plain terms:

> The second congress of the KPP in the name of hundreds of thousands of workers marching under its banners *addresses itself to all parties in whose ranks workers and poor peasants are also marshalled, first and foremost to the PPS and to the "Liberation" party,*[1] *with an appeal to form a common front in the struggle for the immediate aims of the masses of the Polish people, for their salvation from the assault of reaction.*[2]

A lengthy resolution was adopted on the unity of the trade union movement.[3] Nor were the controversial agrarian and national questions neglected. The agrarian theses put forward at the third party conference a year earlier were now formally adopted as party policy, together with resolutions on the alliance between worker and peasant and on the slogan of the "worker-peasant government" — the epitome of the united front in its application to Poland.[4] The national question was still more delicate in view

[1] A Left-wing peasant party now in opposition to the Right-wing peasant party of Witos.

[2] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, i (1953), 193-207, 243-251. An article by Brand, a young intellectual of the KPP, published in the journal of Comintern, argued that the communists could succeed, where Pilsudski had failed, in rallying the masses "against the government of the bourgeoisie and the rich peasants", and elaborated the theme of the united front with less restraint than the official resolution and manifesto: "To the Pilsudski parties (in whose readiness to fight we ourselves have very little belief, but in which significant numbers still put their faith) we offer the united struggle — for the sake not of Pilsudski, but of this clear-cut class programme. We need not fear that, if our common fight is victorious, we shall thereby have worked for Pilsudski. A new Moraczewski government, coming to power as the result of a real struggle of the worker and peasant masses against the bourgeoisie, ... would be a step forward in the direction of the proletarian dictatorship" (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 28-29 (December 1, 1923), cols. 7589-7617). Pilsudski was, in terms of Polish politics, a leader of the opposition to the National Democrats, and was regarded by the KPP as a spokesman of the petty bourgeoisie (*KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, i (1953), 117).

[3] *Ibid.* i, 234-242.

[4] *Ibid.* i, 208-224; the criticism was later made that, while the slogan of "the land for the peasantry" was now clearly proclaimed, "class contradictions within the peasantry" were neglected, and the alliance with the peasantry treated simply as a special case of the united front (*Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 352).

of the past association of the party with the heresy of the rejection of national self-determination.[1] The congress resolution bore the title " For Our and Your Freedom " — the motto used by Russian supporters of the Polish insurrections of 1830 and 1863. Its first concern was the danger that the Polish Government might intervene against the German, as it had done against the Russian, revolution ; and it developed the theme that only the three-fold revolution — Russian, German and Polish — could ultimately enable the three peoples to live together in brotherhood and security. The Polish working masses were exhorted to " recognize and support the striving of the Ukrainian and White Russian peasants and workers for liberation from the rule of capitalist-landowner Poland and for union with Soviet White Russia and the Soviet Ukraine ". No question was raised of a desire of the German minority for union with Germany, though the resolution contained clauses denouncing anti-German sentiment in Upper Silesia and the other ceded territories, as well as anti-Semitism. The resolution ended with a call for a common struggle for liberation from the yoke of capitalism and for " a union of free and equal socialist republics ".[2] A short separate resolution exhorted the Polish workers of Upper Silesia to lend support to " the German proletarian revolution ".[3]

Shortly after the congress, the communist parties of the Western Ukraine (i.e. Volynia and East Galicia) and Western White Russia (i.e. the eastern provinces of Poland in which a majority of the population was White Russian) were organized as autonomous units within the KPP. The situation in these regions was complicated and confused. Incorporated in Poland, they suffered under the repressive rule of an administration notoriously intolerant of the rights of minorities. The most effective propaganda against Polish rule in these regions was

[1] See p. 187, note 1 above.

[2] *KPP : Uchwały i Resolucje*, i (1953), 225-231 ; the last quoted phrase was omitted from this version, but appeared in the Russian version of the resolution in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 7, September 1924, cols. 177-184.

[3] *KPP : Uchwały i Rezolucje*, i (1953), 232-233. A Communist Party of Upper Silesia had been formed on December 12, 1920, during the plebiscite period, but in 1922 was incorporated in the KPP (*Z Pola Walki*, No. 3, 1958, p. 150, note 88) ; *Kalendar Kommunista na 1925 god* (1925), p. 244, lists it as an autonomous section of the KPP, but no other evidence of this status has been found.

organized from centres across the frontier in the Ukrainian and White Russian Soviet republics respectively ; [1] and it was conducted in the name of the communist parties of these republics, which were sections of the RKP(B). On the other hand the principle had always been accepted by the Russian party and by Comintern that communist parties functioned within the territorial limits of a given state, so that the KPP could claim to exercise authority over communist movements in the Western Ukraine and Western White Russia. In 1921, at the time of the third congress of Comintern in Moscow, an agreement was reached for the joint control of party activity in the Western Ukraine by the KPP and the Ukrainian party.[2] But it evidently did not operate without friction.[3] The situation was further complicated by the existence in these regions of small groups of a nationalist intelligentsia which, though willing to receive communist support in the struggle for national independence, did not desire to commit themselves, either politically or ideologically, to Moscow. A communist party of East Galicia, not officially recognized either in Warsaw or in Moscow, had apparently existed since 1919. In 1922 it affiliated to the KPP while retaining its own independent central committee.[4]

The next development came when, four days after the treaty recognizing Polish sovereignty over East Galicia had been officially signed at the conference of ambassadors in Paris, the congress of the sizeable Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party met in Lvov on March 18, 1923. In the atmosphere of indignation excited by the action of the Allied Powers, the congress was

[1] The campaign of the Red Army in 1920 kept alive hopes in these regions of deliverance from the east; in the early nineteen-twenties people in the " Ukrainian villages " of Polesia and Volynia were constantly encouraged by rumours that Budenny's legions were coming " in the spring " (M. Stakhiv, *Khto Vynen ?* (Lvov, 1936), p. 28).

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 7, 1924, pp. 170-172, records the agreement, but gives no text. It quotes a declaration made on the occasion by the Polish delegation; this spoke of the eventual union of Soviet Poland and a Soviet Ukraine, since world revolution would make frontiers unimportant, but refrained from demanding a secession of East Galicia from Poland. The demand for secession was first accepted at the second congress of the KPP in 1923 (see p. 189 above).

[3] Skrypnik, referring to it at the second congress of the KPP, claimed that it needed revision " in the direction of greater practicality " (*Z Pola Walki* No. 1 (5), 1959, p. 165).

[4] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, i (1953), 127.

captured by the communists ; [1] and for the first time communism became a serious force in East Galicia, where, according to a hostile witness, the " pro-communist orientation " grew throughout 1923.[2] This made it necessary to regularize the relations between the KPP and the local party ; and in the latter part of 1923 the Communist Party of the Western Ukraine (KPZU) became an autonomous unit of the KPP on the same footing as the Ukrainian Communist Party within the Russian party.[3] In December 1923 the same procedure was applied to Western White Russia, where, so far as is known, no separate communist party had hitherto existed : a Communist Party of Western White Russia (KPZB) was founded as an autonomous unit of the KPP.[4]

The events of the autumn of 1923 in Germany and Poland quickly impinged on this situation, and showed the close links existing at this time between the destinies of the KPP and the KPD. The abortive German revolution of October 1923 was followed in the following month by widespread disturbances in Poland, where the economic situation was scarcely less desperate. A general strike instigated and supported by the KPP, and publicly proclaimed by the PPS on November 5, 1923,[5] was a complete, though momentary, success, and led to open insurrection in Cracow, where the garrison went over to the strikers.

[1] M. Stakhiv, *Khto Vynen ?* (Lvov, 1936), pp. 40-43.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 31, where a not very convincing parallel is drawn between this " national " communism and the Schlageter campaign in Germany at the same period (for which see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 179-186).

[3] *KPP : Uchwały i Rezolucje*, i (1953), 127-128. M. Stakhiv, *Khto Vynen?* (Lvov, 1936), p. 30, alleges that " the Warsaw central committee named its regional organization the Communist Party of the Western Ukraine . . . merely in order to fool credulous Ukrainians ", that 70 per cent of the party were Poles and Jews, and that Ukrainians were used " simply as organizers among the Ukrainian peasantry " (*ibid.* p. 33) ; on the other hand Kostrzewa implies that the KPP recognized the autonomy of the Western Ukrainian party under pressure from Moscow (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 1, 1924, cols. 295-296). The strongest external influence on its subsequent course seems to have come neither from Warsaw nor from Moscow, but from Kharkov.

[4] *KPP : Uchwały i Rezolucje*, i (1953), 191.

[5] The extent of KPP responsibility for the strike is contested ; a Polish delegate at the fifth congress of Comintern in the following summer claimed that the general strike had been proclaimed " under our influence " (*Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 285-286).

But the KPP lacked the power, and the PPS the will, to exploit the revolutionary opportunities of the situation; and the movement was quickly crushed. The fiasco of the German revolution was capped by a similar fiasco in Poland. No immediate inclination was shown in Moscow to condemn the Polish, any more than the German, party leaders.[1] But divisions in the KPP were too sharp to save the "three Ws" from charges of passivity by the Left minority which had suffered defeat at the August congress. Immediately after the congress an open challenge to the leadership was delivered in an article in the September issue of the party journal, *Nowy Przeglad*, by Domski, who once more attacked not only the policies of the KPP, but the whole conception of the united front "from above" as propounded by Comintern. He denounced the "tactics of manœuvre" involved in this conception as incompatible with Bolshevism, and called Brandler and Thalheimer, as well as Warski and Kostrzewa, "neo-Mensheviks", summing up the alternatives as "either united demagogy or revolutionary agitation".[2] After the failures of October and November 1923, the campaign was taken up by Lenski, another old-standing member of the Polish party. Lenski, who had worked since 1917 in various Polish organizations in Moscow, and was now head of the Polish section of the central committee of the Russian party, used the journal published by the section, *Trybuna Komunistyczna*, as a platform to attack the Polish leaders for their interpretation of the united front, for their failure in the Cracow insurrection and for their support of Trotsky.[3] These attacks fitted in opportunely with what Maslow was saying in Moscow about Brandler,[4] and proved not unwelcome to Zinoviev. The decision having now been taken to condemn Brandler, Thalheimer and Radek as the authors of the German

[1] For the delay in Moscow in passing judgment on the KPD see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 226-233; an article on the Polish disturbances in *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 12 (35), December 1923, pp. 951-955, while admitting that "in Cracow the communist organization was still too weak to take over the leadership", praised the rôle of the KPP in conventional terms.

[2] *Nowy Przeglad*, No. 9, 1923, pp. 421-432.

[3] *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4, 1958, p. 287; for a list of Lenski's articles see *ibid.* pp. 309-310. These items form part of a lengthy biography of Lenski (whose real name was Leszczynski) and bibliography of his writings.

[4] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 231-232.

disaster, the same arguments applied almost automatically to the failure of the KPP in November. The discrediting of the " three Ws " was the logical counterpart of the downfall of Brandler ; the Right wing in the Polish party, as in the Czechoslovak party, was condemned by analogy. When the Polish leaders intervened in the Russian party controversy and came out openly in defence of Trotsky and then of Radek, they sealed their own fate by incurring the unqualified hostility of the triumvirate, and fell into the pattern, already established in the German and Czechoslovak parties, of a Right wing tainted with Trotskyism. But for the moment, like the Czechoslovak leaders, they retained the confidence of a majority of their party, which could not easily be shaken from without ; and they earned a respite by accepting, though under protest and with implied reservations, the resolution of IKKI of January 1924 on the German disaster.[1]

The respite was, however, of short duration. The proceedings in Moscow were an invitation to malcontents in the Polish party. What was described as " a group of Polish comrades working partly in Poland, partly abroad " issued in Berlin a manifesto which served as the platform of a Left opposition. The manifesto drew an explicit comparison between the disturbances of November 1923 in Poland and the events of October in Germany ; the charge was made that the leaders of the KPP had remained passive in face of this opportunity, and had left it to the PPS to make the running. The manifesto attacked current conceptions of the united front through the usual formula of a demand for " unity from below ". It criticized the party central committee for concealing from the party the decisions of IKKI on the Russian and German questions, and called for an immediate party conference. The signatories were a group later known as " the four " — Lenski, Domski, Osinska, a sister of Unshlikht and Adamski, whose identity is uncertain, but who seems also to have worked in Moscow.[2] The complaint was afterwards made

[1] For the attitude of the Polish leaders at this time see *ibid.* pp. 234-235, 240-241.

[2] The manifesto was published, without the names of the signatories, in *Die Internationale*, vii, No. 4, March 31, 1924 ; the four signed a later declaration of May 11, 1924 (see p. 195, note 1 below) in which they referred to themselves as authors of the earlier manifesto. Lenski had come from Moscow to Berlin en route for Paris early in 1924 (*Z Pola Walki*, No. 4, 1958, p. 288).

that the manifesto had been published before it had been communicated to the central committee of the KPP.[1]

The central committee, which was still controlled by the " three Ws ", attempted at a session in March 1924 to stem the tide of criticism. In a long resolution it confessed that " not only our party, but other parties of the Third International, did not succeed in guarding against serious errors ". The " disease of Leftism " had been overcome at the second party congress. But the party had failed to utilize the Cracow rising, and had fallen a victim to the error of pursuing " the united front at all costs ". In the trade union question, the resolution attacked " the renunciation by communists of public discussion and criticism in the name of trade union unity and of a false idea of united front tactics ", and denounced the tendency to obliterate the ideological differences between communists and reformists. In the national question, there had been cases of " mistaken interpretation by individual comrades " of the correct decisions of the second congress : these were put down to the inexperience of the young parties of Western White Russia and the Western Ukraine, and to failure to distinguish between " communist-revolutionary " and " petty bourgeois radical " tendencies in these parties. In particular the party was accused of an undue reluctance to resort to methods of violence :

> Our party has not yet been prepared to undertake great struggles. . . . The idea of armed struggle, the only means of destroying the bourgeoisie, has not yet been inculcated by the party in the masses.

At the same time a further resolution condemned Domski and his group as " disorganizers " who had attempted to " form a fraction " and to " hawk their theses around in the country and throughout the International ".[2] This half-hearted recantation,

J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 93, identifies Adamski with Damowski " an official of the Soviet Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade "; Adamski is mentioned in *Z Pola Walki*, No. 3, 1958, p. 168, note 193, as a member of the Polish bureau of the Russian party central committee in 1922.

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 288.

[2] The text in *KPP : Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 39-51, omits several passages of self-criticism, including the passage on the neglect of " armed struggle ", as well as the resolution directed against Domski and his group ;

which accepted much of the criticism but denounced the critics, did not appease the opposition. Domski in a further article accused the "three Ws" of "Menshevism" and "opportunist practices"; and "the four" issued on May 11, 1924, a further statement confirming their original manifesto, and stating that they fully accepted the resolutions of the second congress and objected only to the practice of the existing central committee.[1]

When the fifth congress of Comintern met, the situation in the KPP was similar to that in the Czechoslovak party. The authority of the Right leadership had not been broken. But the delegation included vocal members of a Left minority,[2] who enjoyed the patronage and encouragement of Zinoviev and of the other Russian leaders. Zinoviev in his opening report accused the Polish leaders of having displayed "much too much diplomacy" in the German and Russian questions. He declared that the central committee of the Polish party was "not united", and expressed the conviction that "at the moment when the Polish communist workers learn where the shoe pinches, where something has gone wrong in the leadership, what is the real dispute between their central committee and the International and, especially, the Russian party — at that moment the Polish workers will stand *on our* side".[3] Speaking on behalf of the central committee, Krajewski tried to find a half-way house. He admitted that the December letter supporting Trotsky had been "an opportunist error", but defended the committee against other charges, and claimed that it was now in full agreement with

these are quoted in J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), pp. 92-93, and may probably be regarded as authentic. The central committee is also said to have deprived the four of "the right to exercise responsible party functions" (*Z Pola Walki*, No. 4, 1958, p. 288).

[1] It has not been ascertained where the article and statement were originally published: they were included in a collection of documents prepared by the KPD for its delegation to the fifth congress of Comintern (*Materialen zum V. Weltkongress der Komintern* (1924), pp. 58-64).

[2] Domski, but not Lenski, was included in the list of the Polish delegation in *Pyatyi Vsemirnyi Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), ii, 241-242; Lenski, who had been in Paris in the spring of 1924 working on *L'Humanité* and in the PCF, is said to have come to the fifth congress as a member of the French delegation (*Z Pola Walki*, No. 4, 1958, p. 288; J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 101), though he does not appear in the list of French delegates.

[3] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 99-100.

the views of Moscow. He singled out Domski for attack on the ground that he had opposed the agrarian and the national resolutions of the second party congress, and had been " against the united front in general ". The speech was, however, heard with impatience and with frequent interruptions, the example for which was set by Zinoviev himself; and Lenski, on behalf of the Left opposition, made a long reply dismissing Krajewski's apologies as " insincere ".[1] The three leaders, who remained silent in the plenary sessions, made a declaration reserving their case for the forthcoming debate in the Polish commission of the congress, and reiterating their agreement with the " tactical line " laid down by Zinoviev.[2] But, under pressure of opinion at the congress, a shift of forces took place in the Polish delegation. A group led by Krajewski and Skulski, a Pole said to have served as political commissar of a Bashkir division in the Red Army, went over to " the four ", who now commanded a majority in the delegation, and were thus enabled to issue a statement condemning the declaration of the " three Ws " as " fractional " and unauthorized.[3]

The scene was now set for the debate in the Polish commission. It was presided over by Stalin, and lasted for three days. Lenski appeared as principal prosecutor. Having denounced Warski as an enemy of Bolshevism and exposed the records of Walecki and Kostrzewa, he admitted that " the most important reason for our coming out against the policy of the Right leaders was the Russian and German question ", and argued that the KPP " must cease to be a barrier between Russian Leninism and the west ". He was followed by Skulski, who may be assumed to have represented the Russian view. He assailed the " three Ws " with quite as much vigour as Lenski, but, unlike him, did not ask for their removal from the leadership; it was enough, he declared, that the majority should be supported by " the political authority

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 283-288, 295-300; Krajewski was a brother of Domski (their real name was Stein), and a son-in-law of Warski (J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 101). Lenski apologized for his poor German and spoke in Russian (*Pyatyi Vsemirnyi Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), i, 280; this passage was omitted from the German version).

[2] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 451.

[3] *Ibid.* ii, 584; for the events leading up to the issue of the statement, see J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), pp. 101-102.

of Comintern ", and that a discussion should be opened in the party. Warski put up a weak defence, arguing that the December letter in support of Trotsky had been prompted by a desire to avoid a split in the Russian party. He probably did not help himself by quoting a remark alleged to have been made by Petrovsky, on some unspecified occasion, in the presence of Krajewski to the effect that the united front was " a piece of humbug invented specially for the sake of Chicherin's policy before the Genoa conference ". Kostrzewa and Walecki were openly defiant, and stoutly maintained that the decisions taken in Moscow about Trotsky and about the German party were disastrous blunders.[1] Stalin summed up. In a cautiously-worded but incisive speech he dwelt once more on the shortcomings of the Polish leaders, especially in their attitude to the Russian and German questions, and demanded more resolute handling of the " opportunist opposition ". He was, however, against a " cutting off " of leaders from above ; " let the Polish Communist Party at its next conference or congress reconstitute its own central committee ".[2]

The national question was also used as a subsidiary instrument to discredit the Polish leaders. But this proved somewhat difficult. The KPP was not, like the Czechoslovak party, divided within itself on national lines. The Slav minorities were represented by the sub-parties of the Western Ukraine and Western White Russia, and the membership of the main party was almost exclusively Polish and Jewish ; nor did any divergence arise between Right and Left on the national question. While therefore the KPP was theoretically vulnerable in virtue of its past association with Rosa Luxemburg and the heresy of the rejection of national self-determination [3] — a point of which critics never failed to remind it — it continued to present a united front on national issues. A delegate of the KPZU at the fifth congress claimed that the social question in the West Ukraine was inextricably linked with the national question, leading to demands

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 103-110 ; Regula quotes extensively from the records of the debate in a Comintern publication *Sprawa Polska na V Kongresie Kominternu* which has not been available.

[2] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vi, 264-272 ; it originally appeared in *Bol'shevik*, No. 11, September 20, 1924, pp. 51-55.

[3] See p. 187 above.

first for national independence, and now for union with the Soviet Ukraine: he challenged the KPP to take a clear line in favour of this demand.[1] These issues were doubtless ventilated at length in the unpublished proceedings of the commission on the national question. The conclusions of the congress left the situation in the KPP obscure and ambiguous. Manuilsky, when he reported to the congress on the work of the national commission, took Warski severely to task for minimizing the importance of the German problem in Poland. On the other hand, he warned the KPZU against pressing its claim for autonomy too far: it must remain subordinate to the KPP in Warsaw, not to the Ukrainian party in Kiev. The resolution on this question eventually adopted by the presidium of IKKI [2] was relatively indulgent to the KPP; for, while it stressed the importance of self-determination for Ukrainians and White Russians, it approved the action already taken in these questions and, except for a passage on Upper Silesia, did not raise the German problem at all.

The resolution drafted in the Polish commission was also approved not by the congress itself, but at the subsequent session of IKKI [3] — probably an indication that its text had been the subject of hard bargaining. It pronounced a severe condemnation on the leadership of the "three Ws", whom it described as "incapable of carrying out in action the line of the Communist International", and called for an extraordinary party conference to "correct the political line" and elect a new central committee. Meanwhile the Politburo and Orgburo of the KPP were to be replaced by a special bureau of five, which would convene the conference and provide for the temporary leadership of the party in the interim. The rule in the party statute giving members of the central committee an *ex-officio* vote at party conferences was suspended — a clear indication that the "three Ws" still had a majority in the central committee; a representative of IKKI was to be appointed to the KPP; and the disciplinary measures taken against the four signatories of the opposition manifesto were

[1] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 694-696.

[2] For this resolution and for Manuilsky's report see pp. 89-90 above.

[3] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.) ii, 1030.

withdrawn. The text appeared in the resolutions of the congress [1] and was followed up by an open letter from IKKI to the members of the KPP. This sharply attacked the " three Ws " for the failures of their leadership, accusing them in particular of having " thrown the influence of your party into the scale for the Russian opposition and against the RKP ". A majority of the Polish delegation at the fifth congress had declared against them ; and the Polish commission had agreed with the majority. It remained for the party to act accordingly.[2] No record appears to exist of the appointment of the proposed bureau of five. But Lenski, together with the principal opposition leaders, was despatched to Poland with instructions to prepare for a party conference or congress.[3] The " three Ws " with two of their chief supporters were retained in Moscow.[4] The new leadership issued a lengthy declaration of policy, which contrived, in accordance with the current Comintern policy, to give a certain Left turn to current slogans ; and the party central committee adopted a resolution on the same lines.[5] But the illegal conditions in which the party worked, and perhaps the divisions within it, postponed the formal ratification of the change by a party conference ; and the three months contemplated in Moscow in July as the limit for the convening of the conference elapsed without any action being taken.

Whether by design or not, the turn to the Left at the fifth congress of Comintern encouraged a renewal of subversive activities in the eastern provinces of Poland, taking the form partly of passive resistance to taxation and to government edicts, and partly of partisan warfare against Polish police and armed forces. After the congress Skulski was apparently smuggled

[1] *Thesen und Resolutionen des V. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1924), pp. 179-180; the Russian version in *Pyatyi Vsemirnyi Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), ii, 166, followed in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 463-464, adds to the article providing for the extraordinary conference the words, "*within three months at the latest*" ; the version in *KPP : Uchwaly i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 59-60, follows the German text down to this point and omits all the rest.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 108, August 19, 1924, pp. 1395-1396 (where the letter is dated simply " July 1924 ").

[3] *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4, 1958, p. 289.

[4] J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), pp. 113-114.

[5] *KPP : Uchwaly i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 61-70, 71-81.

across the frontier to take charge of these operations, fell into the hands of the Polish police, and was rescued from his place of confinement by a partisan detachment said to have been sent out from Minsk.[1] At a conference in October 1924 the Communist Party of Western White Russia passed a resolution deciding to proceed to " the organizational and political preparation of the armed struggle " ;[2] and the period is said to have been one of rapid growth in the hitherto insignificant membership of the Western White Russian party.[3] How far the movement had the support of the KPP in Warsaw, it is difficult to ascertain. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the main external impetus came from Minsk ; and Domski was afterwards said to have described the movement as mere " anarchism ".[4] But the new leaders of the KPP had condemned their predecessors for passivity in face of the Cracow insurrection of November 1923, and had passed resolutions in favour of " armed struggle ".[5] Though what was being plotted in the eastern borderlands was a peasant rising rather than a proletarian revolution, and was inspired by a nationalist rather than a communist outlook, it was not easy for self-proclaimed Leftists to dissociate themselves from an activist policy, or to disown a campaign which had the support of Minsk or of Moscow.

Meanwhile the Polish Government strengthened its repressive measures against the communists. On October 14, 1924, Lenski was discovered and arrested by the police, and committed to prison.[6] Police persecution and the arrest of the *de facto* leader struck an untimely blow at a party already in disarray. As the sequel showed, the rank and file of workers who formed the core of the KPP had never really reconciled themselves to the deposition of the " three Ws ". Domski himself, in a characteristically

[1] J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), pp. 120-121 ; this is the sole source for Skulski's adventure. For further references to the resistance campaign see *ibid.* p. 130, where it is said to have reached its highest point in the summer of 1924.

[2] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 323.

[3] L. Jakauleu, *Zachodniaya Belarus* (1931), cited in N. P. Vakar, *Belorussia* (Harvard, 1956), p. 125.

[4] *KPP : Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 246 ; *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 207.

[5] See pp. 193-194 above.

[6] *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4, 1958, p. 289.

outspoken article, admitted a prevailing impression that the change in leadership " came from without, and found no basis in the party itself ", and confessed that " the political passivity of the workers is still great ", though he claimed that this was being overcome.[1] On the other hand, activists of the extreme Left were not satisfied that either Comintern or the new leaders of the KPP had moved sufficiently far in their direction. An ultra-Left group in the Polish Communist Youth League denounced the decisions of the fifth congress of Comintern, describing the slogans of the united front and the worker-peasant government as " sources of opportunism ".[2] Skulski himself, in an article in the party journal in January 1925, wrote of the tactics of the united front as no longer relevant, and declared that " social revolution for a government of the dictatorship of the proletariat, a communist government ", must be " our watchword in the struggle for power ".[3] Warski, detained in Moscow, tried to rehabilitate himself in the eyes of the authorities by an elaborate recantation, which was published in *Pravda* with an editorial note stating that the article confirmed the position taken up by the fifth congress of Comintern, and curtly expressing the hope that Warski would " liquidate his error *finally* ". Formerly himself one of Rosa Luxemburg's principal lieutenants, he now blamed the Luxemburgist tradition for the Polish party's " negative attitude to the Bolshevik conception of leadership in the party and to the rôle of the party in the revolution ". This was essentially a western attitude adapted to parliamentary institutions. In a party concerned with the organization of revolution, such opportunism could not be tolerated. Trotsky's denunciation of the party bureaucracy, which had been endorsed by " the then leading group " in the Polish party, was a repetition of Rosa Luxemburg's criticism of Lenin's conception of party organization, and was " an attack on the revolution and on the dictatorship

[1] *Pravda*, January 6, 1925; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 4, January 6, 1925, p. 50.

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 1 (38), January 1925, p. 115; the author of the article, evidently a supporter of Domski, claimed that supporters of these views were in a minority " even among the youth ", but admitted the general weakness of the party.

[3] *Nowy Przeglad*, January 1925, pp. 716-717, quoted in J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 121.

of the proletariat ".[1] The publication of Warski's article showed the usual desire in Comintern at this time to keep alternative lines open, and not to commit itself irrevocably to a single group in a foreign party. But it changed nothing in the situation of the KPP, whose fortunes remained at a low ebb.

(g) *The Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP)*

The Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP) had from the first strong claims to be regarded in Moscow as a model party. Bulgarian radical intellectuals of the latter part of the nineteenth century had, almost without exception, received their advanced education in Russia, and were as firmly oriented towards Russia as those of most other countries of eastern and central Europe were towards the west. Blagoev, the founding father of the Bulgarian socialist movement, and venerated till his death in 1924 as the grand old man of the BKP, finished his education at the university of Petersburg, where he founded in 1883–1884 what was apparently the first social-democratic group on Russian soil.[2] The Bulgarian Social-Democratic Party dated from 1892. Its split in 1903 into Narrow and Broad factions closely followed the split in the Russian party between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks; and a bond of sympathy, and from time to time of practical collaboration, united Russian Bolsheviks and Bulgarian Narrows. Both were matched in a firm opposition of principle to the first world war. The transformation of the Narrows into the Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP) and their prompt adhesion to the newly-founded Communist International in 1919, followed by their unquestioning and whole-hearted acceptance of the 21 conditions in the following year, confirmed the reputation of the BKP for loyalty and orthodoxy.[3] Even when, after 1921, with

[1] *Pravda*, December 5, 1924. The article was reprinted in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 161, December 12, 1924, pp. 2208-2210, with an announcement that it was to appear shortly in *Bol'shevik*; it never in fact appeared there. Warski was described by Trotsky as "a 'revolutionary' social-democrat of the old type" — like Klara Zetkin — who eventually became "a pillar of Stalinism" (Trotsky archives, T 3129, pp. 7-8).

[2] For this group and its relation to Plekhanov's Liberation of Labour group in Geneva see J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), pp. 12-13.

[3] V. Serge, *Mémoires d'un Révolutionnaire* (1951), p. 195, recalls hearing Kolarov and Kabakchiev "at the Kremlin tribune . . . speak with pride of their party, the only European socialist party faithful, like the Bolsheviks, to a

the postponement of the revolution in Europe, revolutionary fervour began to be mitigated, in the counsels of Comintern, by diplomatic calculation, the privileged position of the BKP remained intact, and even received fresh reinforcement. Bulgaria, second only to Germany, was a victim of the hated Versailles peace settlement;[1] her neighbours, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Greece — like Poland and Czechoslovakia — were agents and *protégés* of the victorious Powers. Hence the sympathy felt in Moscow for the wrongs of Bulgaria reinforced the revolutionary cause; and the alliance between communism and nationalism, which was attempted in Germany in 1923, was far more easily realized in Bulgaria, where party activities had been driven underground and were not exposed to continuous public criticism. The espousal of territorial revision by the Soviet Government, which sometimes embarrassed the relations of Comintern with the communist parties of the victorious countries and of their satellites, was an additional asset in relations between Comintern and the BKP, and rendered them unusually close and friendly.

The strength and authority of BKP gave it a commanding position in the Balkan federation of communist parties which was founded at a conference in Sofia in January 1920.[2] The membership of the federation at first fluctuated. At one moment

doctrinal intransigence". The Bulgarians ranked second only to the Hungarians among the international officials of Comintern in its first few years. Kabakchiev attended the Halle congress of the USPD with Zinoviev in October 1920 and the Leghorn congress of the PSI with Rakosi in February 1921 (for these congresses see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 217-218, 225); Kolarov played a conspicuous rôle at all congresses and sessions of IKKI in Moscow, undertook many important missions for Comintern in western Europe (J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), p. 300), was a secretary of IKKI from 1922 to 1924, and became a member of IKKI at the fifth congress in 1924.

[1] Hungary would, of course, have qualified for the same rôle but for the abortive revolution of 1919, which made it impossible throughout these years to build up any communist movement in Hungary.

[2] For the early history of the federation see J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), pp. 223-233; it was in fact a revival of a social-democratic Balkan federation created in 1910, and the common numbering of its later conferences, which made its Moscow conference of December 1922 the fifth, apparently took account of two pre-1914 conferences. *Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale vom IV. bis V. Weltkongress* (1924), p. 38, calls the conferences of December 1922, December 1923 and July 1924 the first, second and third; yet another numbering appears in A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *10 Let Kominterna* (1929), p. 375.

it was designed as a Danube-Balkan federation; at another Turkey was included. From 1922 onwards it consisted of the communist parties of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Greece,[1] and Rumania.[2] At an important conference in Moscow on December 8-12, 1922, following the fourth congress of Comintern,[3] the federation issued a manifesto proclaiming as its aim the establishment of Soviet republics in the Balkan countries and of a "Balkan federation of socialist federal Soviet republics". It demanded national independence for Macedonia, Thrace and the Dobrudja, and protested against the transfers of minority populations between Greece and Turkey, and Greece and Bulgaria, which were to be carried out under League of Nations auspices, as being designed to further the cause of Greek imperialism.[4] The Comintern

[1] For accounts, differing in minor details, of the origins of the Greek Communist Party see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 29, February 29, 1924, pp. 335-336, and Kh. Kabakchiev *et al.*, *Kommunisticheskie Partii Balkanskikh Stran* (1930), pp. 175-186. Founded in November 1918 under the name Greek Socialist Workers' Party, it was a mixed party of the Left (no social-democratic party existed in Greece) comprising a variety of opinions; and, though it adhered to Comintern in 1920, the struggle continued between those who confined themselves to a vague ideological sympathy for communism, and those who wished for rigid ideological and organizational links with Moscow. The latter tendency gradually gained the upper hand, and "opportunist" groups were expelled in October 1922 and again in September 1923. It was not till its third extraordinary congress in November 1924 that the party finally accepted the 21 conditions, adopted a statute on the approved Comintern model, and changed its name to Greek Communist Party (for this congress see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 13, January 20, 1925, pp. 163-164). The statement in A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *10 Let Kominterna* (1929), p. 351, that it took the name "communist" in 1920 seems incorrect.

[2] The Rumanian Communist Party had been created in 1921 by a split in the socialist movement apparently under joint Russian and Bulgarian pressure. It was handicapped from the outset by these two powerful influences, which required it to campaign for the cession of Bessarabia to Soviet Russia and of the Dobrudja to Bulgaria. For its early history see the sources quoted in J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), p. 199, note 104; the demands of the BKP varied between a "Soviet Dobrudja", a "free and independent Dobrudja", and outright cession to Bulgaria (see *ibid.* pp. 198-199).

[3] The implication (see *ibid.* p. 234) that the decisions registered at the conference had in fact been taken at the congress is an unsubstantiated conjecture; the only recorded decision of the congress was to exhort the Yugoslav party to participate in the Balkan federation (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 365).

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 8, January 11, 1923, pp. 61-62: the manifesto carried the fictitious date-line "Sofia, December 1922". The Bulgarian party council, without referring to the conference of the federation, adopted a resolution in similar terms on January 22, 1923 (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 26-27, August 24, 1923, cols. 7323-7327).

representative at the conference seized the occasion to criticize the Yugoslav party for its incorrect attitude to the national question.[1] The headquarters of the Balkan federation, which had been transferred soon after its foundation to Vienna, moved in 1923 to Berlin, and thereafter to Moscow ;[2] and such permanent organization as it had was exclusively Bulgarian.[3] Zinoviev in June 1923, at the moment of reproaching the BKP for its defects, still referred to its central committee as "standing at the head of the whole Balkan federation".[4] When the Greek party rose in revolt against the opposition of the Balkan federation to the policy of population transfers, it was the Bulgarian party which in March 1923 sent an emissary to Greece to "smash" the revolt.[5]

An attempt to set up a parallel trade union federation for the Balkans under Bulgarian hegemony proved less successful. In the autumn of 1920 the newly-founded International Trade Union Council (Mezhsovprof) in Moscow[6] sent a delegation headed by Glebov to Sofia to organize a Bulgarian congress of trade unions and a Balkan trade union conference. The Bulgarian congress was held in October 1920, and resulted in the adhesion of a united Bulgarian trade union movement to Mezhsovprof.[7] On November 3, 1920, the projected Balkan trade union conference convened in Sofia, being attended by delegates of the Bulgarian, Yugoslav and Rumanian trade unions. All these declared their adhesion to Mezhsovprof. Greek delegates were prevented from travelling to Sofia ; but a Greek trade union congress in September had already decided to withdraw from IFTU and, by a vote of 96 to 48, to cooperate with the Greek Socialist Workers' Party

[1] Josip Broz Tito, *Politicki Izvjestaj Centralnog Komiteta KPJ* (1948), p. 19; this account accepts the myth that the conference was held in Sofia. For the attitude of the Yugoslav party see p. 223, note 3 below.

[2] Notice of the transfer of the headquarters to the Hotel Lux (the Comintern hotel) in Moscow in July 1924 was given in a statement signed by Dimitrov (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 103, August 8, 1924, p. 1329).

[3] The statement in *Enciklopedija Jugoslavije* (Zagreb, 1958), iii, 321, that Filipovič, *alias* Boškovič (for whom see p. 401, note 3 below), was at one time president of the Balkan federation, even if true, does not invalidate this observation.

[4] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 26-27, August 24, 1923, col. 7352.

[5] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 115, July 9, 1923, p. 1009.

[6] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 207.

[7] *Ibid.* pp. 49-50 ; Glebov's account of his mission is in *Die Internationale Arbeiterbewegung*, No. 2, February 1921, pp. 40-44. For the Greek congress see *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 9, December 1, 1921, p. 80.

(the then name of the Greek Communist Party).[1] The Sofia conference also established a secretariat for the Balkans and Danubian countries, purporting to comprise trade union organizations in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Turkey, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, and to maintain contacts between them and Mezhsovprof.[2] But the secretariat never seems to have been operative in the last three countries; the Yugoslav trade union organization was outlawed, together with the Yugoslav Communist Party at the end of 1920;[3] and the Rumanian trade unions, whose representative had supported all the resolutions of the Sofia conference of November 1920, soon altered their course under official pressure and declared, at their congress of October 1921, against association with any political organization or programme.[4] The Bulgarian trade unions, alone in the Balkan countries, remained affiliated to Profintern — a situation recognized by a resolution of the executive bureau of Profintern of December 3, 1922, which appointed the Bulgarian organization as the representative of Profintern in the Balkans with the mandate to maintain contact with other Balkan trade unions.[5] The Balkan trade union secretariat faded out of sight.

The default of the BKP in June 1923 and the defeat of the insurrection of September 1923[6] marked a crucial turning-point in its history. Though not officially outlawed, it lost the protection of a legal or semi-legal status; and the organizations connected with it, including the Red trade unions, were broken up. Henceforth the leaders of the BKP resided on foreign soil, and directed increasingly difficult underground operations in the country itself. The change profoundly modified the relation of the party to Comintern. The abandonment and condemnation at the behest of Comintern of the passive policy adopted in the June rising, and the substitution of a forward policy with disastrous consequences in September, produced the first serious split in

[1] *Compte-rendu du Conseil International des Syndicats Rouges pour la Période de 15 juillet 1920 au 1er juillet 1921* (Moscow, 1921), p. 48.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 49-50.

[3] See p. 222 below.

[4] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 1 (12), January 15, 1922, pp. 44-45.

[5] *Ibid.* No. 12 (23), December 1922, p. 903.

[6] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 191-195.

the ranks of the party: henceforth, acceptance of the correct view of these events became a touchstone of party loyalty. Secondly, the now recognized party leaders, Kolarov and Dimitrov, dogged in all their activities by persistent police persecution, and conscious of criticism and dissent within the party itself, became far more directly dependent than hitherto on Comintern: it was indeed to their prompt readiness, in the crisis of June 1923, to become the spokesmen of Comintern policy that they owed their position. In the years after 1923 the BKP underwent the same process of Bolshevization as other communist parties in the sense of more direct and disciplined subordination to directives laid down in Moscow. But, in the case of the BKP, the process could be built on a firm foundation of common tradition and common interest which was often absent in other parties, and worked with less friction and less appearance of compulsion reluctantly accepted. The confidence of Comintern in the leaders of the BKP was clearly demonstrated at the sixth conference of the Balkan federation held in Berlin in December 1923 and attended by Bulgarian, Yugoslav, Greek and Rumanian delegates, and by a representative of Comintern. Though it did not repeat the demand of the conference a year earlier [1] for the creation of "Soviet republics", its main resolution reaffirmed the principle of national self-determination to the point of secession, and applied it specifically to the Croats in their struggle "against Serb hegemony"; to Macedonia and Thrace; and, in Rumania, to Bessarabia (which was said to display "a firm national-revolutionary trend to unity with the USSR"), Transylvania, the Dobrudja and Bukovina. The Greek Communist Party was instructed to defend the minorities subject to oppression by the Greek Government (Turks in the ceded territories, Bulgarians in Macedonia and Thrace and Rumanians, Albanians and others elsewhere); to protest against forced Hellenization of ceded territories by forced expulsion and settlement of populations; and to "do all in its power to promote the carrying out of the resolutions relating to Macedonia and Thrace".[2] Since each of these prescriptions accorded closely with the policies of the BKP and of Comintern,

[1] See p. 204 above.

[2] The initial *communiqué* on the conference did not quote or summarize the resolution and played down its importance, merely stating that it provided

and was embarrassing or distasteful to one or other of the remaining parties, it was not difficult to discern the source from which they derived.

Under the official interpretation of the events of 1923, the June error of the BKP had been its failure to cooperate with the peasant movement, and the September rising had been, not a communist enterprise designed to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, but a joint worker-peasant insurrection operating through "revolutionary committees" representing "a huge majority of the Bulgarian people — the toiling masses".[1] The corollary of this diagnosis was continued cooperation with the peasantry in the name of the united front. The policy found its first expression in the formation of a bloc between the communists and the Left wing of the Peasant Union which put forward candidates for the election to the Bulgarian Sobranie in November 1923. In spite of the general atmosphere of jerrymandering and intimidation, the bloc secured 217,000 votes, and 31 peasant and 8 communist deputies took their seats in the Sobranie.[2] But the experiment proved unpropitious. The communists took willingly to their parliamentary rôle; and their leader, Sakarov, an old deviator in the days of the Narrows, issued a declaration disavowing responsibility for the September rising, dissociating the group from Comintern, and undertaking that they would restrict themselves to constitutional and parliamentary procedures. Kolarov and Dimitrov, now settled in Vienna, thereupon issued a declaration in the name of the party central committee expelling from the party Sakarov and anyone who followed his lead. Only one of the deputies, however, recanted and returned to party orthodoxy.[3] IKKI in a resolution of February 1924 once more

for "the application of general directives of principle to the special conditions of individual Balkan countries", and that "no differences of opinion of great importance" had arisen (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 9, January 15, 1924, p. 91); the text of the resolution appears to have been published for the first time as an annex to an article by Kolarov in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 3, May–June 1924, cols. 133-150. For the Macedonian question see p. 212 below.

[1] See the "Open Letter to the Workers and Peasants of Bulgaria", signed by Kolarov and Dimitrov in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 161, October 15, 1923, pp. 1376-1377.

[2] J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), p. 148.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 152-153; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 2, January 4, 1924, p. 16. The presidium of the Balkan federation also issued a statement

described the Bulgarian insurrection of September 1923 as "a popular rising" and endorsed the action of the BKP on that occasion.[1]

Other more dubious ventures were also attempted. Since the fall of Stambulisky, two of his former ministers, Todorov and Obbov, had maintained some sort of Peasant Union organization among the Bulgarian exiles in Yugoslavia, and received funds from the Yugoslav and Czechoslovak Governments for the purpose. As a result of the new *rapprochement* between Bulgarian communists and peasants, Todorov visited Dimitrov in Vienna early in January 1924, and proceeded thence via Berlin to Moscow, where he conducted negotiations with Dimitrov and Kolarov, presumably under the aegis of Comintern, and also visited Chicherin, who expressed inability to intervene in Comintern affairs.[2] The basis of the negotiations was evidently the desire of both parties to bring about the overthrow of Tsankov's government; but no obvious means of doing so presented themselves, and no firm obligations seem to have been undertaken by either side. Todorov wanted arms and, above all, money; Kolarov and Dimitrov wanted Todorov to break his association with the Yugoslav and Czechoslovak Governments and to join Krestintern. Todorov afterwards claimed to have extracted from Comintern a subsidy of 20 million dinars (the figure was surely exaggerated): whatever promises he made in return were not honoured.

Darker still were the relations between BKP and the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO). Macedonia was a territory of mixed population on the confines of Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece. The Bulgarian claim to it had been recognized by Russia and Turkey in the abortive San Stefano Treaty of March 1878, and was thereafter never relaxed. IMRO

on the events in the BKP, denouncing "attempts by some of its pusillanimous and treacherous elements to split the party" (*ibid.* No. 3, January 8, 1924, p. 24).

[1] *Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale vom IV. bis V. Weltkongress* (1924), p. 42.

[2] For the sources for these negotiations see J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), pp. 160-165. The only circumstantial account is in K. Todorov, *Balkan Firebrand* (Chicago, 1943), pp. 200-210; in view of Todorov's character and record, no statement by him — and, indeed, no statement by anyone — about the negotiations can be accepted without caution. An earlier work by Todorov, *Politička Istoriya Sovremene Bugarske* (Belgrade, 1938), was completely silent on the subject.

dated from 1893, the epithet " internal " in its title distinguishing it from an " external " committee for the liberation of Macedonia from Turkish rule established in Sofia. Its programme was the union of Slav Macedonia with a greater Bulgaria. Subsidized by the Bulgarian Government, it controlled *de facto* an extensive territory, terrorizing such parts of the population as did not voluntarily submit to it. Bulgarian claims to some parts of Macedonia were once more recognized in the Serb-Bulgarian treaty of 1912; but, after the second Balkan War in 1913, the whole of Slav Macedonia passed into the hands of Serbia, the predominantly Greek sector of Macedonia falling to Greece. This allocation was confirmed by the peace settlement of 1919. IMRO resumed its rôle of resistance, no longer to the Turkish, but to the Yugoslav, oppressor. But a split now occurred in its ranks. Its leaders, Alexandrov and Protogerov, continued to follow an openly pro-Bulgarian line, demanding the annexation of Macedonia to Bulgaria. But a small group, headed by one Dimov, started in 1919 to agitate for an independent Macedonia within a Balkan federation and to denounce all existing Balkan governments. The adherents of this group were commonly known as " federalists " by way of distinction from the pro-Bulgarian " autonomists ". Unable to make headway in his campaign, Dimov in 1920 joined the BKP, which stood for a " federalist " rather than a " big Bulgarian " solution of the Macedonian problem.[1]

In the winter of 1921–1922, a crisis occurred in the affairs of IMRO. Stambulisky, irked by the pretensions of IMRO or anxious to improve his relations with Yugoslavia and with the west, cut off the usual subsidies. This led to an approach by IMRO to the BKP, which was presumed to have the resources of Comintern behind it; and in May 1922 Protogerov travelled to Genoa at the moment of the Genoa conference for a conversation with Rakovsky, whose Balkan origin and experience made him a natural channel of communication with Moscow. The result appears to have been inconclusive. But during the next twelve months, a *rapprochement* occurred between the two organizations, of which the main symptom was a declaration of IMRO supporting the cause of Macedonian independence and

[1] J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), p. 176.

dissociating itself from the policies of the Bulgarian Government.[1] It was perhaps significant that the Balkan federation of communist parties, always the mouthpiece of the BKP, took the occasion of its conference in Moscow in December 1922 to demand independence for Macedonia and Thrace within a future federation of Balkan republics.[2] In the spring of 1923 an emissary of IMRO, Vlakhov by name,[3] visited Moscow in the hope of clinching an agreement which would bring much-needed subsidies; and these seem to have been promised on condition that IMRO made its peace with Dimov and the "federalists" and firmly adopted the policy of independence for Macedonia.[4]

During Vlakhov's absence, however, a more alluring prospect opened before the IMRO leaders. They were apprised of a coup being planned by the army and Right-wing politicians against the Stambulisky government, and invited to support it. The bond was common hatred of Stambulisky's attempted appeasement of Yugoslavia, the inducement to the IMRO leaders the hope of returning to their former status as honoured pensioners of the Bulgarian Government. Some tacit understanding was undoubtedly reached; and at any rate some sections of IMRO assisted the military group which overthrew Stambulisky.[5] Radek, at the session of the enlarged IKKI in Moscow a fortnight later, attempted to have things both ways. While reproaching the BKP for its passivity in face of the reactionary attack on the Stambulisky government, he also attacked it for its failure in the past to pay sufficient attention to the Macedonian question or to the "underground revolutionary Macedonian organization", which "for a long time past has sympathized with the Russian revolution", and was "a social factor with which we could have formed a bloc for the struggle against Stambulisky". A proclamation by IKKI to "the Bulgarian workers and peasants" contained a special section beginning "Peasants of Macedonia!

[1] *Ibid.* p. 177.

[2] See p. 204 above.

[3] Vlakhov's Soviet connexions and sympathies were said to date from the time when he was Bulgarian consul-general in Odessa after the revolution (J. Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy* (1939), p. 184).

[4] J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), p. 179.

[5] J. Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy* (1939), pp. 164-166; this account by a British journalist later resident in Sofia was based on a careful sifting of the evidence.

Macedonian Revolutionaries!", which urged them to unite with the workers against the hated Tsankov government.[1] The complexities of local politics, in the Balkans and elsewhere, were often under-estimated in Moscow.

Of all policies and expedients tried by the BKP before the events of 1923, cooperation with IMRO seemed the one which had been most hopelessly and irretrievably shattered by these events. In the first bitterness of the defeat of the September insurrection, a communist publicist accused IMRO of having helped to suppress the rising, and of provoking the arrest of communists by betraying their secrets to the government.[2] But the underlying logic of the situation soon prevailed. The weakness and humiliation of the BKP, and the insistence of Comintern on united front policies, encouraged the quest for allies even where prospects seemed most clouded. The situation of a year earlier was now reversed: the BKP was the suitor, and IMRO could afford to wait. The resolution of the sixth conference of the Balkan federation held in Berlin in December 1923 included a detailed statement on Macedonia. "Control of Macedonia", it declared, "in virtue of its geographical position, guarantees mastery of the whole Balkan peninsula." Macedonia was treated throughout as a single national unit partitioned between Yugoslavia, Greece and Bulgaria. Thrace, somewhat weakly and without argument, was bracketed with Macedonia, and the aim was defined as "*a voluntary union of independent Balkan republics*", including Macedonian and Thracian republics.[3] During the winter of 1923–1924 tentative overtures seem to have been made by the BKP.[4] The IMRO leaders held back.

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolnitel'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1923), pp. 257-258, 302-303; for the general tenor of Radek's speech, and of the proclamation, see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 193.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 159, October 10, 1923, p. 1357; No. 160, October 12, 1923, p. 1367. The charge may have been true (see J. Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy* (1939), pp. 175-177).

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, Nos. 3-4, May–June 1924, pp. 139-145; for the whole resolution see p. 207 above.

[4] For the tenuous and indirect evidence see J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), pp. 181-183; it seems fair to conclude that advances were made. It was rumoured that IMRO had been in receipt of subsidies not only from the Bulgarian, but from the Italian, Government, and that the curtailment or threatened curtailment of Italian subsidies as a result of the Italo-Yugoslav agreement of January 27, 1924, contributed to IMRO's financial

But it was not compatible with their principles to reject any potential source of support; and in April 1924 serious negotiations were opened in Vienna. Vlakhov, now established there as Bulgarian consul-general, was the principal negotiator for IMRO. Kolarov and Dimitrov no doubt acted for the BKP. At the end of the month Alexandrov, Protogerov and Chaulev appeared on the scene to endorse the agreement reached and to sign the documents. The first of these, dated April 29, 1924, was a declaration signed by Protogerov and Chaulev. It committed IMRO to fight for "the liberation and unification of the separated segments of Macedonia into a completely independent political unit" within a Balkan federation, which would be "alone capable of paralysing the annexationist designs of the Balkan states". In this cause IMRO would rely "exclusively on the moral support of European progressive and revolutionary movements and on the moral, material and political aid of the USSR", and would "establish contact with the communist parties of the Balkan states". A supplementary protocol of the following day provided for the reincorporation in IMRO of all "federalist" groups which had split away from it, and for the publication in Vienna in French of a monthly journal, *La Fédération Balkanique*, to publicize IMRO's new policy. These documents were clearly not intended for the public: the alliance with Moscow was not to be revealed. The two documents designed for publication were a "Manifesto to the Macedonian People" and a declaration to be read by the Macedonian deputies in the Bulgarian Sobranie. These made no mention of the Soviet Union or of communism, but pledged IMRO to "the liberation and reunion of the separated parts of Macedonia", and denounced the Greek, Yugoslav and Bulgarian Governments by name as oppressors of the Macedonian people. Both documents were dated May 6, 1924; the manifesto was published in the first number of *La Fédération Balkanique* on July 15, 1924.[1] The most startling feature of IMRO's change

embarrassments: this speculation can be neither confirmed nor refuted with any confidence.

[1] Photostatic copies of all four documents are included in the annexes to a later anonymous pamphlet, *Les Traîtres à la Cause Macédonienne* (1927), written by Vlakhov; the original Bulgarian version of the pamphlet *Izmenitsite na Makedonsko Delo*, was published in Prague in 1926 (D. Vlakhov, *Makedonija* (Skoplje, 1950), p. 300).

of front was the cavalier attitude to its main existing source of revenue; the Bulgarian Government could scarcely be expected to continue to pay subsidies to an organization which openly attacked it. No record exists of any document signed in Vienna on behalf of the BKP or of Comintern. But the counterpart of the agreement can hardly have been other than a promise of liberal financial support from Moscow. A visit of Alexandrov to Rakovsky in London in May 1924 was somewhat belatedly reported in the press, and denied by IMRO:[1] it probably took place. Dimitrov could feel satisfied with the outcome of the negotiations. In an article referring to the agreement in general terms, he remarked that, while "the Macedonian organization of Todor Alexandrov" had allowed itself to be "used" both for the overthrow of Stambulisky and for the suppression of the September rising, events had opened the eyes of "a great part of the Macedonian emigration and many members of the autonomist organization", who now "refuse to be the tools of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie".[2] Radič, during his visit to Moscow in June–July 1924, was apparently induced to adhere, in the name of the Croat Republican Peasant Party, to the Macedonian manifesto of May 6, 1924.[3]

The BKP might now be said to have recovered from the low ebb of its fortunes in the autumn of 1923. A tentative understanding had been reached with Todorov as spokesman for the *émigrés* of the Peasant Union; and what seemed a firm agreement had been concluded with the much more formidable and influential IMRO. At this moment, in the middle of May 1924, the underground party succeeded in holding a two-day conference at Mount Vitosha, not far from Sofia. An opposition, which still

[1] *The Times*, July 19, August 1, 1924; J. Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy* (1939), p. 181. S. Christowe, *Heroes and Assassins* (N.Y. 1935), p. 176, speaks of Rakovsky's talks with Alexandrov and Protogerov, but makes him, erroneously at this time, ambassador in Paris.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 57, May 28, 1924, pp. 687-688.

[3] This statement rests on a declaration of the BKP after the disowning of the agreement by Alexandrov and Protogerov (*ibid.* No. 126, September 26, 1924, pp. 1677-1678) and must be regarded with some reserve; J. Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy* (1939), p. 182 reports IMRO support for Radič as well as for the communists. For Radič's visit to Moscow see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 199-200.

condemned or criticized the policy of the September rising, was beaten off; and the proceedings amounted to a vote of confidence in the absent Kolarov and Dimitrov, who were re-elected to the party central committee and confirmed as the directors of its foreign bureau. Marek, the chief organizer of the conference, became secretary of the illegal party.[1] When therefore Kolarov and Dimitrov appeared in Moscow in June 1924 at the fifth congress of Comintern, the prestige of the BKP had been completely restored. Kolarov, as a leading official of Comintern, opened the proceedings, and presided as Zinoviev's deputy at many of the meetings. The BKP presented no problems calling for discussion. Its policies, as embodied in the resolutions of the Balkan federation, were vigorously upheld, and served to point the shortcomings of other Balkan delegations. Manuilsky in his report on the national question attacked the opposition in the Yugoslav party, and the Greek party as a whole, for their recalcitrance. From the Yugoslav point of view, the Macedonian question took second place to the question of Croatia; and the replacement of the old demand for the cession of Slav Macedonia to Bulgaria by the demand for an independent Macedonia made little difference. From the Greek point of view, the constitution of an independent Macedonia implied the cession to the proposed new unit of the sector of Macedonia which had belonged to Greece since 1912; and an independent Thrace meant the loss to Greece of the territories acquired in 1913 and 1919. The Greek Communist Party refused to recognize or publish the resolution of the Balkan federation in favour of Macedonian and Thracian independence, and protested against it to Comintern. Such an attitude Manuilsky described as reminiscent only of Austro-Marxism. Maximos, the Greek delegate, pleaded that the Greek Communist Party accepted in principle the slogan of autonomy for Macedonia, and had merely asked, in view of the unpopularity of this slogan in Greece at a time when 750,000 Greek refugees from Turkey had just been settled in Greek

[1] For the sources for this conference, the last to be held by the party on Bulgarian soil for more than 20 years, see J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), pp. 157-159; a *communiqué* on the conference, but no detailed record of the proceedings, was belatedly published in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 111, August 22, 1924, p. 1438.

Macedonia, for some delay in putting forward the slogan and for special regard for Greek conditions.[1] But the Greek party was not very important; and Maximos's protest was dismissed without discussion. The resolution of the congress on "National Questions in Central Europe and in the Balkans" contained an uncompromising chapter on Macedonia and Thrace. Referring to "the partition of Macedonia" between Yugoslavia, Greece and Bulgaria and to the partition of Thrace between Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria, it endorsed the demands of the sixth conference of the Balkan Federation of December 1923 for "a unified independent Macedonia" and "a unified independent Thrace", and declared it the task of the Balkan federation "to synthesize and to lead" the policy of the Balkan communist parties in these questions.[2] It was a mark of the ascendancy of the BKP, and of the confidence which it enjoyed at this time in Moscow, that Kolarov was elected a member, and Dimitrov a candidate member, of IKKI.[3]

As soon as the congress ended, the seventh conference of the Balkan federation was convened in Moscow to reinforce these policies. It censured the "opportunists" of the Yugoslav opposition and the seceders from the Greek Communist Party who resisted them. Its principal innovation in comparison with the more cautious pronouncements of the fifth congress was an emphatic statement that "the position in the Balkans is not only revolutionary, but the revolutionary crisis is reaching its acutest stage", and that "Bulgaria stands immediately on the eve of a

[1] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, pp. 629-630, 691-693; for the Yugoslav opposition, which was apparently not represented at the congress, see p. 226 below.

[2] *Thesen und Resolutionen des V. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1924), pp. 127-128; for the chapter of the resolution on the Yugoslav question see p. 227 below. The resolution also contained a brief section approving "the action of the Rumanian Communist Party in putting forward the slogan of the separation of Transylvania and the Dobrudja from the Rumanian state in the form of an independent territory" (*ibid.* p. 133): no Rumanian delegate spoke at the congress, though six appeared in the list of delegates (*Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1054). In December 1924 the Greek Communist Party at length held a congress which condemned the previous attitude of the central committee and declared for the right of "self-determination to the point of secession" (*Pravda*, January 6, 1925).

[3] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1021.

fresh civil war ".[1] The militant mood in the BKP inspired by the *rapprochement* with IMRO, and already registered at the Vitosha party conference, was still in the ascendant. In the BKP, however, as in other parties, the optimism prevailing at the fifth congress of Comintern suffered a quick reaction. The success enjoyed in the summer of 1924 by the Bulgarian spokesmen in Moscow was not reflected in party affairs elsewhere. The tentative negotiations with the *émigré* leaders of the Peasant Union and the agreement signed with IMRO both quickly came to grief. Both were deeply shrouded in the atmosphere of complicated duplicity and political unreality characteristic of Balkan affairs in this period.

When Todorov angled — perhaps successfully — for subsidies from Moscow in the first months of 1924, the discussions were obscured by a wilful misunderstanding or by a desire of each party to double-cross the other. Todorov, anxious though he was for fresh sources of support, had no intention of abandoning his present and perhaps more reliable sources — the Yugoslav and Czechoslovak Governments; but for the moment his Left hand could disclaim what his Right was doing. The communists were bent, as a condition of their support, on detaching the Peasant Union from its bourgeois financial basis; and they perhaps reflected that, if Todorov could be sufficiently compromised by a communist alliance, this result would automatically follow. The clash of interests seems to have come to a head when Todorov and Dimitrov met again in Vienna in August 1924, and arranged for negotiations to be resumed in Prague later in the month. At this point a split occurred among the Peasant Union leaders, Todorov and Obbov both desiring, if the worst came to the worst, to sacrifice the support of Moscow for that of the bourgeois governments, and Atanasov and Stoyanov, who are said to have escaped from a Bulgarian prison with the aid of the communist underground organization, favouring the opposite policy. Negotiations in Prague, at which Obbov, Atanasov and Stoyanov represented the Peasant Union, resulted in an agreement, which included an arrangement for a division between the Peasant Union and the BKP of offices in the Bulgarian Government to be formed after the overthrow of the Tsankov régime, but which was thereupon rejected by Todorov. Somebody

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 99, August 1, 1924, pp. 1272-1273.

disclosed Todorov's flirtation with Moscow to the Yugoslav and Czechoslovak Governments; and Todorov, under fire from both sides, did his dishonest best to extricate himself from the communist entanglement. Finally, when prolonged and disreputable recrimination on all sides made it clear that the project of an alliance between the BKP and the Peasant Union was dead, and after Todorov and Obbov on the one hand, and Atanasov and Stoyanov on the other, had engaged in mutual invective in the Yugoslav and Bulgarian press, Dimitrov in April 1925 published his version of the story, which made Todorov the principal villain, in a Bulgarian newspaper.[1]

Relations between the BKP and IMRO were altogether more serious; for IMRO had effective power in Bulgaria which the Peasant Union had not. The leaders of IMRO faced, however, a dilemma similar to that of the Peasant Union: alliance with Moscow was ultimately incompatible with dependence on subsidies from their present paymaster — the Bulgarian Government. Whether at the time of the conclusion of the Vienna agreement Alexandrov already contemplated the possible necessity of disowning it, and for that reason left his two colleagues to sign it alone, or whether he repented too late of what had been done, cannot be guessed.[2] What is known is that, after his return to Bulgaria, on June 5, 1924, he sent a communication to Vlakhov in Vienna urging him to stop the publication of the manifesto and the launching of *La Fédération Balkanique*. In spite of this protest Vlakhov, supported by Chaulev, who had remained in Vienna, issued the first number of *La Fédération Balkanique* containing the manifesto on July 15, 1924. A fortnight later, Alexandrov and Protogerov, who were still in Bulgaria, denounced the manifesto as a fabrication, though they hesitated between the version that the signatures had been forged and the version that Chaulev and Vlakhov had negotiated the agreement without their authority. In the second number of *La Fédération*

[1] For the sources for this not very important, but characteristic, episode see J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), pp. 163-168.

[2] K. Todorov, *La Vérité sur l'Organisation Révolutionnaire Intérieure Macédonienne* (1927), p. 12, alleges that Alexandrov and Protogerov found the initial subsidies from Soviet sources inadequate, and "fell back into the arms of the Bulgarian Government" on the promise of an annual subsidy of 12 million levas; for the Vienna agreement see p. 213 above.

Balkanique on August 15, 1924, Vlakhov denounced Alexandrov and Protogerov, and produced circumstantial arguments for the genuineness of the document. On August 31, 1924, Alexandrov was assassinated. Direct responsibility for the act was never established. But the collusion of the Bulgarian Government may be assumed. No attempt was made to identify the murderers; and the Bulgarian Government issued a story, which was promptly denied by the BKP, but read like an attempt to justify the killing of Alexandrov, of an alleged plot by the BKP and a section of IMRO to start a rising on September 15, 1924. During the first stage of these events, the leaders of the BKP endeavoured to minimize the completeness of the break, and issued a statement to the effect that the party supported IMRO and the policy of independence for Macedonia, but remained organizationally distinct and did not concern itself in IMRO's internal dissensions.[1] But the scandal went from bad to worse. On September 13, 1924, Dimov was assassinated in Sofia, and three months later Chaulev was murdered in Milan. This let loose a widespread campaign of assassination in the ranks of IMRO, at first directed against those suspected of communist sympathies, but later degenerating into a personal vendetta, in which Mikhailov, Alexandrov's successor, played a leading part. The last hopes in Moscow of cooperation with IMRO were extinguished by a proclamation of IMRO of March 1925 reaffirming its loyalty to the Bulgarian Government.[2] Another ambiguous Comintern experiment had ended in disaster; and in the winter of 1924–1925 the fortunes of the BKP had once more reached a low point.

(*h*) *The Yugoslav Communist Party (KPJ)*

The outlawry and official persecution of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ) brought to an end its legal activities

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 126, September 26, 1924, pp. 1677-1678.

[2] For the sources for these events see J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), pp. 188-191. For the circumstances of Alexandrov's murder see D. Vlakhov, *Makedonija* (Skoplje, 1950), pp. 307-308; S. Christowe, *Heroes and Assassins* (N.Y., 1935), pp. 180-189; J. Swire, *Bulgarian Conspiracy* (1939), pp. 188-189. The first two accounts implicate Protogerov, who was assassinated four years later for his alleged complicity; the third fairly and squarely accuses Mikhailov.

on Yugoslav soil in the autumn of 1921.[1] In July 1922 it held in Vienna what was alternatively described as an enlarged session of the central committee or as the first party conference (two full party congresses had been held legally in 1919 and 1920). It was a stormy conference, and three leaders of a " Left " opposition walked out when their criticisms of Markovič, the secretary of the party and hitherto its virtual leader, were rejected. Though Markovič appears to have retained his authority by the narrowest of margins, the newly-elected central committee was composed exclusively of his supporters.[2] On receiving a report on the conference, Comintern insisted, in accordance with its usual tactics at this time, on the admission of one of the minority leaders, Kaclerovič, to the central committee, and on the expulsion from the party, on grounds of breach of discipline, of Milkič, one of Markovič's leading supporters.[3] The fourth congress of Comintern in November 1922, showed the same desire to hold the balance even in the Yugoslav party. Kon, the Polish delegate, who acted as *rapporteur* on the question, insisted on the need to outlive the traditions of the Second International (which sounded like a criticism of the majority), but deprecated the demand of the minority to declare the decisions of the Vienna conference invalid owing to its failure, inevitable in the underground conditions in which the party now worked, to observe certain provisions of the party statute.[4] The congress resolution condemned the passivity shown by the party in face of official repression, but approved the

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 227. A decree outlawing communist organizations and activities was passed on December 29, 1920; but it was not rigidly enforced, and communist deputies continued to function till the passage of a new law " for the protection of the state " in August 1921.

[2] The only available account of the proceedings, said to be based on party archives returned from Moscow to Belgrade in 1958, is in an article entitled "Rad i Zaklucci I, II, i III Konferencije KPJ" in *Istorija XX Veka: Zbornik Radova*, ed. D. Jankovič, i (1959), 237-249. According to this account, only 21 delegates were present, besides Heckert as representative of Comintern: this seems to contradict the statement in Josip Broz Tito, *Politicki Izvjestaj Centralnog Komiteta KPJ* (1948), p. 19 (this was Tito's report to the fifth party congress) that Markovič's majority was 15 to 13.

[3] *Istorija XX Veka: Zbornik Radova*, ed. D. Jankovič, i (1959), 249. Milkič had been a delegate of the KPJ at the second congress of Comintern in 1920; the nature of his offence is not recorded.

[4] *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1923), pp. 937-941.

decisions of the Vienna conference. Anxious, as everywhere, to avert schisms and secessions, it declared that no issues of principle were involved, that the dissensions at the conference had been provoked " exclusively by causes of a personal character ", and that " active comrades from the ranks of the minority " should be admitted to responsible party work.[1] When the resolution was presented to the plenary session, a delegate of the minority in the Yugoslav delegation, claiming to represent a " Left " and " anti-opportunist " standpoint, asserted that the so-called minority in reality enjoyed the support of a majority of the party, and proposed that the leadership should be equally divided between the two factions; and a majority delegate retorted that a new central committee had already been elected by the Vienna conference and had been endorsed by IKKI. After this exchange, which boded ill for future harmony in the party, the resolution was adopted unanimously.[2]

What was, however, evidently the most important decision about Yugoslav affairs was not taken by any organ of the congress, nor — for obvious reasons — published. It was proposed to create a legal Yugoslav workers' party, which, not being ostensibly communist and admitting non-communists to membership, would escape the legal ban, but would be dominated by the members of the illegal party and would serve the ends of communism. This was confirmed by a formal resolution of the central committee of KPJ, which also drafted a statute and programme for the new party.[3] The creation of a legal party was the answer to the reproach levelled at the illegal party of " passivity " and failure to penetrate the masses, and to the increasingly strong pressure of Comintern for united front tactics: these were expressed in the programme, which strongly emphasized the practical demands of the workers and played down potential revolutionary implications. On January 13-14, 1923, the Independent Workers' Party of Yugoslavia (NRPJ) held its founding congress in Belgrade and adopted its programme and statute.[4] It also launched in Belgrade a weekly journal *Radnik* (*The Worker*)

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 363-365.

[2] *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1923), pp. 944-945.

[3] *Istorijski Arhiv KPJ*, ii (1950), 271.

[4] *Ibid.* ii, 272-290.

— which carried on its title-page the slogans "Proletarians of all countries, unite" and "The liberation of the workers is the task of the workers themselves" — as well as several local journals. Whether or not this camouflage really deceived the authorities, the new party enjoyed official toleration and a legal status for eighteen months. A simultaneous attempt was made to revive a legal independent trade union movement. The Yugoslav trade unions had suffered from the same repressive measures which were applied to the party. A Yugoslav central trade union council was said in 1920 to have a membership of 200,000 workers; it was sympathetic to Moscow, and sent delegates to the trade union conference in Sofia organized by Mezhsovprof in November of that year.[1] This was dissolved and outlawed at the same time as the KPJ in 1920 or 1921. Independent trade unions gradually struggled back to life, and early in 1923 established a council and held a conference, which adopted a statute and programme modelled on those of Profintern, and went back to the old name of the Yugoslav central trade union council. But they claimed no more than 24,000 members. In addition, a few unions were affiliated to IFTU, a few belonged neither to Profintern nor to IFTU, and some Croat unions were associated with Radič's party.[2] But, except for the small group of industrial workers at Belgrade, the trade union movement remained insignificant.

The first appearance of the new party was at the Yugoslav elections of March 18, 1923. Whereas at the elections of November 1920 the then legal KPJ had secured almost 200,000 votes and 58 seats, the NRPJ now obtained only 24,000 votes and had no deputies. The defeat was attributed not only to the long period of illegality and persecution, but to the isolation of the party from the masses and to its failure to appeal to the peasantry and to the oppressed nationalities[3] — all issues which were to loom large in party controversy in the next few years. Nor did the creation of a legal party put an end to the dissensions in the KPJ. The second party conference held in Vienna in May 1923 mustered 37 delegates, and was attended by Milyutin and Šmeral

[1] See p. 205 above.

[2] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 9 (32), September 1923, pp. 829-830; *L'Activité de l'ISR: Rapport pour le III^e Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), pp. 333-334; *L'ISR au Travail, 1924-1928* (1928), p. 255.

[3] *Krest'yanskii Internatsional*, No. 1-2, January-February 1925, pp. 15-17.

as representatives of Comintern. It adopted resolutions on all the major issues confronting the party, old and new — the political situation, the question of Fascism, the agrarian question, the trade union question and relations between the legal and illegal parties. All these issues became a battlefield between the hitherto dominant Markovič group (Markovič himself was in prison) and a vigorous "Left" opposition. Though Milyutin is said to have supported Markovič, the Left proved victorious by a large majority, and a new central committee of a predominantly Left complexion was elected, Kaclerovič succeeding Markovič as secretary-general. No resolution was passed on the national question. But it was a sign of the times that a number — perhaps even a majority — of members of the central committee were non-Serbs, and a Croat, Cvijič by name, was appointed party delegate to attend the enlarged IKKI in Moscow in June 1923.[1] Cvijič appeared at the session under the name of Vladetič; and, when Zinoviev reproached the KPJ with erroneous views on the national question, he defiantly replied that the trouble was due not to erroneous views, but to the police repression to which the party was subjected.[2]

The national question, which was soon to become a major stumbling block and bone of contention in the affairs of the KPJ, had played no part in its early history.[3] The KPJ had been formed out of two disparate elements. The Serb Social-Democratic Party before 1914 had been a party of the Second International. Unlike all other social-democratic parties of central and western Europe, it had voted against war credits in the Serbian parliament in 1914, thus winning for itself a largely undeserved reputation as a party of the extreme Left; it appears to have taken no further action against the war. Its membership was based on the relatively small group of skilled and organized workers in Belgrade. Its intellectuals were Marxists in the Luxemburgist tradition which rejected nationalism as an outworn

[1] *Istorija XX Veka : Zbornik Radova*, ed. D. Jankovič, i (1959), 249-268; for a briefer account see *Istorijski Arhiv KPJ*, ii (1950), 92.

[2] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolnitel'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1923), p. 75.

[3] Tito in his report of 1948 (see p. 220, note 2 above) explicitly stated that it was raised for the first time at the conference of the Balkan federation in December 1922, and that both Right and Left in the KPJ shared the same "incorrect", i.e. anti-national, attitude.

superstition. Former Serb social-democrats formed the nucleus of KPJ on its foundation in 1919, and down to 1923 continued to dominate it. The Croat and Slovene social-democrats before 1914 were few in number, and shared the mild and " Rightist " traditions of Austrian social-democracy. They did not join, or failed to make any impact on, the KPJ, whose Croat and Slovene members were mainly either peasants or nationalist intellectuals in revolt against the imposition of Serb supremacy on the new state and its institutions. The Croat and Slovene elements in the party were initially weak, and had little influence on its policies. Its hitherto predominantly Serb leaders, headed by Marković, regarded appeals to nationalism as bourgeois and non-Marxist; and this enabled them to reject, as irrelevant to party doctrine, Croat and Slovene attacks on the unity of the Serb-Croat-Slovene state, and to maintain a Serb ascendancy in the party. Moreover this ascendancy could be justified in terms of doctrine by pointing to the proletarian and trade unionist character of the Belgrade party organization, which made it more distinctively proletarian than other sections of the party. Zinoviev at the session of the enlarged IKKI in June 1923, while acquitting Marković personally of error, alleged that other party leaders declared that the workers had no fatherland, and that they were not interested in the national question.[1] These views could plausibly be described in Comintern vocabulary either as Right or as ultra-Left. But, when in the autumn of 1923 the German fiasco and the Trotsky controversy in the Russian party brought about a crisis in Comintern, and attacks on the Right leadership of the German, Polish and Czechoslovak parties were in fashion, Marković and his colleagues were also denounced as Rightists, with covert encouragement from Moscow, by an opposition which, though it too had Serb leaders, relied heavily on Croat and Slovene support.

The rift between Left and Right in the KPJ, once brought into the open, quickly spread to all the current issues under debate in Comintern — the united front, the attitude to the peasantry, trade union unity, party organization and the relation of the legal to the illegal party. The dispute came to a head at the third party

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolnitel'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1923), p. 33.

conference, held illegally in Belgrade in December 1923 and attended by 65 delegates, at which the Left commanded a substantial majority.[1] The most important and controversial of the resolutions adopted by the conference related to the national question. It roundly condemned " the dictatorship of the imperialist policy of the Entente and of the Serb ruling class ", to which the Croat and Slovene bourgeoisie had capitulated. It recognized " the right of self-determination to the point of secession ", though, having affirmed the principle, it hedged on the application. Recognition of the right was not incompatible with " agitation against secession " ; the unity of the Serb, Croat and Slovene peoples in a single state was the product of geographical and economic considerations, and served " the cause of historical progress and the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat ". On the other hand, " the struggle for the independence of Macedonia " was unconditionally approved. A separate resolution was devoted to Macedonia and Thrace. The claim of these territories to autonomy was asserted (in party terminology no clear distinction was drawn between " autonomy " and " independence "), and " a voluntary union of independent Balkan republics " was proclaimed as the goal. Resolutions were also passed on the national and international situation, on the agrarian question, on Fascism, and on the trade unions (which were described as " living organs of the united front "). By a curious procedure, the NRPJ published these resolutions in *Radnik* as draft resolutions of its own, and submitted them to a party referendum.[2]

The result of the creation of the legal NRPJ was to make it

[1] The fullest account of the conference is in *Istorija XX Veka : Zbornik Radova*, ed. D. Janković, i (1959), pp. 268-282, according to which the resolutions were adopted by majorities of varying sizes ; *Istorijski Arhiv KPJ*, ii (1950), 59, speaks of a " huge majority " for the Left.

[2] The resolutions were reprinted in *ibid.* ii, 60-89, in the form in which they appeared in *Radnik*; it is uncertain how far they had been modified for purposes of publication in order to give them " legal form " (*ibid.* ii, 59, 271, where " small stylistic changes " are mentioned), since the originals were not available, having been either lost or deposited in Moscow. The summary of the resolution on the national question given by the Yugoslav spokesman to the fifth congress of Comintern six months later (*Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 658-660) corresponds fairly accurately to the text as printed. The conference also passed resolutions on party organization, on relations with the legal party and on anti-militarist agitation, which were not suitable for publication ; the section of the trade union resolution relating to

throughout the year 1924 the effective communist party of Yugoslavia and to transfer to it the dissensions previously existing in the KPJ. In the referendum which was held in February 1924 the members of the NRPJ approved by an immense majority the resolutions submitted to them, and also elected a central committee from which the Right was apparently excluded.[1] This led to the formation within the Belgrade party organization of an opposition group which denounced the referendum as fraudulent, and threatened to split the party.[2] At the fifth congress of Comintern in June–July 1924 the national question was the burning issue in the Yugoslav party. Manuilsky censured the Right Serb leaders Markovič and Milojkovič, who were not present at the congress, for an indifference to the question reminiscent of the Second International and of Austro-Marxism. Markovič, he declared, treated the question whether the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were one nation or three as purely academic, and argued that nothing short of a European proletarian revolution could solve the Macedonian problem; Milojkovič went still further, denying that the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were different nations, and maintaining that all that was needed was a revision of the constitution.[3] The official spokesman of the party confined himself to a summary of the party resolution of December 1923, and added that the representative of " the minute section of the KPJ " which opposed the resolution would read a statement in the commission explaining the opposition standpoint.[4] Such a state-

communist fractions in the unions was also not published (*Istorija XX Veka: Zbornik Radova*, ed. D. Jankovič, i (1959), 281-282.

[1] *Istorijski Arhiv KPJ*, ii (1950), 271; the approval of the resolutions is said *ibid.* ii, 59 to have been unanimous.

[2] *Ibid.* ii, 310-311.

[3] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 628-630; it is noteworthy that Milojkovič's heterodox articles were also published in *Radnik*. Some uncertainty attaches to Markovič's personal views on the national question, which may have fluctuated. In the first years of the party, the Serb majority, of which he was the recognized leader, dismissed the question as irrelevant. In 1923, when the question was first becoming acute, Markovič, then in prison, published a book *Nacialno Pitanje v Svetlosti Marksizma*, in which he admitted that Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were " three nations ", and spoke with warm approval of Stalin's pamphlet of 1912 on the national question, but denied that any strong demand for secession or federation existed in Yugoslavia, and favoured the solution of autonomy.

[4] *Protokoll: Funfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 658.

ment, if it was made, is not on record, and evidently produced no effect. Manuilsky, reporting to the congress on the work of the commission, ignored the Yugoslav question altogether;[1] and the resolution eventually issued by the presidium of IKKI was quite uncompromising. "The Serbs, Croats and Slovenes", it declared, "are three different nations": any pretence to the contrary was "a mask of Serb imperialism". The national question in Yugoslavia was not a constitutional question, though the KPJ should take an active part in the campaign for a revision of the constitution. The slogan of the KPJ must be "the right of self-determination in the form of a demand for the separation of Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia" and for their transformation into "independent republics".[2] The conference of the Balkan federation, held in Moscow immediately after the congress, pointed out the close connexion between national revolutionary movements and the peasant question, and condemned the "opportunist" standpoint of Marković, Milojković and their supporters in the Yugoslav party.[3]

The visit of Radič to Moscow, and the adhesion of the Croat Republican Peasant Party to the Peasant International,[4] occurred while the fifth congress was in progress. It did not imply acceptance of communism, and had, strictly speaking, nothing to do with Comintern; nobody mentioned it at the congress. But it had the effect of sharpening the antagonisms within the KPJ. On the one hand, it made Comintern, and the party leaders who followed the Comintern line, more attentive to the national aspirations of the non-Serb units of the Yugoslav state, and more conscious of the services which they might render to the revolutionary cause. It may well have accounted for the emphatic terms in which the demand for the secession of Croatia and Slovenia was formulated in the congress resolution. On the other hand, the success enjoyed by Radič in Moscow, implying agreement on a programme designed to end Serb supremacy and lead eventually to the break-up of the Yugoslav state, excited keen jealousies and resentments in the Serb section of the party; the

[1] For Manuilsky's report see p. 89 above.

[2] For this resolution see pp. 89-90 above; for the special section relating to Macedonia and Thrace see p. 226 above.

[3] For this conference and its resolution see pp. 216-217 above.

[4] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 199-200.

defenders of the Comintern line waged an uphill battle against increasingly powerful attacks by the opposition. But Radič's flirtation with Moscow also provoked an intensification of official repression. Even earlier the toleration accorded to the NRPJ had begun to wear thin ; according to the report of IKKI to the fifth congress of Comintern, the party " is not legal in all parts of Yugoslavia and is frequently disturbed by waves of police persecution ".[1] On July 12, 1924, the NRPJ and its journal *Radnik* were officially banned, and the fiction of a distinction between legal and illegal parties ended.[2] An attempt was made to evade the ban on *Radnik* by starting a new journal under the name of *Okovani Radnik* (*The Worker in Chains*), and for two months the *Radnik* and *Okovani Radnik* were published alternatively and side by side. But before the end of the year, both had been effectively closed down.[3] Meanwhile, at the end of July 1924, the Right-wing Serb government of Pašič fell, and was succeeded by a more liberal coalition under Davidovič : this was hailed in Comintern circles as the Yugoslav expression of the " democratic-pacifist " era. The change came, however, too late to benefit the Yugoslav communists.

The struggle within the party grew more and more bitter. The majority of the central committee of the NPRJ published its theses on the dispute in the last issue of the illegal *Radnik* on September 28, 1924.[4] Counter-theses from the opposition, issued on October 3, 1924, reserved the issues of principle for the decision of a party congress, but refuted the charge of a " Right deviation ". The national question was firmly dealt with :

> The opposition defends and represents the point of view that so much significance cannot be attached to the national question as to thrust back social-economic and class interests into a secondary place. The opposition maintains that the task

[1] *Bericht über die Tätigkeit der Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale vom IV. bis V. Weltkongress* (1924), p. 43.

[2] *Potsetnik iz Istorije KPJ* (*1919–1941*) (1953), p. 33 ; *Istorijski Arhiv KPJ*, ii (1950), 271. For a resolution of the central committee of the NRPJ of July 18, 1924, protesting against the ban, see *ibid.* ii, 307-310 ; but the text has evidently been modified to take account of the change of government at the end of the same month.

[3] *Ibid.* ii, 483, note 87.

[4] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 2 (39), February 1925, pp. 161-162 ; for the theses see *Istorijski Arhiv KPJ*, ii (1950), 310-318.

> of the Marxist proletariat is purely negative, and that the proletariat in its national policy cannot take up a position of so-called practicality, since the danger then threatens that its class struggle will be equated with a bourgeois-nationalist policy.[1]

The majority replied in a " final statement " ; and the Yugoslav Workers' Youth League (SROJ) which had been created at the same time as the NRPJ and was banned with it in July 1924, also came out with a long resolution supporting the central committee and condemning the opposition.[2] The main strength of the opposition was among the industrial workers of Belgrade. The trade union journal *Organizovani Radnik* served as the mouthpiece of the opposition, and attacked the decisions of the fifth congress of Comintern and of the seventh conference of the Balkan federation, which had endorsed the national resolution of the fifth congress, and censured the Yugoslav opposition.[3] At this point, however, counsels of moderation and compromise temporarily prevailed. At the beginning of November 1924 a " platform of agreement " between the majority and the opposition in the NRPJ was drawn up and accepted by both sides. It represented a substantial endorsement of the official view. On the vexed national question it finally declared that Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were " three different nations ", and that " the theory of a single nation with three names is a mask for Great Serb imperialism ". The party had erred in failing to " make concrete the idea of a struggle for the right to an independent Croat or Slovene republic " ; and the opposition was condemned for having " insufficiently appreciated the significance of the national question ". The Radič fiasco was dismissed in a cautious and cryptic sentence :

> The slogan of the worker-peasant government was never made sufficiently concrete, especially at a time when Radič was stressing on his side the slogan of the worker-peasant government,

[1] The text of the opposition theses has not been available, but this passage is quoted in Kh. Kabakchiev *et al.*, *Kommunisticheskie Partii Balkanskikh Stran* (1930), p. 150.

[2] These documents are in *Istorijski Arhiv KPJ*, ii (1950), 318-330 ; for the SROJ see *ibid.* ii, 482, note 82.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 2 (39), February 1925, p. 161 ; for the conference of the Balkan federation see pp. 216-217 above.

which made practical work difficult among the Croat working classes.

The opposition was also criticized in passing for its attitude to the questions of party organization and of the trade unions.[1]

What nullified this attempt at compromise remains obscure. Circumstantial evidence suggests that pressure was applied from Moscow, or more specifically by the Bulgarian leaders of the Balkan federation, which had not been mentioned in the draft platform. In the middle of November 1924 the central committee of the KPJ intervened to reject the platform.[2] The NRPJ, which had never been an independent entity and had lost its sole *raison d'être* with the loss of its legal status, could only follow suit. At a party conference on November 25, 1924, the leaders put forward a resolution which, while textually repeating much of the platform, sharpened the points of difference with the opposition, and introduced several new paragraphs, designed to give it a more sharply Leftist character. One of these declared that the situation in the Balkans was revolutionary, and spoke of the need for " the creation of *a united Balkan fighting front* " and of the prospect of " eventual counter-revolutionary intervention and eventual war in the Balkans " ; this would call for " a struggle for a government of workers and peasants and for a federation of worker-peasant Balkan republics ". Another passage proclaimed it the duty of the party to demand " the formation of independent states " in Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia and Montenegro. The opposition was also sharply criticized for the use of *Organizovani Radnik* in its campaign " against the political line of the party ". The resolution was declared to close the party discussion and was evidently presented to the opposition as an ultimatum.[3] Of 88 party organizations which were invited to pronounce on the resolution, 79 supported the central committee and only one (Belgrade) the opposition : eight expressed no opinion. Among those supporting the central committee, 16 organizations proposed to postpone a final judgment on the dispute till the next party congress ; 57 organizations proposed to exclude the opposition from the party, 30 unconditionally, 27 only in the event of its refusal once again " to submit to the decisions of the party ".[4]

[1] *Istorijski Arhiv KPJ*, i (1950), 331-336.
[2] *Ibid.* ii, 93, 475, note 19. [3] *Ibid.* ii, 336-343. [4] *Ibid.* ii, 343.

Thereupon Milojkovič and a number of opposition members " left the party ", whether by a voluntary act or under a formal sentence of expulsion is not clear.[1] Markovič, who had just been released from prison,[2] was apparently not involved in these proceedings.

These events took place against a background of further political change in Yugoslavia. On November 6, 1924, the compromise government of Davidovič was overthrown, and the high-handed Pašič, the sworn enemy both of Radič and of the communists, returned to power. Since the concessions made or promised by Davidovič to Croat and Slovene nationalism had been among the main charges against him, a sharp attack on Radič and his party was the obvious sequel. A prominent feature of the campaign was the publication of a " Zinoviev letter " in the form of an alleged agreement signed by Zinoviev and Smirnov (the secretary of the International Peasant Council) on behalf of Comintern and by Radič on behalf of the Croat Republican Peasant Party. One of the provisions of the agreement was that the propaganda of the party was to have " a genuinely communist character and conform to the programme and resolutions of the Third International ".[3] The document was a barefaced forgery; and the protests of Comintern were followed by protests from the Balkan federation and from the International Peasant Council.[4] In the midst of the clamour excited by this publication, in the first days of January 1925, Radič was arrested and thrown into prison. The government seized the favourable opportunity to hold elections, which were fixed for February 8, 1925. They were conducted in an atmosphere of intimidation: according to a

[1] According to the Yugoslav delegate at the fifth enlarged IKKI in April 1925, " the Right opposition left the party, explaining their secession by the fact that the KPJ addressed itself to the party of Radič with a proposal for the creation of a united front " (*Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 335). There is no record of any specific approach to Radič after the admission of his party to Krestintern, which took place five months before the final split in the party; nor was this the main point of difference between the factions.

[2] *Kalendar Kommunista na 1925 god* (1925), p. 514, dates his release October 1924.

[3] The text was printed in *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, January 7, 1925, with loud protestations of its fraudulent character.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 10, January 13, 1925, pp. 108-110; No. 15, January 23, 1925, pp. 176-178.

communist account, the country on election day resembled " a great armed camp ". Of nearly three million votes, the " national bloc " supporting the Pašič government received just over a million; the Croat Republican Peasant Party of Radič secured 530,000 (an increase of 60,000 over the figure of 1923); and the rest of the votes were distributed between smaller national parties and splinter groups, the " independent workers' party " (an attempt to replace the banned NRPJ) having 18,000.[1] The most impressive achievement was perhaps the increased vote, in face of severe repression and the imprisonment of its leader, for the Croat Republican Peasant Party. But this provided little consolation to the communists, who were left to reflect that, thanks to their errors, the bourgeoisie had captured the support of large numbers of the peasantry.[2] Here, as in other communist parties, the turn to the Left had led to sectarianism and isolation. In the winter of 1924–1925, the KPJ, divided against itself and outmatched by its adversaries, was driven completely from the field.

(*i*) *The Swedish Communist Party*

Among the lesser national communist parties none gave more trouble in the period of the fifth congress of Comintern than the Swedish. It had been created in 1921 by a split in the Swedish Left Social-Democratic Party on the basis of the 21 conditions. Its leader Hoeglund enjoyed particular prestige as one of the heroes of Zimmerwald and a participant in the founding congress of Comintern in 1919. But revolution was not a live issue in Sweden, and traditional attitudes were strong. At the session of the enlarged IKKI in Moscow in June 1923, Hoeglund had been responsible for an unusual discussion on the question of religion. Both Zinoviev and Bukharin sharply criticized a recent article in which he had argued that " at present it is less important to attack heaven than earth ", and that the religious beliefs of a

[1] *Krest'yanskii Internatsional*, No. 1-2, January–February 1925, pp. 18-20 (the figure of 1,300,000 for an " opposition bloc " is a hypothetical total reached by adding together the national parties and Left splinter parties); *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 268.

[2] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 335-336.

party member were a matter of indifference to the party.[1] Hoeglund retorted that he was not against anti-religious work as such, but wished to avoid "crude anti-religious propaganda which does harm to the party" and to be cautious about attacking "religious people in the party"; he claimed that this accorded with practice, if not with theory, in the Russian party.[2] A special resolution of the enlarged IKKI defined the attitude of communist parties to religion in comparatively moderate terms. It was admitted that "in a mass communist party rank-and-file members will sometimes be found who are not fully emancipated from religious inclinations and prejudices". But it was none the less the duty of party leaders to "struggle against religious prejudices and preach atheism in the appropriate form". Outside the party, cooperation with all workers could be sought on a broad front, irrespective of religious beliefs.[3] But no sooner had this scandal been forgotten than Hoeglund started another. In November 1923, after the schism in the Norwegian Communist Party, he wrote an article in the party newspaper *Politiken* protesting against the tactics of IKKI in expelling Tranmael.[4] After this act of defiance he was summoned to Moscow, where a compromise was rather surprisingly achieved.[5] But Hoeglund continued to offend against Comintern discipline by refusing to take sides in the controversies in the Russian and German parties, and by proclaiming the neutrality of the Swedish party in the Norwegian schism.[6] By this time, perhaps not without encouragement from Moscow, opposition to Hoeglund had begun to appear in the Swedish party itself, though Hoeglund still commanded an overwhelming majority, and Zinoviev admitted that the opposition to him had no support outside Stockholm.[7]

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1923), pp. 28-29, 53-54.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 80-81; for warnings against anti-religious excesses in the Russian party see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 17, 86.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 373-374.

[4] For the crisis in the Norwegian party see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 458-459.

[5] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 251, where IKKI was said to have "set aside its differences with Hoeglund, in the hope that this would bring about tranquillity in the Swedish party".

[6] For an account of the grievances against Hoeglund see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 105, August 12, 1924, pp. 1349-1350.

[7] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.) i, 95.

Hoeglund's position seemed a classic example of a " Right deviation " in the style of Brandler ; and the Comintern leaders set out to use the fifth congress to break his control of the Swedish party. He spoke in the general debate in mild terms, saying that the applicability of united front tactics depended on circumstances, and that no differences of principle existed in the Swedish party, but that certain " gross breaches of discipline " by members of the minority would have to be dealt with at the forthcoming party congress. This provoked violent personal attacks on Hoeglund on familiar lines by Kuusinen, speaking as Finnish delegate, and by the delegate of the Norwegian party.[1] A split now occurred in the Swedish delegation itself. The majority of the delegation handed in a statement protesting against the attacks of the Finnish and Norwegian delegates ; but a minority of three protested against the protest.[2] Meanwhile the affairs of the Swedish party were referred to a Scandinavian commission in which Bukharin and Kuusinen were the dominant figures.[3] A resolution was drafted in which the " Right wing " of the party was condemned for refusing to conform to Comintern directives, and Hoeglund's past errors were enumerated. The Swedish party was forbidden to hold its congress till all members of the party had had time to declare through a referendum their attitude to the resolutions of the fifth congress of Comintern. Finally IKKI would send a representative to the Swedish Communist Party to assist it to carry out these resolutions and to prepare for the party congress.[4]

The resolution on the Swedish question, though it appeared among the resolutions of the fifth congress, was not in fact submitted to the congress, but to the session of IKKI immediately following it. Here the issue finally came to a head. Hoeglund declared that the resolution constituted " a vote of non-confidence in the present party leadership ", and avoided giving a direct

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 344-351, 360-363.

[2] *Ibid.* i, 439 ; ii, 591.

[3] For the list of members see *ibid.* ii, 1063 ; representatives of the Swedish and Norwegian parties were doubtless heard, but were not members of the commission.

[4] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 469-471 ; Hoeglund had originally summoned the party congress for July 19, 1924, i.e. ten days after the end of the congress of Comintern (*Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 251).

answer to the question whether he was prepared to comply with it. After an attack by Bukharin, and a further appeal from Zinoviev for unconditional acceptance, Thälmann bluntly said that Hoeglund could not remain in Comintern (or, by implication, in a party affiliated to it) unless he accepted the resolution. The proceedings ended with a further refusal by Hoeglund to say anything more and with the formal adoption of the resolution.[1] Even now the authorities were extraordinarily reluctant to proceed to extremes, and hoped against hope for a compromise. On July 23, 1924, a week after this final scene, a letter from IKKI to the Swedish party protested against the attitude of "the Right majority" in the party central committee, and complained that Hoeglund had failed to answer the question whether he would submit to the decisions of the congress.

> IKKI does not wish [it concluded] to remove comrade Hoeglund from the central organ of the party unless he himself wishes to set aside international unity in the struggle.[2]

But this letter produced no result. Three weeks later, on August 11, 1924, the presidium of IKKI passed a resolution warning Hoeglund "for the last time" of the fatal consequences to himself to which a further struggle against Comintern would inevitably lead. It recited his past errors, noted that since his return to Stockholm he had denounced the resolutions of the fifth congress as "a Jesuitical comedy", and called on the Swedish party to put an end to this state of disorder.[3]

The scene now shifted to Stockholm, where representatives of IKKI arrived in the middle of August with a mandate to insist on carrying out the proposed referendum of all party members on the resolutions of the fifth congress. On August 18, 1924, Hoeglund, still supported by a majority of the central committee, published a statement rejecting the demand for a referendum. On the following day, at a meeting of the central committee, the delegates of IKKI pressed for the immediate holding of the referendum and for the transfer of the party newspaper *Politiken* to a board consisting of one representative of the Hoeglund group,

[1] *Ibid.* ii, 1035-1044.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 108, August 19, 1924, p. 1396.

[3] *Ibid.* No. 116, September 5, 1924, p. 1514; A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *10 Let Kominterna* (1929), p. 323, dates the resolution August 8, 1924.

one of the opposition, and one of IKKI. These demands were once more rejected. Then, on the night of August 20-21, 1924, the opposition organized a *coup* and seized the offices of *Politiken*; a statement was issued in the name of IKKI that Hoeglund had put himself outside the party. Hoeglund had now had enough. He retired with his immediate supporters to found a new party and a new party organ *Den Nya Politiken*. The party referendum was at length held on September 6, 1924, and showed an "overwhelming majority" in favour of acceptance of the resolutions of the fifth congress.[1] Meanwhile a formal letter from IKKI to the Swedish party branded Hoeglund and his associates as "renegades and enemies of communism", and recognized the party led by Kilbom, Samuelson and other members of the opposition as "the only Swedish communist party".[2] When the dust of the conflict had settled, it was claimed that the party had retained 6000 of its former 8000 members and that Hoeglund's new party numbered 1500. In the Riksdag elections of October 1924, the Swedish Communist Party received 65,000 votes and Hoeglund's party 24,000.[3] Thereafter the Swedish Communist Party, like the Norwegian party after the expulsion of Tranmael, lapsed into docile insignificance.

At the height of the dispute with Hoeglund steps had been taken to set up a federation of Scandinavian communist parties, on the analogy of the Balkan federation, comprising the parties of Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland. This was achieved at a conference held in Oslo on January 20-22, 1924, though delegates of the Finnish party failed to appear. Hansen, the principal Norwegian delegate, was elected secretary of the federation, the headquarters of which were established in Oslo.

[1] These events are related in a *communiqué* of IKKI in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 124, September 23, 1924, pp. 1654-1655: out of about 8000 party members 6064 took part in the referendum and 5282 voted in the affirmative (*ibid.* No. 140, October 28, 1924, pp. 1856-1857).

[2] *Ibid.* No. 117, September 9, 1924, pp. 1529–1530; A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *10 Let Kominterna* (1929), p. 323, lists two letters from IKKI to the party of August 28 and September 1, 1924.

[3] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 140, October 28, 1924, pp. 1856–1857. According to the figures of the mandates commission of the fifth congress (*V^e Congrès de l'Internationale Communiste* (1924), p. 332 — this report was not printed in the German edition of the proceedings), the Swedish party numbered 12,000; but such claims made at congresses were frequently inflated.

Annual conferences were contemplated.[1] The session of IKKI which immediately followed the fifth congress of Comintern, and condemned Hoeglund, gave its formal approval to the new federation.[2] Further conferences of the federation were held in November 1924 and in April 1925, the latter being concerned to promote a Left-wing movement in the trade unions.[3] Thereafter its activities appear to have dwindled. When in March 1926 IKKI decided to create "national secretariats" in Moscow,[4] Finland was placed under a different secretariat from the three other Scandinavian countries.

(*j*) *The Workers' Party of America*

In the United States, the legal Workers' Party of America had completely superseded the illegal party, which was finally liquidated early in 1923.[5] In the years between 1923 and 1926 it reflected with unusual precision the shifts and variations of the Comintern line. This was a natural consequence of its remoteness from American political realities. Unlike most European parties, which had some mass following, whose demands and interests imposed on the party a certain life of its own, unlike even the British party which, though itself weak and numerically insignificant, enjoyed the support of a large mass of sympathizers in the trade unions, the American party was almost totally isolated in the American scene, and received its life-blood by constant transfusions from Moscow. Its most direct approach to the workers was through the Trade Union Educational League (TUEL), a body founded in 1920 in Chicago by Foster, a radical trade union leader. At the end of 1921, after Foster's conversion

[1] A. Tivel, *5 Let Kominterna* (1924), p. 70.

[2] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1044.

[3] A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *10 Let Kominterna* (1929), p. 376; *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 203.

[4] See p. 909 below.

[5] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 423. The change was approved by Comintern at a meeting of the American commission held during the fourth congress in November 1922; the fullest record of the proceedings, which have not been published, is in T. Draper, *The Roots of American Communism* (N.Y. 1957), pp. 383-386. For the letter from IKKI admitting the Workers' Party to Comintern as a sympathizing party see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 8, January 11, 1923, p. 60.

to communism, the league adhered to the Communist Party of America, and was adopted as the American bureau of Profintern.[1] It published a monthly journal, the *Labor Herald.* But its success in infiltrating the unions was limited; and its status as the trade union section of the party remained indeterminate.

In the summer of 1922 a Comintern delegation of three — Pogany, the Hungarian, Walecki, the Pole and Reinstein, the Russian-American [2] — came from Moscow in an attempt to put the affairs of the party in order, and in August 1922 attended the last ill-fated congress of the illegal party at Bridgman, Michigan, which was broken up by the police. When the two others departed, Pogany remained in the United States as Comintern representative,[3] adopted the *alias* of Pepper, and played for some years an influential rôle in the affairs of the American party. The Bridgman congress elected him to the central executive committee; and before long he attained the key position of secretary of its political committee (the American equivalent of the Politburo).[4] If he occupied a more dominant position than Guralsky or Manuilsky in Germany, than Humbert-Droz in France and Italy, or even than Bennett in Great Britain, this was due not so much to his own personality as to the greater readiness and eagerness of the American party to listen to the voice of Moscow. Apart from its numerical weakness, the American party was handicapped as an effective organization by its polyglot character. In the early 1920s not more than one-tenth of its membership was English-speaking; and the party was divided into language federations, the Finnish contingent being at this time by far the largest.[5]

[1] For the origin and development of the TUEL see J. Oneal and G. Werner, *American Communism* (N.Y., 1947), pp. 164-179; a Profintern report in *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale,* No. 8 (31) August 1923, p. 761, described it as " the organ of Profintern in America ", and its second congress on September 1-2, 1923, was reported *ibid.* No. 10-11 (33-34), October–November 1923, pp. 895-896.

[2] For Reinstein see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923,* Vol. 3, pp. 116-117.

[3] Some doubts exist about Pogany's formal status. The factional strife of the numerous Hungarian refugees had become a nuisance to Comintern in 1922, and Pogany was apparently one of those whose removal to other fields of work was welcome (T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1950), pp. 57-58); but, if he was not formally appointed Comintern representative in the United States, he acted with great effect in that capacity.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 38. [5] *Ibid.* p. 190.

When Pepper first became a power in the American party, enthusiasm for the united front was at its peak in Moscow, and the abandonment by the American party of the illegal methods which had led to the Bridgman fiasco was designed to deliver it from its isolation, and to pave the way for a wooing of other groups on the Left of American politics. In October 1922 Pepper made his *début* with a pamphlet *For a Labor Party*, advocating the creation of a new mass party by the joint efforts of the communists and other groups of the Left; and his fluent pen soon enabled him to outshine native-born but less articulate Americans in the party press. During the war various radical groups had appeared in the United States, especially in the Middle West, calling themselves at first labor, and later farmer-labor, parties. A National Farmer-Labor Party came into existence in 1919; and a farmer-labor candidate actually ran at the presidential election of 1920. After many negotiations and intrigues, the Farmer-Labor Party of Chicago called a convention to meet in Chicago on July 3, 1923, with a view to the formation of a broad coalition of the Left: the American Workers' Party, as well as other Left parties, received invitations to send delegates. To Pepper this seemed a first-rate opportunity for the application of united front tactics. He made active propaganda throughout the party for the new move, and won over a majority of the hesitant central executive committee. At the convention the communists threw the weight of their organization and of their oratory behind a motion for the immediate formation of a Federated Farmer-Labor Party, which was carried by a large majority. In the enthusiasm of the moment, the communists by general consent (the objectors having withdrawn from the convention) took the lead. A communist, Manley by name, was appointed secretary of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party; and the Chicago organ of the Workers' Party *The Voice of Labor* was renamed *The Farmer-Labor Voice* to become the organ of the new party.[1]

This resounding success, however, quickly backfired on the victors. While communist drive and energy had carried away a majority of delegates at the congress, communist predominance in the new party seemed on reflexion obnoxious to all but a few extremists in the old farmer-labor groups. The congress was

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 43-48, 75.

followed by a general defection from the ranks of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party, which soon became a mere adjunct of the Workers' Party without serious pretensions to an independent status. The Pyrrhic victory at Chicago also had the paradoxical effect of loosening the cohesion of the communist leadership. Foster seems from the first to have disapproved of the vigorous policies pursued by Pepper at the Chicago convention, which had fatally alienated the moderates in the farmer-labor group. Pepper and Ruthenberg, now working in close harmony, decided to nip this opposition in the bud. At the central executive committee on August 23, 1923, they introduced a resolution which not only enthusiastically reaffirmed the prospects of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party, but expressed dissatisfaction with " the trade union work of our party ", which failed to give support to the policies of the executive. This resolution, with its implied censure of Foster, was carried by a majority of 9 to 3, Foster, a Russian-born New York Marxist named Bittelman, and Cannon, another moderate voting against it. But the balance between the opposing forces was indirectly and insensibly redressed by another step taken at this time. The national party headquarters, hitherto located in New York, were removed on September 1, 1923, to Chicago as the centre where such mass support as the party enjoyed, or could hope to enjoy, was heavily congregated ; [1] and Foster's following and influence, negligible in New York, were at their strongest in Chicago.

An open rift in the party leadership was now imminent, and was evidenced by polemical exchanges between Pepper for one group and Cannon for the other in the party press ; while Pepper extolled the virtues of party discipline and the united front, Cannon tartly retorted that Marxism provided only " some general principles to go by ", and that " there is no pattern made to order from European experience that fits America today ".[2] But at this point Foster suffered a fresh set-back. The powerful trade union organization, the American Federation of Labor (A. F. of L.) took alarm at the apparent ease with which communists had captured the farmer-labor movement, and decided on counter-measures. The annual convention of the A. F. of L.,

[1] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), p. 90.
[2] Quoted *ibid.* p. 82.

held in Portland in October 1923, refused a seat to Dunne, a well-known member of the Workers' Party, who held a trade union mandate, and banned all contacts between unions affiliated to it and the TUEL. The natural retort was an instruction from Foster to members of the TUEL to deny their membership of it when questioned.[1] But this had the effect of converting the TUEL into a conspiratorial underground organization, and destroying its utility as a propaganda organ.

A new twist was given to the affairs of the American party when, in the autumn of 1923, the name of Senator La Follette of Wisconsin began to be canvassed as potential "farmer-labor" or "third party" candidate for the presidential election in the following year. Pepper impetuously saw in La Follette a potential American Kerensky who would lead the first revolution against the existing reactionary order in the United States, and thus prepare the way for the second, proletarian, revolution; and he began to write boldly of the "La Follette revolution".[2] Here, above all, was a heaven-sent opportunity to apply the tactics of the united front, and to establish contact between the Workers' Party and a broad popular movement. Foster and Cannon, though less ecstatic about La Follette's prospective campaign for the presidency, agreed that the party should support him; and, when the third congress of the Workers' Party met in Chicago on December 30, 1923, it seemed that no important issue of principle divided the two groups. The letter addressed by Comintern to the congress was presumably inspired by Pepper's reports, but was discreetly vague. It hailed the formation of the Federated Farmer-Labor Party as "an achievement of prime importance", but thought that the need still existed for "a united front of all proletarian and farmers' parties and organizations".[3] The unsolved question which confronted the congress was, however, the latent struggle for the leadership. The numbers of the delegates supporting the Pepper-Ruthenberg and Foster-Cannon groups

[1] *Ibid.* p. 216.

[2] Some of Pepper's more extravagant utterances are quoted *ibid.* pp. 82-84; Trotsky called Pepper "the type of the accommodator, the political parasite" (Trotsky archives, T 3129, p. 4).

[3] *The Second Year of the Workers' Party of America* (1924), pp. 56-61 (this was the report of the central executive committee to the congress); the letter was not apparently published by Comintern.

were about equal; the balance was held by the New York German communist leader Lore, who commanded the 15 votes of the German party federation, and was an out-and-out opponent of the policy of support for La Follette. Unable to upset this policy, he preferred to give his votes to the group which espoused it less whole-heartedly; he may also have preferred Foster personally to Pepper. In this situation the Pepper-Ruthenberg group, finding itself in a minority, refused to submit to the congress the theses supporting the La Follette policy, and substituted a motion referring the issue to Comintern for decision: this was carried without opposition. But a vote of censure on Foster's leadership of TUEL was defeated by a combination of the Foster-Cannon and Lore groups; and, when elections took place, the same majority effectively ousted the old leadership. The victors did not press their victory to extremes. The new central executive committee was composed of 8 Fosterites (including Lore) and 5 Pepperites; Foster became president and Cannon vice-president, but Ruthenberg retained his post as secretary. The political committee consisted of 4 Fosterites and 3 Pepperites.[1] The congress seemed to have done nothing irretrievable. But it had brought to light a deep rift in the American party which festered and remained unhealed for the rest of the decade.

After a period of relative independence, the American party now fell once more under the shadow of Moscow. Pepper, with his intimate knowledge of the Soviet scene, here enjoyed an enormous advantage, and saw how the Trotsky affair could be used to serve his purposes. Lore, who had met Trotsky in New York in 1917, was an ardent Trotskyite, and in his German language newspaper in New York claimed the results of the third party congress as a victory for Trotsky's cause. Pepper now demanded from the central executive committee a vote of confidence in the Russian central committee and the Russian party, and thus placed Foster and Cannon in the position of having either to disown their ally Lore or to come out in favour of Trotsky. Foster and Cannon staved off the attack on the plea that the committee had insufficient information, and was not called on to

[1] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 89-91; for a confused contemporary account of the congress see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 27, February 26, 1924, pp. 292-299.

pronounce on a controversy in the Russian party. This struggle extended over two meetings of the central executive committee on March 7 and 18, 1924, almost two months after the censure pronounced on Trotsky in Moscow;[1] and shortly afterwards a delegation consisting of Foster, Pepper and Olgin (a member of Lore's group) left for Moscow to seek the advice of Comintern on the policy of the American party. The immediate issue in dispute was the attitude to be adopted at a farmer-labor convention which was to meet in St. Paul on June 17, 1924, to consider the question of the La Follette candidature and any alternatives.[2]

The first surprise which greeted the delegates on their arrival in Moscow was a decision to withdraw Pepper from his work in the American party and employ him in Moscow — a decision which must have given great satisfaction to Foster, whether or not he actually inspired it.[3] A substantive decision on the issues confronting the American party proved much harder to achieve. The "turn to the Left" which Comintern was now preparing to execute, and the growing disillusionment in Moscow with the British Labour government, made the united front with a bourgeois presidential candidate increasingly suspect. But no clear-cut solution was in sight. As late as the middle of May 1924, Comintern sent a non-committal telegram to Chicago declaring the St.

[1] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 106-108.

[2] The decision to send the delegation to Moscow had been taken after an argument on tactics in the central committee on February 15-16, 1924 (*ibid.* p. 103); it was the logical sequel of the resolution passed at the third congress to leave the decision on the La Follette issue to Comintern (see p. 242 above).

[3] The causes and circumstances of Pepper's withdrawal remain obscure. According to Lovestone (*Daily Worker* (Chicago), December 13, 1924) Lore had stated in New York at the beginning of March 1924 that Pepper was to be removed; but the source of his information was not disclosed. According to Foster, Pepper had proposed to add four new members to the central executive committee in such a way as to restore control to the Pepper-Ruthenberg group, and his removal was due to Foster's protest against this manœuvre (*ibid.* December 30, 1924). In any case, Pepper's removal must have been decided on before Foster's arrival in Moscow some time in April 1924 (the exact date is unknown, but he was still in the United States on March 25, 1924); the decision was known in Chicago on April 11, 1924, on which date Ruthenberg sent a letter of protest to Comintern against it (T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), p. 111, note 44). Pepper was in good standing in Moscow, as his appearances at the fifth congress of Comintern in June–July 1924 showed; in the following year he was appointed head of the newly created information section of IKKI (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 69, April 27, 1925, p. 929).

Paul convention of June 17 to be " of momentous importance for the Workers' Party " and urging that every effort should be used to make it " a great representative labor and Left-wing gathering ".[1] During the next few days the delegation in Moscow was purged of its taint of Trotskyism, and was brought into line. Ruthenberg had cut the ground from under its feet by telegraphing to the thirteenth Russian party congress then in session an assurance of the support of the American party for " the leadership of the old Bolsheviks ".[2] In Moscow the American question was debated in a commission of IKKI presided over by Radek — a symptom that it was not of primary importance. The main embarrassment was that Trotsky was vigorously opposed to the policy of support for La Follette, which he regarded as " a piece of monstrous opportunism " and a pandering to " the worst petty bourgeois illusions ".[3] It was necessary both to disown Trotsky, and to accept his view as substantially correct. This task was duly carried out by the commission. Foster and Olgin were induced to sponsor a motion censuring Lore :[4] a reprimand was judged sufficient at this time, and no proposal was made to remove him from the central executive committee. At the same time the La Follette alliance was effectively jettisoned. The resolution adopted by the presidium of IKKI on May 20, 1924, proposed that the Federated Farmer-Labor Party should proffer its support to La Follette on the condition of his accepting its programme *in toto* and placing the whole management of his campaign in its hands. This extravagant proposal was sure to be rejected, and was tantamount to a refusal of support. On La Follette's rejection of it, the Workers' Party would publicly repudiate him, and run its own presidential candidate.[5] One further detail of Foster's stay in Moscow throws light on the situation. He and Lozovsky drew up a new draft programme for

[1] *Daily Worker* (Chicago), May 16, 1924.

[2] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), p. 108.

[3] These views were expressed in the preface to L. Trotsky, *Pyat' Let Kominterna* (1924), p. xvii, dated May 20, 1924 ; they must have been known earlier to those taking part in the discussion.

[4] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), p. 110.

[5] *Ibid.* pp. 113-114, note 57 ; the resolution did not appear in any Comintern publication. Foster afterwards claimed credit for adding the proposal to run a communist candidate to the original Comintern draft (*ibid.* p. 110).

the TUEL: it was dated May 17, 1924.[1] It seems clear that throughout this period Lozovsky and Profintern supported Foster, and that this support helped to counter-balance the preference shown by Comintern for the Ruthenberg group.[2]

Foster hastened back to the United States with the still unpublished resolution of May 20, 1924, in his pocket. It seems to have been pure coincidence that La Follette chose this moment for a step which was bound to come, and might indeed have come earlier. Perturbed by the compromising character of communist influence in the farmer-labor movement and of Workers' Party support for himself, he issued to the press on May 28, 1924, while Foster was on the high seas, a statement denouncing communism as "an enemy of the progressive movement and of democratic ideals", and maintaining that the Workers' Party was acting on instructions from Moscow. The Workers' Party could now save itself some embarrassment by representing its new line of out-and-out hostility to La Follette as a retort to La Follette's attack.[3] The St. Paul convention ended in confusion. On July 4, 1924, a convention in Cleveland, from which communists and their allies were firmly excluded, nominated La Follette for the presidency. On July 8, 1924, the political committee of the Workers' Party, by a majority which this time included Ruthenberg, decided to carry out the Comintern mandate and nominate its own candidate; and a few days later Foster and Gitlow were named as communist candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency.[4] By this time the fifth congress of Comintern was in full swing in Moscow. But, since the "turn to the Left" in the American party had already been executed in the resolution of May 20, 1924, nothing remained to be done. Zinoviev frankly admitted that on this issue "we have wobbled somewhat, since we know America too little", and added that "in the end" IKKI

[1] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 6 (41), June 1924, pp. 348-352.

[2] Radek is said to have expressed mistrust of Foster and favoured Ruthenberg (T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 110, 112); but this rests on the evidence of a member of the Ruthenberg group who was not present in Moscow.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 114; Trotsky in a note of June 4, 1924, pointed out how "opportune" the decision to withdraw support from La Follette had been (L. Trotsky, *Pyat' Let Kominterna* (1924), p. xvii).

[4] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 115-117.

had decided against the tactics of cooperation.[1] Pepper, who still figured as a delegate of the American party, spoke at length of the difference between labour movements in "Anglo-Saxon" and continental countries, claimed that the British example of united front tactics with labour was applicable to the United States, and accepted what had been done with evident lack of conviction. Two other delegates, Dunne and Amter, the former a follower of Foster, the latter of Ruthenberg, spoke for and against the abandonment of the attempt to cooperate with labour and progressive parties.[2] Kolarov somewhat belatedly suggested that the farmers' party was becoming more radical and "more and more inclined to the idea of the formation of a worker-peasant government in the United States".[3] Zinoviev summed up by expressing full confidence in both Foster and Ruthenberg and inviting the two groups to "coalesce and work together without factional disagreements".[4] The congress as a whole understood nothing of the situation, and showed little interest in it: it was embarrassing only in so far as it reflected on the controversy of principle about the united front and the workers' government. The relations of the American party to IKKI reversed the conventional pattern: the party was only too ready to receive the firm directives which IKKI was unwilling and unable to give. The paradox was only apparent. The American party was too remote from American political realities to frame an intelligible policy for itself. But, for the same reason, IKKI — even if it had understood American conditions — could not have framed a policy for it. In a country where theory was despised and action was all-important, the party was under no temptation to become a theoretical sect. But no effective course of action was open to it.

When the election took place in November 1924, La Follette secured 4,300,000 votes, against 14 millions for Coolidge, the successful Republican, and 8 millions for the Democrat; the communist vote just topped 33,000. (Debs had secured 800,000 votes in the presidential election of 1912.) Though no better result could have been expected, this ignominious defeat caused a fresh outburst of recrimination in the party between the factions.

[1] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 52.

[2] *Ibid.* i, 304-316, 417-421. [3] *Ibid.* ii, 782. [4] *Ibid.* i, 506.

A majority led by Foster, who wished to reject all political co-operation with the non-communist Left, and to return to his old trade union base, masked an uncompromising policy under the slogan of the united front exclusively " from below ". A minority, headed by Ruthenburg and Pepper, desired to maintain cooperation with the moribund farmer-labor movement.[1] Even after the fiasco of the presidential election Pepper, in an article which appeared in the Comintern journal in January 1925, described the La Follette party in sympathetic terms as " an inevitable stage in the revolutionizing of the American proletariat ". Two months later the same journal published an article by Foster and Cannon attacking the minority view that the time was ripe for " a campaign for a ' class ' farmer-worker party " : this was immediately followed by an article by Ruthenberg in support of Pepper.[2] At home the picture looked somewhat different. The central executive committee, speaking with the voice of the Foster-Cannon majority, issued an uncompromising statement on the results of the discussion in the party. In all the great cities the " farmer-labor policy of the minority " had suffered defeat ; in New York the majority group had been victorious over the minority and the Lore group together. In spite of the sneers of the minority at " half-educated workers " and " syndicalists ", the leaders claimed to enjoy the full confidence of the party. Pepper and Lovestone were criticized by name ; Ruthenberg, as the party secretary, was spared. The statement ended with an appeal for " the speedy liquidation of factionalism ".[3] But Comintern was still unwilling to come out whole-heartedly in support of Foster. A proposal of the majority to hold an immediate party congress, which would have ratified their victory, was vetoed from Moscow, presumably under the influence of Pepper ;[4] and representatives of both factions were summoned to attend the session of the enlarged IKKI in Moscow in March 1925.

[1] Theses propounded by Foster and Ruthenberg respectively, and published in the *Daily Worker* (Chicago), were summarized in *American Labor Year Book, 1925* (1925), pp. 161-164.

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 1 (38), 1925, pp. 105-114 ; No. 3 (40), 1925, pp. 77-99, 100-116.

[3] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 35, March 13, 1925, pp. 534-535.

[4] An account of the controversy based on contemporary reports in the *Daily Worker* (Chicago) is given in J. Oneal and G. Werner, *American Communism* (N.Y., 1947), pp. 199-202.

CHAPTER 29

THE YEAR OF LOCARNO

THE disillusionment over Soviet relations with the western world, which set in towards the end of 1924, marked an acute reaction from the hope and confidence engendered by the flow of recognitions and by the apparent trend to the Left in western Europe earlier in the year. At first each blow seemed to be tempered by some fresh gain — Germany's acceptance of the Dawes plan in August by the signature of the Anglo-Soviet treaty, the scandal of the Zinoviev letter in October by the French recognition. But it soon transpired that the blows were real, the compensating successes illusory. When Chicherin addressed TsIK on October 18, 1924, on the international situation, he could still acclaim with a note of self-congratulation " the succession of recognitions of the USSR ". The impending French recognition provided a gleam of fresh light on the western horizon. But it scarcely relieved the blackness of that quarter of the diplomatic sky. Referring specifically to western support of the unsuccessful Georgian rising of the previous August, and to the fall of the Labour government in Great Britain with the accompanying " outburst of hostile feeling towards the USSR among the English propertied classes ", Chicherin spoke of " the recently opened world offensive of imperialism " and " the united front of bourgeois governments against the USSR ". Later in the speech the growth of " western tendencies " in Germany, and " the striving of a large section of the ruling classes to gain admission to the League of Nations " were fitted into the same picture.[1]

Throughout the winter of 1924–1925 the relations of Moscow with the west continued to deteriorate. Before the end of 1924 Soviet observers had diagnosed the birth of an Anglo-Franco-

[1] *SSSR : Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 2 Sozyva : 2 Sessiya* (1924), pp. 62-63, 66 ; for further passages of the speech relating to Germany see pp. 67-68 above.

American bloc against the Soviet Union, of which the Dawes plan was the symbol, and into which Germany was being half reluctantly, half unconsciously drawn. In November 1924, at the sixth congress of Soviet trade unions, Zinoviev noted that the short-lived " democratic-pacifist " period had passed away and had given place in the west to " the blackest bourgeois reaction ", signalized by the Conservative victory in Great Britain and the Republican victory in the presidential election in the United States.[1] Radek in an article in *Pravda* on January 1, 1925, analysed the situation with his usual hard-headed brilliance. " The era of pacifism and democracy ", he wrote, had been replaced by a new imperialist front against the Soviet Union, " the rain of recognitions of the Soviet Union " by " a rain of hostile actions from a whole series of states against the Soviet Union ". The turning-point had been the British rejection of the Anglo-Soviet treaty. " *Can one suppose* ", asked Radek, " *that the United States of America and England are already preparing a real war against the Soviet Union?* " He did not think so. But they were organizing " pressure on a grand scale " in order to enforce concessions. He concluded that " *it would be the height of folly not to confess that the Soviet Union is entering on a period of international dangers* ".[2]

The note of alarm was made shriller by a new consciousness of the military weakness of the Soviet Union. Never since the end of the civil war — not even at the time of the Curzon ultimatum — had anyone in Soviet Russia seriously thought in terms of war against western Europe. Frunze, early in 1924, when he first assumed responsibility for military affairs, stated in public that the Red Army was a match for the armies of neighbouring countries, but not of the great capitalist Powers.[3] The first effect of the military reforms of 1924, though they formed the basis for the Red Army of the future, was to draw attention to its

[1] *Shestoi S"ezd Professional'nykh Sovetov SSSR* (1925), pp. 19-20; Kamenev shortly afterwards described Coolidge, the new American president, as " representing the most reactionary financial and big business circles of American imperialism and capitalism " (L. Kamenev, *Stat'i i Rechi*, xi (1929), 252).

[2] The article was reprinted in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 8, January 9, 1925, pp. 86-87.

[3] M. Frunze, *Sobranie Sochinenii*, iii (1927), 103-104.

present shortcomings: the Soviet leaders became fully conscious, perhaps for the first time, that the Red Army in its existing condition was not a serious fighting force.[1] Frunze in a speech of December 7, 1924, detected clouds that were "beginning to thicken anew on the Soviet horizon", and accused Great Britain of instigating "a return to the old methods of direct pressure".[2] These genuine apprehensions opportunely coincided with a desire to build up the authority of Frunze, who in January 1925 replaced Trotsky as People's Commissar for War and president of the revolutionary military council.[3] Stalin, speaking in the party central committee a few days after Trotsky's resignation from these offices, declared that "the international situation has begun to change radically", and that "the question of intervention is again becoming actual"; and his conclusion pointed to the need "to be ready for everything, to prepare our army . . . and in general to raise our Red Army to the proper level".[4] Frunze, in a series of speeches delivered in the first months of 1925 [5] harped on three themes: the growing danger from the capitalist world; the growing military strength of the Soviet Union, and the need to build up that strength to meet the danger; and the peaceful intentions of the Soviet Union. On the last point Frunze felt himself personally vulnerable to charges of desiring war against Rumania in order to recover Bessarabia; and in a speech of February 16, 1925, sought to exculpate himself from the charge. He confessed that he had no love for the Rumanian ruling class. But "we are profoundly convinced that the preservation of peace and the fact of our peaceful progress will lead to the solution of a whole series of questions, including the Bessarabian question".[6]

[1] For avowals in this sense see Vol. 2, p. 396. The same view was current outside the Soviet Union; Maltzan told the British Ambassador in Berlin on December 27, 1924, that the Red Army had "deteriorated considerably" and was no longer "much good even against Poland" (D'Abernon, *An Ambassador of Peace*, iii (1930), 120).

[2] M. Frunze, *Sobranie Sochinenii*, ii (1926), 154.

[3] See Vol. 2, p. 33.

[4] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 12, 14; this speech was published for the first time in 1947.

[5] Speeches of January 21, February 4, 16 and 24, 1925 (M. Frunze, *Sobranie Sochinenii*, iii (1927), 9-14, 40-46, 71-87, 93-106).

[6] *Ibid.* iii (1927), 82-83; for an appeal by Rakovsky to Italy and Japan not to ratify the treaty of October 28, 1920, by which the four allied governments had assigned Bessarabia to Rumania, see *Izvestiya*, February 20, 1925;

The three themes were demonstratively woven together at the third Union Congress of Soviets which met in May 1925. Chicherin began with an emphatic declaration of peaceful intent:

> The basic content of our foreign policy, its primary assumption, its first requisite, is its profound anxiety for peace. . . . The working masses want peace, and not only the working masses in our union, but throughout the whole world.

But he admitted that "the unfavourable elements, the elements making for the unification of world reaction have recently become stronger", and that "the present moment presents greater difficulties than the preceding period".[1] The congress listened to a detailed report by Frunze on the organization of the Red Army; no such report had been made to a Soviet congress since Trotsky's reports in the civil war. Frunze dwelt on the growing menace from the capitalist countries — the hostile attitude of Poland and Rumania, and reports that Estonia intended to cede the Baltic islands of Oesel and Dagö to Great Britain. The moral was "to pay much more attention than hitherto" to the question of the armed forces; and "a strong, powerful Red Army" was described as the best guarantee of peace. At the same time Frunze rejected all charges of "Red imperialism". The Soviet Union spent less on armaments than any of the great European countries, and proportionately less than the smaller ones.[2] The congress, in its general resolution on the report of the government, drew attention to "dangerous attempts to bring about once more in different ways a hostile encirclement of our union", and instructed the government "to give due attention to the Red Army and Red Fleet and Air Force, bearing in mind that the effective strength of the armed force of the union remains, as was demonstrated throughout the struggle of the Soviet state for survival, the fundamental guarantee against attacks on the workers' state". The congress also adopted a detailed resolution on the strengthening of the Red Army.[3] Such pronouncements helped to produce an atmosphere of national enthusiasm congenial to the development

an interview in the *Giornale d' Italia* in the same sense with Yurenev, the *polpred* in Rome, was reported *ibid.* February 21, 1925.

[1] *Tretii S"ezd Sovetov SSSR* (1925), pp. 84, 98.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 481-514.

[3] *Tretii S"ezd Sovetov SSSR: Postanovleniya* (1925), pp. 5-6, 38-44.

of " socialism in one country " — itself a product of the growing antipathy to the west, and fear of the west, which marked the Locarno period.[1]

The year 1925 in the Soviet Union was one of industrial revival, of growing national self-confidence symbolized and stimulated by the doctrine of " socialism in one country ", and of the beginnings of an effective reorganization of the Red Army. Frunze in his speech of February 16, 1925, pointed to the growing economic and political consolidation of the Soviet Union. This did not mean, however, that the danger of war had diminished. It had rather increased, since the growing strength of the Soviet Union increased the alarm of bourgeois capitalist countries and their desire to form a united front against it.[2] Sokolnikov some weeks later made the same point in an address to an all-union financial conference.[3] Zinoviev, speaking in August 1925 in the German commission of IKKI, added eloquence to the same argument:

> It is just these five years that are critical, because it is just now that Russia is growing, and the bourgeoisie understands quite well that, if it misses these five years, it has missed everything, since our Red united front is also growing.

And he concluded impressively that " the years from 1925 to 1930 are absolutely decisive for the fate of the socialist republic in Russia ".[4] A little later Kamenev took up the tale, expressing to a Moscow district party conference on November 22, 1925, the belief that the capitalist countries were being impelled to intervene against the Soviet Union by the thought that " in a few years we shall be, if not the richest, one of the richest, most compact, most energetic, most self-conscious countries in the world ".[5] The fear of hostile intervention by the capitalist world was combined with a rapidly growing confidence in Soviet strength. But, by a strange paradox, this confidence also served to make the fear more real, since it appeared to provide the adversary with a

[1] Brockdorff-Rantzau recorded that Chicherin liked to refer to the anti-Soviet coalition as a " crusade " (*Brockdorf-Rantzau Nachlass*, 9101/224038) — a phrase recalling the intervention of 1918–1919.

[2] M. Frunze, *Sobranie Sochinenii*, iii (1927), 79.

[3] *Sotsialisticheskoe Khozyaistvo*, No. 4, 1925, pp. 8-9.

[4] *Der Neue Kurs* (1925), pp. 33-34; for this session see pp. 327-329 below.

[5] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 160, December 4, 1925.

compelling motive to intervene before it was too late. " Our whole policy in the past year of the revolution ", said Zinoviev to the congress of the metal workers' trade union on November 25, 1925, " has been in the main dictated by the struggle to win time." [1] To gain time, and stave off disaster, till the Soviet defences should become impregnable, was now the goal of Soviet foreign policy. This was the mood of the anxious year of Locarno.

The winter of 1924–1925 revealed a constantly increasing preoccupation in Moscow with the need to woo Germany away from an incipient western orientation. Negotiations for a Soviet-German commercial treaty, foreshadowed in the agreement of July 29, 1924,[2] at length opened in Moscow, on November 15, 1924. Krasin's opening speech from the Soviet side was a major pronouncement on Soviet economic policy. He attacked the conventional conception of a division of labour between industrial and agricultural countries with the Soviet Union ranged in the second category. After showing that Russian industrial development was in full swing even before the revolution, and that this had strengthened commercial relations between Russia and Germany, he went on :

> The development of industry at whatever cost is for our country a requirement which is conditioned not only by the immense extent of our territory and the size of its population, but by the immediate demands of the peasantry ; its inevitability stands in direct connexion with the political achievements of the working class in the October revolution.

The speech ended with a long defence of the monopoly of foreign trade. The Soviet Union, as " an economically weak state ", was obliged to regard the maintenance of the monopoly " not as a technical question of the method of conducting foreign trade relations, but as a major question of principle, in some degree as a question of the existence of the Soviet Union ". These were

[1] *Ibid.* No. 161, December 8, 1925, p. 2413.

[2] See p. 62 above ; a memorandum from the economic expert of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs of September 11, 1924, urged the importance of not allowing Great Britain to forestall Germany in Soviet markets (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 4829/242004-8).

points on which no compromise was possible, and which must form the corner-stone of any treaty.[1] On the political issue, Soviet spokesmen missed no opportunity of driving home their dissatisfaction with the new turn in German policy towards the west. The official economic newspaper appealed to Germany to overcome " the peculiar psychological aberration " which had overtaken German policy since the acceptance of the Dawes plan ; and Krasin, in an interview in the same newspaper two days later, feared that Germany had abandoned her traditional economic attitude towards Russia " under pressure of the hegemony of Anglo-American capital ".[2] The conclusion of an Anglo-German commercial treaty on December 2, 1924, though long expected, did nothing to allay these fears.

On the Soviet side, the same month was full of diplomatic activity designed to counteract growing pressures on Germany from the west. On December 4, 1924, Kopp, formerly Soviet representative in Germany and intimately concerned in the early stages of the secret military agreements,[3] now a member of the collegium of Narkomindel, suggested to Brockdorff-Rantzau the need for an understanding about Poland, and hinted that " a joint German-Russian pressure could be brought to bear on Poland " in the matter of the German-Polish frontiers. He asked for " a mutual exchange of views ". Brockdorff-Rantzau, in reporting this conversation to Berlin, put in his own plea for an immediate exchange of views with the Soviet Union on the Polish question " in a concrete form " before the approaching arrival of the new French Ambassador.[4] On December 13, 1924, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs authorized the ambassador to enter into confidential discussions with Chicherin, and to inform him that Germany desired to keep in permanent touch with the Soviet Union over Polish affairs. It was left to the ambassador's discretion to add that the common aim of German and Soviet policy

[1] L. Krasin, *Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli* (1928), pp. 316-326 ; the opening speech from the German side was made by Brockdorff-Rantzau, and Litvinov was also present (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/554540-2). Both speeches were fully reported in *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn'*, November 22, 1924.

[2] *Ibid.* November 18, 20, 1924.

[3] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 317, 362-363.

[4] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/154862-5 ; in a conversation between Brockdorff-Rantzau and Chicherin on the next day no mention was apparently made of Kopp's *démarche* (*ibid.* 2860/554605-8).

must be " to push Poland back to her ethnographic frontiers ".[1]

Before the ambassador could act on this instruction, less welcome news reached Moscow from Berlin. Maltzan, a firm advocate of German-Soviet collaboration, who at the time of Rapallo was head of the eastern division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,[2] and since the end of 1922 had been secretary of state (i.e. principal permanent official) in the ministry, was appointed German Ambassador at Washington. Coming at this juncture, the appointment inevitably appeared as a fresh move towards a re-orientation of German policy. Radek, in an article in *Pravda*, described Maltzan's transfer as a " Washingtonian Canossa " — a German surrender to Anglo-American capital — and roundly dubbed Carl von Schubert, designated as Maltzan's successor, " a vulgar Anglophil ".[3] For Brockdorff-Rantzau the departure of Maltzan meant the loss of his principal friend and confidant in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and sharpened his mistrust of Stresemann and his outspoken hostility to the western orientation. In the controversies of the year 1925 he was more often in sympathy with the views of the government to which he was accredited than with those of the government which he represented. The rift which opened at this time between him and Stresemann was one of emphasis and personal preoccupation rather than of principle. Neither denied the necessity for Germany of a foreign policy which took account both of east and of west. But while Stresemann, absorbed in the difficult negotiations with the west, looked with growing impatience on the continuous flow of protests from the east,[4] Brockdorff-Rantzau, who now regarded the

[1] *Ibid.* 2860/554636-554638. In view of Stresemann's subsequent forgetfulness, real or feigned, of this instruction (see p. 275 below), it may be significant that it was signed not by Stresemann, but by Maltzan ; but it can scarcely have been sent without Stresemann's authority. It was sent on the day after the important German note of December 12, 1924, to the secretary-general of the League of Nations, expounding at length Germany's conditions for entry into the League (see p. 66, note 1 above). This timing became characteristic of Stresemann's diplomacy : a conciliatory gesture to the west was immediately balanced by a corresponding gesture to the east.

[2] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 365.

[3] *Pravda*, December 17, 1924 ; according to G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), p. 130, Schubert " had never made a secret of the fact that he could not bear the Russians ".

[4] Stresemann's attitude was fairly summed up by a phrase in a memorandum of April 1925 : " We cannot expose the Rhineland to perpetual vexations in order to please Russia " (*Stresemann Nachlass*, 3166/7312/158681).

maintenance of a close collaboration between Germany and the Soviet Union as his life-work, was increasingly irritated by policies which appeared to ignore this essential factor, or to relegate it to a secondary place.

It was in these circumstances that Brockdorff-Rantzau on December 20, 1924, acting on his instructions of a week earlier, assured Chicherin of the desire of the German Government to keep in touch with him on the Polish question, referring in particular to his " exhaustive conversation " with Kopp who had been the first to raise it. The conversation threw a curious searchlight on the underlying character of Soviet-German relations at this time. Each side was ready at moments of tension, and in order to impress or influence its partner, to " play the Polish card ".[1] But neither side regarded positive action against Poland as within the realm of practical politics at this time ; and neither trusted the other sufficiently to assume binding commitments for the future. Hence any attempt by one of the partners to broach the question always provoked hesitant reactions from the other. On this occasion Chicherin received the German communication " with great interest, yet not without a certain nervousness ". He complained that, while the Soviet Government had proposed " a continuous exchange of views on political questions in general ", the German Government appeared to limit the exchange to the Polish question. When, nevertheless, Brockdorff-Rantzau, in accordance with his instructions, alluded to the common aim of " pushing back Poland to her ethnographic frontiers ", Chicherin " welcomed the hint and described it as of special importance ". The conversation ended with a promise by Chicherin to consult higher authorities on the divergences which had come to light, and to resume discussions later.[2] When the report of this conversation reached Berlin, a reply was sent to Brockdorff-Rantzau on December 29, 1924, which displayed

[1] For the origin of this phrase see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 364.

[2] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/154904-6 ; nearly three years later Brockdorff-Rantzau reported an interview with Chicherin in which the latter recalled " the secret conversations which took place between Berlin and Moscow at the end of 1924 and the beginning of 1925, and had as their purpose an understanding . . . directed to a pushing back of Poland to her ethnographic frontiers " (*ibid.* 1841/419296).

some eagerness to throw on Kopp the responsibility for having first raised the question, but approved the ambassador's language. In particular, " your allusion to our intention, together with Russia, to push back Poland to her ethnographic frontiers, corresponds to our view here ".[1]

Before receiving this comment on the earlier conversation, Brockdorff-Rantzau had a further meeting with Chicherin during the night of December 25-26, 1924. This time, when Brockdorff-Rantzau again referred to Kopp's remarks, Chicherin tartly rejoined that Kopp had spoken as a private person and had exceeded his authority.[2] With the approval of the Politburo Chicherin now submitted to the ambassador a formal proposal for the conclusion between the two countries of a pact of neutrality, by which each party would bind itself " not to enter into any political or economic alliance or agreement with third parties directed against the other ", and to coordinate its action with that of the other in the matter of joining, or sending an observer to, the League of Nations. A neutrality pact, though not in itself a novel conception, acquired in the German context the particular meaning of an agreement with Germany to counteract the German move towards the west. Chicherin added, playing on chronic German fears of a Soviet approach to France, that the Soviet Union would assume an obligation to conclude no agreement with France against Germany provided Germany assumed a corresponding obligation in respect of Great Britain *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union. " We shall do nothing with Herbette [the new French Ambassador] ", he concluded, " if you do nothing with Chamberlain ." [3]

The delicate state of the incipient German *rapprochement* with the western Powers made the proposal for a Soviet-German neutrality pact highly embarrassing to Berlin. Stresemann, fully conscious of its nature and purpose, adjourned its further consideration while he elaborated his security proposals for the

[1] *Ibid.* 2860/554677-9 ; 4562/154907-9.

[2] Early in 1925 Kopp was appointed Soviet representative in Tokyo (see p. 878 below) ; as a former associate of Trotsky (see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 317), though not known to have been implicated in his recent activities, it may have been thought desirable to remove him from Moscow.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/154921-154930, 156559 ; Brockdorff-Rantzau later referred to " Chicherin's proposals of December 29 " — the date of his report on them to Berlin.

west. These were finally recorded in his memorandum to the French Government of February 9, 1925 ; to this it was necessary to await a reply. Stresemann was, in fact, engaged in an astute balancing feat. Arguing in a private meeting on February 16, 1925, in favour of a continuance of economic negotiations with the Soviet Union, he explained that " the fact that the western Powers are still pre-occupied by the dangers of a Russo-German political understanding is a political asset of considerable value for Germany ".[1] But Stresemann's evasive tactics soon provoked impatience in Moscow. In the latter part of February 1925, Brockdorff-Rantzau begged his brother in Berlin to call on Schubert and plead for an early answer to the " proposals of December 29 " ; but this produced nothing but further explanations and excuses.[2] Fear of the German *rapprochement* with the west made Soviet politicians more forthcoming. Rykov in a rambling conversation with Brockdorff-Rantzau on February 24, 1925, spoke of the need for a Soviet-German military alliance.[3] Chicherin, four days later, tactfully reminded the ambassador that " Russia needs Germany to rebuild her military power, and Germany needs Russia as an arsenal ". After covering much old ground, Chicherin started a new hare. Soviet policy was, he said, now turning more and more towards Asia. This inevitably meant conflict with Great Britain ; and, since France would take sides with Britain, " Russo-German military cooperation cannot be excluded ".[4] A few days later, in his speech at the session of TsIK in Tiflis, Chicherin sounded a warning note:

> Objective reality has proved that at this moment something has happened which amounts to an attempt to create a single front against the Soviet republic.

The passage in the speech relating to Germany still breathed a note of optimism :

> In the final analysis, whatever agreements Germany concludes with the western Powers, German politicians will always

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/554842-5.

[2] *Ibid.* 4562/154991-2 ; the ambassador is unlikely to have been mollified by the receipt from Schubert of two memoranda on Germany's attitude to the League of Nations which had been handed to D'Abernon (*ibid.* 4562, 154993-5003).

[3] *Ibid.* 4562/155006-9.

[4] *Ibid.* 4562/155024-7 ; for the turn towards Asia, as exemplified in the Soviet-Japanese treaty of January 20, 1925, see p. 625 below.

> recognize the need to secure their rear in the east. We may be certain that, whatever vacillations may have been apparent in German policy — and there have been, are, and will be, vacillations — in the final analysis Germany will not break with us, will not abandon that policy of friendly relations with us which has already lasted for some years.[1]

Once more the need for German policy-makers and strategists to " secure their rear " by assuring themselves of Soviet support against eventual Polish aggression was invoked as the crowning argument against too exclusive a German involvement with the west. But the speech ended on a grim note by canvassing the possibility that, " as a result of some unfavourable circumstances, a united front of imperialist states may all at once again be formed against the Soviet republic ".[2]

From this time the argument between Moscow and Berlin proceeded with increasing urgency, and with frequent outbursts of mutual exasperation. On March 10, 1925, Krestinsky pressed Stresemann for an answer to the December proposals of the Soviet Government: since Stresemann had repeatedly said that German dealings with the west changed nothing in German relations with the Soviet Union, it was difficult to see why they should be an obstacle to negotiations for the proposed Soviet-German pact. Stresemann unconvincingly excused the delay on the ground of the death of Ebert, which had occurred on February 28, 1925, and promised an early answer. He gave Krestinsky an account of the German memorandum of February 9, which, though still unpublished, had been widely discussed in the European press, and repeated the usual apologia for German policy.[3] Three days later Stresemann received from the secretary-general of the League of Nations the long-awaited and favourable reply on the legal obligations which Germany would incur as a member of the League;[4] and this strengthened his hand to deal at length with Moscow. On March 19, 1925, in instructions sent to Brockdorff-Rantzau for communication to the Soviet Government, Stresemann

[1] *SSSR : Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 2 Sozyva : 3 Sessiya* (1925), pp. 31-33. [2] *Ibid.* p. 60.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155014-6; the version in *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, ii (1932), 512, omits the passages referring to the Soviet proposal for a neutrality pact.

[4] *League of Nations : Official Journal*, April 1925, p. 490.

offered the fullest official exposition yet attempted of the implications, for the Soviet Union, of Germany's entry into the League. If the Soviet Government, argued Stresemann, was really interested in "the deepening of German-Russian relations", it must welcome a step which would strengthen Germany's position in European politics. Even under the provisions of articles 16 and 17 of the covenant, Germany would be able to protect her neutrality by exercising the right of veto. It was true that membership of the League would constitute a barrier to active intervention by Germany against Poland. But a policy of " pressing back Poland to her ethnographical frontiers is in any case scarcely practical politics in the foreseeable future ". Finally, Germany's position in the League as a member of the council would enable her to counteract " all anti-Russian tendencies ". In conclusion, Stresemann proposed that detailed discussions should be held with the Soviet Government on the implications for German-Soviet relations of Germany's possible entry into the League.[1]

Brockdorff-Rantzau received these instructions with consternation. They would, he pointed out to Stresemann in a telegram of protest, inevitably be regarded by the Soviet Government as " an indirect rejection " of the Soviet proposals. In a long and argumentative reply Stresemann insisted on the original instructions.[2] These were carried out in an interview with Litvinov (Chicherin being sick) on April 7, 1925; and the substance of the instructions was embodied in a memorandum subsequently handed to him at his request. After a rehearsal of Stresemann's arguments, the memorandum ended with a proposal for a confidential discussion with the Soviet Government of the implications of Germany's membership of the League for Germany's relations with the Soviet Union, followed by the most tentative of suggestions that this discussion might be a first step towards the treaty so much desired by the Soviet Government:

> If the government of the USSR falls in with this line of thought, it would at the same time permit of an approach to the elucidation of the question whether, and in what way, a positive understanding about general political aims would be possible.

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155068-155090.
[2] *Ibid.* 4562/155141-4, 155146-51.

Litvinov's attitude was bitter, but resigned. If Germany entered the League, the Soviet Government would " not declare war or break off diplomatic relations ", and would even " remain ready as before to receive any concrete proposals of the German Government ". But, in that event, he " saw no possibility of reaching any positive result in the most important questions, such as the ethnographic frontiers of Poland ".[1] Stresemann's arguments continued to seem as unconvincing to Brockdorff-Rantzau as they had seemed to Litvinov. On April 10, 1925, three days after the interview with Litvinov, he hastened to Berlin [2] in an attempt to undo the harm which Stresemann's policy was causing to Soviet-German relations, penning on the journey a memorandum in which he gave vent to his pessimism at the new turn in German policy.[3] On April 15, 1925, Stresemann tartly recorded in his diary that, while he negotiated with Krestinsky in one room, Schubert was negotiating in the next room on similar lines with Brockdorff-Rantzau.[4] The negotiations between Stresemann and Krestinsky were pursued in conversations on that day and on April 25, 1925. Krestinsky complained that, while Germany openly took the initiative in negotiations with the west, the discussion of the Soviet proposals was continually postponed. Stresemann now for the first time admitted the priority of the western negotiations, excusing the delay in beginning the Soviet discussions by the slowness of the western Powers in replying to the German memorandum of February 9, 1925. He repeated that Germany had refused to recognize her present eastern frontiers or to accept an unconditional obligation under article 16, and that the security pact was " not pointed against Russia ". But the conclusion of a secret treaty with Russia before the signature of

[1] *Ibid.* 4562/155178-81. Chicherin's illness may have been diplomatic; he saw Brockdorff-Rantzau briefly on the following day, but would add nothing to what Litvinov had said (*ibid.* 4562/155182). The memorandum handed to Litvinov was also communicated to Krestinsky in Berlin (*ibid.* 4562/155229-42), and is printed in T. Schieder, *Probleme des Rapallo-Vertrags* (1956), pp. 75-82.

[2] Simons, president of the Supreme Court, in his capacity as acting president in the interval between Ebert's death and Hindenburg's election, wrote to the Chancellor on March 20, 1925, to suggest that Brockdorff-Rantzau should be recalled to Berlin for a discussion of the consequences of Germany's membership of the League of Nations (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 1692/397761-5); it is not clear from the records whether Brockdorff-Rantzau in fact came on instructions or on his own initiative.

[3] *Ibid.* 4562/155211-15.

[4] *Stresemann Nachlass*, 7129/147779-80.

the security pact would be an act of bad faith *vis-à-vis* the west which Germany must avoid.[1] Once Stresemann had come to terms with the west, he could then reinsure himself by some fresh agreement with the east. The present object was simply to keep the Soviet negotiators in play.

This policy of procrastination, and the continued absence of the German Ambassador from his post, did nothing to make opinion in Moscow any less restive. The bomb explosion in Sofia cathedral in April 1925 [2] caused a widespread revival of the anti-Soviet campaign in the European press; and later in the month Hindenburg's election as president of the German Reich caused a fresh wave of alarm in Moscow. Zinoviev voiced the fear that this would lead to the creation "along the line Germany-France and Germany-Poland of a nervous, insecure situation", in which the Entente would do its best "to set Hindenburg Germany against the Soviet Union".[3] The obvious disquiet also aroused in western Europe by the Hindenburg election made a diagnosis of that event at first a little uncertain.[4] But, as the British hand became ever more visible as the directing force behind the negotiations for a security pact, the pact was seen more and more clearly in Soviet imagination as the instrument through which the Conservative government in London, implacably hostile to the Soviet Union, would organize the anti-Soviet front and complete the isolation of the Soviet Union in Europe. The American press had recently published what purported to be a memorandum on the security negotiations submitted by Austen Chamberlain to the British Cabinet in February 1925.

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155203-8, 155223-9; the version of the first conversation in *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis* (1932), ii, 513-514, is much abbreviated, and erroneously states that it took place before Brockdorff-Rantzau's arrival from Moscow. Stresemann's reference to "a secret treaty with Russia" is obscure, since the original Soviet proposal had been for an open pact; but Stresemann had presumably already rejected the idea of a publicity which might have been fatal to the western negotiations. German sensitiveness on this point is correctly explained in L. Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (1930), ii, 606: "Berlin wanted no repetition of the Rapallo scandal".

[2] See pp. 396-397 below.

[3] *Chetyrnadtsataya Konferentsiya Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)* (1925), p. 227.

[4] Stalin a few days later thought that, though "the imperialist groups in the leading countries" might be able to "patch up" an agreement for a united front against the Soviet Union, there was no reason to suppose that such an agreement would be stable or successful (Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 100).

The memorandum referred to " the Russian problem " as " that incessant though shapeless menace ", and had gone on to discuss it in the context of European security :

> Russia is not, therefore, in a sense, a factor of stability ; she is, indeed, the most menacing of our uncertainties, and it must be in spite of Russia, perhaps even because of Russia, that a policy of security must be framed.[1]

Chicherin in his speech on foreign relations at the third Union Congress of Soviets in May 1925 noted that " the Geneva press . . . is beginning to clamour for the transformation of the League of Nations into some kind of universal alliance against the USSR ", and in a later passage he expressed a perhaps genuine uncertainty about British intentions :

> England's policy consists in officially denying any hostile intentions towards us ; yet in fact, wherever we turn, we meet the opposition of English agents. . . . Is the English government trying to get ready to strangle us, or is it on the contrary trying to isolate us and so strengthen its position in relation to us ? Is the English government preparing a new campaign

[1] Excerpts were published in *Chicago Tribune*, March 6, 1925, and the full text in *The World* (N.Y.), May 10, 1925 ; in a reply to Ramsay MacDonald in the House of Commons on May 11, Austen Chamberlain refused to make any statement, " affirmative or negative ", on its authenticity, and added : " It is not in the public interest to give information as to what memoranda are prepared in the Foreign Office for my consideration or use " (*House of Commons : Fifth Series*, clxxxiii, 1454-1456). This was regarded as tantamount to an admission that the memorandum had been written in the Foreign Office, though not by Chamberlain himself. Rumour attributed its authorship to Tyrrell, then assistant under-secretary ; according to H. Nicolson, *George the Fifth* (1952), p. 405, it was prepared as the result of a conference of " all the senior and some of the junior, members " of the staff of the foreign Office, summoned by Chamberlain. Chamberlain, with a nice economy of truth, denied to Rakovsky that such a memorandum " had ever gone out from this office " (*A Selection of Papers dealing with the Relations between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government, 1921–1927*, Cmd. 2895 (1927), p. 40). It never seems to have been reprinted in English, but a German translation under the title *Chamberlain's Secret Memorandum of February 20, 1925* appeared in *Europäische Gesprache*, No. 9, 1925, pp. 463-460, and a Russian translation in *Mezhdunarodnaya Letopis'*, No. 8-9, August–September, pp. 77-80. Stresemann informed the Reichstag that Austen Chamberlain had denied the authenticity of the memorandum, and was ridiculed by Radek in *Pravda*, November 27, 1925, as " an almost innocent virgin ". Later he told Krestinsky that Chamberlain had assured him that the memorandum was " an invention from beginning to end " (*Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis* ii (1932), 529) ; had this been true, it is inconceivable that Chamberlain should not have denied its authenticity in the House of Commons.

against us, or is it trying to create an atmosphere more favourable to itself for negotiations.[1]

In the same speech Chicherin reverted to the position of Germany, and predicted that, as soon as Germany sat down with her former enemies in Geneva, they would be strong enough, despite the wish of the German Government, to prevent it from continuing its existing friendly relations with the Soviet Union.[2] After the congress ended, a leading article in *Izvestiya* embroidered the same theme:

> The logic of things is stronger than any subjective intention; and no doubt can remain that, after her entry into the League of Nations, that is to say, after she has submitted to the orders of the western imperialist Powers, Germany will become, sooner or later, probably sooner, a helpless plaything in the hands of the imperialists. . . . It requires no further explanation to show that Germany's definitive orientation to the west and her entry into the League of Nations can objectively lead only to a worsening of relations between Germany and the Soviet Government.[3]

Some capital was made in the Comintern press out of an "International Union against the Third International" which held a congress in Geneva at the end of May 1925, and in which British influence seemed predominant.[4] Nor had Comintern been backward in furthering Stalin's injunction to communists to use the Dawes plan "to exploit to the utmost any and every contradiction in the bourgeois camp with the object of disintegrating it and weakening its forces".[5] The KPD, in tune with Moscow, based its propaganda on the theme of the Dawes plan as the instrument of a dual exploitation, of Germany by the western Powers and of the German proletariat by world capitalism, and offered the choice "London or Moscow".[6] At the session of the party central committee in May 1925, Ruth Fischer called Hindenburg

[1] *Tretii S"ezd Sovetov SSSR* (1925), pp. 87, 94.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 83; a few days earlier D'Abernon had recorded the hope that "the entry of Germany into the League of Nations will have a decisive influence on the relations between Moscow and Berlin" (D'Abernon, *An Ambassador of Peace*, iii (1930) 163).

[3] *Izvestiya*, May 24, 1925.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 114, July 31, 1925, pp. 1581–1583.

[5] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 52.

[6] R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 391.

" the candidate of England " for the presidency; and the resolution adopted by the committee described the support given by the German bourgeoisie to the guarantee pact and to Germany's entry into the League of Nations as " a British imperialist policy ".[1]

In this suspicious atmosphere official discussions languished for some weeks, and revived only when Krestinsky, on June 2, 1925, returned the formal reply of the Soviet Government to Brockdorff-Rantzau's memorandum of April 7.[2] Its tone was conciliatory, but stubborn. It recognized the good intentions of the German Government, but thought that, if the western pact came into being, the logic of events would " lead gradually to a complete reorientation towards the west and to a drawing of Germany into combinations of one or other group of Entente Powers against the USSR ". If Germany persisted in her plans, the Soviet Union would have to " seek other paths ", though it had " no such intentions or desires at the present time ".[3] This hint made some impression. On May 29, 1925, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs drew up a memorandum headed " Draft Directives for the Conduct of Further Political Discussions with Russia ". The " directives " were designed to satisfy Soviet demands without the offence to the western Powers likely to be caused by a political treaty with the Soviet Union. Under the new scheme now proposed, the neutrality pact desired by the Soviet Government would be replaced by a preamble to the projected commercial treaty. The preamble was an anodyne document which would bind the parties to " conduct their mutual relations in the spirit of the Rapallo treaty " and refrain from any measures that might endanger the peace of Europe.[4] One advantage of this document was that its projected incorporation in a commercial treaty still to be negotiated gave reasonable assurance

[1] *Die Monarchistische Gefahr und die Taktik der KPD* (1925) quoted *ibid.* pp. 427-428.

[2] See p. 260 above.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155328-42 (printed in T. Schieder, *Probleme des Rapallo-Vertrags* (1956), pp. 82-87); this line was followed up in a leading article in *Izvestiya*, June 12, 1925, which ended with the warning that, if Germany fell in with the designs of the west, " the Soviet Union will have to look after the defence of its own interests in some way other than the strengthening and broadening of its political and economic relations with Germany ".

[4] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155320-3. The draft, which followed the main lines of the memorandum handed to Litvinov on April 7, 1925 (see p. 260 above), was several times amended, and finally approved on June 21, 1925 (*ibid.* 4562/155443-7); the final text with Stresemann's signature will be found

of a prolonged delay. On June 10, 1925, Stresemann told Krestinsky that he had never refused to negotiate with Russia, but repeated that he was " not disposed to conclude a treaty with Russia so long as our political situation in the other direction is not cleared up " ; he did not apparently mention the draft preamble.[1] Nor was this document ready in time for it to be handed to Litvinov who, passing through Berlin, had a conversation with Stresemann on June 13, 1925. Litvinov professed himself " very greatly disturbed by the state of Russo-German relations ", and thought that the German attitude to the negotiations for a trade treaty made " a very odd impression ". He described British foreign policy as " completely anti-Russian ", and feared that Germany would be " drawn into the charmed circle of English policy ". But he obtained only an evasive answer to the crucial question " whether these negotiations between Germany and Russia were not dependent on a previous agreement on the western pact ".[2]

On June 16, 1925, the French reply to the German memorandum of February 9, 1925, was at length received in Berlin. Its tenor was sufficiently favourable to portend the success of the western negotiations. Stresemann breathed a sigh of relief, and could now afford to turn to the east. The task of hastening the laggard negotiations for a commercial treaty with its new political preamble devolved on Brockdorff-Rantzau. After sitting idle for more than two months in Berlin, the ambassador was in the worst of moods. He had quarrelled with Schubert ; he had threatened to tender his resignation to Hindenburg ; and he insisted that, if he was to return to Moscow, he should be accompanied by Dirksen, who was in charge of Russian affairs in the eastern department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and could

ibid. 4562/155449-56, and is printed in T. Schieder, *Probleme des Rapallo-Vertrags* (1956), pp. 87-91. The form of the preamble was evidently suggested by the Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty of June 5, 1922 (see pp. 426-427 below).

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155357-9, abbreviated in *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis* ii (1932), 516 ; immediately before seeing Krestinsky, Stresemann had received a visit from D'Abernon, and had told him that, " if by our entry into the League of Nations we really hazard our relations with Russia, we must obtain some corresponding compensation " (*ibid.* ii, 102).

[2] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155374-84 ; Litvinov, playing the Polish card in reverse, suggested that, if Germany persisted in her western policy, Poland might " try to get into touch with Russia ".

undertake the distasteful task of expounding the official view of the pact to Narkomindel, and of putting fresh life into the lagging negotiations for a commercial treaty. On June 21, 1925, he had a lengthy conversation with Stresemann, who urged him to return to his post without further delay. Brockdorff-Rantzau still made show of resistance. He described the proposed preamble to the treaty as " worthless ", and played on Stresemann's fears by pointing out " that the Russians with their temperament are capable of allowing themselves to be carried away and to conclude an agreement with Poland which would guarantee the Polish frontiers ". He announced that he would start for Moscow in three days' time, but would travel by sea for the sake of his health. Stresemann offered him a special saloon coach for the railway journey, and the offer was apparently accepted.[1] Before the end of June Brockdorff-Rantzau and Dirksen were in Moscow.

At the moment when Brockdorff-Rantzau was about to leave Berlin, the Soviet Government exploded in Moscow a mine which had been long in preparation and was designed as a demonstration of dissatisfaction with the behaviour of the German Government. In the middle of October 1924, two young German students, Wolscht and Kindermann by name, arrived in Moscow with the far-fetched and ingenuous intention to visit the remotest parts of the Soviet Union. Hilger, an official of the German Embassy in Moscow[2] on his way back from leave in Germany, met them by accident on the Riga-Moscow train, and gave them a visiting card with his address, inviting them to visit him on their arrival. This they failed to do, and on the night of October 26, 1924, were arrested on a charge of spying; Hilger's visiting card, found on one of them, was treated by the OGPU as *prima facie* evidence of embassy complicity.[3] A third student named Ditmar, a citizen

[1] *Ibid.* 4562/155427-32, abbreviated in *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, ii (1932), pp. 518-519.

[2] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 323.

[3] The fullest available account of this incident, with references to the sources, is an article in *Journal of Central European Affairs*, xxi, No. 2, July 1961, pp. 188-199. The main sources are the archives of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), pp. 140-147; the latter is to be preferred, where the two conflict, to K. Kindermann, *In the Toils of the OGPU* (Engl. transl. 1933). For Brockdorff-Rantzau's reports on the arrest and on his representations to Narkomindel see *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/554653, 554750, 554806.

of one of the Baltic states, who had joined them in Moscow, and was afterwards suspected of being an *agent provocateur*, was arrested with them. The young men, in spite of official protests, had been in prison and under investigation for more than three months when, on February 10, 1925, the trial began in Leipzig of several alleged OGPU agents, accused of planning or carrying out murders and other crimes on German soil. The principal accused was Skoblevsky, who had played a leading part in organizing the abortive communist rising of October 1923; among the charges against him were the murder of a renegade German communist and plots to assassinate Seeckt and Stinnes.[1] The trial received extensive publicity in the German press. The evidence implicated the KPD in a campaign of violence and terror, and suggested at any rate occasional collusion between the accused and Soviet officials in Berlin. On April 22, 1925, the trial ended with death sentences on Skoblevsky and on two Germans, and lesser sentences on the other defendants.[2] Krestinsky, who before the trial began had warned Stresemann of its disagreeable implications for Soviet-German relations, and urged in vain that it should be kept out of the newspapers,[3] now begged Stresemann, in his conversation of April 25, 1925, to intervene on behalf of the condemned men — a request which was categorically refused.[4]

From this moment it was apparent that Wolscht and Kindermann had provided the OGPU with a heaven-sent opportunity to stage a counterpart to the Leipzig trial, and could eventually be used as hostages for Skoblevsky. The slowness of the OGPU to act on this realization may perhaps be attributed to general considerations of foreign policy. Neither side at first was anxious to allow the case of these two foolish young men to inject a fresh element of discord into Soviet-German relations. It was only when, in the summer of 1925, the extent and irreversibility of

[1] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 209, 210, note 1.

[2] For details see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz* No 66, April 24, 1925, p. 892; A. Brandt, *Der Tscheka-Prozess* (1925) is an account by one of the defence counsel of irregularities in the trial.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/554783-5; Chicherin made similar representations to Brockdorff-Rantzau (*ibid.* 2860/554838).

[4] For the record of this conversation see p. 262, note 1 above; on July 21, 1925, Krestinsky made renewed representations to Stresemann that the death sentence on Skoblevsky should not be carried out (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155620).

Stresemann's commitment to the west became gradually clear that the decision was taken in Moscow to put the young men on public trial. On June 19, 1925, while Stresemann was still wrestling with Brockdorff-Rantzau in Berlin, the Soviet press published a long and detailed indictment of Wolscht and Kindermann, who were now accused not only of espionage, but of mounting a plot to kill Stalin and Trotsky, which neatly matched the charge against Skoblevsky; the indictment specifically alleged that they had enjoyed the help and advice of Hilger. The trial began on June 25, 1925 — the day on which Brockdorff-Rantzau, accompanied by Dirksen, started on his return journey from Berlin. Ulrich was the presiding judge, and Krylenko the prosecutor.[1] Witnesses, including the accused in their confessions, continued to implicate Hilger. When the ambassador reached Moscow, his representations to Chicherin brought these personal attacks on Hilger to an end, but did not suffice to save Wolscht and Kindermann who, on July 3, 1925, were found guilty and sentenced to death. The score was now even. The lives of the young men were in no danger, so long as Skoblevsky was not executed; and an exchange could presently be effected. On July 8, 1925, Brockdorff-Rantzau was informed by Narkomindel that the death sentence on the young men would not be carried out, and that the matter could be settled " in a friendly manner " between the two governments.[2] The amount of heat generated on the German side puzzled Moscow, and was interpreted as a political demonstration.

Meanwhile, the discussions of the delayed commercial treaty were resumed, side by side with negotiations on a demand from Brockdorff-Rantzau for a withdrawal of the charges against Hilger and the German embassy. It had long been recognized on the German side that the success of the commercial negotiations depended on the state of political relations between the two countries.[3] On July 1, 1925, Dirksen, in the presence of Brockdorff-Rantzau, expounded to Chicherin the views of the German Government on the proposed commercial treaty and the preamble.[4] The differences of principle on the commercial treaty

[1] Krylenko's speech was published in *Pravda*, July 3, 1925, and is reprinted in N. Krylenko, *Sudebnye Rechi, 1922–1930* (1931), pp. 61-98.

[2] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155568-9.

[3] *Ibid.* 4829/242047-8.

[4] *Ibid.* 4562/155530-2.

were clearly defined.[1] The German Government sought to override the foreign trade monopoly, and obtain direct access to Soviet industrial and commercial concerns; no concession was forthcoming on this point. Though the existence of the monopoly made most-favoured-nation provisions of the ordinary kind almost valueless, a great deal of discussion revolved round the assertion of this principle. The Rapallo treaty had admitted an exception to the principle in favour of Soviet trade with countries "which were previously part of the former Russian empire": this exception was reaffirmed. The Soviet Government now claimed an extension of this exemption to Soviet trade with the smaller Asian countries — Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, Sinkiang and Outer Mongolia; in practice, Soviet trade with these countries was conducted on a totally different basis from Soviet European and overseas trade, escaping almost entirely from the restriction of the monopoly of foreign trade.[2] This claim was strenuously resisted by the German negotiators. Wallroth in a letter to Schlesinger, the German negotiator, of June 24, 1925, explained that the German Government would agree to the exclusion from the application of most-favoured-nation rights of trade with the Baltic states, Persia, Afghanistan, Sinkiang and Outer Mongolia, but not with Poland, Finland, Turkey or China.[3] Stresemann himself as the result of a conversation with Krestinsky in Berlin on June 22, 1925, complained that the Soviet Union wanted to exclude Germany from most-favoured-nation rights in respect of trade with "China and others", as if these states belonged to Russia, and became sarcastic over the limited interpretation placed by the Soviet Union on most-favoured-nation treatment.[4] The Soviet negotiators pressed for the extension of extra-territorial rights to the premises of the trade delegation in Hamburg, and made demands for credits to facilitate German exports to the Soviet Union: this was an essential condition of an expansion of Soviet-German trade.[5] But it was clear that the real obstacles

[1] A good account of them in general terms is given in L. Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (1930), ii, 583-590.

[2] See pp. 631-638 below.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4829/242127.

[4] *Ibid.* 2860/555311-4; *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, ii (1932), 150.

[5] L. Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (1930), ii, 589. In 1923 the German Government had advanced half the price of 20 million puds of Soviet wheat to be purchased by German importers, the advance to be spent on German

were political. Agreement would be reached on these subsidiary issues once the political complications had been overcome.

The preamble, as was to be expected, continued to give trouble. Chicherin poured scorn on its empty platitudes, and ironically suggested to Dirksen that " it might be used as a preamble to a veterinary agreement ".[1] In a more formal conversation with Brockdorff-Rantzau a few days later he characterized the preamble as consisting of " vague hints and pretty phrases ", more appropriate for an after-dinner toast than for a treaty ; and he submitted an alternative draft which was in substance identical with the neutrality pact proposal of December 1924, and would have been incompatible with Germany's membership of the League of Nations.[2] This he threatened to publish, apparently to the embarrassment of the German delegation.[3] *Pravda* kept up the heat in a leading article which declared that " important circles of the German bourgeoisie are more and more being taken in tow by English imperial policy ", and that even German nationalists had become " mercenaries of English imperialism ".[4] In the middle of July, a proposal to break off the negotiations was seriously considered in Berlin. Stresemann, in a memorandum of July 13, 1925, to the cabinet, explained that it had proved impossible to reach an agreement on the lines laid down in the directives to the German delegation. A proposal to postpone further negotiations till the autumn had immediately encountered " the suspicion of the Soviet Government, which has been raised to the highest point owing to the German negotiations with the west " ; and postponement would be interpreted as " an attempt to turn German policy away from Soviet Russia to the west ".

goods for the Soviet Union (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 5265/317020-2 ; see also *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 26, note 3) ; a proposal for a similar advance of 100 million marks on the security of the 1924 harvest was discussed but apparently came to nothing (*Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, ii (1955), 317, note 94). Schlesinger, the commercial expert of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, wrote to Brockdorff-Rantzau on January 22, 1925, that " the credit negotiations entrusted to me are turning out to be extraordinarily difficult " (*Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass* 9101/227171-2).

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155609-12.

[2] *Ibid.* 4562/155599, 155610 ; the remark about the " toast " evidently rankled, and was recalled by Stresemann in a conversation with Krestinsky on December 25, 1925 (*Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, ii (1932), 532-533).

[3] G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), p. 145.

[4] *Pravda*, July 10, 1925.

Moreover, the strained condition of German commercial relations with France and Poland also made a German-Soviet agreement highly desirable. The treaty was necessary to Germany, both politically and economically; and concessions on the oustanding issues would have to be made to obtain it. But it was also necessary, without breaking off negotiations, to postpone the signature till agreement had finally been clinched with the west.[1] A struggle ensued in the German cabinet, which discussed the matter on no less than four occasions between July 14 and 22, 1925.[2] Finally on July 28, 1925, Stresemann was able to instruct the impatient Brockdorff-Rantzau that the German Government would " probably " agree to the extra-territoriality of the whole premises of the Soviet trade delegation in Berlin, provided other outstanding Soviet demands, including one for the extra-territoriality of the trade delegation premises in Hamburg, were dropped.[3] This was evidently regarded as completing the negotiations; and at the end of July 1925 Dirksen returned to Berlin.[4]

Meanwhile the stubborn battle between Brockdorff-Rantzau and Narkomindel over the case of Wolscht and Kindermann had been pursued simultaneously with the commercial negotiations,[5] and ended in an agreement which took the form of a *communiqué* " from the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs " published in *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* on August 8, 1925. The *communiqué* rehearsed a statement received " some time ago " from the German Embassy relating the casual nature of Hilger's relations with the two young men, and added the bare comment that the judgment of the court did not mention Hilger. It concluded by recording that both governments agreed to regard the incident as closed. But this partial concession in Moscow did not remove

[1] The text of the memorandum is in *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/555443-55; G. Hilger *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), p. 180, comments on it as a turning-point in German policy. For the " directives " see p. 265 above.

[2] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4484/096333-5, 096349-51; 5265/316915. Quotations from the German archives in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, v (1957), No. 3, pp. 473-474, show that pressure to conclude the agreement came on political grounds from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and that other departments were lukewarm or hostile.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4484/096340-4.

[4] *Ibid.* 2860/555546.

[5] At one point Brockdorff-Rantzau proposed to break off the commercial negotiations and send the delegation home, but this was vetoed by Stresemann (*ibid.* 4562/155642, 155655); on this occasion more realism was shown in Berlin than in Moscow.

the major difficulty of the Soviet attitude to Germany's negotiations with the west. Soviet objections to these had in no way abated, and were more and more openly expressed. Litvinov, passing through Berlin on his return from his " cure " in western Europe, saw Stresemann again on August 8, 1925. Stresemann once more attempted to defend the preamble, and thought that Chicherin underrated its value as a safeguard against any prejudice which the Soviet Union might fear from Germany's pact with the west.[1] Krasin, in an interview in Paris, sourly observed that, " in as much as the negotiations about the pact and the entry of Germany into the League of Nations are clearly designed to isolate the USSR and to set up a bloc of all European states against it, the people and government of the USSR cannot look with sympathy on such efforts to consolidate peace ".[2] At the end of August 1925 a flutter of alarm was felt in Berlin when eight high-ranking Soviet military officers passed through the city *en route* for Paris: the mission was assumed to be the result of negotiations with the French Ambassador in Moscow.[3] But it was Litvinov who, back in Moscow and now apparently in charge of the German negotiations, made the next move by suggesting, almost casually, to Brockdorff-Rantzau, on August 26, 1925, that the unfortunate preamble " need not be connected with the treaty now being negotiated here "; [4] and Stresemann, who wanted the commercial treaty, provided that he could first make sure of the pact with the west, and did not want the political preamble at all, hastened to fall in with this separation of the two.[5]

The negotiations with the west were now drawing to their triumphant conclusion. Italy, to the annoyance and disappointment of observers in Moscow, was drawn into the net.[6] On

[1] *Ibid.* 4562/155723-7; on the previous day D'Abernon had confided to his diary the prediction that the proposed security pact would " relieve Germany of the danger of being drawn into the arms of Russia " (D'Abernon, *An Ambassador of Peace*, iii (1930), 184).

[2] *Le Temps*, August 8, 1925. [3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 9524/671528.

[4] *Ibid.* 2860/555743-8. According to this report by Brockdorff-Rantzau of the conversation, Litvinov on his return had taken over the direction of European affairs, and Chicherin of the Far East; there is no other evidence of any such division of functions. A fortnight earlier Brockdorff-Rantzau had reported that Litvinov had " a far stronger influence " than Chicherin; this may have been a symptom of Stalin's growing authority. [5] *Ibid.* 2860/555732.

[6] *Izvestiya*, September 8, 1925, in a leading article headed " Italy's Complicated Manœuvres ", deplored Italian participation in the security pact.

September 15, 1925, invitations were issued to Great Britain, France, Italy and Germany, together with Poland and Czechoslovakia, to meet in conference at Locarno on October 5; and it was clear that agreement on the security pact was in sight. The news gave a fillip to the commercial negotiations in Moscow, where the elimination of the preamble had removed the one remaining obstacle. A week later Brockdorff-Rantzau was able to announce that "a positive outcome" was in sight, and that both sides were at work on a final text.[1] But this did not prevent the maintenance of a formidable press bombardment against the proposed guarantee treaty. On September 22, 1925, *Pravda* carried a leading article *On the Threat of a War*, which concluded that British actions were "*objectively nothing less than a systematic and prolonged* preparation of war against the USSR". Two days later, a particularly violent article in *Izvestiya* entitled *Facing the Danger of an Irrevocable Step* spoke of "the two faces" of the League, and concluded that "any day a situation may arise in which, according to the constitution of the League of Nations, Germany will be obliged to range herself in a camp hostile to the Soviet Union". On the same day, Chicherin informed the ambassador that he was leaving on the following evening for Warsaw en route for Berlin, where he would spend some days and seek medical advice, proceeding thereafter to some spa in western Europe; the Soviet chargé d'affaires in Berlin relayed the same information to Schubert, with the supplementary remark — one of those remarks which obviously mean the opposite of what they say — that the visit to Warsaw had "no kind of political significance".[2] Though Chicherin's journey was repeatedly referred to as a private one, he departed from Moscow with full ceremonial, a guard of honour and the whole diplomatic corps attending him at the railway station.[3]

Chicherin's three-day visit to Warsaw was barren of any concrete result.[4] But, in spite of the formal denial in *Izvestiya*,[5]

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/555865.
[2] *Ibid.* 4562/155849-51, 155855-6.
[3] *Ibid.* 4562/155868.
[4] See p. 446 below.
[5] *Izvestiya*, October 1, 1925, wrote that the visit was "not a demonstration against Germany": it was England which sought to isolate the Soviet Union and to incite its neighbours. It was true that the Soviet Union regarded Great Britain and not Germany as the real enemy; but Chicherin knew that he could make no impression on the former, and hoped to impress the latter.

everyone recognized its significance as a warning served on Germany that, if she sought new friends in the west, she could no longer count on Soviet support against her principal bugbear in the east. Chicherin reached Berlin from Warsaw on the evening of September 30, 1925, two days before the German delegation was due to start for Locarno, and at 10.30 on the same evening began a conversation with Stresemann which lasted for four hours. After his usual tactical opening on the activities of Comintern, Stresemann announced his readiness to proceed at an early date to the conclusion of the commercial agreement " in order to counter the talk about a western orientation ". Having thus prepared the ground, Stresemann attempted to refute the charge of concluding " an Anglo-German alliance against Russia " ; and the discussion followed now familiar lines. Chicherin created a diversion by referring to Brockdorff-Rantzau's proposal of December 1924 for common action " to push Poland back to her ethnographical frontiers ". Stresemann expressed his astonishment and dismay at such a proposal, which, he said, was totally unknown to him, and sent for Schubert who, after a perfunctory search, was equally unable to confirm it. While these enquiries were in progress, Chicherin fell asleep ; and on this inconclusive note the conversation appears to have ended.[1] On the following day, October 1, 1925, the German Government decided in principle on acceptance of the proposed commercial treaty, leaving the outstanding details to be settled in Moscow. A communiqué to this effect was issued with the following concluding paragraph :

> It is a particularly fortunate coincidence that the decision of the government of the Reich on the conclusion of the treaty could be communicated personally to the People's Commissar Chicherin, who is in Berlin.[2]

The still more fortunate coincidence by which the decision was made public on the eve of the Locarno negotiations was not

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/555899-910, much abbreviated in *Gustav Stresemanns Vermächtnis*, ii (1932), 523-526. Stresemann's forgetfulness seems to have been genuine, but was surprising ; the phrase occurred not only in instructions of December 13, 1924 (see pp. 254-255 above), but in those of March 19, 1925 (see pp. 259-260 above), and according to G. Hilger and A. Meyer, *The Incompatible Allies* (N.Y. 1956), p. 154, was a formula in common use.

[2] *Gustav Stresemanns Vermächtnis*, ii (1932), 526 ; Schlesinger reported to Brockdorff-Rantzau on October 2, 1925, that " the German-Russian trade

mentioned. The most important item in the decision (though this, too, was not made public) was the approval of a credit of 100 million marks for the Soviet Government to be arranged through the German banks.[1] This concession was the final signal that the German Government at last meant business.

Meanwhile, nothing was omitted that might do honour to Chicherin and to the government which he represented. He was entertained by the Chancellor on the day after his arrival at a luncheon at which Stresemann, Seeckt and Gessler were also present;[2] and arrangements were made, at his own request, for him to be received by Hindenburg.[3] On the evening of October 2, a few hours before the departure of the German delegation for Locarno, Stresemann and Chicherin had yet another meeting. On this occasion Stresemann, obviously embarrassed, was obliged to admit that the phrase about "pushing back Poland to her ethnographical frontiers" had occurred in the instructions sent to Brockdorff-Rantzau in December 1924, though he tried to transfer the responsibility for it to Kopp and, in general, to minimize its importance. He was clearly alarmed at the possibility of a public disclosure of such a *démarche* on the eve of the Locarno conference. Stresemann explained to Chicherin that he could not afford to conclude an agreement which might be suspected of covering "great secret military preparations by Germany", and for which "we should have to bear a blow across the neck (Nackenschlag) on the western frontier". The rest of the conversation turned mainly on the relation of Germany's entry into the League to article 16 of the League covenant. Stresemann explained the difference between "*de jure* exemption from article 16", which would require an amendment of the covenant by a majority of League members, and "*de facto* exemption", which would be secured through an authoritative "interpretation" of the article; he repeated that Germany had no intention of enter-

ship" had at last "after a stormy voyage of many years" reached a "peaceful haven" (*Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass*, 9101/227160).

[1] A note on this question submitted by Stresemann to the Cabinet on October 1, 1925, is in *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/555923.

[2] *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 2, 1925: F. von Rabenau, *Seeckt: Aus Seinem Leben, 1918–1936* (1940), p. 420.

[3] The request had been made in Moscow in the conversation of September 24, 1925 with Brockdorff-Rantzau (see p. 274, note 2 above).

ing the League unconditionally.[1] At the last moment, by way of ensuring, or demonstrating, that the eastern aspect of German foreign policy would not be lost sight of, Dirksen was included in the German delegation for Locarno.[2]

During the whole period of the Locarno negotiations, Chicherin remained in Berlin. On October 2, 1925, he held a general reception for the press and repeated his fears that Great Britain would succeed, through the security pact and the League of Nations, in drawing Germany into anti-Soviet paths.

> England [he declared] will not let a single opportunity pass without exploiting it to the full for her anti-Soviet purposes. . . . Under this article [article 16] Germany will fall into a position in which England, aided by France, will be able to apply the strongest pressure to Germany, while England will strive to appear as the defender of Germany in relation to France. Add to this that England can promise Germany great benefits at the expense of Poland, and you have the policy of the carrot and the whip.[3]

On October 6, 1925, he was received by Hindenburg. No serious political conversation took place. Chicherin several times emphasized the importance of close relations between the Soviet Union and Germany, and Hindenburg steadily evaded the issue.[4] Chicherin also seized the occasion of his stay in Berlin to visit the French Ambassador, and mooted the possibility of a visit to Paris during his sojourn in western Europe ;[5] and this project was duly leaked in diplomatic circles as a further hint to the German Government.[6] Chicherin remained in Berlin till the eve of the return of the German delegation from Locarno before continuing his journey to Wiesbaden. His parting shot was a press interview of October 15, in which, while admitting that a Soviet observer

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860, 555911-7 ; the date, here incorrectly given as October 1, is corrected to October 2 in the copy in Schubert's file (*ibid.* 4562/115922). According to L. Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (1930), ii, 606, which doubtless reproduced Chicherin's impression, " Stresemann gave a definite undertaking to Chicherin not to accept Locarno or enter the League without previous modification of article 16 ".

[2] H. von Dirksen, *Moscow, Tokyo, London* (Engl. transl. 1951), p. 68: this detail is missing from the original German edition of the work.

[3] *Izvestiya*, October 4, 1925 ; a further interview given to the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* on October 4 appeared in *Izvestiya*, October 6, 1925.

[4] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/115931-4.

[5] See p. 420 below.

[6] H. von Dirksen, *Moskau, Tokio, London* (Stuttgart, n.d. [? 1949]), p. 70.

might in certain circumstances be sent to Geneva, he once more declared " entry into membership of the League absolutely unacceptable " to the USSR.[1]

Stresemann in Locarno had meanwhile shown himself not unmindful of relations with his great neighbour on the east. Immediately after his arrival he countered Chicherin's publicity in Berlin by a statement to the press rejecting the implication of a western orientation in German policy, and declaring that he had clearly shown by his willingness to conclude a commercial treaty " Germany's intention to keep the road to Russia open ".[2] Much of the discussion at Locarno turned on article 16 of the covenant. During the discussions Austen Chamberlain once more declared " openly and categorically " that " it had never entered the mind of the British Government in any way through the pact to create a pact directed against Russia ".[3] Stresemann, fortified perhaps in his resistance to the west by Chicherin's protests as well as by opposition at home, stood firm against French and British pressure to assume military obligations. The way out was found in the adoption of a phrase from the defunct Geneva protocol of 1924; the principal Powers declared to Germany that a member of the League was under the obligation to cooperate in resisting aggression only " to an extent which is compatible with its military situation and takes its geographical position into account ". It was one of those phrases, indispensable in diplomatic negotiation, into which a wide variety of meanings could be read, and which therefore provided a pretext for agreement. The security pact and the accompanying instruments, including the declaration on the interpretation of article 16, were initialled at Locarno on October 16, 1925. They were formally signed in London on December 1, 1925.

On October 12, 1925, while negotiations were in progress at Locarno, the Soviet-German commercial treaty was signed in Moscow by Litvinov and Brockdorff-Rantzau. Its political significance was marked by the declaration that the Rapallo treaty would continue to be regarded as the foundation for regulating German-Soviet relations. The principal instrument was a

[1] For this interview see pp. 455-456 below.
[2] *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, ii (1932), 527-528.
[3] *Stresemann Nachlass*, 7319/160080.

general commercial agreement, which included a specific acceptance of the Soviet monopoly of foreign trade. The parties declared it to be their aim " to restore to the pre-war level the share of both countries in reciprocal imports and exports ". The clause on most-favoured-nation treatment excluded from its operation " favours granted by the USSR to Persia, Afghanistan and Mongolia " and " favours granted by the USSR to Turkey and China in respect of frontier traffic " : the exclusion did not extend to overseas trade with China. The treaty embodied seven subsidiary agreements, including a consular convention and a convention on legal assistance in civil disputes.[1] A few days before the signature Sokolnikov announced the terms of the credit granted to the Soviet Government by a group of German banks, acting in fact, though not in name, on behalf of the German Government.[2] This was a short-term credit repayable in two instalments in January and February 1926 : the rate of interest was 8½ per cent. Apart from its political significance, it had the practical advantage of enabling the Soviet Union to make immediate purchases in Germany, and pay for them when the grain became available for export.[3] The sum total of these agreements provided for the normalization and expansion of economic relations between the Soviet Union and Germany ; and the timing of their signature had an obvious political significance. Commercially and financially, the Soviet Union had the best of the bargain. But this was no compensation for Germany's new political link with the west. The burning political issue of the implications of Locarno for the future of Soviet-German relations was reserved for further negotiation.

Notwithstanding the mollifying effects of the Soviet-German commercial treaty, the Locarno treaties were received in the

[1] The original Russian and German texts, with French and English translations, are in *League of Nations: Treaty Series*, liii (1926), 7-160 ; the German texts, together with the protocols of the official negotiations, are in *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/555927-6087. For the speeches delivered by Litvinov and Brockdorff-Rantzau at a banquet after the signature, and a press interview by Brockdorff-Rantzau, see *Pravda*, October 13, 1925.

[2] The final negotiations in Moscow were evidently conducted in part by Schlesinger, the commercial expert of the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs ; a memorandum on the question sent by him to Schubert from Moscow on October 7, 1925, is in *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4829/242197-201.

[3] *Izvestiya*, October 6, 1925 ; G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), pp. 181-182.

Soviet Union with an outburst of shrill indignation not unmixed with apprehension. German protestations that the agreed interpretation of article 16 of the Covenant left Germany free to refuse the passage of French troops across Germany in the event of a Soviet-Polish war, and that the arbitration treaties with Poland and Czechoslovakia did not constitute a renunciation of Germany's territorial claims,[1] went unheeded. Zinoviev denounced it as "*a direct attempt at a break, an immediate preparation for war against the Soviet Union*"; Great Britain did not dare to start a war alone, but was anxiously trying to build up an anti-Soviet coalition before it was too late.[2] Radek, in a lengthy essay constructed round the thesis that "the subordination of Germany to the League of Nations is the first step towards the creation of a capitalist trust of Powers directed against the Soviet Union", analysed with his customary acumen the changes in the relative positions of the leading Powers revealed, or brought about, by Locarno.[3] Kamenev at a Moscow party meeting in November 1925 called Locarno "the first attempt at an agreement which will open to English and French capitalism the road to the frontiers of the Soviet Union across Germany";[4] and Zinoviev, addressing the congress of the metal workers' trade union, described it as "*a factor that threatens peace*" and "a mine set beneath our union".[5] A conference of communist parliamentarians of European countries held in Brussels on November 10-12, 1925, adopted a declaration that the Locarno treaty was "not only a grievous danger for Soviet Russia, but also a new and serious threat to all the working masses suffering under capitalist exploitation and oppression". One speaker struck a new note when he called it "also *a pact against the awakening colonial peoples in Asia*

[1] These were the main points of a telegram sent by Schubert to Moscow on October 23, 1925 (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155981-4).

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 145, October 20, 1925, pp. 2144-2145.

[3] *Ibid.* No. 148, October 31, 1925, pp. 2206-2208; No. 150, November 3, 1925, pp. 2219-2221; No. 152, November 6, 1925, pp. 2279-2280; No. 153, November 10, 1925, pp. 2293-2295; No. 154, November 13, 1925, pp. 2310-2312; No. 156, November 20, 1925, pp. 2340-2342; No. 157, November 24, 1925, pp. 2357-2358. The first five instalments also appeared in *Izvestiya*, October 22, 24, 25, 31, November 5, 1925.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 160, December 4, 1925, p. 2402.

[5] *Pravda*, December 1, 1925; for the speech see Vol. 1, p. 351.

and Africa".[1] On the eve of the formal signature, *Izvestiya* once more voiced Soviet fears of the League of Nations as an instrument in the hands of the Great Powers :

> During an international conflict it can force weaker states to comply with its sovereign will in the interests of a bandit or group of bandits.[2]

Thälmann, in the debate on Locarno in the German Reichstag on November 24, 1925, called it an attempt of " English imperialism " to " organize Europe as an English front against Soviet Russia ", and maintained that Germany, by her acceptance of it, " passes over into the ranks of the enemies of Soviet Russia ".[3] These were only the highlights of a campaign which everywhere depicted Great Britain as the prime organizer of a far-flung coalition which threatened the Soviet Union with war and destruction.

While, however, Locarno went to swell the mounting tension between the Soviet Union and Great Britain, its effect on Soviet-German relations was problematical, since the Soviet Government alternately treated Germany as the principal villain, and as a principal victim, of the piece. The British chargé d'affaires in Moscow, Hodgson, did not think that " Germany's joining the pact of security and entering the League would make any violent difference in Russian-German relations ".[4] Superficially, this prediction proved correct. The conclusion of the Locarno treaties was accompanied by the signature of a Soviet-German commercial agreement and the granting of a substantial credit to the Soviet Government. It was followed by a development both of Soviet-German trade and of Soviet-German military cooperation. Never were relations between the two countries more actively cultivated than in the two years after Locarno. The truth that Germany and the Soviet Union needed each other seemed to have been fully vindicated, and to have triumphed over the passing mutual irritations of the Locarno episode. Yet it was

[1] The proceedings of the conference were reported in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 155, November 17, 1925, pp. 2328-2333 ; No. 156, November 20, 1925, pp. 2345-2350 ; No. 157, November 24, 1925, pp. 2363-2367.

[2] *Izvestiya*, November 27, 1925.

[3] *Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, cccIxxxviii (1925), 4512-4513, 4521.

[4] D'Abernon, *An Ambassador of Peace*, iii (1930), 191.

also true that after Locarno nothing was quite the same as before. Brockdorff-Rantzau rather quaintly lamented that "the old *charme* of our relations with Russia has gone"; [1] and Dirksen complained that "Rapallo had lost its romantic halo".[2] What was missing was the old sense of a common destiny as outcasts from the European community: this was the essence of the "spirit of Rapallo". Germany may still have needed the Soviet Union as much as ever. But she needed it no longer as an exclusive partner, but as a counter-weight to other actual or potential partners, as an insurance against an otherwise too exclusive dependence on the west. Collaboration for all practical purposes might continue and increase. But the underlying motive on the German side had undergone a change of quality. And the perception of this change quickly affected Soviet policy. The Soviet Government, for all the practical value which it still attached to German friendship, was increasingly conscious of a certain coldness and hollowness in this friendship, and increasingly eager to seek compensation elsewhere. Unable to break the firm front of British hostility, it turned rather desperately towards France and Poland. While continuing to protest its undying disapproval of the League of Nations, it began to regard the proceedings at Geneva with a more interested and less jaundiced eye. Most of all, perhaps, it intensified the drive, already apparent in Soviet foreign policy before Locarno, to call in the new world of Asia to redress the balance of the old.

[1] G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), p. 129.
[2] H. von Dirksen, *Moskau, Tokio, London* (Stuttgart, n.d. [? 1949], p. 75).

CHAPTER 30

COMINTERN: THE FIFTH IKKI

THE international anxieties which occupied the minds of the Soviet leaders in the first months of 1925 were quickly reflected in the affairs of Comintern. The proceedings of what was known as the "fifth enlarged plenum" of IKKI,[1] which met in Moscow on March 21, 1925, were dominated by two key words: stabilization and Bolshevization. The "stabilization" was that temporarily achieved by western capitalism after the revolutionary shocks of the first post-war period had been overcome, though recognition of this was tempered by recognition of a corresponding stabilization of the Soviet régime. The Bolshevization of communist parties had been proclaimed as a goal at the fifth congress. It was now repeated with increased emphasis and in a new situation, a somewhat forced attempt being made to link Bolshevization with stabilization.

The atmosphere at the fifth enlarged IKKI differed widely from that which had surrounded the fifth congress of Comintern in June–July of the previous year. The disappointments suffered by Soviet diplomacy in the last months of 1924 had their counterpart in Comintern. Earlier prognostications notwithstanding, the revolutionary tide was still ebbing in Europe. Sporadic

[1] The first and second sessions of the "enlarged" IKKI were held in February and June 1922 (for this innovation see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 394); the third was in June 1923 and played an important part in German affairs (see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 177-181); the fourth immediately followed the fifth congress of Comintern in July 1924. The fifth plenum of March–April 1925 was unusually large and important. It mustered 244 delegates, representing 34 countries, of whom 104 had voting rights; of these 37 were regular members of IKKI (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 474). Zinoviev described it as having "the character of a congress" (*Chetyrnadtsataya Konferentsiya Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)* (1925), p. 217). From the "sixth enlarged plenum" of February–March 1926 onwards the numbering, hitherto informal, was officially recognized.

peasant risings in the eastern provinces of Poland had led nowhere, and were becoming a source of embarrassment.[1] The end of the year 1924 was marked by another event which, though of minor importance in itself, seemed a clear index of the fading prospects of revolution in Europe. Throughout the year the small but aggressive Estonian Communist Party had attracted the attention of the police. In January 1924 " mass arrests " of communists were reported from Tallinn, the Estonian capital.[2] In August 1924 the authorities " unleashed a new attack on the working class " with numerous arrests and suppression of party organizations.[3] After this, the authorities apparently decided to bring the communist menace into the open, and on November 10, 1924, staged a mass trial of 149 communists in Tallinn.[4] On November 15, one of the leading defendants, Tomp by name, publicly defied and denounced the court. He was summarily executed the same night. IKKI issued a statement denouncing the " Estonian hangmen " ; and the delegates to the sixth Soviet trade union congress, then in session in Moscow, rose to honour the memory of the martyred leader.[5] The trial ended on November 27, 1924, with the condemnation of virtually all the accused and sentences of imprisonment ranging from life to four years.[6] These stern measures induced a mood of desperation in the party. On December 1, 1924, an armed communist rising occurred in Tallinn, and the insurgents for some hours held key positions in the town. But the army and police remained loyal, and the restoration of order was only a matter of time. Arrests and executions, with or without trial, now began. The " blood of the workers is flowing in Estonia ", declared IKKI on December 11, 1924.[7] The usual uncertainty prevails about numbers. But a later estimate of 300 executed and 500 imprisoned [8] was probably not exaggerated. The direct responsibility of Comintern, or even

[1] See p. 381 below.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 30, March 4, 1924, pp. 344-345.

[3] *Ibid.* No. 126, September 26, 1924, p. 1681.

[4] *Ibid.* No. 148, November 13, 1924, p. 2001.

[5] *Ibid.* No. 149, November 18, 1924, pp. 2002-2004; *Shestoi S"ezd Professional'nykh Soyuzov SSSR* (1925), p. 391 (for a manifesto protesting against the " white terror " in Estonia see *ibid.* pp. 491-492).

[6] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 154, November 28, p. 2095.

[7] *Ibid.* No. 162, December 12, 1924, p. 2212.

[8] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 341.

of the Soviet Government, for this abortive *coup* was at once alleged or assumed, but never certainly established. The rising, though doubtless planned in advance in consultation with Moscow, may well have been launched at the fatal moment on local initiative.[1] But, whatever its origin, its message was wholly discouraging. It repeated the lesson already taught by the German and Bulgarian disasters of 1923.[2] Another revolutionary *coup* had been tried and had failed. The ugly word *putsch* applied to it by its opponents was in itself a criticism of those in Comintern who supported forward and adventurous policies, and was a powerful

[1] A leading article in *Izvestiya*, December 4, 1924, regarded it as self-evident that the rising had broken out "suddenly and spontaneously", and poured contempt on those who attributed it to "incitement from Moscow" or "Soviet propaganda"; a few days later the Soviet *polpred* in Stockholm denied, in an interview in the Swedish press, "newspaper reports of the complicity of the USSR or of Comintern in the events in Tallinn" (*ibid.* December 16, 1924). No other official disclaimer seems to have issued either from Soviet or from Comintern sources. A *post-mortem* in the Comintern journal concluded that "*the party made one fundamental mistake: it over-estimated the activity of the working masses*", and, without speculating on the causes, that it had been "compelled to proceed to a 'premature' rising" (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 1 (38), January 1925, p. 131); a later official Comintern report merely recorded that "our party with one mind decided on a rising to overthrow bourgeois domination" (*Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 341). A confidential memorandum of uncertain but well-informed authorship, evidently written in the winter of 1925–1926, and preserved in the Trotsky archives (T 857 — a note in Trotsky's handwriting attributing it to Radek and dating it "before the VI congress" (i.e. in 1928) has probably been misplaced, and does not seem to refer to this document at all), reflects genuine bewilderment: "We do not know the relation of IKKI either to the Bulgarian or to the Estonian events: we do not know, not merely the real relation of IKKI to these events, but even its political judgment on them, since IKKI refused to make any clear public appraisal of them". The commonest assumption is that Zinoviev was personally responsible (e.g. the statement in V. Serge, *Mémoires d'un Révolutionnaire* (1951), p. 194, that Zinoviev "launched this stupid adventure"; circumstantial stories in G. Besedovsky, *Na Putyakh k Termidoru* (Paris, 1931), i, 152-153, and in W. Krivitsky, *I was Stalin's Agent* (1939), p. 65, agree in blaming Zinoviev, but differ on every other point). It seems more plausible to attribute the attempt to one of those military or terror groups which functioned on the periphery of the party, and whose responsibility in Moscow was to the OGPU rather than to Comintern (for these groups in Germany and Poland see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 209-210, 223, note 1); the Bulgarian bomb outrage of April 1925, which was commonly linked with the Estonian rising, was ultimately brought home to the "military organization" of the Bulgarian party (see p. 397 below).

[2] Zinoviev later bracketed "our last defeat in Tallinn" with "our defeat of 1923 in Germany" and "our two defeats in Bulgaria" (i.e. June and September 1923) (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 13); for Trotsky's summing-up see p. 292, note 4 below.

plea for a change in the Comintern line. Neither the prediction of an early revolutionary upheaval, nor the demand for a fresh movement to the Left in communist parties, which had been heard at the fifth congress six months earlier, were any longer convincing or appropriate watchwords.

It was not surprising that Stalin, always a sceptic about the prospects of revolution in Europe,[1] should have been the first to subject the optimistic illusions of the summer and autumn of 1924 to a sober re-appraisal. In January 1925, at the Moscow provincial party conference, he reviewed the " allies " of the Soviet power. He rejected in turn as inadequate " the proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries " (which, though " the most faithful and important ally ", was not at present able to render " direct aid and actual assistance "), " the oppressed peoples of the underdeveloped countries " (who, though providing " the greatest reserve of our revolution ", were " slow to start "), and " the peasantry of the capitalist countries " (which was " not as reliable as the proletariat "). The remaining " ally ", invisible but the most important of all, were " the struggles, conflicts and wars among our enemies " — the divisions in the capitalist world.[2] The implied moral was that the hostile strength of the capitalist world must be countered by diplomatic manœuvres rather than undermined by the slow processes of revolution. Stalin thus became a pioneer in the recognition of the " stabilization of capitalism ", though he may not at this time have realized how aptly it could be used to reinforce his new doctrine of socialism in one country. In February 1925 he admitted, in an interview with a German communist, that the Dawes plan " has already yielded certain results which have led to relative stability in the situation ".[3] What was said did not differ in substance from the recognition at the third congress of Comintern in 1921 that capitalism had attained a temporary " equilibrium ".[4] But the equilibrium had itself been described as " unstable " ; and the admission into the

[1] See Vol. 1, pp. 178-179.

[2] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 26-28 ; for Stalin's previous speech on the danger of intervention and the need to strengthen the Red Army see p. 250 above.

[3] *Ibid.* vii, 35 ; for this interview see p. 314 below.

[4] Zinoviev later specifically identified the " stabilization of capitalism " recorded by the fifth IKKI with the " *equilibrium of forces* ", qualified as " *relative* " and " very unstable ", which Lenin had diagnosed at the third

vocabulary of Comintern of a " stabilization ", however partial and temporary, of capitalism made something of a stir, so that the Bolshevik leaders at first hesitated to commit themselves to it. Stalin in an article published in *Pravda* on the day after the fifth IKKI met, and evidently intended to impress the delegates, avoided the word except in the specific context of currency stabilization. But in substance his pronouncement left little unsaid :

> There is no doubt that capitalism has succeeded in extricating itself from the slough of the post-war crisis. The stabilization of the currency in a number of capitalist countries, the growth of world trade and the broadening of production in individual countries, the export and investment of capital, especially Anglo-American capital, in countries of Europe and Asia — all this speaks of successes in the " constructive work " of capital. . . .
>
> There is no doubt also that in the centre of Europe, in Germany, the period of revolutionary upsurge has already ended.[1]

No insistence in the later paragraphs of the article on the continuing contradictions of capitalism and on the precarious and short-lived prospects of its recovery, could remove the impression of this frank admission. The diagnosis of the political situation and the verdict on the " democratic " illusions of the earlier period were no less uncompromising : " so-called ' pacifism ' has faded away without coming to flower and without creating for itself an ' era ', an ' epoch ' or a ' period ' ".[2] Stalin ended with an enumeration of five " tasks of communist parties ", none of which suggested the imminence — or indeed the possibility — of an immediately revolutionary situation.[3]

congress of Comintern in 1921 ; in 1924–1925, " when the situation had become far more clearly defined ", the formula of " equilibrium " had led to that of " stabilization " (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (*B*) (1926), pp. 641-642 ; the passage in Lenin's speech of 1921 is in *Sochineniya*, xxvi, 450). One difficulty about the word " stabilization " was that the introductory declaration of the constitution of the USSR, adopted in December 1922 (see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 398), had cited " the instability of the international situation " as calling for a common front of Soviet republics.

[1] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 52.

[2] *Ibid.* vii, 55.

[3] *Ibid.* vii, 57-58. The first four tasks were (1) to utilize thoroughly all contradictions in the bourgeois camp, (2) to promote " a *rapprochement* of the working class of leading countries with the national-revolutionary movement of

When the session of the fifth IKKI opened, Zinoviev in more rhetorical and slightly less sharp language, offered the same diagnosis. In his brief speech of welcome to the delegates, he ruefully noted that Comintern could claim " no great successes " since the fifth congress.[1] His main report was devoted to a circumspect analysis of the situation. He began by referring to the question, much discussed at this time, of the prospective " route " which the revolution would take, but confined himself on this occasion to casting doubt on the long accepted assumption that it would pass, first of all, through Germany. Zinoviev denounced those " who believe like fatalists in the stabilization of capitalism, allegedly to the extent of 100 per cent ". It was true that " the bourgeoisie has secured a breathing-space ", and that the economic situation had improved in the leading capitalist countries. But how unstable this stabilization was, could be shown by the persistence of acute antagonisms within the capitalist world — notably the antagonism between Great Britain and the United States, which rested on profound divergences of interest; and the contradictions between America and Europe were reinforced by contradictions within Europe itself — notably the animosity between Great Britain and France. In spite, therefore, of the absence in some countries of " an immediately revolutionary situation ", it was none the less true that " the general world situation remains objectively revolutionary ". The " democratic-pacifist era " diagnosed at the fifth congress was declared to be at an end; it had been only " an episode in the period of imperialist wars and of the preparation of the proletarian revolution ". The social-democrats and Radek were again attacked, though more briefly than at the fifth congress in the previous year: social-democracy was once more described as " a wing of Fascism ", having " taken up a petty-bourgeois position and become a wing of bourgeois ' democracy ' ".[2]

In the debate on Zinoviev's report, delegates of foreign parties were more concerned to demonstrate their loyalty to Comintern than to grasp the nettle of " stabilization ". Only Varga, who may

colonies and dependent countries ", (3) to promote trade union unity, (4) to promote a *rapprochement* of the proletariat with the small peasant; for the fifth task see p. 302 below.

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 6.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 33-58.

well have been the author of the phrase, referred uncompromisingly to "the stabilization of capitalism". But even he also thought that its extent and its durability had been "perhaps overestimated" in some quarters"; the "relative social stabilization" ("the bourgeoisie has succeeded in stabilizing its domination") had not been matched by the same degree of economic stabilization.[1] Zinoviev, in replying to this debate, was principally concerned to refute those outside the party or the Soviet Union who had read too much into the admission of "stabilization". These "lovers of exaggeration" were assured that "we in no way renounce our general thesis, to wit, that since 1917 we have entered the era of *world revolution*", and that not only "Germany is not the whole of Europe", but that "Europe is not the world".[2] The hint that, in the timetable of European revolution, a laggard Germany might be replaced by Great Britain was characteristic of hopes nourished in Moscow at this time.[3] The hint that Asia might come to the aid of a faltering Europe was soon to become a favourite theme of Comintern orators. Zinoviev rather laboriously introduced the argument that the stabilization of capitalism carried with it a corresponding stabilization of the Soviet order, but did not pursue it.[4] No resolution on "stabilization" was proposed, and no analysis of world economic prospects offered. The theses on Bolshevization briefly remarked by way of introduction that "we confront a phase of more or less delayed development of the world revolution".[5] Any hint that a new diagnosis was being offered, or a fresh turn given to the Comintern line, was firmly avoided.

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 173-184. Varga's authorship of the phrase is suggested by the earlier remark of Zinoviev (*ibid.* p. 37) that the economic improvement in several capitalist countries was "not Varga's fault"; a footnote appended to this passage explained that Varga in his writings had "described the temporary stabilization of capitalism observed in some places".

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 426-427.

[3] See pp. 72, 130 above.

[4] According to the German record, which may claim authority, since Zinoviev spoke in German, Zinoviev said: "Wir sind eine Stabilisierungssession zu unserer Stabilisierung" (*Protokoll der Erweiterten Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1925), p. 336); the Russian translator could apparently make nothing of this cryptic aphorism, and the Russian version runs: "Our session is 'the session of Bolshevization' of communist parties" (*Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 443).

[5] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 475; for the main part of the theses, see pp. 297-298 below.

Whatever the impression fostered at the time, however, the change in attitude marked by the session of the fifth enlarged IKKI was real, and was aptly described by the word " stabilization ". Those most intimately concerned in the framing of Comintern policy were most conscious of the change. The " fundamental question " discussed at the fifth IKKI, wrote Manuilsky shortly after the session closed, was stabilization ; [1] and Zinoviev a year later remarked in retrospect that " the word ' stabilization ' defined the character of the plenum ".[2] On a long view this interpretation was correct. The spring of 1925 was a period of intense consciousness and apprehension of the isolation of the Soviet Union in a hostile capitalist world, when capitalism, having survived all revolutionary onslaughts of the first post-war years, was again on the offensive. It was the period of the birth of the doctrine of " socialism in one country " and national self-sufficiency, when the Russian present could no longer be treated as primarily dependent on a revolutionary future, which would work salvation not only for Russia, but for all mankind. It was the period of the turn to the Right in agrarian policy and the attempt to find security in a compromise with the well-to-do peasant — the " wager on the *kulak* ". These moods could not be without influence in Comintern. The fifth enlarged IKKI, with its emphasis on the increased stability both of the capitalist and of the Soviet world, foreshadowed both a more conscious and deliberate retreat from the revolutionary illusions and adventures of the past and a more intense concern for the security and interests of the Soviet Union as the great bulwark of socialism. More specifically, it foreshadowed a rejection of those Leftist leaders of foreign communist parties whose authority had been so enthusiastically endorsed by the fifth congress in the summer of 1924.

The theme of stabilization was taken up afresh at the fourteenth Russian party conference, which met three weeks after the end of the IKKI plenum. In the enclosed forum of a party conference, it was less important to take account of impressions made on foreign communist parties or on the non-communist

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 4 (41), April 1925, p. 5.

[2] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 4.

world; and Stalin and Bukharin had by this time discovered in the stabilization of capitalism, and the corresponding stabilization of the Soviet Union itself, one of the links which would help to forge the chain of socialism in one country. Zinoviev in his report on the proceedings of IKKI boldly asserted the prevalence of "stabilization". "Elements of instability" were present in the situation; but the substitution of Chamberlain, Hindenburg and Briand for MacDonald, Ebert and Herriot marked a definite swing to the Right. It was, however, "necessary to speak not of one but *of two stabilizations*" — the capitalist stabilization and the stabilization of the Soviet Union; and, when he came to point the moral in terms of the guidance to be given by Comintern to the "international proletariat", Zinoviev spoke with greater frankness than at the session of the enlarged IKKI:

> It is true that it would be considerably easier for every one of us to speak in high tones, to arouse the masses for the struggle, to summon them to an immediate assault, to battle, and so forth. It is much more difficult to restrain an international organization from unconsidered steps, to curb its revolutionary impetus, and to point out to it the difficulties of the situation, in order to achieve the necessary result.[1]

The resolution adopted by the conference declared that "the most important themes" raised at the IKKI plenum had been the questions of "*the stabilization of capitalism*" and of "*the further destinies of the USSR in connexion with the slowing down of international revolution*". It distinguished between "(*a*) a revolutionary situation in general, (*b*) an *immediately* revolutionary situation, and (*c*) out-and-out revolution". At the present time in Europe in general, and in Germany in particular, (*b*) did not exist, though (*a*) remained intact. This led up to the cautious proclamation of the doctrine of socialism in one country.[2] Some days later Stalin returned, in his speech to the Moscow party organization on the results of the conference, to the theme of "the

[1] *Chetyrnadtsataya Konferentsiya Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)* (1925), pp. 235, 240.

[2] *VKP(B) v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1941), ii, 26-27; for this resolution see Vol. 2, pp. 45-46.

temporary stabilization of capitalism ". He was careful to balance this by dwelling equally on the " two stabilizations " :

> At one pole, capitalism stabilizes itself, fortifying the position which it has attained and developing it further. At the other pole, the Soviet order stabilizes itself, fortifying in its rear the positions which it has won and moving forward on the road to victory.

The world had irrevocably " split into two camps ".[1] But even in this form the recognition of the stabilization of capitalism still shocked the bolder spirits in the party. At a meeting of the Gosplan club on May 25, 1925, speeches were made by Varga, Trotsky and Radek, all of whom seemed anxious to attenuate the impression created by the party pronouncements on stabilization.[2] Varga pointed to the absence of capital accumulation during or since the war, the disappearance of the *rentier*, the growth of unemployment, and failure to restore production to its pre-war level, as evidence that no lasting basis had been created for stabilization. Trotsky rode his favourite hobby-horse of the period, " the antagonism of American and European production ",[3] as well as antagonisms within Europe. The economic position was still declining in spite of some symptoms of recovery, e.g. currency stabilization. Where the Bolsheviks had miscalculated in 1918–1919 was in their estimate not of the economic, but of the political, situation. The " objective conditions " had been ripe for revolution though the working class " failed to find in time a militant leadership ".[4] Radek was the most impressed of the three with the degree of stabilization achieved by capitalism, recognizing that the export of American capital to Europe would strengthen European capitalism and give it a breathing space in the struggle

[1] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 91, 95.

[2] The speeches were reported in *Planovoe Khozyaistvo*, No. 6, 1925, pp. 153-188, and were reprinted as a pamphlet, E. Varga, L. Trotsky, K. Radek, *K Voprosu o Stabilizatsii Mirovogo Khozyaistva* (1925).

[3] See pp. 469-470 below.

[4] In an unpublished memorandum written three years later and preserved in the Trotsky archives, Trotsky branded the Estonian rising and the Bulgarian outrage as " outbreaks of despair arising from a false orientation " and " attempts to force the historical process by the methods of the *putsch* ", but went on to describe " the Right course " adopted in the spring of 1925 as " an attempt at a half-blind, purely empirical and belated adaptation to the delay in the development of the revolution created by the defeat of 1923 " (T 3117, pp. 106, 112).

against socialism. But even he argued that the contradictions of capitalism would ultimately be increased by this process. This reassurance did not seem convincing at all. Bukharin, in addressing the Komsomol conference in June 1925, assumed that his audience was " utterly fed up with this stabilization ", and took pains to dissociate it from Hilferding's theory of equilibrium, and " the Menshevik theory of a peaceful stage in the development of capitalism ".[1] Among young communists " stabilization " could never be a word to conjure with.

Much more could be done with the other current word in the Comintern vocabulary of 1925 — " Bolshevization ". The demand which had emerged at the fifth congress in June 1924 for " the Bolshevization of the parties " was primarily an offshoot of the Trotsky controversy, Bolshevization being treated as the hallmark of opposition to Trotskyism.[2] Bolshevization was the specific form in which Leninism was applied to Comintern and to the foreign parties. Communist parties, as Stalin explained in his article of September 1924, consisted largely of " former social-democrats who have gone through the old school and young party members who have not yet sufficient revolutionary hardening ". But the last six months had witnessed a " liquidation of social-democratic survivals ", a " Bolshevization of party cadres ", and an " isolation of opportunist elements " (meaning, in particular, Brandler and Souvarine); " the process of the *final* formation of really Bolshevik parties in the west . . . *has begun* ". All this was associated with " the victory of the revolutionary wing of the leading parties ", i.e. with the turn to the Left registered at the fifth congress of Comintern.[3] Bolshevization in this sense was the product of an optimistic mood, and implied readiness to take advantage of the revolutionary situation which might be expected to arise in the early future. In 1924 it would have been difficult

[1] *Pravda*, June 19, 1925.

[2] See pp. 92-94 above.

[3] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vi, 292-294; for this article see p. 64 above. The counter-revolutionary influence of former social-democrats was analysed by Kamenev in a speech of September 1924 to the central committee of the Komsomol, in which he also emphasized the association of " all opportunist elements " in foreign parties with the Russian opposition (L. Kamenev, *Stat'i i Rechi*, xi (1929), 100-101).

to attach any other meaning to it, or to distinguish it from the policy, first embodied in the 21 conditions of 1920, of welding together all communist parties, on the well-tried and disciplined Russian model, into a single fighting organization schooled for the revolutionary offensive.[1]

In January 1925 Zinoviev addressed a much publicized letter to all the constituent parties of Comintern impressing on them the duty of Bolshevization.[2] At first sight it appeared to contain nothing new. Bolshevization in the Russian party was once more identified with " the ideological struggle against Trotskyism, for the liquidation of Trotskyism " ; and a disclaimer of any idea of " *mechanical* transference of the experiences of Russian Bolshevism to the situation of other countries " was combined with insistence on the need to learn from those experiences. Appeals for " a mass party " and " a party of militant Bolshevism " were likewise familiar. What was new was the urgency of tone, and the context in which the demand for Bolshevization was made. At the beginning of 1925, when any early prospect of an immediately revolutionary situation had disappeared, and when the capitalist Powers, under the leadership of Great Britain, had embarked on an offensive which might threaten the security of the Soviet Union, Bolshevization became the expression of different conditions and of a different purpose. It was now declared to be especially necessary at a period when capitalism was showing greater capacity for resistance than had been expected, at a moment of transition from the era of " democratic pacifism " to an era of " raging bourgeois reaction ". It was no longer a matter of grooming the parties for an early seizure of power, but rather of closing the ranks to meet an enemy offensive. Moreover the situation within the parties had changed. Only in Great Britain, where the old leaders had not been evicted, could it plausibly be said that the fifth congress had paved the way for a

[1] Zinoviev's major article against Trotskyism in November 1924 had concluded with a demand for " *Bolshevization of all strata of the party* " (see Vol. 2, p. 19).

[2] The letter first appeared in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 12, January 16, 1925, pp. 135-137 and in *Pravda*, January 18, 1925, where it was addressed " To the Enlarged IKKI " ; it appeared as an article in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 1 (38), January 1925, pp. 1-9 under the title *The Bolshevization of the Parties of Comintern.*

mass movement to the Left. In Germany, France, Poland and Czechoslovakia the removal of former social-democrats from positions of leadership in the communist parties had driven a wedge between the parties and the trade unions, and weakened the hold of the parties on the masses. The new untried leaders of the Left, installed after the fifth congress, were found to have less appeal to the workers than the old and more experienced leaders of the Right.[1] Bolshevization in the spring of 1925, considered as an attempt to promote the creation of mass parties, appeared to call for a modification or reversal of the procedures adopted under the same name in the summer of 1924.

The fifth enlarged IKKI of March 1925 provided Zinoviev with an ample opportunity to expound the slogan in all its aspects to a large and representative Comintern audience. The " era of democratic pacifism " had inspired the belief that " other countries might also have their Kerensky stage ".[2] This belief Zinoviev dismissed as an illusion ; and its rejection should logically have implied that the parties would now have to prepare themselves for the direct seizure of power. But this was not the main impression which emerged from Zinoviev's analysis, with its reiteration of the absence of " an immediately revolutionary situation ". Zinoviev sought to dispel the impression that Bolshevization was a merely mechanical process : what was required was " a genuine Bolshevization of minds, of parties, of the workers' movement ".[3] In insisting on the need for party discipline, he attempted to forestall criticism by a reference to articles of Kreibich and Thalheimer, " which unfortunately have not so far been published ", criticizing current methods of selecting leaders in the parties : old and experienced leaders were, it was suggested, being set aside because they were not subservient enough to Comintern authority, and replaced by " blank sheets " entirely receptive to guidance from Moscow.[4] But this revealed nothing about the

[1] The clearest diagnosis of this situation can be found in the anonymous memorandum in the Trotsky archives cited p. 285, note 1 above.

[2] For the argument whether MacDonald was a Kerensky see p. 130, note 7 above.

[3] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 64.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 72-75 ; in his later speech Zinoviev referred to what was apparently the same article of Kreibich as having been published without his knowledge and consent in a pamphlet about " the purge in the party and the

content of Bolshevization. The long, eloquent and confused appeal with which Zinoviev ended his speech contained one significant point:

> The watchword of Bolshevization was born of the struggle against Right tendencies. It will be directed principally against the Right — but also, of course, against ultra-Left deviations, against the pessimism which here and there is beginning to weigh on us.[1]

Bolshevization would inevitably come more and more to mean rigid adherence to the day-to-day exigencies of the party line; and the pessimism exhibited by the ultra-Left would in the coming months relate not, as this passage might seem to imply, to the prospects of revolution, but to the efficacy of Comintern policy and to the feasibility of " socialism in one country ".

In the ensuing debate Kuusinen almost alone attempted to offer some explanation of the purposes and procedures of Bolshevization. It was " directed against opportunist tendencies, but not at all in favour of sectarian tendencies ". It implied the recruitment of new organizers from among " workers from the bench " — the creation of a " new revolutionary type of party worker-official ". It called for " firmness of party discipline ", but at the same time for the application of " the democratic method within the party ". Kuusinen ended this part of his exposition with a striking phrase: the party would establish its leadership primarily " by method of inner democracy, by way of study, explanation and persuasion, by way of the ' massage ' of members of the party ".[2] Kreibich appeared as the most articulate critic of the slogan. He persisted in attacking the " commissar methods " applied by Comintern leaders to foreign parties, and declared that for the Czech workers, with their experience of Austrian rule, " revolt against any authority and discipline was

methods of Comintern" issued by an expelled member of the Czechoslovak party (*ibid.* pp. 440-441). The theme was not new. Bukharin in 1928 quoted an unpublished letter of Lenin (no date given) to himself and Zinoviev: " If you drive away all not particularly amenable, but intelligent people, and leave yourselves only obedient fools, you will *surely* destroy the party " (*Protokoll: Sechster Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* i (1928), 552-553); there is, however, no indication that Lenin was thinking of Comintern.

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 79.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 204-211.

an inseparable part of the struggle for national liberation ".[1] Zinoviev, in his reply to the debate, strove to keep every alternative open. Bolshevization, he declared, " means the preparation of the vanguard of the proletariat for the proletarian revolution " ; capitalism could find a way out " only if there is no vanguard of the working class or if this vanguard remains passive ".[2] What was now required was to " beat the Rights without making any political concessions to the ' ultra-Lefts ' ". Zinoviev made an heroic attempt to equate the two catchwords of stabilization and Bolshevization, but lost his way in a cloud of rhetoric :

> Let us keep in mind that *we must stabilize ourselves, that is to say Bolshevize ourselves*, maintain our positions, and await the moment when we can at last take the bourgeoisie by the throat, and, having made an end of it, set to work to realize communism.
>
> . . . He who tries to concoct a contradiction between the fifth congress and this plenum is either on the wrong road, or has an interest in distorting the truth. . . . The present enlarged plenum of IKKI continues and develops previous resolutions.[3]

And when in his farewell speech at the end of the session Zinoviev enumerated the four slogans which summed up the work of the session, he placed in the forefront " *our first slogan:* against ultra ' Left ' illusions ".[4] The main resolution of the plenum, leaving stabilization prudently alone, expatiated at length on every aspect of Bolshevization :

> With the slow and delayed tempo of revolution, the slogan of Bolshevization becomes not less but more significant . . . If the tempo of revolutionary development slows down, if the result of this is to magnify hesitations in certain strata of the proletariat, and moods favourable to counter-revolutionary social-democracy are on the increase, from this we deduce *with even greater indispensability* the slogan of the Bolshevization of the parties.

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 227-228 ; this taunt evidently stung Zinoviev who replied that Kreibich reminded him of Paul Levi (*ibid.* p. 440). [2] *Ibid.* p. 439.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 441-443 ; in the German version of this passage (*Erweiterte Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1925), p. 336) the first sentence runs : " Let us stabilize ourselves and Bolshevize our parties ", not identifying the two operations. This passage was immediately followed by the sentence quoted above (see p. 289, note 4), in which German and Russian versions also diverged. [4] *Ibid.* p. 488.

The moral was clear: it was stabilization that pointed the way to Bolshevization. Bolshevization, though "it arose *in the struggle against the Right danger*", was "impossible without a struggle also against ultra-Left deviations". The two essentials — conformity to the Russian model and centralized direction — were thrown sharply into relief. Bolshevization was defined as "the ability to apply the general principles of Leninism to give concrete conditions in a particular country". The Bolshevization of the parties was "the study and application by them in practice of the experience of the RKP in three Russian revolutions, and also, of course, of every other section which has serious struggles behind it": such other parties notoriously did not exist. The last section of the resolution dealt with "Bolshevization and International Leadership". The concluding words were perhaps the most important of all:

> It is indispensable to implant in the consciousness of the broadest masses that, in the epoch through which we are living, the serious economic and political battles of the working class can be won only if in all fundamentals they are directed from one centre on an international scale.[1]

Yet, in spite of these massive theses, Bolshevization still seems to have attracted little attention outside immediate Comintern circles.[2] At the fourteenth party conference later in the same month, which dealt extensively with stabilization,[3] Zinoviev did not mention Bolshevization; and Manuilsky in his article on the fifth IKKI in the journal of Comintern, while he discussed the tactics of the parties in relation to stabilization, also avoided the word.[4]

The general debate on stabilization and Bolshevization at the fifth enlarged IKKI was followed by a brief session devoted

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 474-495; for the passages quoted see pp. 475, 495.

[2] Radek, always eager to cross swords with Zinoviev, caustically observed that "Bolshevik parties are not born under the watchword of the Bolshevization of economics or of politics", and that "a skilful Bolshevik policy depends on a correct appraisal of forces in one's own country, on knowing how to link oneself to the daily struggle of the working class" (address of February 19, 1925, at the Communist Academy in *Mirovaya Politika v 1924 godu*, ed. F. Rotshtein (1925), p. 27); but this was before the session of the enlarged IKKI.

[3] See pp. 290-291 above.

[4] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 4 (41), April 1925, pp. 5-21.

to the discussions in the Russian party. This was opened by Bukharin, who began his report by pointing out that all opposition leaders in foreign communist parties, whether belonging to the Right (like Kreibich in the Czechoslovak party) or to the ultra-Left (like Bordiga in the Italian party), proclaimed their sympathy with Trotsky. Having thus identified Trotsky with the cause of dissent and division in Comintern, Bukharin proceeded to a comparatively mild and unemotional analysis of Trotskyism, the essence of which consisted in neglect of the peasant and in a demand for the dictatorship of industry.[1] No supporter of Trotsky entered the lists. The debate on Bukharin's report took the form of a series of statements by Italian, French, British, German and American delegates, all in turn associating Trotskyism with opposition movements in their own parties; and this parade of unanimous assent might have been described as the first exhibition of Bolshevization in practice. Trotskyism had become the essence of opposition, and Bolshevization the symbol of loyalty to the Comintern line. If Leninism was a doctrine of universal application, so also was Trotskyism. This note was struck by Neumann, the German speaker:

> We too recognize that Trotskyism is not only Russian, but international. . . . Trotskyism is today especially dangerous, and, since it has been shattered in the discussion now concluded in the RKP, it has perhaps become all the more dangerous in western Europe.[2]

The resolution adopted by IKKI denounced Trotsky's attacks as "an attempt to revise Leninism and to disorganize the leadership of the RKP(B)"; they had been applauded not only by "several persons who had been excluded from the ranks of communists (Levi, Rosmer, Monatte, Balabanova, Hoeglund, etc.)", but also by the social-democratic and bourgeois press. IKKI was content to endorse in its entirety the condemnation by the Russian party central committee of Trotsky's campaign, "which has done the greatest harm to the whole Communist International", and the measures proposed to combat it.[3] Trotskyism, in the

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 364-384.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 399-400; for Neumann, see p. 326 below.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 506-507; for the resolution of the Russian party of January 20, 1925, see Vol. 2, p. 32.

sense of open and avowed support for Trotsky's cause, had been eradicated from Comintern.

The proceedings of the fifth enlarged IKKI afforded little clue to what Bolshevization would mean in its application to individual parties. The theses on Bolshevization contained summary injunctions to all the leading parties by name. Apart from this, the problems of certain parties were sufficiently acute to call for separate treatment. Special commissions were set up to examine the affairs of the Czechoslovak, American, Yugoslav and Italian parties: these drafted resolutions which were later presented to the plenary session. While particular questions were argued on their merits, nobody openly questioned the desirability of Bolshevization, and its application was left to work itself out in practice. Yet, even though its application varied, the occasion and manner of its proclamation at the fifth IKKI in March–April 1925 was a landmark in Comintern history, and proved significant in three ways.

In the first place, Bolshevization played much the same rôle in Comintern as was played by the cult of Leninism in the Russian party. The struggle against Trotskyism was part and parcel of the same process: Bolshevization brought with it the more rigid insistence on doctrinal orthodoxy and on party discipline which made itself felt in the Russian party after the defeat of Trotsky.[1] At a moment when the waning prospect of world revolution threw into even stronger relief the prestige of the Soviet Union and the claims of Soviet power and Soviet security to the loyal support of communist parties throughout the world, the need for a disciplined organization, responding sensitively to the changing directives of a central policy-making authority, was readily apparent. The assertion of the " monolithism " of the Russian party, which was a product of the campaign against Trotsky and dated from January 1924,[2] meant a new insistence on the monolithic character

[1] Zinoviev noted at this time, without drawing any specific conclusions, " a certain parallelism in the development of the Communist International and of our own revolution " (*Chetyrnadtsataya Konferentsiya Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)* (1925), p. 217).

[2] See Vol. 2, p. 222; Bela Kun, writing some years later of the slogan of Bolshevization, attributed it to " the defeat of the German proletariat in October

of Comintern. The 21 conditions of 1920 already treated Comintern as a world party, of which the national parties were " sections ", and the stamp of the Russian party had been set on its fellow members.[1] What had at first been justified by the prestige of the Russian party, could now be reinforced by the cult of the dead leader.

> Only one counsel [wrote Guralsky in the German party journal on the eve of the fifth congress] can be given to the comrades: Study the history of the Bolshevik party of Russia, the only victorious party in the world, and study Lenin, the greatest revolutionary leader whom the oppressed class has had in history.[2]

Zinoviev struck the same note in the peroration of his main speech at the fifth congress:

> If we do not wish to pay mere lip-service to Lenin's teaching, if we wish to create a real communist, Leninist International, if the resolution about the Bolshevization of the parties is not to remain an empty phrase, then we need an iron discipline, then we must root out all the remains and survivals of social-democratism, federalism, " autonomy ", etc.[3]

And the resolution of the congress on the report of IKKI drove home the lesson in uncompromising terms:

> The congress instructs the executive committee [i.e. IKKI] to demand even more strictly than before from all sections and all party leaders *iron discipline*. The congress notes that in certain cases the executive committee, by sparing *comrades who rendered services* in the past, has proceeded with insufficient energy against breaches of discipline; *the congress empowers the executive committee to act, when necessary, more resolutely and without recoiling from extreme measures.*[4]

Nor does this conception of disciplined control from the centre appear to have encountered any widespread opposition. " There is now little controversy re interference from Moscow ", reported Murphy to the seventh congress of the CPGB in May 1925;

1923 " and " the appearance of Trotskyism on the scene " (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 25, March 15, 1929, p. 562).

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 198-200.

[2] *Die Internationale*, vii, No. 4, March 31, 1924, p. 156.

[3] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 106.

[4] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 397.

" all sections of the International now look to the international executive [i.e. IKKI] as its leader ".[1] As the victorious Russian party consolidated its power, and the other parties conspicuously failed to make any advance towards their revolutionary goal, the disparity between them in prestige and in material resources continually widened, and the dominant rôle of Moscow in Comintern could no longer be gainsaid; the process of Bolshevization was the culminating stage in a now irresistible progression. Any issue, whether of policy or of personalities, arising in any communist party automatically tended to become an issue for or against Moscow. Loyalty to the line laid down by Comintern was the test of a good party member.

Secondly, the injunction to " Bolshevize ", associated no longer with the early prospect of a revolutionary offensive, but with the need to consolidate and to stabilize, to hold existing positions against an offensive of the capitalist Powers, easily became identified with an injunction to defend the Soviet Union, the only country with revolutionary achievements to be consolidated and maintained. The claim was not new.[2] But, while it once more invited the taunt that the interests of communist parties and of Comintern were being subordinated to the interests of Soviet foreign policy, it was inherent in a situation where other communist parties were too weak to exercise any independent influence or pursue an independent policy, and was never abated. It was from the first an integral element in Bolshevization. Stalin, in his article in *Pravda* on the opening of the session of the fifth IKKI, though he did not use the word " Bolshevization ", included among the " tasks " of foreign communist parties an injunction which did not beat about the bush :

> To support the Soviet power and defeat the machinations of imperialism against the Soviet Union, remembering that the Soviet Union is the bulwark of the revolutionary movements of all countries, that the preservation and strengthening of the Soviet Union means the hastening of the victory of the working class over the world bourgeoisie.[3]

Nor was it an accident that this aspect of Bolshevization should have been especially emphasized by the protagonist of socialism

[1] *Report of the Seventh Congress of the CPGB* (n.d), p. 181.

[2] See pp. 11, note 1, 70-71, 78, note 1 above.

[3] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 58 ; for this article see p. 287 above.

in one country. It was of the essence of that doctrine to give precedence to the consolidation of a socialist régime in the Soviet Union over the conquest of power elsewhere, to treat this as the first essential condition of progress towards world revolution, and to make resistance to intervention by the capitalist Powers against the new Soviet order the prime duty of foreign communist parties.[1] It was at this moment that Stalin and Bukharin argued in the Politburo, against Zinoviev and Kamenev, that the threat of capitalist intervention was now the *sole* obstacle to the final achievement of socialism in the Soviet Union.[2]

Thirdly, the fifth congress of 1924 had been a landmark in the organization of Comintern work. From 1921 onwards delegates of IKKI, i.e. of Comintern headquarters, had been regularly sent to congresses of the more important parties, especially when critical issues were under discussion, and had openly intervened in the proceedings in support of policies and decisions approved by IKKI. In the summer of 1922 Borodin had been sent to Great Britain to advise on the reorganization of the CPGB.[3] In the winter of 1923–1924 IKKI had played a major part in the changes of leadership in the German and Polish parties. But before 1924 the dealings of Comintern with the parties were still haphazard and spasmodic, being based on a response to particular emergencies rather than on an orderly system. These shortcomings did not disappear after the fifth congress. The organization of individual parties still left much to be desired. But from 1924 onwards an extensive Comintern apparatus was built up in Moscow under the able direction of Pyatnitsky; and a regular flow both of instructions and of subsidies to the major member parties was established.[4] At the moment when Zinoviev launched his campaign for Bolshevization, Comintern possessed for the first time the means and organization to give effect to it; and this by itself was enough to differentiate the campaign from previous attempts carried on under different slogans to bring the foreign parties into line. As in Russian party and Soviet institutions, the

[1] This argument was used against "socialism in one country" in an unpublished note by Trotsky written in the winter of 1925–1926 (Trotsky archives T 3007 or, in a slightly amended version, T 3017).

[2] See Vol. 2, pp. 44-45.

[3] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 422.

[4] See pp. 900, 912-913 below.

principles of democratic centralism and dual subordination were asserted in Comintern; the central committees of communist parties were responsible both to their own congresses and to IKKI. But they were required to carry out unconditionally all decisions, not only of IKKI itself, but of its presidium and secretariat, and of the regional bureaus established by IKKI from time to time.[1]

If, however, after 1924, the formal organization of Comintern as a single, centralized, disciplined unit directed from Moscow inevitably implied a centralized direction which was in all essentials Russian, and was exercised in harmony with the direction of Soviet foreign policy, the evidence shows that this development was unconsciously accepted rather than deliberately planned by the Bolshevik leaders. The desire to make the central organization of Comintern more genuinely international was constantly expressed. At the fifth congress in June 1924, Zinoviev rhetorically appealed to the parties, since "Lenin is no more", to attempt "to replace him, if only in a certain degree, by our *joint* forces", and spoke of "a collective leadership".[2] The theses on the Bolshevization of the parties adopted by the fifth enlarged IKKI in April 1925 required every foreign party to "put its best forces at the disposal of the cause of international leadership".[3] Zinoviev told the German workers' delegation in Moscow in the summer of 1925 that out of 45 members of IKKI only 5 were Russian.[4] The fourteenth congress of the Russian party in December 1925, in its brief resolution on Comintern, expressed the desire to "strengthen the apparatus of the Communist International by pursuing a policy of increasing the influence of foreign communist parties in the leadership".[5] Yet this desire, though in large measure sincere, proved in practice unreal and unrealizable. So long as Comintern remained, in accordance with the principles laid down at its second congress in 1920, a

[1] For the statutes of Comintern and of the parties see pp. 898-900, 913 below.

[2] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 104.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 495.

[4] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 9 (46), September 1925, p. 64.

[5] *VKP (B) v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1941), ii, 59. At this congress Skrypnik made the odd complaint that the Russian party did not play a large enough part in the affairs of IKKI (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), pp. 684-685).

unified organization directed from a single centre, and that centre was in Moscow, nothing could prevent the trend towards greater administrative efficiency reflecting itself in a greater measure of centralization and in more exclusive acceptance of the Russian model. For these reasons Bolshevization, though not a new conception, marked a new stage, different in degree if not in kind, in the relations of Comintern with the parties.

But what was perhaps most significant of all was the change in the character, composition and leadership of the parties to which the process of Bolshevization was applied. While conditions varied from country to country, the main parties had originally been formed, generally between 1919 and 1921, out of a combination of two elements — break-away movements from mass workers' parties, and small independent groups of Left-wing extremists, part workers, part intellectuals. These elements blended slowly. Down to 1925, at any rate, a certain tension between the "mass" character of the first and the "sectarian" tendencies of the second was discernible in many parties, and sometimes took the form of an issue between "workers" and "intellectuals".[1] When, after the third congress of Comintern in 1921, the organization of "mass" communist parties was seriously taken in hand, the foremost rôles in the parties automatically fell to men whose background and experience made them familiar with the recruitment and leadership of the masses; and these were of necessity converts to communism from socialist or social-democratic mass parties. Brandler in Germany, Frossard in France, Kabakchiev in Bulgaria, Šmeral in Czechoslovakia,

[1] Humbert-Droz in a letter to Zinoviev of February 1, 1924, called Bordiga "an intellectual who thinks it impossible for his thought to submit itself to the collective discipline of the party" (Humbert-Droz archives, 0013); see p. 140 above for his similar verdict on Souvarine. Zinoviev, in his communication of March 1924 to the Frankfurt congress of the KPD, had favourably contrasted workers with "leaders from the intelligentsia" (see p. 102 above); and at the fifth congress of Comintern he poked fun at Korsch, Lukacs and Graziadei as "professors" (*Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i. 53). The controversy about the intellectuals was acute in the French party; *L'Humanité*, January 19, 1925, remarked that, "if worker comrades sometimes commit errors of syntax, they do not commit the political errors which have been committed by the international Right". At the sixth IKKI in February–March 1926 Bukharin accused the ultra-Left in the KPD of lacking "deep faith in the power of the working class", and was accused by Urbahns of starting "a persecution of the intellectuals" (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 3 (52), March 1926, pp. 54, 102).

Gallacher and MacManus in Great Britain, the three W's in Poland, Hoeglund in Sweden, all belonged to this category. But after the disasters of 1923 (in the case of Frossard, it had happened still earlier [1]), the failure of the parties to take advantage of the revolutionary potentialities of that turbulent year was attributed to inability to slough off the preconceptions and inhibitions of their social-democratic background and to play a truly revolutionary or " Bolshevik " rôle. This reaction, registered at the fifth congress of Comintern in 1924, brought into power and prominence, often without the need for much prompting from Moscow, new leaders of the " Left " — Treint, Ruth Fischer and Maslow, Neurath, later Domski — who were supposed to be free from the social-democratic taint, and were pledged to the task of " Bolshevizing " their parties. But this experiment also broke down, partly because the revolutionary prospects did not materialize, but also because the reaction against the " mass " traditions of the old social-democracy had spelt a revival of those " sectarian " tendencies of the extreme Left which the appeal to the masses had been intended to dispel. As Humbert-Droz afterwards wrote, " the slogan of Bolshevization put forward by the fifth congress gave an impetus in a number of important parties to the struggle with Right deviations, and indirectly opened the way to ultra-Left deviations ".[2] It thus came about that Bolshevization, which at the fifth congress had been directed mainly against the Right, was turned at the fifth enlarged IKKI nine months later primarily against its opposite.[3]

Meanwhile, however, the membership of the parties had undergone many changes. Though precise statistics are lacking, the turn-over of members in many parties had been large, and by 1925 foundation members were probably everywhere in a

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 457.

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 2 (51), February 1926, pp. 85-86.

[3] Zinoviev at the fourteenth Russian party congress in December 1925 noted " a certain *relapse into an ultra-Left deviation in Comintern* " as characteristic of the period 1924–1925 (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), p. 664); Bukharin at the seventh Komsomol congress in March 1926 described it as having occurred " last year, at the moment of this retreat conducted by the Communist International " (i.e. the recognition of stabilization), and compared it with the rise of an ultra-Left group among the Bolsheviks after the defeat of 1905 (*VII S"ezd Vsesoyuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soyuza Molodezhi* (1926), p. 267).

minority.[1] If Bolshevization was in some cases associated with an exodus from the party, the new members who now entered the party came into it as a rule without any hampering or conflicting traditions or beliefs. At a time when disillusionment with the post-war world, and with the contribution made to it by the old workers' parties, was rife, the name and prestige of the Soviet Union still exercised a powerful attraction; and the Bolshevization of parties now partly, if not predominantly, recruited under that impetus involved less violent change than the word seemed to imply. The change in the composition of the parties brought with it a corresponding change in the leadership. The campaign for Bolshevization which culminated at the fifth enlarged IKKI in March–April 1925, with its insistence on "stabilization" and its growing suspicion of the "ultra-Left", marked the beginnings of a sharp reaction against the "Left" leaders approved less than a year earlier by the fifth congress, who, lacking past experience of the workers' movement, failed to maintain the hold of their parties over the masses, and especially over the trade unions, and quickly forfeited the rash confidence bestowed on them in Moscow.

The fundamental dilemma of Comintern policy at this time was once more clearly revealed by these developments. In communist parties which could claim any measure of mass support, a majority of the workers in the party, while ready to engage in revolutionary demonstrations, resisted any firm commitment to revolutionary action; and the pull towards the Right exercised by workers outside the party on workers in the party was a chronic danger. In this sense the party always faced a Right opposition, and was constantly called on to repel a threat from the Right; the struggle against social-democracy never disappeared from the agenda of Comintern.[2] But, at a time when the policy of

[1] The French party was accused in the spring of 1926 of "mechanically hacking off the old cadres"; and "the renewal during recent years of its cadres" was said to be "a particularly characteristic feature of the physiognomy of the French Communist Party" (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 593). But the same situation, though perhaps in a less marked form, existed in other parties.

[2] In April 1925, at a conference organized by the information department of IKKI, it was decided to set up a special section of the information department "to combat social-democracy" (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 69, April 27, 1925, p. 934).

Comintern was at all costs not to lose touch with the masses, and the policy of the Soviet Government demanded the support of a maximum number of sympathizers in important capitalist countries, these policies could be effective only if a certain appeasement of the Right was practised in the communist parties concerned. This in turn provoked uneasiness and dissent on the Left wing of the party, resulting in the phenomenon of ultra-Left deviations; and, while the weight of party propaganda had still to be directed against the "fundamental danger" from the Right, the most delicate task of the leaders and managers of Comintern in Moscow was to create and keep in being a nucleus of the moderate Left from which the party leadership could be drawn. For this leadership, in conducting propaganda against the Right, must in practice show sufficient moderation and make sufficient concessions to the Right to retain mass support, and at the same time repel assaults on this attitude from the ultra-Left, which now constituted in some respects a greater, though less avowable, danger than the Right. And this tight-rope balancing feat [1] could, in the nature of things, be performed only by party leaders who enjoyed continuous prompting and firm backing from Moscow. It was essential that the leaders of the respective parties should be, not men irrevocably committed to a policy, whether of the Left or of the Right, but men on whose unquestioning loyalty the central authorities of Comintern could count. The interventions of these authorities in the affairs of particular parties during these years almost always turned on the choice of leaders. Issues of policy provided the cloak for a struggle for power between leaders, but were largely independent of it.

The proceedings of the enlarged IKKI of March–April 1925 were so overshadowed by the themes of stabilization and of the Bolshevization of the parties that the few other items on the agenda received little attention. Two sessions were devoted to the discussion of a report by Lozovsky on trade union unity,[2]

[1] Zinoviev described it as the function of Comintern at this time to steer between the Scylla and Charybdis of Right and ultra-Left, since "one deviation always begets another deviation" (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), p. 665).

[2] For this see pp. 575-576 below.

and one to a debate on the agrarian question introduced by Bukharin. This was the moment when policies of the conciliation of the peasant, with Bukharin as their principal advocate, had reached their height in the Soviet Union ; [1] and the purpose of Bukharin's report, and of the theses which he presented, was to popularize among foreign communists the view that the road to revolution lay through an effective alliance with the peasantry.[2] The theses were an attempt to reconcile Marxist doctrine with the current exigencies of policy. This was effected by drawing a distinction between historical periods. The final goal was " large-scale collective agricultural production " and " the liquidation of the backward state of agriculture ". But in the present period everything must be " entirely subordinated to the aim of the seizure of power and the installation of the dictatorship of the proletariat " ; and " the idea of the technical and economic superiority of large-scale agricultural production must not prevent communists from partitioning a part of the large estates . . . for the benefit of poor, and sometimes even middle, peasants if revolutionary necessity demands ". Peasant parties and organizations in all countries deserved a measure of support, and should be encouraged to adhere to the International Peasant Council. An alliance between " the working class and the small agricultural producers " was " the sole possible basis for a successful advance towards socialism in the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat ".[3] None of the leaders of other parties took part in the perfunctory debate on the theses. The only point of substance was raised by Varga and Dombal, who proposed the creation of political peasant parties. This was rejected by Bukharin in favour of support for " peasant unions " of a non-party character in which communists could join with peasants on a non-political basis. It was hopeless to expect to turn peasants into communists over-night ; but it was possible to secure their

[1] See Vol. 1, pp. 245-261.

[2] At the fourteenth congress of the Russian party in December 1925 Manuilsky said : " The tactics of the united front with the peasantry in Russia corresponded to the tactics of the united front in the west as a means for our communist parties to win the masses " (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), p. 693).

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 495-506 ; Bukharin's report introducing the theses is in *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 304-338.

cooperation on a concrete programme. The alliance with the peasantry thus became an aspect of the united front policy, and fitted in easily with the turn of direction in Comintern towards the Right.[1]

The national question in its European setting, which had been dealt with nine months earlier in a resolution of the fifth congress,[2] occupied the fifth IKKI only in its Czechoslovak and Yugoslav manifestations; these were relegated to appropriate commissions, and dealt with in separate resolutions.[3] The "colonial" question, though also not debated in plenary session, was referred to a commission presided over by Foster, the American delegate, who submitted to the final plenary session four draft resolutions — on Java, on Egypt, on India and on the "American colonies"; it was explained that resolutions had been adopted only on issues on which practical directives could be given to communist parties. The resolutions were unanimously adopted without discussion. But when the time came to publish the records of the session, Soviet relations with the western Powers were tense, and events in China had injected into them a new element of bitterness.[4] A mood of caution prevailed in Moscow. The four "colonial" resolutions of the fifth IKKI were never published in full, though quotations from some of them appeared in Comintern literature.[5]

[1] For the debate see *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 338-363.

[2] See pp. 89-90 above.

[3] See pp. 375-376, 404 below.

[4] See p. 417 below.

[5] For the resolutions see pp. 466-467 (American colonies), 666 (India) and 673-674 (Java) below; Foster's speech presenting the resolutions, which appeared in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 68, April 24, 1925, p. 923, was reduced in the official record to the bare statement that resolutions had been submitted and adopted (*Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 472).

CHAPTER 31

COMINTERN AND THE PARTIES (2)

(*a*) *The German Communist Party (KPD)*

NOTWITHSTANDING the prominence assumed by the British Left in the calculations of Comintern in the years 1924–1926, and the indulgence shown to the CPGB, the KPD remained the party whose relations with the Soviet leaders were most intimate, and whose destinies were most closely intertwined with those of Comintern as a whole. The first months of 1925 were a critical turning-point in its affairs. The loss of votes in the election of December 1924, though it might be attributed to the general configuration of German politics and not to party shortcomings, helped to undermine the prestige of the leadership. Both Maslow, still in prison, and Ruth Fischer were on poor terms with Thälmann, the third prominent figure in the Left leadership which had overthrown Brandler. Zinoviev, in his letter to the parties of January 1925,[1] had named the trade union question as the crucial test of Bolshevization for the KPD. In this question Maslow had a notoriously bad record;[2] and Ruth Fischer, at the fifth congress of Comintern, had excused rather than denounced the erroneous attitude of the KPD towards the unions. Maslow and Ruth Fischer were intellectuals, whom it was easy to convict of lack of sympathy for a policy of approach to the masses through the trade unions and the united front. Once a situation had arisen in which the intellectuals of the Left and ultra-Left were associated with a campaign of resistance to the policies of Moscow, and in which the Bolshevization of the party could be interpreted as an appeal to the masses in support of these policies, an authentic worker like Thälmann would emerge as a more acceptable leader than Maslow or Ruth Fischer.

[1] See p. 294 above.

[2] See pp. 99, 114 above.

This was the personal background of the evolution of the KPD in 1925.

Two incidents which occurred early in 1925 suggested that the present Left leadership no longer enjoyed unreserved confidence in Moscow, and that in Germany Bolshevization might in practice be interpreted as a turning away from the Left. At the beginning of February 1925, Stalin gave a somewhat cryptic interview to a journalist of the KPD named Herzog. Like his letter of the previous November,[1] it was outwardly colourless and non-committal. It was more remarkable for what it did not say than for what it said. In the inevitable reference to the disaster of October 1923, it refrained from the usual diatribe against the Right, and appeared to attribute the defeat to German political conditions rather than to shortcomings in the party. Stalin deprecated the view of "some comrades" that Bolshevization meant "to drive all who think differently out of the party". He was careful not to blame the party for the result of the Reichstag elections in the previous December. But he conspicuously omitted any expression of confidence in the party leaders: indeed, he did not mention them at all.[2] What Stalin evidently wished to make clear in the interview was that he was still uncommitted to any group in the KPD. A week later — no doubt, quite independently of Stalin's move — the KPD leaders attempted to commit the Russian party to a policy of reprisals against the German Right. Ever since the fifth congress of Comintern, Brandler, Thalheimer and four other deposed Right leaders of the KPD had continued to live under the aegis of Comintern in Moscow in order to prevent them from intervening in KPD affairs: in accordance with the usual rule of interchangeability of membership between the constituent parties of Comintern, they enjoyed membership of the Russian party. The publication in *Pravda* on November 29, 1924, in the course of the campaign against Trotsky, of a statement by Brandler and Thalheimer

[1] See p. 116 above; in the article of December 17, 1924, in which Stalin had launched his campaign against Trotsky on the basis of "socialism in one country", he accused Trotsky of "unrestrainedly lashing the KPD for its real and imaginary errors" (Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vi, 361) — an indication of willingness to adopt a more indulgent attitude.

[2] *Ibid.* vii, 34-41; the interview was published in *Pravda*, February 3, 1925, under the heading "Stalin on the Prospects of the KPD and on Bolshevization".

criticizing the present leaders of the KPD [1] had been greeted with indignation in Berlin, and still rankled. On February 11, 1925, the Zentrale of the KPD addressed a letter to the central committee of the Russian party inviting it to pronounce a formal censure on the six former KPD leaders and on Radek for their past errors, and to expel them from the party.[2] Following this thrust, Maslow, who had evidently brooded in his prison cell on the implications of Stalin's interview with Herzog, rashly allowed himself to be provoked, and on February 20, 1925, wrote a letter in which he accused Comintern, and by implication Stalin, of temporizing with the Right.[3]

These sallies from Berlin indicated an independence of attitude and a critical spirit which accorded ill with the official view of " Bolshevization ", and were unwelcome in Moscow. Stalin's prompt reply to Maslow, dated February 28, 1925, was couched in terms as guarded and correct as his original interview, but was not without acid undertones. If the members of the Russian party central committee, " especially Zinoviev and Bukharin ", knew that they were suspected of sympathizing with Brandler and making a turn to the Right, they would — declared Stalin — die of laughing. Maslow should be more careful in making wild charges. For the rest, wholesale expulsions of dissenters from a party merely proved that the leaders of the party " are feared but not respected ". The internal policy of the KPD must be made " more elastic ". Stalin ended by asking pardon for his " directness and sharpness ".[4] Two days later, on March 2,

[1] See Vol. 2, pp. 25-26.

[2] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 583-587.

[3] The letter was not published: its contents can be inferred from Stalin's reply.

[4] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 42-47 (see also Vol. 1, p. 184, note 1). The account of this episode in R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), pp. 434-439 gives a not quite accurate version of the Herzog interview, omits the letter of the Zentrale of February 11, 1925 (though constantly complaining of Russian intervention in KPD affairs, Ruth Fischer fails to record the occasions on which she and other KPD leaders solicited such intervention), and describes Stalin's reply to Maslow of February 28, 1925 as " an offer and a threat ". Stalin had made overtures to Maslow a year earlier (see pp. 95-96 above), but there is no indication that he was prepared to renew them now. At the most, his letter was a threat; at the least, a reassertion of his determination not to take sides prematurely in German affairs. In a pungent article in the German party journal, Ruth Fischer countered Stalin's protest in the

1925, the Politburo of the Russian party considered the request of the KPD leaders for the censure and expulsion from the Russian party of their defeated rivals, and decided to refer it to a committee of the party central control commission, to which would be added representatives of the control commission of Comintern.[1] This formally correct, but leisurely, procedure could hardly be read as anything but a snub to the KPD leaders. It ensured that the whole matter would stand over till the meeting of the enlarged IKKI in the latter part of March.

Maslow, who was not insensitive to the changing climate in Moscow and saw that he had gone too far, now hastily abandoned his vendetta against the Right, and responded with an elaborate attempt to swing the policy of the KPD in the desired direction. He proposed a united front not only with the SPD, but with the Centre party, for the defence of the republic against the Reichswehr and the Right parties generally[2] — a concession to expediency which encountered strong criticism from a new Left opposition headed by Scholem and Rosenberg. An occasion soon occurred to bring the issue to a test. Ebert, the president of the Reich, died on February 28, 1925. Under the constitution, a new president was elected by a national plebiscite. The first ballot was conclusive only if one candidate obtained an absolute majority; on a second ballot the candidate obtaining most votes was elected. A result on the first ballot was highly unlikely, and

Herzog interview against the attempt to expel "all who think differently" by quoting one of the cross-headings in Stalin's *Foundations of Leninism*: "The Party is Strengthened by the Purge of Opportunist Elements"; she added that "the danger of Left abstractions in the German party is still far smaller than the danger of Right deviations" (*Die Internationale*, viii, No. 3, March 1925, pp. 106, 110). Soviet interest in Maslow at this time was evinced in an enquiry by Krestinsky of Stresemann about the present position of the case; Stresemann replied that Maslow would shortly be brought to trial, and the prosecution was expected to demand a lengthy sentence of imprisonment (*Auswärtiges Amt*, K 281/096797); for a further diplomatic overture in the Maslow affair see p. 335 below.

[1] This decision was recorded in the eventual report of the party control commission published in the resolutions of the fifth enlarged IKKI (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 525).

[2] Maslow's proposals were made in unpublished memoranda to the Zentrale of the KPD and in an article in the journal of the Berlin party organization, *Die Funke*, March 25, 1925; this has not been available, but is cited in R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), pp. 416-417, which clearly implies that the proposals preceded the crisis over the presidential election.

nothing could be lost on any hypothesis by putting forward a candidate: the central committee of the KPD nominated Thälmann. Maslow, true to his new policy, proposed that the party should withdraw Thälmann, and support Braun, the candidate of the SPD. But he was outvoted; and the main result of his intervention was to produce a lasting rift between himself and Thälmann. The first ballot took place on March 29, 1925. Thälmann obtained 1,870,000 votes — a falling-off of 800,000 in the party vote since the Reichstag election of the previous December. The largest single vote of 10,400,000 went to Jarres, the candidate of the Right; Braun reached 7,800,000 and Marx, the Centre candidate, 3,900,000. After the decision to run Thälmann had been taken in Berlin, but a few days before the ballot, the fifth enlarged plenum of IKKI opened in Moscow on March 21, 1925.

The mood in Moscow, when the fifth enlarged IKKI assembled, was to play down the German question. "Germany is somewhat receding", repeated the leading article published on the occasion in the Russian party journal, "England — though extremely cautiously — advancing".[1] Zinoviev in his main report had nothing to say about Germany except the now routine admission of the absence of an immediately revolutionary situation and protest against the Dawes plan.[2] In the trade union question, delegates of the KPD once more tried to forestall criticism by dwelling on the peculiar difficulties of the unity campaign in Germany, and claimed that the workers were being brought back into the unions.[3] But they did not escape indirect censure in the resolution, which referred pointedly to the "great error" of Rosa Luxemburg in insisting on the exclusively party character of the trade unions, and to the "analogous error" of some German communists in 1924, and repeated that "one of the most important parts of the teaching of Leninism is the obligation of communists to work even in the most reactionary trade unions".[4] No attempt was made to temper this unpalatable

[1] *Bol'shevik*, No. 5-6, March 25, 1925, pp. 5-6; for earlier judgments in the same sense see pp. 72, 130, 289 above.

[2] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 48-49.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 89-90, 287-288.

[4] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 481-482; the KPD had issued an instruction on February 1, 1925, that all its members

injunction for the irreconcilables in the KPD.

The results of the first ballot in the German presidential election, betokening a further loss of votes by the KPD to the SPD, came in while the fifth IKKI was in session; whatever was said or left unsaid, the prestige of the KPD and of its leaders had suffered a blow. Klara Zetkin, no longer an active figure but still the grand old woman of the party, happened to speak on the day when the news reached Moscow. She referred to the figures without undue emphasis — a presidential election was not strictly comparable to Reichstag elections. Her main theme was a guarded defence of the Right. The excluded comrades should have the right to rehabilitate themselves and return to the party; and was it necessary in future that "exclusions and disciplinary reprisals" should have so "mechanical" a character?[1] But this attempt to come to the rescue of Brandler and his associates was of no avail. However much enthusiasm for the German party Left might have waned, it was impossible to acquit the Right of its past errors, especially as that would also have involved a rehabilitation of Radek. The joint committee of the control commissions of the Russian party and of Comintern had made its report on the proposal to expel Brandler and his supporters: this had been approved by the Politburo and the central committee of the Russian party, and was now submitted to the IKKI plenum, which endorsed it without discussion.[2] The committee, which examined all the accused, reported that "the Brandler-Radek-Thalheimer group" had organized conferences or "conversations" in Moscow on the affairs of the KPD, and had established secret communications with associates in Germany; in particular, Radek had sent a sum of "£100 sterling" for the support of Rightists who had been excluded from the German party. The committee pronounced a severe censure on the accused, banned them from any further activities in connexion with the German party, and warned them that any violation of this ban would entail their exclusion from the Russian party; it also banned Brandler, Thalheimer and Radek from any further participation

must join trade unions — once more without result (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 12 (49), December 1925, p. 131).

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 237.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 412-414.

in Comintern.[1] Every sanction had been applied except the one specifically asked for by the Zentrale of the KPD: expulsion from the Russian party. After this report had been approved by the plenum, a declaration addressed by Brandler, Radek and Thalheimer to the Politburo of the Russian party was read. The three signatories claimed that the differences formerly existing between them and IKKI were "historically exhausted"; they professed to find in Zinoviev's theses on Bolshevization a confirmation of their views which they unreservedly accepted; and they pleaded for the reinstatement of proletarian members of the KPD expelled on the charge of Right deviations.[2] The declaration provoked two replies. The first, which was drafted by the Russian delegation and was formally approved as a resolution of the enlarged IKKI, described the declaration as "politically insincere" and refused to consider it.[3] The second, put forward by the German delegation, was merely read in plenary session; it condemned the declaration of Brandler, Radek and Thalheimer in still sharper terms, and once more expressed the opinion that "the party should not shrink from the expulsion of a small group composed of dangerous oppositionists and, in part, of traitors".[4] The proceedings ended on this ambiguous note. The enlarged IKKI, under the guidance of the Russian party, professed agreement in principle with the present leaders of the KPD, but refused to accept their extreme proposals. The rejection of Ruth Fisher's demand for the expulsion of Brandler and Thalheimer had analogies with the rejection of Zinoviev's and Kamenev's demand for the expulsion of Trotsky.[5] In both moves the hand of Stalin could be seen. Both were significant for the future.

The last days of the session were overshadowed for the German delegation by the problem of the German presidential election. The second ballot, at which the candidate receiving the highest number of votes would be proclaimed president, was to be held on April 26, 1925. The fact that the Right candidate

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 583-587; the text is also in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 525-528.

[2] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 414-416.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 580-582; the text is also in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 523-525.

[4] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 416-420.

[5] See Vol. 2, p. 31.

had led the field at the first ballot gave the Right legitimate hopes of ultimate victory. But the Centre and Left were bound to reflect that, if they combined against the Right, they might still be in a position to elect a joint candidate; the combined votes of the Centre and of the SPD at the first ballot — not counting the votes of the KPD — exceeded those of the Right. Zinoviev, in his speech at the end of the debate on his report, offered the opinion that Germany was confronted by the alternative " bourgeois republic or monarchy ", and that in the present phase a majority of German workers would vote for the SPD on this issue; the KPD thus ran " the danger of being separated from certain strata of the proletariat ". Zinoviev deprecated the view that for the KPD there was no difference between " the black-red-gold flag of the bourgeois republic " and " the black-white-red flag of the monarchy ". As between bourgeois democracy and monarchy, it should support the former.[1] The implication was clear that the KPD should at the second ballot make common cause with the SPD; and, if Zinoviev refrained from the indiscretion of tendering public advice to the German leaders, he is unlikely to have observed the same restraint in private. Ruth Fischer appears to have agreed with Zinoviev. Maslow, who, though still in prison in Berlin, was certainly apprised of currents of opinion in Moscow, wrote a cautiously worded article in the party journal drawing attention to the " monarchist danger " from the Right, and arguing that " the democratic republic is better, more convenient, *more advantageous for the struggle for liberation*, than a constitutional monarchy ".[2]

On April 9, 1925, three days after the session of the enlarged IKKI had ended in Moscow, Hindenburg announced his acceptance of an invitation to run as the candidate of the Right. This announcement came as a bombshell for all parties. It not only presented, in view of Hindenburg's well-known views on the monarchy, a direct challenge to the republic: it gave the Right a presidential candidate whose personal popularity and prestige were worth many votes. Unless all the republican parties agreed on a single candidate, their chances of success were slight; the

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 436.

[2] *Die Internationale*, viii, No. 4, April 1925, p. 194.

1,800,000 votes of the KPD were now of vital importance. Zinoviev drew the natural conclusion, and, while disclaiming any desire on the part of IKKI to intervene in German affairs, " categorically advised the KPD " (whose leaders were still in Moscow on the eve of their return to Berlin) to make a public offer of its support to the SPD candidate.[1] This advice led to serious trouble on the Left wing of the KPD. Ruth Fischer and Maslow ranged themselves whole-heartedly behind Zinoviev. But a new " ultra-Left ", led by Scholem and Rosenberg, protested against all " united front " bargains with leaders of other parties as unprincipled, and wished to run Thälmann again in the second ballot regardless of consequences ; and Thälmann, proud of his rôle as presidential candidate, supported this course. After bitter debates in the party Zentrale in Berlin, a decision was taken by a narrow majority to withdraw Thälmann and offer support to the SPD candidate.[2] Meanwhile, however, a fresh complication had arisen. The Centre resolutely refused to withdraw its candidate, Marx ; and the SPD, realizing that Marx was the only " republican " candidate who could unite the votes of the Centre and Left against Hindenburg, reluctantly decided to support him. By the time, therefore, that the KPD had been induced to offer its reinforcement to the SPD candidate, that candidate had been withdrawn.[3] This contingency had not been considered in Moscow ;[4] and some members of the Zentrale of the KPD who

[1] *Chetyrnadtsataya Konferentsiya Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)* (1925), pp. 222-223.

[2] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), p. 393.

[3] Ruth Fischer later wrote that " the communists delayed making their proposal to support Braun until after the Social-Democratic Party was already committed to support Marx " (*Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 426), hinting that the delay was deliberate. On the other hand, a statement issued by IKKI on the day after the election implied that the SPD, as " faithful watchdogs of the bourgeoisie ", deliberately chose to withdraw its candidate rather than accept the KPD offer (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 72, May 1, 1925, pp. 961-962). Neither of these insinuations is convincing. The action of the KPD, owing to divided counsels, was dilatory and half-hearted ; but any scheme to run Braun as a joint " republican " candidate would have foundered on the intransigence of the Centre.

[4] According to A. Rosenberg, *Die Geschichte des Bolschewismus* (1932), p. 209, Zinoviev still wanted the KPD to withdraw Thälmann, and vote for Marx. This is probably true ; at the fourteenth Russian party conference on April 29, 1925, he remarked that the KPD " sometimes needs serious lessons ", and that " the infantile diseases of ' Leftism ' " still sometimes affected it

had reluctantly agreed to withdraw Thälmann in favour of the SPD would have been outraged by a proposal to support the bourgeois and Catholic Centre. The ballot took place on April 26, 1925, with Hindenburg, Marx and Thälmann as candidates. Hindenburg was elected with 14,650,000 votes; Marx received 13,750,000 and Thälmann 1,930,000. The slight increase in Thälmann's vote was attributed to the fact that some SPD workers in Saxony had voted for him in defiance of party instructions. But, since the poll was heavier on the second ballot than on the first, the percentage of KPD votes was actually lower.

These events were a further blow to the KPD and to the authority of its leaders, who had exposed the party to the taunts of the SPD for having helped to bring about Hindenburg's victory.[1] Ruth Fischer and Maslow were now particularly vulnerable. From the point of view of the Right, they had mismanaged a heaven-sent opportunity to form a united front with other Left parties in order to defeat Hindenburg. From the point of view of the Left, they had compromised on sound Left principles by their offer to collaborate with the SPD — and to no purpose. At this moment a further, though minor, mishap occurred. Since December 1924 the KPD, with 43 deputies, had held the balance in the Prussian Landtag between the SPD, which controlled the government, and the bloc of Right parties which formed the opposition. On April 27, 1925, the day after Hindenburg's election, the KPD group in the Landtag, in an open letter to the SPD, formally offered support for early legislation on such questions as the eight-hour day, an amnesty for political offenders and the confiscation of Hohenzollern property.[2] The SPD declined the Greek gift of communist aid. But in the crucial division of May 8, 1925, when the KPD voted against

(*Chetyrnadtsataya Konferentsiya Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)* (1925), p. 243). But there is no evidence that advice in this sense was given to the KPD, possibly because events moved too fast.

[1] The SPD issued posters showing "Hindenburg riding to power on Thälmann's shoulders" (R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 429).

[2] According to a later statement by Zinoviev the offer was couched in terms so insulting that it was bound to be refused (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 41-42). The extract from the letter printed in *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 86, does not bear out this charge; but the moment chosen was not auspicious.

the government by way of reprisal, the government was narrowly saved by the abstention of several deputies of the Right, who refused to vote with the communists. Once more the tactics of the KPD had ended in ignominious failure.[1]

The central committee of the KPD met on May 9–10, 1925, under the impact of these events in a sour mood. At a meeting of party officials held a few days earlier Rosenberg, Scholem and Katz, who had opposed both the withdrawal of Thälmann's candidature and the Prussian manœuvre, accused the party leadership of failing to attack the ruling bourgeoisie and confining itself to " more or less adroit wrangling with the SPD ".[2] This group took the offensive in the central committee. The spokesmen of the majority counter-attacked, and attributed recent mistakes to the failure of the party, under ultra-Left influences, to take sufficient account of the monarchist danger, to exercise sufficiently strong pressure for trade union unity, and to adopt sufficiently flexible tactics. This was a complete endorsement of the views of IKKI, and constituted, in effect, a movement of the leadership towards the Right. The error of Brandlerite tactics, it was now suggested, was only that they had been applied in a revolutionary situation — which now no longer existed. Out of 50 delegates, 15 voted against the resolution put forward by the Zentrale : it was the first open revolt since the Frankfurt congress more than a year earlier.[3] The stand taken by the leaders was rewarded by a pronouncement of the presidium of IKKI approving the resolution and condemning " the false tactics of the minority ". On the other hand " the struggle against the false position adopted by the Katz-Scholem-Rosenberg group must be carried on in the form of open discussion and argument " ; no encouragement was given to the leadership to resort to disciplinary measures.[4] These were more and more coming to be

[1] For this episode see O. Flechtheim, *Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik* (Offenbach, 1948), pp. 119-120.

[2] The resolution proposed by them was eventually published in *Die Internationale*, viii, No. 11, Nov. 1, 1925, p. 695.

[3] An account of the meeting and extracts from its resolution are in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 82, May 15, 1925, pp. 1113-1114, 1122-1123 ; R. Fischer's comments are in *Die Internationale*, viii, No. 5a, May 1925, pp. 281-284.

[4] *Izvestiya*, June 12, 1925 ; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 94, June 16, 1925, pp. 1286-1287.

regarded as an exclusive prerogative of the authorities in Moscow.

These preliminaries made it clear that the tenth congress of KPD, which was to meet in Berlin on July 12, 1925, would not have a smooth or easy path. The usual letter addressed to the party in advance of the congress by Zinoviev in the name of IKKI repeated the diagnosis registered in Moscow in April of a period of relative stabilization; the Dawes plan had given the German bourgeoisie "a substantial breathing-space". The letter dwelt at length on the trade union question, which was described as "the Achilles' heel of the KPD", and declared that 75 per cent of the work of the party ought to be devoted to the unions. What was new was the uninhibited emphasis on the danger from the Left. A conventional reference to "Brandlerism", defined as "the remnant of the traditional social-democratic ideology in the camp of communism", occurred towards the end of the letter. But the enemies distinguished more than once by name were the adherents of the Left or ultra-Left — Rosenberg, Scholem, Katz and Korsch; and the party was invited, when electing its new Zentrale, "to have no fear of drawing into the work the best elements from former groups not belonging to the Left" — a manifest gesture of reconciliation towards the Right to meet the new threat from the ultra-Left.[1] A further letter, accompanied by elaborate explanatory essays and theses, was addressed to the congress by three senior members associated with the Right wing of the party — Ernst Meyer, Frölich and Becker. The letter opened with a gloomy picture of the depressed and bewildered state of the party, which it attributed to the fact that the present Zentrale had "become the prisoner of the ultra-Left". The slogan of "the united front from below", which had been appropriate at the time of the fifth congress of Comintern, had ceased to be valid with the acceptance by Germany of the Dawes plan and with the Hindenburg election. The moral of the need for a turn to the Right was not explicitly drawn, but emerged unmistakably from the argument.[2]

[1] The letter is in *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), pp. 167-177; it appeared in both *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, July 2, 1925.

[2] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), pp. 257-270; for Meyer, a former leader of the party, see *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 413, 452.

Since it was in the Italian party that, thanks to Bordiga, the struggle against factional opposition had most clearly taken the form of a struggle against the ultra-Left,[1] it was probably not by accident, and not without the connivance of Comintern, that a member of the Italian party, speaking at the congress of the KPD as a fraternal delegate, delivered an impassioned attack on Bordiga and his Left supporters, who defended Trotskyism and did not want a Leninist party.[2] Manuilsky appeared at the congress no longer as the representative of IKKI, but as delegate of the Russian party. The change of rôle was significant. In theory, since the constituent parties of Comintern were normally encouraged to discuss one another's affairs, it enabled him to tender advice which would not take the invidious form of dictation by the central organ. In practice, since Manuilsky discharged exactly the same function as he had performed at the previous congress in his capacity as delegate of IKKI, it advertised the open appearance of the Russian party as the real directing force in Comintern, and the relegation of IKKI to an avowedly subsidiary and ceremonial status.[3] Manuilsky devoted the first half of his speech to the international situation and the danger of war. This led up to an attack on the German " ultra-Left ", which had alleged that " the new tactical line of the KPD is a sacrifice of the German proletariat in the interests of the self-preservation of the USSR ". The speaker caustically observed that, " if the German ultra-Left is not in a position to put its foot on the neck of the German capitalists, the Russian Communist Party is obliged to protect itself against the attack of international capital ". This meant dependence on the Red Army and therefore on the link with the peasantry. The " new peasant policy " of the Soviet Union was described as " above all a policy of defence against the Chamberlains ". A new criterion of policy was proclaimed :

> Everything which under present conditions serves to ward off Chamberlain's offensive against the proletarian revolution is a revolutionary, a communist, a proletarian policy.

[1] See pp. 367-369 below.

[2] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), pp. 294-295.

[3] Humbert-Droz attended the congress as representative of IKKI, and made a mainly non-controversial speech (*ibid.* pp. 282-285).

Manuilsky then passed on to the trade union question, and once again denounced the ultra-Lefts. It was from the opposite side that the KPD was open to criticism: far from having been guilty of a " coalition policy ", as the ultra-Left pretended, it had not even succeeded in making a united front with the social-democrat workers. It had lacked understanding of " the need to penetrate the masses "; and the whole trade union policy of the party " bears the stamp of this fundamental error ". Katz and Rosenberg were attacked by name during the speech; Bordiga was cited in passing as a type of " ' Left ' sectarianism "; nobody else was specifically mentioned. Finally, Manuilsky denounced as " a fearful anachronism " a demand from the ultra-Left that only those members of the KPD who had formerly been in opposition to Brandler should be eligible for party office.[1]

Manuilsky, who had come to Germany illegally (he spoke at the congress under the name of Samuely) and was in danger of arrest, took no part in the further proceedings.[2] Meyer, now the chief spokesman of the Right, accused the whole Left of pursuing a " fractional " policy and of rejecting the united front altogether.[3] The most vocal and best reasoned criticisms came from the ultra-Leftists, Rosenberg and Scholem; and, in repelling them, Ruth Fischer and Thälmann almost inevitably appeared to be executing a move towards the Right — which was precisely what the ultra-Left alleged. But in fact they were doing little more than attempt to maintain the now highly precarious balance of the party leadership and stave off attacks from all sides. The stereotyped formulas about the united front and trade union unity were repeated with minor variations and with decreasing conviction. One resolution of the congress dealt with " the work of communists in the free trade unions "; another repeated the rule that every member of the party should also be a member of a trade union. Thälmann obediently reiterated at the congress the

[1] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), pp. 300-319.

[2] R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 443, describes an incident between Manuilsky and Geschke, who was in the chair, which may illustrate the growing impatience in Moscow with the vagaries of the KPD; according to the same source, both Right and Left in the KPD were irked by the increasing dependence of the party on Moscow.

[3] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), pp. 594-595.

demand of IKKI that 75 per cent of party work should be devoted to the unions.[1] A few votes of the ultra-Left were cast at an early stage of the proceedings against some sections of the resolution approving the report of the Zentrale on its work since the last congress, and the resolution as a whole was eventually adopted with three abstentions.[2] But in the end a compromise, dictated by the weariness of the struggle rather than by any real agreement, was silently arrived at. The adoption of the main theses and resolution on the political work of the party, and the resolution on the work of party members in the "free" trade unions, revealed an unexpected unanimity.[3] Finally, no doubt after some bargaining behind the scenes, the central committee was elected by acclamation.[4]

It was perhaps not realized in Berlin how little this result would be to the taste of the Comintern leaders, who had expected from the congress a firm decision against the ultra-Left critics and a further drive for the united front against the Dawes plan and against Germany's *rapprochement* with the west. The extreme sharpness and bitterness of attack now mounted in Moscow against the KPD and its leaders can, however, be explained only by the injection into the argument of a fresh item of discord — the question of the ideological, as well as of the organizational, relation of the Russian party to other parties in Comintern. It was in the KPD, where a tradition of mistrust of the Russian party and jealousy of its predominance was combined with an ingrained German assumption of Teutonic superiority over the Slav, that the conception of a western revolt against Russian leadership in Comintern, with its specifically Russian or Leninist interpretation of Marxism, was likely to win recruits; and the Russian leaders were at this time acutely apprehensive of a challenge to Russian leadership in Comintern which would find its ideological justification in such arguments. In the summer of 1925 Maslow from his prison cell issued a pamphlet entitled *The Two Revolutions of the Year 1917*, in the preface to which he openly attacked Lenin's "mistake" of 1921 in launching the

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 241-245, 532, 628.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 415-416; for the resolution see *ibid.* pp. 178-180.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 650-651; for the resolutions see *ibid.* pp. 182-225, 241-245.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 658.

slogan " To the masses " and in inaugurating the policy of the united front. The policies to which Maslow took exception were not specifically Russian, and there is little evidence that he ever attempted to oppose a western Marxism to a specifically Russian or Leninist Marxism. But such a tendency was strong in the KPD, and especially among the so-called ultra-Left ; [1] and Maslow, who did not conceal his personal dislike of many of the Russian leaders, was made the scapegoat for it. It afterwards became an accepted item of the KPD legend that " under the leadership of the party by Ruth Fischer and Maslow the attempt was quite consciously made to establish the independence of the German party *vis-à-vis* Comintern ". [2] On July 29, 1925, ten days after the end of the KPD congress in Berlin, the presidium of IKKI approved the line taken by its representatives at the congress, strongly condemned ultra-Left tendencies in the KPD, and invited the party to send a delegation to Moscow forthwith for a discussion with the German commission of IKKI.

Faced with an invitation which was tantamount to an ultimatum, the central committee of the KPD decided by four votes to three to accept : [3] to refuse would have been open revolt. The delegation, which numbered nine in all, was led by Thälmann and Ruth Fischer, and included an active young member of the Left named Heinz Neumann, who was destined to serve as the ideological spearhead of an attack on the Maslow-Fischer leadership.[4]

[1] Rosenberg afterwards wrote an important work *Die Geschichte des Bolschewismus* (1932), translated into English as *A History of Bolshevism* (1934), which was strongly tinged with the view of Bolshevism as the Russian form of Marxism ; Korsch's writings reflected the same idea, though Korsch claimed Lenin as an exemplar of the true Marxism as against the current Russian " Marxism-Leninism ".

[2] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des XI. Parteitags der KPD* (1927), p. 27.

[3] This was disclosed by Zinoviev in his speech in the commission in Moscow (*Der Neue Kurs* (1925), p. 15).

[4] This was referred to in the " open letter " (see p. 329, note 3 below) as the " second delegation ". A " first delegation " from the KPD had visited Moscow after the party congress (whether or not at the invitation of IKKI, is not clear) " with a plan to disavow the representative of IKKI ", i.e. to secure a reversal of the attitude of Moscow as expounded by Manuilsky at the congress ; the delegates, whose identity is not on record, were quickly convinced of the impracticability of this " plan " (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 209). IKKI then demanded the despatch of a larger and more representative delegation ; according to the " open letter ", Ruth Fischer did all in her power to obstruct this. Among those

The German commission of IKKI met in Moscow on August 12, 1925, and opened with a report by Bukharin. Zinoviev made no less than three speeches in the course of the proceedings, and Bukharin also replied to the debate.[1] The German delegates made on Bukharin and Zinoviev the impression of hoping against hope to secure a " disavowal " of the spokesmen of IKKI at the congress and a suspension of further Comintern action against the KPD Left.[2] If so, they were quickly made aware of their mistake. All the vulnerable points in the party record, not excluding " the most delicate questions ", were brought up for discussion. Bukharin in his report described the allegation that Comintern was driving the KPD to the Right as " a deliberate lie ", and denounced the " anti-Moscow tendency " in the KPD as the counterpart of the threatened western orientation in German foreign policy. Ruth Fischer had not only failed to oppose this tendency, but had even instigated it. Maslow's pamphlet criticizing Lenin came in for strong attack in this context; he was accused both of attacking Lenin and of attempting to set up " a personal dictatorship " in the KPD.[3] Zinoviev described Ruth Fischer and Maslow as intellectuals of the Left: " *the pretension of these intellectuals was to lead not only the KPD, but Comintern as well* ".[4] As the debate proceeded, the tone grew sharper. Ruth Fischer, declared Zinoviev, came to Moscow, and said: " I am really in agreement, but those who carry weight in the party are against " ; to the party congress, on the other hand, she said: " I am really in agreement, but Moscow is a power, one must reckon with it ". This was a travesty of leadership.[5] Bukharin, in his concluding speech, reiterated that it was useless to repeat resolutions and assurances which had not been carried out in the past, that he had " no confidence in these declarations ", and that Ruth Fischer was pursuing a system of " double book-keeping ".[6]

summoned to Moscow by IKKI, though not apparently as a member of the delegation, was Ernst Meyer; this was evidently a gesture of conciliation towards the Right.

[1] These speeches were reproduced in a KPD party pamphlet *Der Neue Kurs* (1925): none of the other speeches appears to be on record.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 11; Bukharin repeated his impression much later (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 209).

[3] *Der Neue Kurs* (1925), pp. 1-9. [4] *Ibid.* p. 18. [5] *Ibid.* p. 38.

[6] *Ibid.* pp. 11-12.

The tactics of the Soviet leaders were now obvious. The attack was concentrated personally on Maslow and Ruth Fischer. Thälmann, who seemed more likely to prove amenable to direction, was spared, and was not displeased with the prospect of emerging as sole and uncontested leader of the party. The other members of the delegation were ready to transfer their allegiance to the new star. The proceedings crystallized in an open letter to be addressed by IKKI to all members of the KPD. The letter as drafted constituted a strong personal attack on Maslow and Ruth Fischer. It deplored the growth of " anti-Muscovite tendencies " in the KPD: the two leaders had not fought energetically enough against those " ' ultra-Left ', but in reality anti-communist ", manœuvres. Some groups in the KPD had always been influenced by social-democratic and " western European " traditions, and had taken up an attitude of hostility towards Comintern and the Soviet Union: Maslow's recent attack on Leninism was a case in point. No effective leadership had been given in the crucial question of the penetration by the party of the social-democratic trade unions and of the masses of workers. The letter demanded " a large-scale agitation on the basis of the visit of the first workers' delegation to Soviet Russia " ; " pressure on the workers for trade union unity ", leading to " *the formation of a Left wing in the trade unions* on the pattern of the English workers' movement " ; and " the development of a strong trade union department attached to the central committee of the KPD ".[1] The letter than trailed off into a general attack on Maslow and Ruth Fischer for lack of leadership and lack of principle: they had shown a firm front neither to the Right nor to the Left. The charge that Comintern was pushing the party

[1] For the trade union department of the KPD see p. 105 above. According to Bukharin (*Der Neue Kurs* (1925), pp. 3-4), a delegation of the KPD which visited Moscow before the tenth party congress in July 1925 agreed to a proposal that the Zentrale should establish, " as one of the most important party institutions ", a trade union section 20 strong, but nothing was done to give effect to it; this seems difficult to reconcile with other information. A party report to the tenth congress stated that " only a few weeks ago ", a new and independent trade union secretariat had been established to take the place of the old department, the members of which worked in close contact with the politburo of the KPD (*Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), pp. 59-60). Zinoviev a few months later referred to the trade union question as the principal bone of contention with Maslow and Ruth Fischer (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (*B*) (1926), p. 662).

to the Right was again indignantly denied. But the differences between IKKI and " the Ruth Fischer-Maslow group " were now of long standing ; and an " overturn " in the leadership was imperative. The draft was accepted by all the non-German members of the presidium of IKKI and by the whole KPD delegation except Ruth Fischer herself. Strong pressure was placed on her by Zinoviev, formerly her strongest supporter, to sign. She was entitled to vote against it ; but, once the majority approved it, party discipline required her to associate herself with the decision.[1] She submitted ; and her signature appeared on the document with the rest. The open letter and " the criticism directed by IKKI against the hitherto leading Ruth Fischer-Maslow group " was at once endorsed by the central committee of the KPD " without reservation " with only one adverse vote and one abstention.[2] On September 1, 1925, the open letter appeared in the party newspaper, and was given the widest possible publicity in the Soviet Union and in the German party press.[3] An article in *Pravda* accused " the Ruth Fischer-Maslow group " of wanting to be " more to the Left than Leninism " and of failing to win over the social-democratic workers in the trade unions :

> Nearer to the social-democratic workers ! Real application of united front tactics, not in words but in deeds ! Energetic strengthening of trade union unity ! That is the political meaning of the IKKI letter ![4]

The criticisms in the " open letter " of party failure in the trade unions were dramatically reinforced by the proceedings of the

[1] R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), pp. 447-452, suspects the hand of Stalin behind the open letter : Zinoviev told her that Stalin wished to expel her and Maslow, and that he had saved them with difficulty. This statement, made in order to browbeat her into signing, was probably untrue ; Stalin's attitude at this time was one of studied moderation.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 128, September 4, 1925, p. 1870.

[3] The German text appeared in *Die Rote Fahne*, September 1, 1925, in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 128, September 4, 1925, pp. 1863-1870, and in *Der Neue Kurs* (1925), pp. 42-62 ; for the Russian text see *Pravda*, September 8, 9, 1925. None of the published versions of the open letter bears a date ; A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *10 Let Kominterna* (1929), p. 332, dates it August 20, 1925 — the date of its approval by the commission (*Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 7). At some stage IKKIM was drawn into these proceedings, and decided to " work out special points about the youth league, which will be included in the general resolution of Comintern on the German question " (*Pravda*, August 25, 1925) : this does not appear to have been done.

[4] *Ibid.* September 9, 1925.

congress of the ADGB which sat at Breslau from August 31 to September 4, 1925; while at the last congress in 1922 there had been 88 communist delegates out of a total of 692, on this occasion out of some 350 delegates only three were communists.[1] Lozovsky summed up the result of the proceedings under the catch-word "From Bebel to Gompers", and added the bitter comment that "*the German trade union movement is at the present moment the most important pillar of Amsterdam*".[2] An article which appeared in the KPD journal contrasted the Breslau congress of the ADGB with the British trades union congress a few days later at Scarborough, where a large communist or near-communist minority had been constantly active and vocal;[3] and Zinoviev, reporting shortly afterwards to the central committee of the Russian party on Comintern activities, spoke pointedly of the contrast between the CPGB, a party of 6000 members which "is advancing, leading the masses behind it, and rising on the crest of the wave", and the KPD, a party of about 150,000, which "is passing through an acute crisis of leadership and has recently been losing influence among the masses".[4]

Though uneasiness and lack of confidence had long prevailed in the KPD, the open letter — and especially its endorsement by virtually the whole central committee of the party and by Ruth Fischer herself — came as a sudden and unexpected shock. It was immediately recognized as marking the end of the Maslow-Fischer leadership.[5] A long article in the *Rote Fahne* of Septem-

[1] *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 17; the excuse of "cleverly applied electoral geometry" was offered for the low number of communist delegates, but it was admitted that "the decline in the influence of the KPD in the trade unions should in no wise be overlooked". The union of metal workers returned 27 per cent of communist votes; in other unions the voting strength of the KPD was "insignificant to vanishing point" (*ibid.* p. 91).

[2] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 10 (57), October 1925, pp. 191-194; Lozovsky's indictment was made more pointed by being sandwiched in between accounts of the progress made by the CGTU in France and by the minority movement in the British trade unions. For a fuller account of the Breslau congress see *ibid.* pp. 217-223.

[3] *Die Internationale*, viii, No. 9, end September 1925, pp. 533-539.

[4] The section of Zinoviev's report of October 10, 1925, relating to the KPD, was printed in *Pravda*, October 25, 1925, and *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 148, October 31, 1925, pp. 2219-2223; for this session of the central committee see Vol. 2, pp. 108-109.

[5] These reactions were described in an article by Pieck in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 11 (48), November 1925, pp. 67-69; an editorial note

ber 8 and 9, 1925, headed *With all our Forces for the Comintern Line!*, attacked Maslow and Ruth Fischer for an " un-Bolshevik attitude to Comintern ": this had manifested itself in a profound disbelief " in the strength and in the class-consciousness of the German proletariat ", in pessimism about the prospects of revolution (Maslow had said that " no revolution is possible in Germany in the next ten years "), and in the campaign against the tactics of Comintern and the propagation of the legend of " Moscow opportunism ". Ruth Fischer's own attitude on her return from Moscow seems to have been equivocal. Though she was one of the signatories of the letter, she attacked it, according to her own later account, in Berlin, Essen and Stuttgart, and found " substantial and growing support for an anti-Moscow position ".[1] It was no doubt for this reason that she was recalled to Moscow on the pretext of further consultation at the end of September. The ultra-Left, in the persons of Scholem and Rosenberg, publicly assailed the open letter as offering to the Right " a platform for the reconquest of the party ", and called on the party to defend itself " against the attack of the Brandler fraction ".[2] With Thälmann now the recognized leader, Heinz Neumann emerged as the party's chief theorist and propagandist. In the first issue of the party journal to appear after the change, an authoritative article from his pen repeated the arguments and denunciations of the " open letter ". The core of the article was a historical review which traced " the anti-Muscovite tendencies in our party " from their beginnings with Korsch, through Rosenberg and Scholem, to Lenz, a member of the Fischer-Maslow group, who had defended " freedom of opinion " and attacked " the dogma of the infallibility of IKKI ". The essence of the whole line was anti-Comintern.[3] A pamphlet by Neumann, *Maslow's Offensive against Leninism*, replying to Maslow's criticism

attached to the article deprecated the tendency to see in the change " a turn ' to the Right ' ".

[1] R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 453; Zinoviev at the session of the Russian party central committee on October 10, 1925 (see p. 330, note 4 above) accused her of continuing " her former policy — or, I should rather say, policy-mongering ".

[2] *Die Rote Fahne*, September 22, 1925.

[3] *Die Internationale*, viii, No. 9, end September 1925, pp. 523-533; by way of showing the authority behind it, the article bore the address " Moscow " under the writer's signature.

of Lenin, had a wide circulation in the party.[1]

The policy and leadership of the KPD had thus been safely geared to the Comintern line. It remained only to give it official endorsement. At the session of the central committee of the Russian party on October 10, 1925, Zinoviev defended the attitude of IKKI towards the KPD in terms which suggested that his ready abandonment of his former *protégés* had exposed him to criticism in Moscow. Repeating the theme of the identification of Ruth Fischer and Maslow with past opposition to IKKI, he spoke of " 'ultra-Left' intellectuals of the type of Maslow and Ruth Fischer, Scholem and Rosenberg ", and alleged that, at the time of the Frankfurt congress of March 1924, when " we decided to help the Left to take over the leadership ", this had been done in full consciousness of Ruth Fischer's and Maslow's defects, and only because, after Brandler's errors and failure, " no other alternative was open to us ". The charge of duplicity was once more levelled at " Ruth Fischer's group ", which did not carry out the fundamental counsels of IKKI, and accepted them " only on paper ".[2] Manuilsky in a long article explained that hostility to Moscow in the KPD reflected " the influence of petty bourgeois German nationalism and mistrust of the methods of the proletarian revolution in the Soviet Union, as well as an echo of the 'western orientation' of the capitalist classes in Germany ".[3] The German Communist Youth League was quickly brought into line. At its congress at Halle in October 1925 it voted by a five-sixths majority its approval of the Comintern line in the KPD, and castigated itself for its sectarian isolation and lack of contact with the masses.[4] But the trade union issue remained a running sore. On October 18, 1925, an ambiguous article appeared in the *Rote Fahne* which, though professing to

[1] Publicity was given to it by a summary in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 24, February 9, 1926, pp. 357-358.

[2] For this section of Zinoviev's report see p. 330, note 4 above. Zinoviev was defending himself against an explicit or implicit charge of having hitherto been the chief patron of those whom he now denounced; at the fourteenth party congress two months later, when Lominadze accused him of not having dissociated himself from Maslow and Ruth Fischer categorically enough, he replied: " We gladly abandon Maslow to you, with Ruth Fischer thrown in " (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), pp. 699, 706).

[3] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 157, November 24, 1925, pp. 2354-2355.

[4] *Die Jugend-Internationale*, No. 7-8, April–May 1926, pp. 7-8.

assert the duty of party members to remain in " yellow " unions, claimed that, where the party fraction in any factory was strong enough, it should demand that the workers should be faced with the alternative of joining " free " unions or leaving the factory.[1]

The situation in the KPD was reviewed at a party conference held in Berlin on October 31 and November 1, 1925.[2] Thälmann made the principal report. Scholem spoke for the opposition. Ernst Meyer represented those former members of the Right who, having dissociated themselves from Brandler, were working their way back into favour with the new leadership. In the absence of Ruth Fischer in Moscow, her immediate supporters maintained an embarrassed silence. An anonymous representative of IKKI — presumably Manuilsky — defined the threefold issue as that of the relation of the party to the working masses, of the party leadership to the rank and file, and of the party to Comintern. The main resolution of the conference, which was adopted by a majority of 217 to 30, condemned both the ultra-Left and the Right, purporting to discover hidden affinities between them, and also the Ruth Fischer-Maslow group, which had tried to " ' manœuvre ' between the two standpoints " and had continued its " double game " with Comintern even after the publication of the open letter. It was essential, declared the resolution, that this group should no longer lead the party or its Berlin organization.[3] Scholem was dropped from the central committee: this was the only formal sanction. But, in spite of this show of unity, wrangling still continued on the trade union question. At a meeting of the Orgburo of IKKI in Moscow early in December 1925 Ulbricht reported that trade union affairs were still treated

[1] This article was quoted in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 12 (49), December 1925, p. 139, as proof that the KPD was at that time still encouraging the workers to leave SPD unions.

[2] A summary account of the proceedings appeared in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 156, November 20, 1925, pp. 2350-2351. For the speech of the representative of IKKI (printed in full) and the text of the resolution see *ibid.* No. 150, November 3, 1925, pp. 2226-2231; for an article by D. M. (Manuilsky) on the conference *ibid* No. 157, November 24, 1925, pp. 2353-2356.

[3] According to a statement of Thälmann at the sixth enlarged IKKI in February 1926, the Berlin district party committee was dominated by a group which had undergone very little change for the past five years, and " under the leadership of Ruth Fischer exercised a strong influence " (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 181).

in the KPD as of secondary importance; and, after another German delegate had pointed once more to the futility of attempting to penetrate the SPD unions, Pyatnitsky sternly repeated that it was the duty of all party members to remain not only in social-democratic but in Catholic unions, and even, if necessary, to enter them.[1]

Meanwhile the campaign against the old leadership had been intensified by the personal discrediting of Maslow. Maslow, after more than a year under arrest, was at length brought to trial in September 1925 on a charge of conspiracy against the state. Whether through irritation at the recent turn of events in the party, or through desire to mitigate the penalty which he was likely to incur, he spoke openly at the trial of the discussions in the party, dissociated himself personally from much that had been done, and, where his own responsibility was admitted, associated other members of the party with it.[2] He was sentenced by the court to four years' imprisonment. In party circles he incurred accusations of cowardice and of breach of party discipline. The matter was referred to the control commission of IKKI, which on October 22, 1925, briefly convicted Maslow of "unworthy" behaviour, but refused to take a final decision on the question of his status in the party until it had had the opportunity of hearing what he had to say.[3] The party conference of the KPD in Berlin on October 31, 1925, passed a resolution which repeated the verdict of "unworthy" conduct, described the methods employed by Maslow for his defence as "inadmissible", and forbade public discussion of the affair in the party until the control commission of IKKI had given its final decision.[4] It

[1] For Ulbricht's report and the discussion on it see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 165, December 17, 1925, pp. 2462-2472; of 4,700,000 members of German trade unions affiliated to IFTU only 150,000 at this time were communists (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 12 (49), December 1925, p. 131).

[2] Extracts from statements by Maslow to the court were included in the declaration of Kühne and Neumann to the Russian party congress in December 1925 (see p. 335 below); fuller extracts are in a party pamphlet *Zum Fall Maslow*, issued by the central committee of the KPD in February 1926.

[3] *Ibid.* (1926), p. 5; the text is also in *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 94, which wrongly gives the date as October 12, 1925.

[4] *Zum Fall Maslow* (1926), p. 5. From Ruth Fischer's letter to the Russian party congress (see below), it appears that this resolution was adopted against the view of the majority of the commission set up by the conference to examine

was shortly after this that Narkomindel offered the German chargé d'affaires to exchange a German under arrest in Moscow for Maslow;[1] but this attempt to bring Maslow back to the Soviet Union, where he could have been made harmless for the future, was apparently not pursued. Derogatory allusions to Maslow's conduct by Manuilsky and Lominadze at the fourteenth Russian party congress in December 1925 provoked Ruth Fischer, who was still detained in Moscow by order of IKKI,[2] to address a letter of protest to the congress, in which she defended Maslow's behaviour in court as "free from objection", and spoke of the "political motives" inspiring the charges against him. This was promptly answered by a declaration of Kühne and Neumann in their capacity as "representatives in IKKI of the central committee of the KPD", and by a personal statement of Lominadze, who referred to the verdict of the control commission of IKKI of November [*sic*] 22, 1925.[3]

As a result of these exchanges the discussion of the affair flared up again early in 1926. The politburo of the KPD passed a resolution on January 6, 1926, which was confirmed by the party central committee two days later, approving the statement of Kühne and Neumann and condemning that of Ruth Fischer, and published an article on the question in the party press in which the charge of "lack of principles and character" was applied equally to Maslow and Ruth Fischer. This was followed on January 13, 1926, by a decision of the presidium of IKKI in Moscow, taken against the solitary vote of Ruth Fischer, formally endorsing the October verdict of the control commission.[4] The control commission itself did not rest on its laurels, and also issued a fresh decision in reply to Ruth Fischer's protest. It repeated its October verdict unchanged, but added a long and

the question, which reported that the condemnation of Maslow was the result of "political decisions" and was connected with his recent political attitude. This was no doubt true; but Maslow's behaviour in court seems none the less to have been a flagrant breach of accepted canons of party loyalty.

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/556139.

[2] Detention appears to have meant an order to remain; if she had demanded her passport, she would presumably have obtained it, but this would automatically have involved expulsion from the party for indiscipline. Maslow had been similarly detained in Moscow in 1923–1924 (see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 231-232), and Brandler and Thalheimer since 1924.

[3] *XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), pp. 898-903.

[4] *Zum Fall Maslow* (1926), pp. 10-12.

detailed motivation, which was in effect an unqualified condemnation of Maslow's conduct before the court.[1] There, with Maslow still in prison, the matter remained for some months. The sixth enlarged IKKI in February–March 1926, apart from some unrecorded remarks in the German commission by the Norwegian delegate Hansen, which provoked a brief retort in plenary session by Manuilsky,[2] did not discuss the Maslow affair.

The KPD conference of October 31, 1925, which endorsed the policy laid down in the " open letter ", had formally closed the debate in the party. The party Left had been divided, and the leadership broken up. Ruth Fischer and her immediate followers, isolated on the one hand from the Thälmann-Neumann group which now enjoyed the confidence of Moscow, and on the other hand from the old " ultra-Left " group of Scholem, Rosenberg and Katz, were effectively ousted from positions of influence, though they remained members of the central committee. But the strength of the dissident Left and ultra-Left, especially in the Berlin organization, remained a source of embarrassment. At a delegate meeting in Berlin on December 21, 1925, a number of ultra-Left proposals are said to have been defeated only by narrow majorities.[3] The outbreak of the struggle in the Russian party between Stalin and Zinoviev was a fresh blow to the ultra-Lefts in the KPD, since the two sides vied with one another in condemning them. Zinoviev, reporting on Comintern affairs to the fourteenth Russian party congress, adhered to the strictest line of current party orthodoxy. The Left wing of the KPD was, he declared, divided into two groups — the group of Thälmann, consisting mainly of the workers of Berlin and Hamburg, who " stand at the head of everything that is healthy in the KPD ", and the group of intellectuals headed by Ruth Fischer and Maslow, who, " having some positive qualities ", had climbed into power on the mistakes of the Right. Between these groups the choice of Comintern was unequivocal : " we are completely at one with the central committee of the KPD headed by comrade Thälmann ".[4] This did not deter Manuilsky from a sly attempt to

[1] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), pp. 94-96.

[2] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 566-567.

[3] *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 95.

[4] *XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), pp. 661-663.

identify Zinoviev with the ultra-Left. The German ultra-Left claimed to pursue a purely proletarian line, while the Russian party was said to be under peasant influence and was accused of adapting its policy to the interests of a largely peasant state. The German ultra-Left alleged that Comintern was an instrument of Soviet policy, and that the Russian party was in a state of degeneration. Without actually stating that Zinoviev shared these opinions, Manuilsky asserted that they would derive fresh encouragement from Zinoviev's defection. Lominadze more explicitly detected " characteristic resemblances . . . between the German Lefts and the Leningrad comrades ".[1] Stalin in a speech at the presidium of IKKI in January 1926 was more cautious. The battle having been won, he made no further insinuations against Zinoviev. But he made a strong attack on " the Ruth Fischer-Maslow group ", which " provides a diplomatic cover for the ' ultra-Left ' group of comrade Scholem " and " thus hinders the central committee of the KPD from overcoming and liquidating the ' ultra-Left ' prejudices of the KPD ".[2]

The allegation of an association between Zinoviev and the German Left, hinted at by Manuilsky and Lominadze at the fourteenth Russian party congress in order to compromise Zinoviev, did not lack plausibility. The period when Ruth Fischer and Maslow had been the dominant figures in the KPD, from the Frankfurt congress of March 1924 to the Berlin congress of July 1925, was also the period of Zinoviev's unquestioned supremacy in Comintern ; they reached their climax, and declined, together. On the other hand, Zinoviev had been one of the main authors of the " open letter ". Throughout the autumn of 1925 and at the fourteenth congress in December, he had continued to denounce the Maslow-Ruth Fischer group in outspoken terms ; and it is unlikely that, before the split actually occurred at the congress, he would have compromised himself by any approach to the KPD Left. After Zinoviev's defeat, the situation changed. His long past association with Ruth Fischer, and the similarity of their present positions as outcasts from the leadership of their respective parties, almost inevitably drew them together. A few days after

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 695, 701 ; it was in reply to this attack that Zinoviev once more " abandoned " Maslow and Ruth Fischer (see p. 332, note 2 above).

[2] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, viii, 4-5.

the congress Ruth Fischer had an interview with Zinoviev, which was for the first time couched in frank language, " uncomplicated by Bolshevik rhetoric ". Zinoviev at this time still hoped to beat Stalin in the long run, and was looking round desperately for support. Foreign party leaders might help : the aim was to " encourage them to regroup themselves and to fight against Stalin ". On the basis of this programme several " semi-clandestine meetings " took place between Zinoviev and Ruth Fischer, apparently extending over several weeks.[1] This incipient reconciliation did not pass unnoticed in other quarters, and excited all the more apprehension, since the ultra-Left group in the KPD had come out in support of the Leningrad opposition.[2] Early in February 1926, Stalin, summoning Ruth Fischer to an interview, made her an offer to return to Germany and to be re-admitted to the leadership of the KPD on the condition of bowing to the Comintern, and present KPD, line.[3] The proposal was not accepted. The conversations with Zinoviev continued ; and before long Ruth Fischer was clearly committed to the position of agent of the Russian opposition in the Germany party. The Bolshevization of foreign parties had the paradoxical result of reproducing in those parties the rifts and rivalries which arose in the Russian party itself.

Meanwhile two events had occurred in the KPD. On January 11, 1926, the ambitious ultra-Leftist Katz, perhaps surmising that the power and prestige of Comintern, and therefore of the Thälmann-Neumann leadership, had been impaired by the discussions in Moscow, decided on a daring *coup*. Collecting round him a small group of faithful workers he attempted to seize by force the party headquarters in Hanover and the office of the

[1] The only direct authority for these conversations is R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), pp. 544-545 ; some of them may have coincided with the Kamenev-Zinoviev approach to Trotsky, which began in March–April 1926 (see Vol. 2, p. 173). Zinoviev continued to attack " the Ruth Fischer-Maslow group " at the enlarged IKKI of February–March 1926, but far more mildly than Bukharin or Stalin (see pp. 508-510 below).

[2] According to Lominadze, " a fractional conference of German ' ultra-Lefts ' meeting in January 1926 . . . took up an attitude sharply antagonistic to the majority of the VKP and to the decisions of the fourteenth congress " (*Bol'shevik*, No. 11, June 15, 1926, p. 23).

[3] The account of the interview comes from R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 543 ; Stalin's proposal reads, however, more like an ultimatum than an offer.

local party paper.[1] The attack, reminiscent of the method successfully employed against Hoeglund in Stockholm eighteen months earlier,[2] failed; and Katz and ten or twelve of his followers were expelled from the party. The Katz affair discredited the ultra-Leftists in the party, who endeavoured without complete success to dissociate themselves from Katz, and led to the creation of an ultra-Left group outside the party which served as a focus of attraction for party malcontents. The other event was an unusually successful application of united front tactics. The proposal had been made by the government to compensate the former ruling families of the German states for property confiscated from them under the republic. On December 4, 1925, the KPD in an open letter invited the SPD and the ADGB to join it in demanding, under the terms of the constitution, a national plebiscite on the issue. The leaders of the SPD, mindful of a possible future coalition with bourgeois parties and unwilling to compromise themselves by an alliance with communists, turned a deaf ear to the overture: *Vorwärts* referred to it as a "communist machination". Notwithstanding this rebuff, the campaign proved attractive to the rank and file of the SPD. By March 1926, twelve and a half million voters had been mobilized in support of the demand; and, though this number was insufficient to enforce a plebiscite, it had proved that large numbers of workers enrolled in the SPD were ready to defy their leaders and follow a KPD lead.[3] The success of this campaign conjured up visions in Moscow of the emergence in the SPD and in the social-democratic trade unions of a revolutionary Left wing comparable to the Left wing in the British trade union movement. It also further discredited the ultra-Left, which had been lukewarm and sceptical about the united front. When at a meeting of the presidium of IKKI in January 1926 Ruth Fischer had demanded that the errors of the Right in the KPD should be condemned with the same severity as those of the ultra-Left, she encountered the formidable opposition of Stalin, who explained that, whatever might be the position in other parties, "what is

[1] For a brief account of this affair see *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 95.

[2] See p. 236 above.

[3] An enthusiastic article (probably translated from the Russian press) appeared in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 53, April 5, 1926, pp. 740-741.

immediately required of the KPD is a transition to the method of indirect movements having as their aim the conquest of a majority of the working class in Germany ".[1] But this did not silence those ultra-Leftist critics who objected that Bolshevization appeared to bring with it the postponement of revolutionary action, and the substitution of demands which, though calculated to embarrass and put pressure on bourgeois governments, had no direct revolutionary content.[2]

(*b*) *The British Communist Party (CPGB)*

The affairs of the CPGB attracted little attention at the fifth enlarged IKKI of March–April 1925. Zinoviev waxed enthusiastic over the progress of the Left-wing movement in the trade unions in penetrating the hitherto impregnable mass of British workers,[3] and expressed the cautiously worded belief that " we are at the beginning of a period when the centre of gravity of the further development of world revolution may gradually begin to move to England ".[4] Gallacher, the principal British delegate,

[1] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, viii, 2; Stalin contrasted the situation in the KPD, where the ultra-Left danger was the more actual, with that in the PCF, where the main danger came from the Right. According to *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 8, the presidium of IKKI dealt with the question of the ultra-Left in the KPD on January 13, 1926; Stalin's speeches are dated January 22, 1926. More than one meeting was evidently held.

[2] Radek in a confidential letter to Klara Zetkin of January 1927 related that in the spring of 1926 he had written an article for publication in *Pravda* entitled " The German Communist Party in Danger " in which he advocated the expulsion of the Left-wing leaders from the KPD: he showed the article to Brandler and Thalheimer, then still in Moscow, who thought that he exaggerated the danger from the Left, and dissuaded him from publication. The letter is in the Trotsky archives (T 909), and was published in English in *The New International* (N.Y.), i, No. 5 (December 1934), pp. 155-157. The date there attached to it, December 1926, is conjectural and incorrect; the letter was provoked by Zetkin's speech in IKKI on December 13, 1926, but also refers to Radek's speech on the anniversary of Liebknecht's and Rosa Luxemburg's death, i.e. presumably January 15, 1927. Radek's story was told after the expulsion of Ruth Fischer and Maslow from the party, and should be accepted with caution.

[3] See p. 576 below.

[4] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 47; a few weeks later at the party conference, Zinoviev more confidently declared that " in England at the present time, under the rule of the Conservatives, a general revolutionary situation is beginning to take shape, is taking shape slowly, but surely " (*Chetyrnadtsataya Konferentsiya Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)* (1925), p. 242).

made a conventional speech from which any note of enthusiasm was absent;[1] and Bell, on behalf of the party, made a routine declaration denouncing Trotskyism.[2] The final resolution on Bolshevization listed the tasks of the CPGB as the cultivation of the minority movement in the trade unions, agitation against imperialism, the creation of a centralized party organization and pursuit of the tactics of the united front.[3] But, if the episode of the Labour government suggested that the British workers' movement would henceforth take predominantly political forms, this illusion was soon dispelled. The trade unions moved back into the centre of the picture. In the eyes of Moscow, by far the most important event of the spring of 1925 in the British movement was the setting up in London in April, on lines proposed in Moscow in the previous November, of an Anglo-Russian joint council to promote the cause of unity in the international trade union movement.[4] Once more the trade unions seemed to open a door through which communism would one day penetrate the consciousness of the British workers.

The seventh congress of the CPGB, held at Glasgow at the end of May 1925, did its best both to reflect these hopes and to carry out the injunctions of the fifth IKKI. It adopted a thesis on "International Trade Union Unity", which gave its blessing to the newly-founded Anglo-Russian joint council, and spoke of developing the National Minority Movement as a means of promoting unity,[5] and a thesis on Bolshevization, the principal items in which were declared to be theoretical training in Leninism and the organization of the party in factory cells.[6] Pollitt, who was the senior member of the presidium elected at the opening of the congress, and dominated the proceedings throughout, pronounced in his closing remarks that "this has been the best congress we have had".[7] But behind the scenes this official

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 154-161.

[2] See p. 125, note 2 above.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 488-489.

[4] For this step see pp. 576-577 below.

[5] *Report of the Seventh Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), pp. 188-191.

[6] *Ibid.* pp. 198-202; for cell organization and for the Lenin schools see pp. 925-930, 1018-1021 below.

[7] *Report of the Seventh Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), p. 129; it was prominently reported in *Izvestiya* on June 2, 1925, and following days.

complacency was tempered by a certain note of scepticism. In an article written on the eve of the congress, and published immediately after it in the Comintern journal in Moscow, Palme Dutt issued, not for the first time, a strong warning against the temptation to take the Left wing of the British labour movement too seriously. He now attempted in a footnote to soften the acerbity of his attack by explaining that he had been referring only to the leaders and not to the masses of workers. But this in effect changed nothing. The essence of the whole article was a thinly disguised critique of the uncritical attitude adopted in some party circles towards the united front as amounting simply to cooperation with a supposed Left wing of the Labour Party.

> The Left wing [wrote Dutt] is not for us a goal in itself, but only a means. Our goal consists in revolutionizing the working class.[1]

Dutt seems to have understood at this time better than the other leaders in Moscow or in Glasgow how little progress had been made towards this goal. In the following issue of the journal, another article, written after the congress, appeared over the signature Robak — evidently a pen-name — which carried the same argument still further. The writer mordantly criticized the lukewarmness of the so-called Left trade union leaders on issues of trade union unity, national and international, and on the question of China, and concluded that neither the Left leaders nor the workers had "understood the position of our party".[2] But this time scepticism seems to have overreached itself. The article was followed by an editorial note reproaching the writer for having under-estimated the weight of the Left wing of the British workers' movement and the importance of collaboration with it.

In spite of these warnings, fresh encouragement was derived during the summer of 1925 from successes in the Labour Left and in the trade unions. On March 15, 1925, the first issue of a weekly newspaper, the *Sunday Worker*, appeared. Its editor,

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 6 (43), 1925, pp. 48-64.
[2] *Ibid.* No. 7 (44), July 1925, pp. 95-105.

Paul, was a prominent member of the CPGB, and its inception must have been financed from party funds. But it was not a party journal. It was designed to appeal to the Labour and trade union Left, and was often described — though not officially recognized — as the organ of the NMM. It enjoyed a considerable success: at the seventh congress of the CPGB in May 1925, a circulation of 100,000 was already claimed.[1] The whole British Left derived a fresh impetus from the events of "Red Friday", July 31, 1925, when the Conservative government, under pressure from the Miners' Federation, accorded a subsidy of £20,000,000 to the coal industry to enable wages to be maintained at current rates for a further nine months. The growing strength of the NMM in the British trade unions was shown at the second annual conference of the movement, which sat on August 29-30, 1925, and mustered 683 delegates, claiming to represent 750,000 workers — or more than three times the numbers of the previous year. The keynote was set in a presidential address from Tom Mann, and in a telegram from Profintern which exhorted the conference to "give a lead to the coming trade union congress, and help lead the British working class to victory". Mann appealed in his address for support for the *Sunday Worker*, and Jackson also spoke on its behalf. The conference produced no novelties, repeating the "aims and objects" resolution of its predecessor and adopting a more elaborate version of the "programme of action".[2] The annual trade union congress, which opened on September 7, 1925, at Scarborough, was once more attended by Tomsky as fraternal delegate, and was the occasion of another demonstration of Anglo-Soviet solidarity. Swales, the newly-elected president of the TUC, spoke scathingly in his report of "the real hatred and hostility to Russia" shown by the Conservative government. Purcell warned the government that "any attempt to break diplomatically with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics would be resisted . . . by the entire trade union movement in this country". Tomsky pleaded for a closing

[1] *Report of the Seventh Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), p. 121.

[2] The proceedings were published in a pamphlet *National Minority Movement: Report of Second Annual Conference* (n.d.); an enthusiastic account of it appeared in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 129, September 8, 1925, p. 1885, and its programme was summarized in *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), pp. 120-122. For the previous conference see p. 134 above.

of the ranks of trade unionists in a world growing ever more dangerous: he instanced the wars in Morocco and in China.[1] Less inhibited than the Hull congress of the preceding year in its judgments of government policy, now that a Labour government was no longer in power, the congress adopted by a large majority a resolution condemning the Dawes plan: Pollitt and Cook spoke in support of the resolution.[2] It unanimously adopted a resolution on international trade union unity, endorsing the efforts of the Anglo-Russian joint council, and passed by an overwhelming majority a motion, proposed by Purcell and opposed by J. H. Thomas, which denounced "the domination of non-British peoples by the British Government" as "a form of capitalist exploitation", and declared its "complete opposition to imperialism".[3] Lozovsky, viewing the scene from Moscow, and more cautious than Tomsky in his appraisal of the Anglo-Soviet *rapprochement*, recognized that "a number of the great unions were categorically opposed to the new tactics called for by the sharpening of the class struggle". But he too hailed the Scarborough congress as "a move to the Left".[4]

From this point, however, reaction set in rapidly. As in the previous year, the annual Labour Party conference, which met at Liverpool three weeks after the Scarborough congress, was far from sharing the pro-Soviet enthusiasm of the trade union congress, and went a long way to nullify its results. Communists on this occasion for the first time formed a plan to apply the tactics used in the trade unions by the NMM to the Labour Party itself. The report of the party executive committee to the seventh congress had diagnosed the growth of a group of Left malcontents in the Labour Party.

[1] *Report of Fifty-Seventh Annual Trades Union Congress* (1925), pp. 70, 474-478; Tomsky's speech, delivered on September 10, 1925, was published in *Pravda*, September 29, 1925.

[2] *Report of Fifty-Seventh Annual Trades Union Congress* (1925), pp. 542-546, 576.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 553-555, 569; an unsigned article in the Comintern journal hailed "the open and unequivocal anti-imperialist resolution of the last British trade union congress at Scarborough" as a "most weighty political phenomenon" (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 12 (49), December 1925, p. 24).

[4] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 10 (57), October 1925, pp. 194-198; for an optimistic account of the congress see H. Pollitt, *Serving My Time* (1940), pp. 205-208.

> The party [the report went on] realizes the crystallization of this Left-wing movement into an organized opposition within the Labour Party as being one of the most important tasks confronting us.[1]

The creation of a pro-Soviet minority movement in the Labour Party proved an uphill task. The Liverpool conference reaffirmed by a more overwhelming majority than ever before the ineligibility of communists for membership of any section of the Labour Party, and endorsed an appeal by the executive to trade unions not to send known communists as delegates to Labour Party conferences.[2] Bennett attempted in the Russian party journal to explain away the discrepancy between the Scarborough and Liverpool conferences, concluding that it was the trade unions which would ultimately dictate the policy of the Labour Party, and that these were " moving to the Left under the hammer blows of the capitalist offensive ".[3] It was a symptom of the increasingly bitter atmosphere when demands were heard at the Conservative Party conference, which met in Brighton on October 8, 1925, for the banning of the CPGB and the arrest of its leaders. Inspired by these manifestations of hostility, the government decided to proceed to the arrest and trial of 12 communist leaders, including Campbell, Gallacher, Pollitt, Inkpin and Hannington. All twelve were found guilty on charges of seditious libel and incitement to mutiny; five received prison sentences of 12 months, the other seven of 6 months.[4] A number of documents " obtained " at the headquarters of the CPGB on the occasion of the arrests were published as a white paper,[5] and served further to inflame popular indignation against the communists.

These crushing blows were evidence of the alarm felt in

[1] *Report of the Seventh Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), p. 138.

[2] *Report of the Twenty-fifth Annual Conference of the Labour Party* (1925), pp. 189, 352.

[3] *Bol'shevik*, No. 19-20, October 31, 1925, p. 84; Bennett also revealed his bewilderment in an article in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 10 (47), October 1925, pp. 97-116, which ended with an expression of the belief that the trade unions would soon tire of their rôle of " patient oxen ", and make their voice heard in the Labour Party.

[4] *The Times*, October 29, 1925. For an account of the trial from the standpoint of the party see *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), pp. 130-133; Pollitt's speech in his own defence is reprinted in H. Pollitt, *Serving My Time* (1940), pp. 211-248.

[5] *Communist Papers*, Cmd. 2682 (1926).

British Government circles as the labour situation and the crisis in the mines grew more menacing. In the winter of 1925–1926 it was not only among communists that the signs were read of an impending clash between capital and labour which might easily take revolutionary forms. The Organization for the Maintenance of Supplies (sometimes called OMS), designed to counter the threat of a general strike, as well as a party of British Fascists, which enrolled some high-sounding names, dated from the autumn of 1925. This mood was balanced by a corresponding extremism of the Left. A violent letter from Saklatvala, a well-known Indian member of the CPGB and a former party M.P., written on October 7, 1925, under the chilling impression of the Liverpool conference, had been among the documents seized on the arrest of the party leaders. The letter expressed the opinion that " without drastic measures to build up our party, we shall be submerged into insignificance in Great Britain ", that " merciless measures to fight the Labour Party " were required, and that the trade unions should be invited " to affiliate to the Communist Party ".[1] Much publicity was given to a pamphlet by Trotsky entitled *Where is Britain Going?* originally published in Russian in the summer of 1925.[2] The conclusion was based on the hypothesis that the Independent Labour Party had hitherto acted as the intellectual spearhead and driving force of the Labour Party, and that this rôle was reserved in future for the CPGB. But the CPGB could " become the vanguard of the working class only in so far as that class comes into irreconcilable antagonism with the conservative bureaucracy in the trade unions and in the Labour Party ", and could " prepare for the rôle of leadership only by a relentless criticism of all the directing personnel of the British Labour movement ". A clash on a world-wide scale

[1] *Communist Papers*, Cmd. 2682 (1926), pp. 72-73.

[2] L. Trotsky, *Kuda Idet Angliya?* (1925); chapters appeared in *Pravda*, May 28, June 4, 11, 17, 1925. Two English editions, printed from the same plates, were issued in February and October 1926; the first contained an introduction by Brailsford and a short preface by Trotsky dated May 24, 1925, the second, which was issued by the CPGB, a new preface by Trotsky (which also appeared in the second German edition) dated May 6, 1926. Earlier in 1926 Trotsky published a further article designed as a postscript to the work (*Pravda*, February 11, 1926), and a comment on Brailsford's introduction entitled *Brailsford and Marxism* (*ibid.* March 14, 1926); these were reprinted in L. Trotsky, *Kuda Idet Angliya?*, Vyp. 2 (1926).

would bring the Communist Party to power " as the party of proletarian dictatorship ".[1] The fourteenth Russian party congress in December 1925 gave Zinoviev the occasion for a review of the British movement as seen from Moscow. He elaborated the argument, often repeated at this time, that the " decline of British influence in the colonies " had reduced the super-profits of imperialism, and therefore the power of the bourgeoisie " to continue the corruption of a substantial stratum of the working class, the so-called labour aristocracy ". This accounted for " the turn to the Left of a whole number of leaders of the English trade union movement ", and enabled Zinoviev to look forward optimistically to " the immense conflict " with the miners which was due to break out in Great Britain in the following May — " a conflict which will take on unprecedented and hitherto unknown dimensions ". Zinoviev defended the Anglo-Russian council against Ruth Fischer and the German Left, as well as against " other comrades ", who had denounced it as a piece of opportunism ; and he predicted for the *rapprochement* between the British and Soviet trade unions " an immense historical future ".[2] In the new year of 1926 the central executive committee of the CPGB adopted a defiant resolution :

> We believe that the British workers can turn their *defensive into an offensive*, and assert a demand for better conditions which will be the prelude to a complete victory over the capitalists.[3]

And this was followed a month later by a manifesto proclaiming that, in the opinion of the CPGB, " the only possible defence of the workers is a mighty counter-attack ".[4] A " conference of action " of the NMM which assembled in London on March 21, 1926, consisted of an impressive array of more than 800 delegates representing nearly a million workers. It rejected the Samuel report on the mines and demanded a plan for direct action including the formation of factory and pit committees : at the same

[1] L. Trotsky, *Kuda Idet Angliya?* (1925), pp. 140-141, 145.

[2] *XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), pp. 655-657, 675-676.

[3] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 12, January 19, 1926, pp. 150-151.

[4] *Ibid.* No. 24, February 9, 1926, pp. 346-347.

time it professed loyalty to the general council of the TUC.[1] But no ambiguities were allowed to mar the picture in Moscow of a British trade union movement driven inexorably to the Left by the pressure of capitalist employers.

Meanwhile the attempt to organize a Left opposition movement in the Labour Party itself, though foreshadowed at the seventh congress of the CPGB in May 1925,[2] continued to hang fire till the hostile attitude of the Labour Party at the Liverpool conference stung the communists into action. In November 1925 the CPGB convened a conference in London which set up a committee for the organization of a National Left-Wing Movement to serve as a spearhead of opposition.[3] On January 20, 1926, the presidium of IKKI discussed the situation created for the CPGB by the "persecutions", and approved its attempt, on the one hand, to maintain the legality of the party and, on the other, to "crystallize out a Left wing in the Labour Party".[4] But the new movement, though it was a thorn in the side of the Labour Party for some years, never enjoyed the success or prestige of the NMM or shook the stubborn resistance of the party to communism. Its relative insignificance demonstrated once more that the key to the British workers' movement lay in the trade unions. It was in the trade unions, not in the political arena, that the battle of communism in Great Britain was fought and lost.

(c) *The French Communist Party (PCF)*

The interval between the Clichy congress of the PCF in January 1925 and the session of the fifth enlarged IKKI two months later witnessed a crystallization of the opposition within the French party. Rosmer and Monatte, expelled from the party, started publication in January 1925 of a monthly journal *Révolu-*

[1] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 135; Earl Browder reported on the conference in *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale* No. 4 (63), April 1926, pp. 233-237. A more highly-coloured account was given by Hardy, the national secretary of the NMM, in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 55, April 9, 1926, p. 790.

[2] See p. 345, note 1 above.

[3] *Sunday Worker*, December 13, 1925; *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 136, where the move is said to have been provoked by the Liverpool conference.

[4] *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 8.

tion Prolétarienne, which purported to uphold the true principles of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky against current distortions, and served as a focus for malcontents still remaining in the party. On February 9, 1925, a letter signed by 80 members of the PCF was despatched to IKKI. It complained of "*the suppression of all criticism and self-criticism* within the party". Opposition speakers at the Clichy congress had been jeered at and insulted, and their remarks distorted in the party press. The letter protested against the expulsion of Rosmer, Monatte and Delagarde. Even Souvarine's "acts of indiscipline" had not merited so severe a punishment as expulsion; Lenin had hesitated over the expulsion of Levi, and Souvarine's offences were "incomparably less grave". The letter attributed the crisis not to personal reasons, but to reasons "at once of a national and international character", which were not further specified. The crisis in the Russian party, about which no discussion was allowed, and the demand "*at all costs to take up a position*", had led to "an incredible passivity" in the rank and file of the PCF. Five days later Loriot in a personal letter to Zinoviev expressed his entire agreement with the letter of the 80, adding that, if any publicity had been given to it, the number of signatures could have been multiplied tenfold.[1] A month later, theses submitted by the opposition in the PCF to the fifth enlarged IKKI [2] opened with the propositions that "*the party is moving away from the masses instead of drawing near to them*" and that "the leadership of the party is bankrupt". They took the view — a favourite view of Trotsky at this period [3] — that the conflict between American and British imperialism "will probably be sharpened to the point of war", which would "precipitate the explosion of universal revolution". They attacked the absurdity of saying that "Fascism is here" in France, and argued that social-democracy was the "Left wing" not of Fascism, but of the bourgeoisie. Finally, they openly condemned the decisions of the fifth congress of Comintern, which had abandoned the goal of "the conquest of a

[1] Copies of these letters, which were not published, are in the Trotsky archives, T 849, 850; the date of the letter of the 80 is taken from the broadsheet of February 5, 1926, cited on p. 366, note 1 below.

[2] Trotsky archives, T 851: the theses were dated March 23, 1925, two days after the formal opening of the fifth enlarged IKKI.

[3] See pp. 469-470 below.

majority" and substituted Bolshevization "interpreted in the sense of sectarianization": the "united front *exclusively* with the masses" proclaimed by the fifth congress was tantamount to a rejection of the policies of a united front and a workers' government.

The leaders of Comintern seem to have regarded silence as the best answer to the protests of the French party opposition; the letter of the 80 and the theses were not published and not discussed by the enlarged IKKI. In general the fifth IKKI of March–April 1925 had little occasion to concern itself with the affairs of the PCF. Even though Treint personally may have ceased to command unqualified confidence in Moscow,[1] he had proved docile to every prompting from headquarters; the processes of Bolshevization were well advanced in the French party; and no alternative leader had appeared on the horizon. The disintegration of the Herriot government, now evidently at its last gasp, was hailed by Zinoviev as an illustration of the ending of the democratic-pacifist era; and Treint harped again on the advance of Fascism in France, though with sufficient moderation to keep within the Comintern line.[2] The instructions to the PCF in the general resolution of the session were conventional, but comprised two points which were to prove significant in the light of later happenings: "anti-militarist propaganda" and "energetic work in the colonies".[3] At the very end of the session Sémard raised the question of the *Révolution Prolétarienne*, pointing out that it published articles by Trotsky and frequently expressed agreement with him. Some members of the party, he said, concluded that Rosmer and Monatte enjoyed Trotsky's support; it seemed desirable to ask Trotsky to make it clear whether the use of his name by them was authorized by him or not.[4] This challenge preceded by a few weeks the far more embarrassing challenge to Trotsky to disavow Max Eastman's writings.[5] But it was not till some months later that Trotsky

[1] See pp. 152-153 above.

[2] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 47-48, 102-103.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 489.

[4] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 484-485.

[5] See Vol. 2, pp. 62-63.

found time to dissociate himself from his French supporters.[1]

Treint had, no doubt, been warned privately in Moscow against the dangers of a too repressive régime in the party. An offer was now made to Loriot, the most prominent spokesman of the Right opposition within the party, to print a statement of the opposition case in the *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*; and the issue of May 1, 1925, carried a long set of theses drafted by Loriot. These took the view that the revolution was not imminent; complained of the persistent exaggeration of the danger of Fascism and the attempt to denounce as Fascist everything that was not communist, leading to the false corollary of an identification of social-democracy with Fascism; and protested against the suppression of free discussion and the imposition of opinions by the national leadership and by IKKI. Bolshevization had meant in practice sectarianism in the party and growing divorce from the masses.[2] But this airing of differences did nothing either to appease the opposition or to improve the spirit of the party. Meanwhile, Herriot had fallen, and had been succeeded by Painlevé. The PCF participated, in accordance with the programme laid down at the Paris congress, in the local elections of May 3 and 10, 1925, withdrawing its candidates at the second ballot where their maintenance was likely to mean the defeat of the Bloc des Gauches by the Bloc National. But the results were disappointing; though there were no strictly comparable figures, the communist vote had almost everywhere significantly declined since the parliamentary elections of the preceding year. Recriminations continued in the party between those who had

[1] After the publication of Trotsky's statement of July 1, 1925, about Eastman, the central committee of the PCF again drew his attention to the *Révolution Prolétarienne* group, which " makes use of his name and his alleged friendship " to attack the party, Comintern and the Soviet Government, and begged him to end this " ambiguous situation " (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 111, July 21, 1925, pp. 1537-1538). Two months later Trotsky replied that, though he had known Rosmer and Monatte since 1915, his participation in the affairs of the PCF had ceased in the winter of 1923–1924; that he had first seen *Révolution Prolétarienne* in the summer of 1925; and that, even if he did not agree with the attacks made on him, he rejected this kind of defence (*ibid.* No. 139, October 6, 1925, pp. 2037-2038; Trotsky's reply was also published in *Révolution Prolétarienne*, No. 10, October 1925, pp. 1-6, with an argumentative comment by the editors).

[2] *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 18, May 1, 1925, pp. 1177-1186; Loriot was quoted *ibid.* No. 17, April 15, 1925, p. 1061, as having said that " we should not copy mechanically the organization of the Russian party ".

disliked any kind of concession to the Bloc des Gauches and those who thought that united front tactics should have been pursued more vigorously. On May 11, 1925, a further letter was sent to IKKI by 130 party members, analysing the electoral defeat and once more denouncing the official optimism and misguided policies of the leaders.[1]

At this moment an event occurred which overshadowed the fortunes of the PCF for several months. In the middle of May 1925 hostilities broke out, in the coastal region of French Morocco commonly known as the Rif, between French troops and the rebel leader Abd-el-Krim, who in the previous autumn had swept over Spanish Morocco inflicting severe defeats on Spanish forces. When the rebels in Spanish Morocco scored their first successes in September 1924, Sémard and Doriot, on behalf of the PCF and the Communist Youth League, had sent a telegram to Abd-el-Krim, hailing " the brilliant victory of the Moroccan people over the Spanish imperialists " and promising the support of the French and European proletariat in the struggle against " all imperialists, including the French " ; and a joint " action committee ", said to have been created by the French and Spanish Communist Youth Leagues, appealed to the French and Spanish soldiers to fraternize with the Arabs.[2] On December 7, 1924, the first conference of delegates of north African workers employed in the Paris region, to the number of 150, met in Paris under the auspices of the PCF and the CGTU.[3] The resolution of the fourth party congress of January 1925 on colonial questions, which stressed the need for greater attention to these questions on the part of the colonial commission of the party, evaded the issue of substance by a comprehensive reference to the decisions of the " world congresses " of Comintern. The congress also adopted without discussion a brief " address to the people of the Rif " expressing sympathy for it " in its struggle for liberation against the army of Primo de Rivera ".[4] On February 4, 1925, when the rising already seemed likely to spread to French Morocco, Doriot read to an indignant Chamber of Deputies his telegram of

[1] Trotsky archives, T 854.

[2] Both documents are in P. Sémard, *Marokko* (German transl. from French, 1925), pp. 76-77, 157-158.

[3] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 27, February 20, 1925, p. 397.

[4] *L'Humanité*, January 23, 25, 1925.

the previous September, and demanded in the name of the PCF the immediate evacuation and " total independence " of Morocco.[1] The outbreak of hostilities in French Morocco in May 1925 provoked a manifesto from the PCF reiterating the slogans of evacuation and fraternization. This was published in *L'Humanité* of May 14, 1925; and on the following day a mass meeting of 15,000 workers proclaimed its " solidarity with the republic of the Rif ".[2] An open letter from the CGTU to the CGT appealed once more for common action.[3] Throughout the summer a series of public demonstrations showed the unpopularity of the war among the workers of the Paris region, but did not shake the official attitude. The French socialists, though they expressed their dislike of the war in cautious language, were rigidly opposed to joint action with the communists. On June 8, 1925, the " eastern bureau " of IKKI in Moscow issued a manifesto " Against the Rif War ". It attacked both the Painlevé government which had " unleashed " the war and the Herriot government which had " prepared " it, and ended with a call for " the fraternization of the French soldiers and the *Rifains* through a prompt peace " and " the complete independence of the colonial peoples ".[4] This seemed at first sight a total endorsement of the action of the PCF and an injunction to proceed further on the same course. But a closer examination revealed, to those familiar with the subtleties of Comintern vocabulary, faintly perceptible nuances of hesitation and restraint. " Fraternization through a prompt peace " had taken the place of fraternization at the front, and " the complete independence of the colonial peoples " was less directly provocative than the specific demand for the immediate evacuation of Morocco. The IKKI manifesto heralded a change of mood which derived from two interconnected causes.

In the first place, the Estonian failure of December 1924 and the disastrous Bulgarian *coup* of April 1925 had reinforced

[1] The speech was apparently expurgated in the *Journal Officiel*, but was published in full in *L'Humanité*, February 5, 1925.

[2] *Ibid.* May 17, 1925.

[3] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 88, May 29, 1925, pp. 1201-1202; for a similar appeal from the PCF to the French Socialist Party see P. Sémard, *Marokko* (German transl. from French, 1925), p. 81.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 93, June 12, 1925, pp. 1264-1265; it also appeared in *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 22, July 1, 1925, pp. 1418-1420.

in the minds of the Soviet leaders fears, originally engendered by the German fiasco of 1923, of further premature attempts at revolution. Yet this was the course into which the PCF, in its efforts to denounce and sabotage the Moroccan war, seemed to be irrevocably drifting. Treint, in particular, had failed to take the hint already dropped during his visit to Moscow in January 1925.[1] In his endeavour to pursue the classic revolutionary policy of transforming the imperialist war into a civil war, he seemed to be turning his back on the united front, isolating the party from moderate opinion, even among the workers, and taking up the " ultra-Left " position which Comintern was now everywhere concerned to condemn. Secondly, the Soviet leaders were acutely alarmed at an international situation which threatened to unite western Europe against them; and, at a time when Germany, under strong pressure from Great Britain, was advancing along the road that led to Locarno, the possibility of detaching France from the new combination and drawing her nearer to the Soviet Union was the dream of Soviet diplomacy.[2] It was particularly inconvenient that the vocal opposition of Comintern and the PCF to the Moroccan war should have bitterly antagonized the French Government and a large part of French public opinion. At the beginning of July 1925, a monster meeting of Paris workers organized by the CGTU and addressed by Barbusse protested against the war in Morocco and the taxes imposed by Caillaux.[3] " Committees of action ", inspired and led by the PCF, intensified their propaganda against the war; and in the latter part of July 1925 a " central committee of action " issued a proclamation " against colonial wars and colonisation ", which included direct encouragement of insurrection in all territories of the French Empire.[4] An international youth conference meeting in Berlin on July 21-22, 1925, under the auspices of KIM adopted theses on the war in Morocco which included demands to " attempt by all means to bring about the defeat of the French bourgeoisie in its war of robbery against the people of the Rif ", and to " utilize for purposes of agitation the first cases of slaughter

[1] See p. 153 above. [2] See pp. 45-46 above, 420-421 below.

[3] For the proceedings see *L'Humanité*, July 5, 1925; for the text of the resolutions, *ibid.* July 7, 1925.

[4] *Ibid.* July 23, 1925.

in the army and fleet ".[1] The French press raged against constant incitements to mutiny and treason in communist newspapers and in the speeches of communist orators. The resentment aroused by these proceedings may well have been one of the causes of the slow progress of Franco-Soviet negotiations; and Krasin's denial of Soviet aid to Abd-el-Krim came too late to stem the tide.[2] By August or September 1925, some, at any rate, of the Soviet leaders would have been glad to be rid of an embarrassing commitment. But the liberation of colonial territories was too deeply imbedded in Soviet ideology for any retreat from this policy to be contemplated. The most that could be hoped for was some tact and restraint in its application.

Treint's readiness to obey orders did not carry with it the insight to anticipate them. On August 1, 1925, happy in the belief that he had the whole-hearted support of Moscow behind him, he published over his signature in *Cahiers du Bolchevisme* a long " draft thesis ", which was intended as a systematic exposition of the party attitude to the war. It was an uncompromising document. Means for preventing war put forward in other quarters — collective resistance to an " aggressor ", humanitarian pacifism, the syndicalist general strike — were passed in review and dismissed as worthless; the only remedy was " the revolutionary action of the masses directed by the proletariat and by its communist party ". No guarantee could be given that the war in Morocco would lead to " an immediately revolutionary situation ", but communists must work in this sense. Both " defeatist agitation " and fraternization were called for:

> The more the soldiers fraternize and are supported by the proletarian movement, the fewer soldiers will be killed, and the more quickly will the general staff be thrown into the sea.

Finally, " even if the majority of the masses stood, as in 1914, in support of imperialism and against their own interest, the duty of the party would be to struggle ' against the current ' ".[3] The reference to the volume of articles by Lenin and Zinoviev published in Switzerland in 1916 under the title *Against the Current* was pointed and audacious. In the following month two fresh

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 125, August 27, 1925, p. 1813; for this conference see p. 995 below.

[2] See p. 419 below.

[3] *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 24, August 1, 1925, pp. 1540-1546.

items were added to the activities of the PCF. In the first place, France became involved in a second colonial war in Syria; and this was henceforth bracketed with the war in Morocco in party propaganda. Secondly, the party took advantage of a congress of the Bloc Ouvrier et Paysan about to meet at Strasburg on September 20, 1925, to launch an appeal supporting "the right of the population of Alsace and Lorraine to self-determination, including the right of total separation from France if it so decides", and demanding a plebiscite to be preceded by the total withdrawal of French military and civilian authorities from the territory.[1] Nothing loath, the congress pronounced itself "the sole authentic representative of the working masses of our country", and forwarded its demand for a plebiscite in Alsace-Lorraine to the foreign ministers of the principal Powers about to assemble in Locarno.[2] No stone had been left unturned to exacerbate patriotic French opinion against the communists and against Moscow.

Nor was the situation much happier on the trade union front. Following the injunctions of Profintern and of the French party congress of January 1925,[3] the CGTU had sent an invitation to the CGT for a joint conference to discuss trade union unity. The CGT, fully alive to the situation, had replied that its attitude would be officially defined at its September congress, but that unity could be realized only by the return of the workers to the CGT unions.[4] Nothing daunted by this rebuff, the CGTU in a further communication reiterated its project for a joint congress, and proposed that the way for such a congress should be prepared by a joint general meeting of trade unions belonging to both federations and by a joint committee of representatives of both.[5] This importunity seems to have been met by silence on

[1] *L'Humanité*, September 25, 1925.

[2] *Ibid.* September 30, 1925; in November 1925 a conference of communist parliamentarians in Brussels passed a resolution claiming for Alsace-Lorraine the right "to decide its own fate, even to the point of complete separation from any imperialist Great Power which seeks to subdue it" (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 155, November 17, 1925, p. 2332). Communist interest in Alsace-Lorraine at this time was presumably inspired by the Locarno treaty, which guaranteed the existing Franco-German frontier.

[3] See pp. 153-154 above.

[4] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), p. 522.

[5] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 66, April 24, 1925, p. 899.

the part of the CGT. But the appearance of a Left wing in the CGT encouraged the CGTU to pursue its campaign. The July demonstration of Paris workers against the war in Morocco had also passed a resolution demanding unity of action between the CGTU and the CGT and "the fusion of all trade unions";[1] and with this end in view the CGTU fixed its congress to open in September 1925 on the date already announced for the CGT congress. The CGT then advanced its congress to the end of August, and the CGTU followed suit. Both congresses met in Paris in the week August 26–31, 1925. The first action of the CGTU congress was to appoint a delegation to visit and address the congress of the CGT. The latter, by a majority vote and against the advice of its leaders, decided to hear the delegation, which put forward the proposal for a unity congress. The CGT leaders once more went into action against the proposal, which was rejected; but a substantial minority of 300 unions voted for it. The CGTU went forward with plans for the congress. The leaders of the CGT threatened with exclusion any of their unions which sent representatives to it; and persuasion or intimidation proved largely effective. When the unity congress met in the first week of September 1925 it was attended by no more than 23 delegates from trade unions belonging to the CGT; and some of these appear to have left before the congress ended.[2] Though trade union unity remained as a goal and a slogan, the fiasco of the unity congress in September 1925 left behind it a mood of pessimism in the CGTU about further efforts in the same direction. Communists, who resented "the systematic policy of splitting" pursued by the CGT, preferred to concentrate on the Red unions, "neglecting work in the reformist unions".[3] Meanwhile the militancy of the CGTU matched that

[1] For this meeting see p. 354 above.

[2] A fairly frank account of these events was given to the sixth enlarged IKKI by Monmousseau in February 1926 (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 351-354); other accounts are in *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 10 (57), October 1925, pp. 188-191, 223-226. The resolution of the abortive congress in favour of trade union unity is quoted in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 129, September 8, 1925, p. 1887.

[3] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 78, 304. A review of the rival forces at this time showed that the split followed partly territorial, partly professional, lines. The CGTU

of the PCF. On October 12, 1925, the party campaign against the fighting in Morocco and Syria culminated in a 24-hour general strike called by the CGTU after the CGT had refused the usual invitation to cooperate; on this occasion, the slogan "Down with the war" was reinforced — perhaps a confession of its waning appeal — by the slogan "Down with Caillaux's taxes". In spite of an official boycott by the CGT and by the socialists, 900,000 workers responded to the appeal.[1] On October 15–20, 1925, a party conference met at Ivry, in the environs of Paris, to take stock of the situation. It condemned the Right opposition, approved all that had been done by the organs of the party, and passed resolutions on the danger of war, on the war in Morocco (commending the slogans of "fraternization" and "immediate evacuation"), on the international situation, on trade union unity, and on the organization of the party.[2]

The Ivry conference, though its proceedings were apparently marked by no open dissent, proved to be the last vote of confidence secured by the existing party leadership. Dissatisfaction was now too widespread to be ignored. The strike of October 12, 1925, though officially hailed as a success, had led to no results except the arrest of large numbers of communists, for the first time since the Ruhr period, on charges of sedition. The loyalty of the army was unshaken; and, while the fighting dragged on, the government appeared to have the situation in hand. It was the protesters who were tired and discredited. Party membership suffered an ominous decline.[3] Two disquieting events followed the end of the Ivry conference. The first was the revival by

predominated in the regions of Paris and Lyons, the CGT in the north and in parts of the south; the CGTU predominated on the railways, and in the iron and steel and building industries, the CGT in the textile industry, in retail trade and in municipal enterprises (*ibid.* pp. 349-350).

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 146, October 27, 1925, pp. 2162-2163 (for a telegram from Profintern to the CGTU see also *ibid.* p. 2168).

[2] For an account of the conference see *ibid.* No. 150, November 3, 1925, pp. 2231-2233. The resolutions were published in *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 30, November 1, 1925, pp. 2069-2093; No. 31, November 15, 1925, pp. 2128-2144; No. 32, December 1, 1925, pp. 2221-2229.

[3] Sémard at the fifth party congress in June 1926 spoke of the losses incurred during "our defeatist campaign against the wars in Morocco and Syria": the Algerian section of the party lost three-quarters of its members (*V^e Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), p. 10).

Souvarine, as a private venture, of the *Bulletin Communiste* which he had formerly edited as a party journal. Restarted at the end of October 1925, it appeared weekly for more than three months. It secured the collaboration of several disgruntled members of the PCF, and its telling sallies were a thorn in the side of the party leaders at a critical moment. The second event was a recrudescence of organized opposition within the party. The voice of criticism had not been silenced by the expulsion of Souvarine, Monatte and Rosmer; it had found new spokesmen in Loriot, Dunois and Paz, who repeated the same complaints about the erroneous policies and dictatorial methods of the party leaders. On October 25, 1925, 250 party members signed a letter protesting against the autocratic régime in the party introduced by " the megalomaniacs of the Politburo and the central committee ", and attacking almost all the policies pursued during the past year — the clumsy application of united front tactics, the slogans used in the campaign against the war in Morocco, the campaign about Alsace-Lorraine (" why not demand the evacuation of Nice, Savoy and Corsica? "), and the demand for cell organization in the party. Eleven communist deputies were said to have been among the signatories.[1] An assault on this scale was bound to leave its mark.

Whether or not the contents of the letter of the 250 were already known to it, the Politburo of the party which met at the beginning of November 1925 found itself on the defensive. It passed a resolution approving the conclusions of the Ivry conference. But, after the usual congratulatory phrases, it proceeded to make some surprising concessions. It was wrong to denounce all who uttered dissentient opinions as Rightists: fear of such censure, it admitted, had made some delegates reluctant to speak their mind. " The national conference ", it went on, " did not completely succeed in dissipating this slight *malaise* "; and some comrades had complained " of too mechanical methods of work

[1] The full text does not appear to have been published; but extensive extracts appeared in *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 14, January 22, 1926, pp. 211-215 (where a list of signatories numbering " almost 280 " was given), and it was quoted by Zinoviev and Sémard at the sixth enlarged IKKI in February 1926 (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 50-51, 77-78) and in the resolution on the PCF adopted at that session (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 604).

and of discipline allegedly applied in an unintelligent manner ".[1] The *malaise* was not likely to be removed by the mere assurances that the direction of the party had always favoured " free discussion ". It seems to have been about this time that Treint read the danger signals and, together with Doriot, made tentative proposals to the other party leaders, including Sémard and Suzanne Girault, to put some water into the wine of current party doctrine. But these proposals did not immediately find favour.[2] Treint's habit of keeping things in his own hands made him unpopular with his colleagues ; and when the change eventually came, far from reaping any credit from it, he became the scapegoat for the sins of the past and the easy target for every form of discontent. In the previous February the central committee under Treint's direction had put out a series of propagandist slogans which included a demand for " the establishment of a revolutionary tribunal to try all those responsible for the high cost of living, for imperialist wars, for the organization of Fascism, or for aggression against Soviet Russia ".[3] This had excited no great attention at the time. But it was now recalled, together with the demand for fraternization and the demand to turn the war in Morocco into a civil war,[4] as examples of extremist or ultra-Left policies, which, however justifiable in terms of theory, were inappropriate in a situation not " immediately revolutionary ", and inopportune at a time when united front tactics were the order of the day. A proposed joint congress of the CGTU and CGT trade unions of Alsace-Lorraine was said to have been wrecked because the communists insisted on dragging

[1] *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 31, November 15, 1925, pp. 2125-2127.

[2] At the fifth party congress in June 1926 Treint, while admitting his previous errors, claimed to have been " one of those who recommended the reform (redressement) of December 2 before the intervention of the International ". Suzanne Girault admitted that Treint and Doriot had made such suggestions at a meeting at the office of *L'Humanité* " some weeks before " December 2, 1925 ; but the suggestions had been sprung without warning on their colleagues, who resisted for that reason (*V^e Congrès National du Parti Communiste Français* (1927), pp. 385-386, 495).

[3] *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No 13, February 15, 1925, p. 843.

[4] Treint afterwards denied that he had ever called for this : what he had said was that " every colonial war may develop into a war between imperialist states, and in this case the struggle against war demands the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil war " (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 517).

in the question of self-determination for the territory.[1] It was difficult to deny that such demands had excited public opinion against the PCF and isolated it even from the more moderate elements of the Left. When the fall of the Painlevé government, the last government resting on the support of the Bloc des Gauches, provoked the usual ministerial crisis, the PCF on November 8, 1925, made the now customary offer to the socialist party of a united front for immediate objectives; and the offer was more than once repeated in the succeeding fortnight. But it was noticeable that the invitation omitted the slogans of fraternization and evacuation, as well as any mention of Alsace-Lorraine, and merely called for collaboration to end the wars in Morocco and Syria, and to support such relatively innocuous demands as the nationalization of the " great capitalist monopolies ", the establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade, a progressive capital levy and workers' control of production.[2]

This change in the direction of moderation came, however, too late to reassure the leaders of Comintern, now everywhere engaged in a campaign against the " ultra-Left ". As long ago as January 1925 it had been rumoured in Moscow that, if Comintern could find an alternative " team ", the existing leadership of the PCF would be swept away.[3] The long-standing enmity between Treint and Humbert-Droz was notorious.[4] More important, Treint was, from the point of view of the divisions in the Russian party, a Zinovievite; and, while the differences between Stalin and Zinoviev at this time did not involve issues of foreign policy, the prestige of Treint was bound up with that of his patron. Souvarine, whose ear was always close to the ground, asked in the *Bulletin Communiste* towards the end of November when " the salutary sweep of the broom " in the PCF was to be expected.[5] On December 1, 1925, the day after Chicherin's arrival in Paris for negotiations with the French Government[6] and the day of the signature of the Locarno treaties in London,

[1] *Ibid.* p. 309.

[2] *L'Humanité*, November 21, 1925; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 163, December 11, 1925, pp. 2433-2435; *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 6, November 27, 1925, jeered at them as " demands of an extreme humility ".

[3] *Ibid.* No. 5, November 20, 1925, p. 75.

[4] See pp. 139, 152, note 2 above.

[5] *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 6, November 27, 1925, p. 67.

[6] See p. 421 below.

the central committee of the PCF, reinforced by the regional party secretaries and by a representative of IKKI in the person of Humbert-Droz, was hastily convened in Paris; and on that and the following day it took decisions which were afterwards regarded as an important turning-point in party history. The embarrassment of the occasion consisted in the need to abandon extremist and ultra-Left positions which had proved unrewarding and inconvenient without thereby appearing to concede merit to the Right opposition, which had attacked those positions for many months past. This was achieved in the form of an open letter to all members of the party, which appeared in *L'Humanité* on December 6, 1925,[1] and which bore witness to Treint's pliability in face of attack. It opened with Treint's favourite denunciation of Fascism. "The appeals of Fascism have found a certain echo"; and the dangers of Fascism were so great that "*the party has the duty of mobilizing all its forces to rally and organize the broadest masses in order to resolve the crisis in a revolutionary manner*". But this rhetoric covered a substantial retreat. A complete application of united front tactics was advocated "from the base to the summit" — the usual corrective to the Leftist policy of the united front "from below". It was admitted that the slogans used in the Moroccan war had lacked "precision" and popular appeal: it had been an error to make fraternization "an absolute condition of the realization of the united front". The need was stressed for "a concrete and limited programme of immediate demands", though this "rectification of our practice of the united front" was, of course, "separated by an abyss from the opportunist conceptions of the Right". Other criticisms followed: more use should be made of "the cadres of the older generation", and the campaign for trade union unity had been conducted with insufficient attention to "immediate demands". Finally the resolution recommended "an internal policy and a leadership of the party which collects

[1] The form may have been suggested by the corresponding manœuvre in the KPD conducted in the open letter of IKKI of August 1925 (see pp. 328-330 above). Zinoviev at the sixth enlarged IKKI of February 1926 approvingly remarked: "In Germany we had to write an open letter from Moscow; in France our comrades in the central committee came to a similar conclusion and themselves wrote the letter" (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 49-50).

round itself, and assimilates, the immense majority of the party ", and " a coherent and flexible organization ". An unpalatable dish was seasoned by a concluding denunciation of " the handful of opposition intellectuals who are in league with the enemies of the party and of the International ". But the sense of the pronouncement as a warning against the ultra-Left was unmistakable.[1] No formal decision was taken on the leadership. The prestige of Treint and Doriot must have been weakened by the censure on the policies with which they had been especially associated; and the appointment of Treint as editor of *Cahiers du Bolchevisme* may have been intended to remove him from the exercise of more directly political functions. The first act of Treint as editor of the party journal was to reverse his earlier position and publish an article emphatically proclaiming that the Moroccan war slogans of fraternization and evacuation had been " too advanced ", and should not have been used for united front purposes.[2]

Had the opposition been interested solely in the policies of the party, almost complete satisfaction had been given to it. But it was chiefly concerned to secure direct or indirect control over the party leadership and the reinstatement of the expelled leaders of the opposition. Here nothing had changed in substance; and the concessions made in the open letter whetted the appetite for more. On December 15, 1925, 24 party members addressed to the central committee a reply to the open letter. The reply asserted that the conference of December 1–2 had met and taken

[1] It was afterwards described as the beginning of " the struggle against ultra-Left tendencies " (*Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 163); at a still later period, when there had been another turn to the Left, party orthodoxy detected in the open letter symptoms of " a dangerous slide towards opportunism " (A. Ferrat, *Histoire du Parti Communiste Français* (1931), p. 170).

[2] *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 34, January 1, 1926, pp. 3-6. *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 12, January 8, 1926, p. 188, reported that, " at the instance of the representative of Comintern ", Treint and Doriot had been replaced in the leadership by Suzanne Girault and Sauvage. But this was wishful thinking on the part of Souvarine; Treint and Doriot continued to figure as the party leaders at the session of the central committee of January 31–February 2, 1926 (see p. 366 below). A later account in the German party journal asserted that the session of December 1–2, 1925, had transferred the leadership from Treint and Suzanne Girault to Sémard and Doriot (*Die Internationale*, ix, No. 14, July 20, 1926, pp. 421-424); but this reflected the situation after the fifth party congress in June 1926.

its decisions behind the backs of the party, which learned of the conference only when it read the open letter; reiterated previous complaints of a régime of "mechanical pressure, intimidation and administrative exclusiveness" in the party; and taunted the central committee with having "made a volte-face to adopt the point of view of the opposition".[1] Since the opposition was clearly in no mind to disarm, and shafts continued to fly, the party secretariat took the offensive and published a letter in *L'Humanité* of January 3, 1926, summoning those party members who were associated with the *Bulletin Communiste* or the *Révolution Prolétarienne* to cease collaboration with these counter-revolutionary journals.[2] This provoked a defiant answer, published in the columns of *Bulletin Communiste*, from seven members of the party who were also members of the editorial board of that journal. The rebels openly proclaimed that the *Bulletin Communiste* and *Révolution Prolétarienne* were the only organs which offered "to the revolutionary spirit surviving in the party the possibility to express itself", and protested against the expulsion of the founders of these journals from the party.[3]

These manifestations suggested that a large-scale crisis was impending in the PCF, and that numerous secessions or expulsions could hardly be avoided. At the fourteenth Russian party congress in December 1925, Zinoviev, while blaming the leaders of the PCF for their failure to exploit a favourable situation, added that a "huge part" of responsibility for this failure rested on "a group of Right leaders headed by Rosmer, Souvarine, old Loriot and others", who had "played a renegade and strike-breaker rôle".[4] This lumping together of expelled and present members of the party opposition suggested a demand for further expulsions. But it soon transpired that nobody, either in Moscow

[1] The reply was published belatedly, not in *L'Humanité*, but in *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 36, January 21, 1926, pp. 231-234; it had already been published in *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 11, January 1, 1926, pp. 162-164. It also appeared as a printed broadsheet, a copy of which is in the Trotsky archives, T 859.

[2] The same issue also carried a notice that *Cahiers du Bolchevisme* would in future appear weekly (instead of fortnightly) in order to provide "a broad tribune for discussion".

[3] *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 13, January 15, 1926, p. 194.

[4] *XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (*B*) (1926), p. 659.

or in Paris, really wished to push the issue to extreme conclusions. On January 16, 1926, *L'Humanité* printed another letter from the party secretariat to the communist members of the board of the *Bulletin Communiste* who had defiantly taken up the challenge of the earlier letter of January 3. The letter, avoiding any issue of substance, declared that what was at stake was " the minimum of discipline without which no truly proletarian party can exist ", and the writers could " enjoy rights as members of the party only by respecting the most elementary discipline ". After this hint of sanctions, however, the letter concluded by inviting the rebels " once more, and for the last time ", to end their collaboration with the two journals. The sequel was surprising. In its issue of January 29, 1926, the *Bulletin Communiste* announced that it was suspending publication in order to see how the situation developed, and that the editorial board was dissolved.[1] In the end, two or three of the rebel ringleaders were expelled from the PCF, and no action was taken against the rest.

Meanwhile the presidium of IKKI in Moscow had discussed the problems of the PCF at sessions of January 13 and 20, 1926.[2] Its two resolutions on the PCF, which were published in *L'Humanité* on January 23, 1926, revealed an ambivalent attitude. On the one hand, it condemned the " counter-revolutionary " attitude and " criminal activity " of the opposition, and instructed party members to sever all relations with Souvarine's " anti-communist " journal; on the other, it pointedly refrained from taking sides in the dispute, and mildly suggested that dissentients should " have the possibility " to air their views in the party press. The opposition refused to be mollified by these back-handed concessions: the 24 signatories of the letter of December 15, 1925, now issued a further broadsheet protesting against the falsification or suppression of their statements in the party press and against the failure of IKKI to reply to previous letters of the opposition. But the ending was an anti-climax. The opposition

[1] *Bulletin Communiste*, No. 15, January 29, 1926, pp. 225-226; the real motive may have been lack of funds rather than desire to ease the situation for the dissidents. A notice in *L'Humanité*, February 20, 1926, stated that the *Bulletin Communiste* group was about to transform itself into a " Marx-Lenin circle ", and warned members of the PCF against joining the circle.

[2] *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 8.

would not leave the party, and declared that it was now protesting " for the last time before relapsing into the silence and immobility which is imposed on it ".[1] All was not well, however, even in the party leadership. A further session of the enlarged central committee was held from January 31 to February 2, 1926. It received three reports. The first, by Treint, was devoted to the current situation and the problems of the united front, and followed well-worn lines; the second, by Doriot, once more denounced the opposition, and endorsed the action taken against the signatories of " the letter of the 250 " and the collaborators with the *Bulletin Communiste* and *Révolution Prolétarienne*; the third, by Thorez, a rising young man who had been active in the campaign against the war in Morocco, dealt with party organization, especially the establishment of cells and of party fractions.[2] The resolutions on the first two reports were carried unanimously; the resolution on the third was carried against one adverse vote and two abstentions.[3] But a resolution of the party Politburo a few days later, while expressing general approval of these decisions, referred to differences of opinion on the question of the united front, and declared that the aim of united front tactics was not to bring about the secession of a few individuals from other parties, but to " revolutionize " the masses of workers still under the influence of the socialist party: this was apparently a snub to Treint who had been responsible for the resolution on the subject. The Politburo resolution concluded by underlining the importance of the two last meetings of the enlarged central committee — a hint at the decisive rejection of the ultra-Left policies of the previous year.[4] Dissensions were still rife in the party. But for the moment it seemed to have rounded an awkward corner; and everything was held in suspense for the sixth enlarged IKKI which was to meet in Moscow in the middle of February 1926.

[1] Trotsky archives, T 866; the broadsheet was dated February 5, 1926, but was probably written before the session of January 31–February 2, 1926 (see below), which is not referred to.

[2] For these questions, see pp. 915-917 below.

[3] The reports were printed in *L'Humanité*, February 4, 6, 1926; the resolutions *ibid.* February 11, 13, 1926. For a general account of the session see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 26, February 16, 1926, pp. 377-379.

[4] *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 39, February 11, 1926, pp. 386-388.

(*d*) *The Italian Communist Party* (*PCI*)

The peace between the factions in the Italian party patched up at the fifth congress of Comintern [1] had in fact changed nothing of substance. If after 1924 the battle of the factions in the PCI, or the controversy between the PCI and Comintern, became less violent and less destructive, this was not because the exhortations of Comintern were more convincing, or because real agreement had been achieved, but because the increasingly severe repression of all political activities opposed to the Fascist régime prevented differences from coming to a head.[2] No party congress could be held. Bordiga and his group maintained their refusal to enter the party central committee; and Bordiga continued to criticize the policy of the party and of Comintern as opportunist and non-Marxist. Though he had been elected a member of IKKI at the fifth congress, Bordiga refused to come to Moscow for the session of the enlarged IKKI in March 1925; and in his absence the discussion of the Italian question was uneventful and sterile. Scoccimarro, the leader of the Italian delegation and a member of the centre group, devoted more than half of an immensely long speech to an attack on Bordiga, whose influence on the "party masses" he admitted and deplored. Bordiga was denounced as an abstract theorist, who took no account of the existing phase of development and left the party no freedom of manœuvre; above all, he rejected the necessity for party discipline.[3] In the Italian commission Grieco, who appeared as the spokesman for Bordiga's group, met attacks by professing readiness to "review some of the opinions of the extreme Left" before the next party congress, and repeated this declaration in the plenary session.[4] Humbert-Droz, the *rapporteur* of the commission, in his speech in the plenary session congratulated the PCI on having, "by its adherence to the programme of action laid down by the fifth congress", consolidated the party and drawn the "comrades of the ultra-Left" into

[1] See pp. 164-167 above.

[2] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 190, dates a revival of "harsher persecutions" from January 1925.

[3] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 128-142.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 483.

practical work. The next task was ideological clarification. Humbert-Droz continued the attack on Bordiga, who had " taken up a hostile position against the International by declaring his complete solidarity with Trotsky " ; in this question, as in others, the extreme Left " becomes a Right ".[1] The same theme was taken up rather more cautiously in the resolution. The conclusion was that the party must bring about " a complete ideological clarification in its ranks ", and that its forthcoming congress must " choose between the tactics of Bordiga and Leninism ".[2] This was perhaps the most clear-cut example up to date of Bolshevization directed against the ultra-Left.

The session of IKKI was followed by an outburst of intensive controversy in the PCI. Bordiga set about organizing a " Left fraction " in the party under the name of a Comitato d' Intesa (Committee of Conciliation) which held a secret conference in Naples, always Bordiga's stronghold, in May 1925, and early in June 1925 made formal proposals to the party central committee for a discussion of their differences.[3] The controversy went on throughout the summer in the colums of *Unità*. Gramsci, in a report to the party central committee of the Italian party, attacked Bordiga for refusing to take his place in IKKI, for his attitude to Trotsky and for his " sectarian tactics " : Bordiga, like Serrati after the second congress of Comintern, had " created a sort of local patriotism in contradiction to the discipline of a world organization ". Gramsci admitted that the accession of the Terzini to the PCI had aggravated the Right danger. But the danger from the Right was now only potential ; the danger from the Left was actual.[4] Bordiga and his supporters issued a statement protesting against the intervention of IKKI and its attempts to enforce " mechanical discipline ".[5] Meanwhile the journal of Comintern published a long historical analysis of Bordiga's errors from the time of the foundation of the party ;[6] and another

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 480-483.

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 518-521.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 7 (44), July 1925, pp. 123-125.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 111, July 21, 1925, pp. 1538-1540 ; for Serrati see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 225.

[5] Humbert-Droz archives, 0076 ; the statement is dated simply " July 1925 ".

[6] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 7 (44), July 1925, pp. 113-127.

article also apparently emanating from Comintern in Moscow attacked Bordiga's "abstentionist" attitude and his continued campaign against the party central committee and against IKKI.[1] A delegate of the PCI at the KPD congress of July 1925 indulged in a long denunciation of Bordiga, who rejected the whole conception of a disciplined Leninist party: when the central committee of the PCI had summoned Bordiga and his ultra-Left supporters to dissolve their fraction, they had returned a "polemical" answer.[2] Throughout the autumn of 1925 IKKI and its presidium were constantly occupied with the affairs of the PCI. On September 4, 1925, an open letter to members of the party criticized the whole tactics of the party since the fifth congress of Comintern, and accused Bordiga of "abstentionism" and "fatalism", as well as of a false diagnosis of Fascism. On November 19, 1925, the presidium approved an appeal to the Italian workers and peasants for a "defensive united front", and a week later a further open letter to the party on the questions of the united front and of the trade unions.[3]

It was not till January 21, 1926, that it proved possible to hold the third congress of the PCI — its first full congress since 1922 — on French soil, at Lyons. Gramsci was the *rapporteur* on the main political issue, Togliatti on the trade unions.[4] Immensely long theses were submitted to the congress on behalf of the central committee.[5] They embodied current Comintern doctrine on such issues as the Bolshevization of the party, the adoption of factory cells as the basis of party organization, and united front tactics, and denounced the ultra-Left and Bordiga by name as

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 120, August 11, 1925, pp. 1724-1726.

[2] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), pp. 294-295; at a later stage of the proceedings another Italian delegate announced that Bordiga had decided to dissolve his fraction (*ibid.* p. 647).

[3] *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 9; A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *10 Let Kominterna* (1929), p. 331, dates the first open letter August 20, 1925 — perhaps by confusion with the open letter to the KPD (see p. 329, note 3 above).

[4] *Die Kommunistische Partei Italiens* (German transl. from Italian, 1952), p. 49; fuller accounts of the congress appeared in *Lo Stato Operaio*, which has not been available.

[5] For the theses in the form in which they were adopted by the congress see *Tridtsat' Let Ital'yanskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (Russian transl. from Italian, 1953), pp. 223-249. The French version in the Humbert-Droz archives (0004) carried the title "The Italian Situation and the Bolshevization of the PCI".

the product of petty bourgeois tendencies in a country where the proletariat was numerically weak. Bordiga submitted counter-theses, which rejected united front policies, the slogan of the worker-peasant government and the campaign for trade union unity, though the united front in concrete trade union questions was accepted. The counter-theses attacked the central committee of the PCI, and demanded a programme of action based on Bordiga's proposals at the fourth and fifth congresses of Comintern.[1] Bordiga once again conducted an active and indefatigable opposition, and resisted all policies designed to appeal to the masses, including the formation of communist fractions in non-party organizations. His main speech lasted for six hours; and the discussion on tactics which he provoked accounted for two-thirds of the time of the congress. Finally, the counter-theses were defeated, and the official theses, safely piloted through the congress by Gramsci and Togliatti, adopted by a large majority.[2]

On the trade union question, the congress once again steered a middle course, approving both a campaign for mass trade unions as opposed to the officially sponsored Fascist unions and the formation of communist party committees for agitation in the factories. Bordiga and the Left opposed the first of these proposals, alleging that trade unions could no longer perform their former functions under Fascism; Tasca and the Right objected to the second.[3] An " action-programme " for the party emanating from the congress laid stress on the need for cooperation with the peasants and for weaning them from the leadership of bourgeois parties. It repeated the current interpretations of Bolshevization, with due regard to " the danger of fractional activity of the ultra-

[1] The counter-theses were apparently published in *Unità*, January 18, 1926, which has not been available; for a summary see *Die Internationale*, No. 8, April 15, 1926, pp. 246-247.

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 2 (51), February 1926, pp. 86-87; according to this account by Humbert-Droz, which quotes no voting figures, 90 per cent of the delegates " adhered to the policy of the Communist International, cancelled the Rome theses, and condemned the ultra-Left deviation of Bordiga ". At the congress of the Italian Communist Youth League, once a stronghold of the opposition (see p. 167 above), Bordiga's group received only 5 per cent of the votes (*Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 189).

[3] See a report by Humbert-Droz to the sixth enlarged IKKI in *Pravda*, February 20, 1926.

Lefts within the party" and also to "the dangers of a Right deviation".[1] In spite of Bordiga's attitude, he was apparently invited to rejoin the party central committee, and is said to have replied by expressing aversion to the idea of "working with the leaders of this party".[2]

An important sequel of the third congress of the PCI was the transfer of Togliatti to Moscow as delegate of the Italian party to Comintern.[3] For the next few years Togliatti was firmly established in Moscow. He opened his account with an article in the Comintern journal exposing "the idealist foundations of Bordigism".[4] Bordiga appeared in the Italian delegation at the sixth enlarged plenum of IKKI which opened in February 1926, and played a conspicuous rôle throughout the session as chief spokesman of the ultra-Left.[5] But his main supporters were to be found in parties other than the Italian party, and his interventions had little direct bearing on Italian affairs. No Italian commission was set up during this session, and no resolution on the Italian party put forward. Zinoviev in his general speech spoke of its progress with rhetorical complacency:

> Our party is firmly at one with the masses. Fascism may indeed continue to murder our comrades by the hundreds; but nobody can destroy the Communist Party.[6]

In fact, after the crisis following Matteotti's assassination in 1924, Fascism had achieved a considerable measure of political as well

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 50, March 26, 1926, pp. 698-699; it is not clear whether this "programme" was actually approved by the congress, or drafted by the party central committee after the congress and issued in its name.

[2] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 199. Bordiga protested to Moscow against the penalization by the party of some of his supporters; but his protest was rejected by the international control commission, whose decision was confirmed by the presidium of IKKI on April 27, 1926 (*Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), pp. 97-98).

[3] According to R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 543, Togliatti received an invitation to settle with his family in Moscow as guests of Comintern, and, after having "wavered long between Stalin and the opposition", decided to accept; in March 1926 he was appointed to the secretariat of IKKI (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 55, April 9, 1926, p. 794).

[4] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 3 (52), March 1926, pp. 41-50.

[5] See pp. 500-502 below.

[6] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 447.

as of economic stabilization. The constitutional opposition faded away; the communists were isolated and suppressed. But with a reliable Italian spokesman always available at Comintern headquarters, and with political activity in Italy firmly crushed under Mussolini's iron heel, the affairs of the PCI gave little trouble in Moscow for some years to come.

(e) *The Czechoslovak Communist Party*

The divisions in the Czechoslovak party continued to provide an embarrassing and intractable problem. In November 1924, the second party congress, not without promptings from IKKI, had placed the party under the control of a central committee and a Politburo in which the Left had a narrow majority, but the Right leaders retained their seats.[1] No open quarrel occurred between them till February 1925 when the party organized public protests of workers against the cost of living. This step was denounced by an extreme Right group in the party, which was not represented in the central committee, as a dangerous provocation; Bubnik, the leader of the group, which apparently controlled the important party organization in Brno, had long been a trouble-maker in the party. The party Politburo recommended the expulsion of Bubnik and his principal lieutenant from the party. The party central committee, in endorsing the recommendation, included several other dissidents in the order of expulsion. The decision of the committee was taken by a majority of 19 to 11; the minority consisted of Šmeral, Zapotocky and the other Right members of the committee, who dissociated themselves from Bubnik's action, but thought the sanction unduly severe.[2] The issue was carried to the enlarged IKKI of March 1925, not by Šmeral and his colleagues, who bowed to the will of the majority, but by the Brno party organization, which submitted a memorandum arguing against the original decision to organize demonstrations and protesting against the expulsion of

[1] See p. 183 above.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 32, March 6, 1925, pp. 479-480; a telegram was sent by IKKI approving the decision (*ibid.* No. 30, February 27, 1925, p. 450). According to Neurath (*ibid.* No. 56, April 11, 1925, pp. 772-773), Šmeral believed, or pretended to believe, that Bubnik's expulsion was only the prelude to the expulsion of himself and Zapotocky.

Bubnik and his followers.[1] From the proceedings in IKKI it soon transpired that nobody really cared about Bubnik, and that the occasion merely served for a general renewal of hostilities between the Left majority of the party central committee and the Right minority. A minor delegate of the Czechoslovak Left attacked Šmeral and Zapotocky; Kreibich attacked Zinoviev and the authoritarian attitudes of Comintern, and was answered by Neurath, who also attacked Šmeral.[2]

While this cross-fire went on in plenary session, a more active battle was engaged in the Czechoslovak commission, the records of which, contrary to the usual practice, were published at length.[3] Neurath opened with an attack on Šmeral for having protested against the expulsion of Bubnik. Šmeral, following his usual tactics, remained in the background, while Muna, his principal lieutenant, declared that the present majority in the central committee, though it enjoyed the favour of IKKI, did not have the majority of the party behind it; he accused IKKI of silently tolerating the attacks on Šmeral, and Neurath of engaging in a campaign of "personal calumnies and insinuations".[4] The Russian leaders, still anxious to avoid a split, were embarrassed by the vehemence of these recriminations. Zinoviev explained that no difference of principle divided the two sides; and Bukharin wound up the first day's proceedings in the commission by half-heartedly supporting Neurath and reproaching Šmeral for his silence.[5] At the next sitting Šmeral responded to the challenge in a lengthy speech. Though cautious and correct in form, and not free from theoretical circumlocutions, it addressed

[1] The memorandum was apparently not published, but was quoted by Zinoviev in his opening report (*Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 70-73), and constantly referred to in the debates; the decision to protest against Bubnik's expulsion was taken at a meeting of party officials in Brno by a majority of 21 to 17 with 3 abstentions (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 30, February 27, 1925, p. 449).

[2] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 115-116, 225-233; for Kreibich's speech see pp. 296-297 above.

[3] They appeared in various issues of *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz* (see notes below): a volume containing the principal speeches was also announced (*Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 1), but has not been traced. The publicity may have been partly due to the prominent part played by Stalin in this commission.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 56, April 11, 1925, pp. 772-774.

[5] *Ibid.* pp. 776-780; Zinoviev's speech was reported in *Pravda*, April 12, 1925.

itself to the major problem in franker terms than had hitherto been used in open debate. Šmeral agreed that the differences were not political. The question was "*how far the executive* [i.e. IKKI] *can interfere in the internal party affairs of the parties*". Šmeral did not deny in principle a right of intervention. But the way in which Manuilsky had intervened at the party congress in the previous autumn had created in the party "an atmosphere of panic . . . a fear in a large section of the party of being expelled". The new régime in the central committee had introduced "a regular espionage system". Šmeral summed up his conclusions:

> I am conscious that we cannot lead the party against the will, and without the support and absolute confidence, of the executive. But the comrades who form the leadership today are unable to lead the party even with the support of the executive.[1]

Ruth Fischer accused Šmeral of sharing Radek's view that, "where no revolutionary situation exists, one must make a reformist policy". Manuilsky spoke of "the panic mood of comrade Šmeral", and defended his own intervention at the party congress on the ground that the two factions had been so equally matched that they could never have reached an agreement unaided.[2]

At this point, on March 27, 1925, Stalin delivered a speech which was evidently intended to bring the debate to a close and prepare the way for an agreed resolution. He admitted that, in the present crisis of the Czechoslovak party, dangers might come from the Left as well as from the Right. But there were three reasons why the Right danger was more serious — the non-revolutionary character of the period, the strength of the old social-democratic tradition in the Czechoslovak party (both Šmeral and other speakers had noted that more than 70 per cent of the members of the party were former social-democrats), and the national divisions in the party, which were a breeding-ground of chauvinism. In polite, but incisive language Stalin enumerated Šmeral's errors. Under the guise of pursuing a "subtle" and "delicate" policy of impartiality between Right and Left, he

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 67, April 24, 1925, pp. 903-906.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 906, 910-912.

had in fact swung over to the Right and protected the Right. No open threats were made. But Šmeral was warned that if he did not renounce his " subtle " tactics, he would find himself in the social-democratic camp.[1] Even this intervention did not, however, end the struggle ; and three days later, in reply to further utterances from Šmeral and Zapotocky, Stalin spoke again in much sharper terms, alleging that the Right group " slanders members of the central committee, tries to justify Bubnik, threatens a split, etc." The speech concluded :

> I am not a worshipper of the method of repressions. I think that the ideological struggle and the ideological victory over the Right is the decisive factor. But I am against excluding measures of repression from our arsenal.[2]

Zapotocky in reply dissociated himself from Šmeral and Kreibich, and evasively concluded that it was too late to threaten a split : " the Czech proletariat wants unity ".[3]

The resolution, which was submitted to the plenary session of the fifth enlarged IKKI by Manuilsky and adopted unanimously, attributed the crisis to the reasons enumerated by Stalin in his speech of March 27, 1925, and stressed the gravity of the danger from the Right ; severely condemned the Brno regional party committee for its opposition to the policy of the central committee and for its support of the renegade Bubnik ; censured Kreibich, whose speech in the plenary session had aggravated his past offences, by name ; and concluded with an appeal to all members of the party for unity, thus by implication rejecting a policy of further expulsions. Šmeral was not mentioned.[4] The

[1] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 59-68. Much publicity was given to this speech ; it appeared in *Pravda*, March 29, 1925, in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 54, April 10, 1925, pp. 751-753 (in advance of the other proceedings of the commission), and again *ibid.* No. 70, April 28, 1925, pp. 940-942 (in its place among the other speeches).

[2] Stalin's speech of March 30, 1925, was not published in *Pravda* or *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, or in his collected works : it appeared with other speeches in the debate in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 4, 1925, pp. 45-47.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 47-53.

[4] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 507-511. The speech of Manuilsky introducing the resolution (*Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 448-466) was remarkable for a passage addressed personally to Šmeral, who was told that it depended on him " whether a mass party is preserved in Czechoslovakia or whether the communist party is splintered " : this tribute to Šmeral's power and prestige was the only direct mention of him in the speech.

minority declared that it would vote for the resolution. Zinoviev in his final speech congratulated all concerned on having avoided a split, and was convinced that all the delegates, to whatever group they belonged, were "true and courageous communists who in case of real danger will rise to the occasion".[1] IKKI had once more solved — or shelved — the Czechoslovak question by giving its blessing to the Left, but refusing to displace the influential Right minority from its posts in the party leadership. A split which would have torn the party in half, and irrevocably committed Comintern to the Left, seemed at the moment by far the greater evil. After the session ended, an appeal to members of the party was issued bearing the signatures of Zinoviev and of the leading members of both majority and minority in the Czechoslovak party central committee. It once more denounced Bubnik and the authors of the Brno memorandum, and called for unity and discipline in the party.[2] Manuilsky was able to cite the Czechoslovak party as a shining example of a party which had overcome its internal crisis through a process of Bolshevization without thereby forfeiting its character as a mass party.[3]

Side by side with the issue of the party leadership, the vexed trade union question once again raised its head. At the organization conference which preceded the fifth enlarged IKKI, Pyatnitsky scented a danger that the Red trade unions in Czechoslovakia might "become too independent and separate from the party, and then fight against the party", putting up candidates for factory councils or committees "without sounding the party about it": such lack of discipline was harmful.[4] A Czech delegate at the fifth IKKI complained that the German section

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 466, 487. Zinoviev afterwards explained to the Russian party conference that the Czechoslovak party contained three elements — "liquidators" (i.e. followers of Bubnik), "party men who have not yet become Bolshevik" (i.e. Šmeral and the Right), and "Bolsheviks, but sometimes Bolsheviks with certain errors" (i.e. the Left); the policy had been to unite the two last against the first (*Chetyrnadtsataya Konferentsiya Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)* (1925), p. 243).

[2] *Pravda*, April 12, 1925; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 64, April 21, 1925, pp. 863-864.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 6 (43), June 1925, pp. 25-26.

[4] *Der Organisatorische Aufbau der Kommunistischen Partei* (1925), p. 80; for this conference see pp. 925-927 below.

of the textile workers' union, though affiliated to Profintern, had refused to join MOS.[1] On the other hand, Czech "opportunists" were said to have raised the slogan "liberation from the influence of Moscow", and to have created a "divided conscience" between trade union and party loyalty. Hais, the president of MOS, who, in an article written after the second Czechoslovak party congress, had shown himself frankly sceptical of the slogan "Back into the reformist unions",[2] was criticized for failing to carry out party decisions and for attempting to maintain the independence of the Red unions.[3] Still plainer speaking was heard in the Czechoslovak commission. Here the Red unions were accused of resisting the decision of the fifth congress of Comintern that party members should not leave the social-democratic unions. Hais was denounced by Neurath as the Czechoslovak counterpart of Schuhmacher; and Stalin attacked the demand for "complete independence of the trade unions from the party" as a Rightist deviation.[4] The view of the majority, Šmeral ironically commented, seemed to be that, "the fewer members the Red trade unions have, the better for unity".[5]

The fifth enlarged IKKI did not pass without further illustrations of the national strain and tensions to which the Czechoslovak party was subject. Stalin in his first speech in the Czechoslovak commission had referred to the national factor in party divisions: the oppressed national groups, the Germans and the Slovaks, "have drifted to the Left while the Czechs moved in the opposite direction".[6] A delegate from Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia attributed the sufferings of his country to "the yoke of the Czech bourgeoisie"; the peasants knew that "the Czechs want to

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 114.

[2] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 12 (47), December 1924, pp. 255-256.

[3] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 276, 283; in the French version of the former passage (*Exécutif Élargi de l'Internationale Communiste* (1925), p. 118) Hais was accused by name of playing a double game.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 56, April 11, 1925, p. 770; Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 63.

[5] *Ibid.* No. 67, April 24, 1925, p. 904; Zinoviev had made a similar comment in the plenary session (*Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 59).

[6] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii. 62.

reduce them to slavery ".[1] Manuilsky in his speech submitting the Czechoslovak resolution to the plenary session noted that, whereas the party Politburo had formerly comprised five Czechs together with a German, a Slovak, a Magyar and a Carpatho-Ruthenian, it now consisted of seven Czechs and two Germans.[2] The resolution openly recognized the survival of " nationalist illusions and prejudices " among the Czech workers, where Bolshevization had made less effective progress than in the proletariat of the national minorities.[3] Another incident of the same period showed the latent forces of Slovak nationalism at work. Early in 1925 two members of the Slovak section of the party, Seidler and Verčik, were expelled from the party, ostensibly on grounds of personal or financial misdemeanours. They appealed to the international control commission in Moscow, which apparently accepted their plea that they had been victimized on account of their Slovak national activities. The commission, sitting at the same time as the fifth enlarged IKKI, rescinded the sentences of expulsion on both, though in the case of Verčik it found him guilty of " grave political error " and excluded him from membership of the central committee and other party organs. The reprieve provoked an angry protest from the Right wing of the party.[4] In May 1925 a local party conference was held at Zilina in Slovakia. Though it was addressed by several of the Czech party leaders, including Šmeral, the conference turned into a demonstration of support for Seidler and Verčik ; its predominant note was a strident Slovak nationalism couched in ultra-Left phraseology, and directed against the Czech party leaders. A resolution adopted by the conference denounced the attempt to expel Seidler and Verčik as " a classic example of the methods used in an opportunist party to strangle the Bolshevik line ", and " an attempt of the Rights with the help of the ' Lefts ' to throttle the only correct Bolshevik line in the Czechoslovak Communist Party ", the product of a bloc between the " so-called Lefts " (Neurath and his supporters) and the " so-called

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 343-345.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 460.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 509.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 67, April 24, 1925, p. 914.

Rights" (Šmeral and Zapotocky).[1] The party leaders were powerless in face of this large-scale act of defiance. Zinoviev, in an article in *Pravda*, dealt with the indiscretions of the Zilina conference in terms of surprising mildness. The attack on the "Left-Centre bloc" which had assumed the leadership of the Czechoslovak party after the fifth congress of Comintern was described as either "a polemical exaggeration" or "a direct political error", and a warning was issued against the danger of "ultra-Left" deviations. But nothing was said of reprisals.[2] Toleration was still the order of the day in foreign communist parties, except where the central authority of Comintern was directly at stake.

In spite, or perhaps because, of these ebullitions of a dissentient nationalism, the incongruous alliance of Left and Right in the leadership of the Czechoslovak party held together better than might have been expected. The old extreme Right was now hopelessly divided, and fell to pieces. Nobody in the party defended Bubnik, who, like Hoeglund in Sweden,[3] contrived for a few months to maintain an independent group outside the party, before finally merging with the social-democrats. Another group, while dissociating itself from Bubnik and remaining within the party, criticized the decisions of the fifth enlarged IKKI as unfair to the Right.[4] Šmeral and his followers accepted the decisions of IKKI and acquiesced in their own minority position in the leading party organs. The third party congress at the end of September 1925 passed off successfully without reopening any of the awkward questions, and excited unreserved approval in Moscow. It presented a picture, according to an enthusiastic resolution of IKKI six months later, of "complete unanimity, revolutionary solidarity and unconditional loyalty to the Communist International".[5] The congress in its trade union resolu-

[1] *Ibid.* No. 85, May 22, 1925, pp. 1170-1171; Manuilsky described it in the Comintern journal as "a very Left and very opportunist resolution against the Šmeral-Neurath bloc" (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 6 (43), June 1925, p. 30).

[2] *Pravda*, June 5, 1925.

[3] See p. 236 above.

[4] "A group of Rightists (Skalak, Kovanda)" was censured on this account by the sixth enlarged IKKI in February–March 1926 (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 625).

[5] *Ibid.* p. 624; "the delegates, 80 per cent of whom were factory workers, demanded an advance to increased activity, a complete break with social-

tion once again denounced the policy of transferring " individuals or groups " from the reformist unions (where they were needed to form " reliable communist fractions ") to the Red unions, and prohibited such transfers except with the express approval of the Politburo of the party.[1] More gratifying still were the results of the Czechoslovak elections of November 15, 1925. In the previous elections of 1920, before the Czechoslovak Communist Party had been formed by splitting the social-democrats, the Czech social-democrats had polled 1,600,000 votes and the German-speaking social-democrats 690,000. These figures now fell to 630,000 and 411,000 respectively, giving 29 seats to the Czech, and 17 to the German, social-democrats. The Czechoslovak Communist Party secured 930,000 votes and 41 seats. The communist vote represented 15 per cent of the total vote: it was proudly pointed out that the KPD, at the height of its electoral success in May 1924, had only obtained 11 per cent of all votes cast in the Reichstag elections.[2] Even so the complaint was heard that 100,000 votes had been " filched " from the party by electoral manipulation in Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia.[3] This striking electoral success helped to prolong beyond all reasonable expectation the uneasy and anomalous coalition which directed the affairs of the Czechoslovak Communist party.

(*f*) *The Polish Communist Party* (*KPP*)

The fifth congress of Comintern in June–July 1924 had in effect deposed the " three Ws " from the leadership of the KPP,

democratic traditions and the consistent Bolshevization of the party " (*Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 239). No full record of this congress has been available; for Neurath's account of it see *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 10 (44), October 1925, pp. 132-136.

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 142, October 16, 1925, p. 2086. The injunction apparently remained a dead letter. At a meeting of the Orgburo of IKKI in December 1925 Ulbricht once again accused Hais of seeking to attract as many Czechoslovak workers as possible out of the reformist and into the Red unions (*ibid.* No. 165, December 17, 1925, p. 2462); and this charge was repeated in an article by a Profintern official in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 12 (49), December 1925, pp. 136-137.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 156, November 20, 1925, pp. 2337-2338; for a congratulatory message from IKKI see *ibid.* No. 157, November 24, 1925. Full figures were given in an article by Šmeral in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 12 (49), December 1925, p. 50.

[3] *XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (*B*) (1926), p. 663.

and transferred it to the Leftist group headed by Lenski and Domski.[1] But the postponement of the formal ratification of this decision by a party conference or congress produced some paradoxical results. By the time the third Polish party congress at last assembled in March 1925, the international situation had undergone a radical change. The "stabilization of capitalism" had begun to be recognized; and the Comintern line was veering away from the Left orientation proclaimed at the fifth congress, which was already obsolescent when the Polish party congress met to endorse the new leadership. This dilemma appeared in concrete form in the affairs of the Western White Russian party. Whatever encouragement the disorders in Polish White Russia in the summer and autumn of 1924 may have received from Soviet or Polish party sources,[2] opinion on these questions had now turned sharply against policies of adventure. The choice had to be made whether to attempt to fan these sporadic disorders into a full-scale armed rising, or to damp them down; and both in Warsaw and in Moscow the arguments in favour of a cautious retreat seemed overwhelmingly strong. The movement was felt to smack of White Russian petty bourgeois nationalism rather than communism; it could count on little practical help from the Polish party or from the Polish workers' movement; and the Soviet Government, discouraged and discredited by the recent failure of the revolutionary rising in Estonia, was unwilling further to jeopardize its international position by sponsoring another forlorn attempt at armed insurrection. The policy of insurrection in Polish White Russia, though still supported by the KPZB, was also apparently opposed by the KPZU, which was planning a rising in Volynia on its own account, allegedly with the support of the OGPU in Kharkov.[3] Among the active sponsors of the Volynian rising, which was planned for the end of March 1925, were two Ukrainian deputies from Volynia to the Polish Sejm, Pristupa and Voityuk, former members of the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party, who had been active in cementing the alliance of the party with the KPP. But this adventurous policy also no longer accorded with the views of

[1] See pp. 198-199 above.
[2] See p. 200 above.
[3] J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 130.

Comintern, and a veto from Moscow descended on the whole project.[1]

It was in these conditions that the third congress of the KPP met in March 1925 in Soviet White Russia in the neighbourhood of Minsk.[2] Of the 59 delegates present, 31 had voting rights, 18 had only a " consultative " voice and 10 were guests : [3] these included Bukharin as representative of the Russian party, and Zinoviev and Manuilsky as representatives of Comintern — a tribute to the importance and delicacy of the occasion.[4] Zinoviev, who spoke on the international situation, struck a milder note than had been heard at the second party congress in August–September 1923, when the German revolution seemed imminent, or at the fifth congress of Comintern, when it had been appropriate to emphasize the turn to the Left. He spoke openly of " the consolidation of the bourgeoisie ". The development of the revolution had been slower than was expected. Fascism was " not a short-lived episode ", but characteristic of a whole period.[5] This cold douche produced some consternation among the more determined stalwarts of the KPP. Domski borrowed the term " social-Fascists " to apply to the PPS ; the theory of the " con-

[1] The most circumstantial account of the Volynian project is in G. Besedovsky, *Na Putyakh k Termidoru* (Paris, 1931), i, 192-194 ; this is a sensational but well-informed source (the author was a Soviet diplomat in Warsaw at the time), unreliable in detail, but not to be ignored. For Pristupa and Voityuk see M. Stakhiv, *Khto Vynen?* (Lvov, 1936), pp. 45-47 : the Ukrainian Social-Democratic Party had been banned, and its journals closed down on January 30, 1925 (*ibid.* p. 48).

[2] J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 121. Domski, at the fifth enlarged IKKI later in the same month, said that the congress had been held " some kilometres from Brest in the countryside " (*Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 163) ; this was designed to create the impression that it had been held on Polish soil. The report that it had been held in Vienna (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 41, March 27, 1925, p. 620) was another piece of official mystification.

[3] For the number of delegates see *KPP : Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 85-86 ; the total membership of the KPP at this time was reckoned at 11,000, of whom 2500 of the most active members were in prison (*Der Organisatorische Aufbau der Kommunistischen Partei* (1925), p. 57).

[4] J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), pp. 121-142, gives the fullest available account of the congress with copious quotations from the official record ; but his account shows the usual bias. For brief contemporary reports of the congress see *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 3 (40), 1925, pp. 145-152 (Domski's account) ; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 41, March 27, 1925, p. 620 ; No. 62, April 17, 1925, pp. 846-847.

[5] J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 123.

solidation " of the bourgeois Polish state was assailed both by Skrypnik and by Warski ; and one or two hot-heads, including a delegate of the Polish Youth League, wished to move further to the Left by omitting all mention of the united front and of the worker-peasant government.[1] But in general no difficulty was found in securing a formal endorsement of the Comintern line.

The White Russian problem, on which a member of the party central committee named Purman made the report, and the national question, which was in the hands of Manuilsky, were closely intertwined, and provided the most thorny topic of the congress. Skulski had changed his tune, and the party central committee stood solidly against the proposed rising. Purman pointed out that, " in view of the situation in Poland and the international situation ", any such attempt would be isolated and doomed to failure. Manuilsky was even more categorical about the impossibility of counting for support on the Red Army, and spoke of " the unfavourable international situation ", referring explicitly to the Bulgarian and Estonian episodes ".[2] Warski, now cast for the rôle of leader of the opposition to the new Left leadership, surprisingly came out in favour of the White Russian rising, which he had previously supported in the Polish party journal *Nowy Przeglad*.[3] But Warski's support was no longer an asset for any cause. The general discussion of the national question yielded nothing new, though Domski vigorously condemned the German separatist movement as " predominantly a movement of the possessing classes " who wished to prolong their exploitation of the Polish peasant and worker.[4] The resolution on the national question distinguished between two different forms taken by it. The claims of the Ukrainian, White Russian and Lithuanian populations of the Polish borderlands could be solved only by self-determination and secession ; the claims of national minorities like the Germans and the Jews were, on the other hand, interwoven with " the class struggle of the Polish proletariat ", and could be solved only by common action. The resolution specifically repeated " the slogan of *the separation of Western White Russia and the Western Ukraine from Poland and their attachment to the neighbouring Soviet republics* ", but also

[1] *Ibid.* p. 129.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 130-131.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 132-134.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 137.

noted that " an isolated rising in Western White Russia and the Western Ukraine, unsupported by a revolutionary movement in the whole of Poland, cannot be victorious " — the implication being that these regions were dependent on Polish revolutionary action for their emancipation. What was required, the resolution added, was " a coordination of mass movements in Poland, in Western White Russia and in the Western Ukraine, and their combination into a single whole ".[1] Having cleared this hurdle, the congress disposed of other questions on well-worn lines. The resolution on the trade unions called for unity both on the national and on the international plane, and referred to the Anglo-Russian joint council and to " the rise of new Left trends in the Amsterdam International ", but denounced the PPS trade union leaders for belonging to " the most reactionary Amsterdam fractions ".[2] A long resolution devoted to the Bolshevization of the party complied with current Comintern prescriptions on party organization.[3] In a section entitled " On Armed Insurrection and the Organization of Self-Defence " the resolution remarked that " the party should create, particularly in Western White Russia and Western Ukraine, self-defence sections for protection against the terror which is especially rife in these regions ", but that these sections should not be allowed to develop into " professional fighting squads which easily transform themselves into centres of adventurism and into a danger for the party ". The attitude of the congress to armed action in the eastern borderlands produced a crisis in the Western White Russian party. What were described as " nationally minded elements " akin to the SRs in outlook, which apparently constituted a majority of the party, broke away under the leadership of Guryn, a member of the central committee of the party, carrying with them the party funds and the illegal party press.[4]

The apparent success of the third congress of the KPP was only the starting-point of fresh difficulties. Its main business

[1] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), pp. 169-187.

[2] *Ibid.* ii, pp. 188-205.

[3] See pp. 295-298 above; for cell organization see pp. 925-930 below, The resolution on Bolshevization is in *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955). 122-139; a party statute had been adopted by the second party congress in August 1923 (*ibid.* i (1953), 255-262).

[4] J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), pp. 133-134; *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 324.

had been to confirm the change of leadership which had already taken place. Domski was now the acknowledged leader of the party, with Skulski and Purman (Lenski being still in prison) as his principal adjutants. But the holding of the congress had been too long delayed. In March 1925 the confirmation of an ultra-Left group in the leadership of the KPP was already out of date in terms of current trends in Comintern policy; and the new leaders failed to win the confidence of the mass of Polish workers, inside or outside the party. The session of the fifth enlarged IKKI, which immediately followed the Polish party congress, paid little attention to Polish affairs. Domski's speech was unusually brief, or was not fully reported. He contrived to play down Zinoviev's theme of the stabilization of capitalism while professing to agree with it, attacked Radek, Brandler and the Right in general, and optimistically declared that "the peasant masses in Poland are in a state of ferment such as we have not seen since 1918".[1] But these professions were of no avail. As was later admitted, the liquidation of the Right leadership at the third Polish party congress had "to some extent facilitated the rise of ultra-Left tendencies".[2] In the summer of 1925 Comintern, more than ever impressed with the necessity and with the prospects of united front tactics in an age of "stabilization", went into action everywhere against the "ultra-Left"; and Domski fell an easy victim to this change of front.

Domski's first conspicuous error was a refusal to participate in joint demonstrations with the PPS on May 1, 1925, thus emphasizing the isolation of the KPP from the masses.[3] But the fatal blunder occurred early in June 1925, when the central committee of the KPP took upon itself to pass a resolution denouncing Right deviations in the German, French and Bulgarian parties. The KPD was condemned for its offer to the SPD to withdraw its candidate at the second ballot in the presidential election, the PCF for making bargains with the socialists for common lists in local elections, and the Bulgarian party for

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 162-165.

[2] *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), pp. 179-180.

[3] This error was specifically condemned by the party conference in December 1925 (see p. 390 below), and frequently referred to in later literature.

" seeking a compromise with the Tsankov government ".[1] On all these occasions the actions of the incriminated parties had been approved by Comintern not as Right deviations, but as laudable applications of the united front; and the intervention of the KPP, like those of Bordiga at the fifth congress,[2] was regarded with anger and apprehension in Moscow as an attempt to create an ultra-Left opposition to the Comintern line. The tenth congress of the KPD meeting in July 1925 passed a resolution condemning " a group of Polish comrades under the leadership of Domski " for the attack on the KPD.[3] At this moment a further difficulty confronted the KPP in the form of a sharp dispute between its two subsidiary parties — the communist parties of the Western Ukraine and of Western White Russia. From the ban placed at the third Polish party congress on revolutionary adventure the leaders of the reconstructed KPZB drew the cautious conclusion that half a loaf was better than no bread, and — not, perhaps, without encouragement from more nationally minded members of the KPP — raised the slogan of " autonomy within Poland ", even asserting that this was what the masses demanded. The stouter-hearted leaders of the KPZU, fearing the application of this precedent to the Western Ukraine, raised a loud cry of protest, insisting that the fifth congress of Comintern had proclaimed a policy for Western White Russia, as for the Western Ukraine, of separation from Poland and annexation to the Soviet Union, and that no party had the right to vary this demand.[4]

[1] The text of the resolution has not been traced; the contents can be reconstructed from the numerous statements condemning it, the fullest being apparently that of Manuilsky at the tenth congress of the KPD two weeks later (*Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), p. 317). On June 12, 1925, the presidium of IKKI passed a resolution condemning the attitude of the KPP (*Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 10, where " Juli " in the first line of the relevant paragraph is presumably a misprint for " Juni "): in a further resolution at the end of June, the central committee of KPP " not only did not abandon its point of view, but continued to justify it " (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 1 (50), January 1926, p. 124).

[2] See pp. 77-79 above.

[3] *Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), pp. 180-181; Rosenberg, speaking in the name of the ultra-Left group in the KPD, pointed out that " the group of Polish comrades " was in fact the central committee of the Polish party, and expressed agreement with the attack (*ibid.* p. 411).

[4] The only source for these details is Skrypnik's speech at the sixth enlarged IKKI in February 1926 (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisti-*

In this situation the authorities in Moscow reached the conclusion that the present leaders of the KPP could no longer be trusted, and decided to intervene. A Polish commission of IKKI under the presidency of Stalin met in July, and adopted the text of a resolution and of an open letter from IKKI to " the organization of the Polish Communist Party " bearing the date July 31, 1925. The letter analysed in detail the errors of the central committee of the KPP in regard to the German, French and Bulgarian questions, and to the trade union question and the May 1 demonstrations, and ended with a scathing attack on Domski's record. It recalled his article of July 1920 when he had " come out *against the campaign of the Red Army* ".[1] This was treated as symptomatic of a fundamental attitude of " resistance to ' Russian communism ' in the name of ' western communism ' ". In 1923 he had been " against the application of Leninism to ' the west ' " — a reflexion of the controversies about the united front. In 1925 he had been against Comintern's policy of the Bolshevization of western communist parties. The final appeal to the Polish party, following current Comintern practice, stopped just short of a formal demand for Domski's eviction from the leadership :

> It is your business, comrades, to require of Domski that he should deliver an unequivocal and exhaustive explanation of his *general* standpoint in view of his anti-Bolshevik sallies in the course of recent years.[2]

The open letter to the KPD a few weeks later [3] was thus anticipated in the action taken in the KPP. The only difference was that Domski, unlike Ruth Fischer, was not called on to sign his

cheskogo Internatsionala (1927), pp. 241-242); but they fit in with other information and are probably correct. Skrypnik alleged that the autonomy slogan had been put forward " with the support of the KPP ", which had treated the slogan of separation adopted at the third Polish party congress as " not something actual, for immediate application, but rather as propagandist ".

[1] See p. 186, note 1 above.

[2] The text of the letter in *KPP : Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 223-247 (no Russian text has been available), though long, is described as " extracts ". It contains nothing on the national question, and it is reasonable to suppose that the omitted passages related to this : they may have discussed the projected rising in Western White Russia earlier in the year, and have been treated as secret on that account. The resolution of the Polish commission of IKKI which registered the decision to send the open letter does not seem to have been published.

[3] See p. 329 above.

own death-warrant. A few days later, on August 3, 1925, the presidium of IKKI dealt with an issue too delicate to be included in the open letter. It condemned " terrorist deviations in the ideology of a part of the Polish party leadership ", and ordered the party to put an immediate end to these " anti-Marxist tactics ".[1]

Exposed to this broadside from Moscow, the central committee of the KPP met on August 10, 1925. No record of its proceedings has been published. But it sent a reply to the open letter which was afterwards described as " a half-hearted attempt to withdraw from an ultra-Left position ".[2] Its greatest measure of intransigence seems to have been reserved for the national question ; for it passed a resolution condemning the opposition manifested by the KPZU to the slogan of autonomy for Western White Russia.[3] What else happened remains obscure. No direct steps are known to have been taken to remove Domski at this time.[4] But his prestige was shattered ; and he appears to have lost control of the party machine. A Polish delegate appeared at the conference of the KPD at the end of October 1925 with the manifest intention of supporting the campaign against the ultra-Left. The Polish central committee had, he declared, recognized its June resolution of censure on the three parties as

[1] *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), pp. 10-11.

[2] This verdict was passed in the resolution of the party conference of December 1925 (*KPP : Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 254) ; it was echoed in similar terms in an article in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 1 (50), January 1926, pp. 124-125.

[3] This resolution was referred to in the subsequent resolution of December 1925, where the resolution of the KPZU was praised as having " contributed to the overcoming of the ultra-Left policy of the party " (*KPP : Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 252, 254).

[4] Zinoviev at the fourteenth Russian party congress in December 1925 remarked that in the summer of 1925 " we " took action against Domski and replaced him by new leaders (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunististicheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), pp. 663-664). But this seems to telescope the IKKI resolution of July with what happened at the fourth Polish party conference in December ; Warski afterwards wrote that the ultra-Left leadership " broke up almost on the threshold of the fourth conference " (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 2 (51), February, 1926, p. 67). Among the sins of the ultra-Left, for which Domski was held responsible in the main resolution of that conference (see p. 390 below), were failures to take political action at the time of Chicherin's visit to Warsaw (end of September 1925) and of Locarno (October 1925). Domski himself at the sixth enlarged IKKI in February 1926 said that he had been " removed from the central committee and sent to Moscow " after the December conference (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 164).

" an ultra-Leftist error ", and had turned against Domski, who had " not given up his ultra-Left views ". The obligation of the KPD to follow this sound example scarcely needed to be stressed.[1] At this moment a fresh complication was provided by the dramatic escape of Lenski from prison in Warsaw, on October 19, 1925. After being hidden for three weeks by party friends, he made his way via Zakopane to Berlin, and thence to Moscow.[2] The significance of this event was to bring the affairs of the KPP into closer connexion with the struggle in the Russian party. Domski, like Ruth Fischer and Maslow in the KPD or Treint in the PCF, was associated with Zinoviev and the Leningrad opposition; Lenski was a supporter of Stalin, and became henceforth a faithful exponent of Stalin's views in the KPP.

It was not till December 1925 that a conference of the KPP could be convened to give effect to the change. Held at the moment when the struggle in the Russian party was raging on the eve of the fourteenth congress, it attracted little attention in Moscow; indeed, significant complaints were afterwards heard of the absence of a " united group " to " give the conference a direction ", and of " lack of leadership ".[3] Theses for the conference were said to have been drafted jointly by Domski, Lenski and Krolikowski, and the main report was made by Lenski who, having been in prison during the excesses of the ultra-Left period, was better placed than Domski to dissociate himself from them. But Warski intervened in the debate on Lenski's report with a speech which was an unreserved condemnation of the ultra-Left, and evidently carried the conference with it.[4] As Manuilsky admitted at the fourteenth congress of the Russian party later in the same month, " Warski, in spite of all IKKI's criticisms of him in the past, was able at the recent Warsaw conference to win the confidence of the party, even of the ultra-Left workers ".[5]

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 153, November 10, 1925, p. 2300; for the KPD conference see p. 333 above.

[2] *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4, 1958, pp. 289-290; J. A. Regula, *Historja Komunistycznej Partji Polski* (1934), p. 116, briefly reports the escape as having taken place through Danzig.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 1 (50), January 1926, p. 124; No. 2 (51), February 1926, p. 67; the latter article was by Warski.

[4] For a guarded account of these proceedings see *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4, 1958, p. 290; the official record of the conference has not been available.

[5] *XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), pp. 697-698.

Neither Domski nor Lenski could muster any large body of support. Warski, who had been a member of the Polish diet since the end of 1924, had assiduously preached the alliance between the workers and the peasantry and attacked the infiltration of western capital into Poland — both themes dear at this time to the heart of Moscow, and well adapted to the tactics of the united front. The rejection of the ultra-Left deviation at the conference of December 1925 led almost automatically to the reinstatement of the leader who, less than eighteen months before, had been fiercely denounced at the fifth congress of Comintern as a deviationist of the Right. Lenski was rewarded for his renunciation of Domski's worst errors by his election to a party central committee now evidently dominated by Warski and his supporters.[1]

The conference assumed major dimensions and passed a series of resolutions in which " the essential ideas of Warski's speech were taken into consideration ".[2] The main resolution, devoted to " the activity of the central committee ", recounted the errors of the " ultra-Left line ", for which Domski was made personally responsible. The chief of these was the resolution of June 1925 criticizing the French, Bulgarian and German parties. This was a revolt against the authority of Comintern, and had been justly castigated in the open letter of IKKI of July 31 : its worst feature, repeated the resolution, echoing the criticism of the open letter, was that it had been a " fractional " attempt to attack " Russian communism " in the name of " western communism ". The other errors were more briefly enumerated — the failure to participate in the May 1 demonstrations, failure to initiate political actions on suitable occasions and " the resolution of the August session of the central committee on the question of the KPZU ", which was sharply condemned as " a detrimental step " and a danger to " the unification of the party ".[3] A resolution on the trade unions reiterated the theme of trade union unity and, in a

[1] *Z Pola Walki*, No. 4, 1958, p. 290. [2] *Ibid.* p. 290.

[3] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 248-256; no general resolution was adopted — or at any rate published — by the conference on the national question. Among the faults later imputed to Domski was encouragement of individual terror (*Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 309); this was not mentioned in the published resolutions of the conference, but a resolution was passed honouring six party members who during 1925 had been either killed in clashes with the police or executed for killing police agents (*KPP : Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 346).

section headed " Left Trade Union Opposition ", alleged that party activity under Left leadership had been mistakenly confined to the effort to form " Red fractions standing on the explicitly revolutionary platform of Profintern ". No attempt had been made to create " a broad opposition movement " within the unions. This was an underestimate of the importance of the trade unions, which had led to a divorce of the party from the masses and the abandonment of the unions to the PPS.[1] The principal remaining resolutions — on the political situation, on the tasks of the party in the countryside and on party organization[2] — conformed accurately to the current Comintern line. In general, the sin of the ultra-Left in Poland, as in Germany, had been " inability to approach the working class in its daily struggle, to carry out the tactics of the united front, to win the trade unions ".[3] Once again, as in 1921, the paramount need was to appeal to the masses.

The results of the fourth KPP conference of December 1925 were accepted with good grace in Moscow. On January 27, 1926, the presidium of IKKI issued a resolution approving the " general line " of the decisions taken and insisting on the need for the

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 278-303. At the trade union congress of June 11–14, 1925, in Warsaw, the KPP, under Domski's leadership, had supported the thesis of " class trade unions " and opposed cooperation with politically unsound or neutral unions (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 105, July 7, 1925, pp. 1442-1443); this attitude was condemned in the open letter from IKKI of July 31, 1925 (see p. 387 above). These charges were further elaborated in *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 207; Lozovsky on the same occasion contested the view that work in non-communist trade unions should be confined to PPS unions, and argued that it was necessary also to work in Catholic and nationalist unions, which contained 100,000 workers (*ibid.* p. 426). See also *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale* No. 4 (63), April 1926, pp. 278-281.

[2] *KPP: Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 257-335. For party organization see p. 929 below; in the latter part of 1925 the second congress of the KPZU and the third conference of the KPZB had already dealt with the question of organization in advance of the December conference of the KPP (*Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 178).

[3] The phrase was Shumsky's at the fourteenth congress of the Russian party (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), p. 683), but the sentiment was general; Lominadze on the same occasion compared the Left crisis in the Polish party with the simultaneous Left crisis in Germany and Italy (*ibid.* p. 699). Lenski, in his account of the proceedings of the December conference, described the KPP as " a union of the struggle of the working class, the peasants and the oppressed nationalities " (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 29, February 23, 1926, pp. 422-423).

KPP to take active measures to increase its influence over the masses of the workers and among the peasantry.[1] The central committee of the KPP responded in the following month with a lengthy resolution once more defining its attitude to other parties and groups in which sympathizers for the pursuit of limited objectives might be found. The situation was complicated by the embarrassing figure of Pilsudski, whose prestige on the Left, based partly on his former leadership of the PPS, and partly on his still active hostility to the national-democrats of the Right, was combined with national and international policies of an increasingly reactionary kind. The February resolution attempted to distinguish between a policy of showing up " the lack of a social programme and the Great Power aspirations of Pilsudskism " and a policy of drawing into the revolutionary camp " the more radical and sincerely idealistic elements of Pilsudskism " — a policy which carried some disconcerting echoes of the " Schlageter line " of 1923 in Germany.[2]

A few days after this resolution had been adopted, on February 17, 1926, the sixth enlarged IKKI met in Moscow. On one of the first days of the session, *Pravda* printed without comment an article by Walecki which contained a strong attack on the ultra-Left in the KPP and a call for a united front with all organizations containing workers or peasants. The most interesting passage in the light of subsequent events was a prognostication :

> The position in Poland is such that the possibility is not excluded that the Polish section of Comintern may be the first to be confronted, by the march of events in its country, with the necessity to take a decision of extreme importance.[3]

Zinoviev in his main speech, delivered on the day after the publication of the article, appears to have treated Walecki's speculation as an encouraging portent : " if there is at this moment a country where an immediately revolutionary situation

[1] *KPP : Uchwały i Rezolucje*, ii (1955), 348-351 ; Zinoviev, in his letter of January 1925 to the parties (see p. 294 above) had written that, for the KPP, Bolshevization meant the application of Leninist principles to the peasant question.

[2] *Ibid.* ii, 352-359 ; for the Schlageter line see *The Interregnum, 1923-1924*, pp. 179-183.

[3] *Pravda*, February 19, 1926.

might crystallize in the comparatively near future, it is Poland ".[1] Apart from a passing remark that " neither Domski nor Walecki " could lead the party,[2] he did not refer to the two successive changes in the leadership of KPP, and did not mention Warski at all. The resolution submitted by him, in congratulating Comintern on having overcome in the past year " a recrudescence of ' ultra-Left ' deviations in Germany, Italy and Poland ", added that in Poland, " the ultra-Left errors of the party leadership almost ruined the party ", and classed Poland with Bulgaria as countries where " the danger of a terrorist deviation " had existed.[3] After a Polish delegate had defended the current line, and attacked the ultra-Left in conventional terms,[4] Domski made a fighting defence. He regretted the failure to set up a commission to examine the Polish question. He confessed to " ultra-Left " errors in specific questions, but rebutted the allegation that his leadership had " almost ruined the party ", and offered the most penetrating analysis made by any communist leader at this time of the dangers threatening Poland and the KPP. " In the near future ", he said, " we are in sight of a Left Fascist *putsch*." Discerning " a significant growth of Polish Fascism ", he distinguished between a Fascism of the Right and a Fascism of the Left: the latter was headed by " the democrat and former socialist Pilsudski ", who had an extensive and varied following. Domski concluded:

> In view of the imminent threatening Fascist danger now overhanging the party, we ought to open our eyes to it in order not to be led by the nose at the moment of the catastrophe.[5]

Skrypnik made his usual attack on the national policies of the

[1] The remark is in the report of the speech in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 36, March 4, 1926, p. 234, and is certainly authentic, though it does not appear in the official record, which was published long after the Pilsudski *coup*.

[2] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 458.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 546, 553.

[4] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 135-139.

[5] *Ibid.* pp. 164-167; according to the version of the speech in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 37, March 8, 1926, pp. 511-512, Domski also expressed surprise at the publication in *Pravda* of Walecki's article, which was " in reality a blow against the present party leadership, and not merely against the Left ". He also pleaded that members of the party Left, who were willing to engage in illegal work, should not be prevented from returning to Poland.

KPP. He admitted that, in the conditions of the stabilization of capitalism, it had been necessary to replace the tactics of " direct assault " by " a state of siege " (meaning, in terms of Western White Russia and Western Ukraine, to abandon plans of insurrection), and that it was legitimate to put forward " partial demands ". This did not, however, justify the substitution of the slogan of autonomy for that of separation from Poland and union with the USSR. Lenski retorted that the demand for autonomy was complementary and subsidiary to full national self-determination, not a substitute for it. On broader issues of party policy, Lenski, now a pillar of orthodoxy, dissociated himself from Domski, his " former collaborator for a short time in the struggle with the Right danger ".[1] Bukharin referred to " extremely harmful tendencies . . . tendencies towards individual terror " prevailing in the party under Domski's leadership.[2] No further comment was made in the general debate on the affairs of Poland or of the KPP, and no special resolution on them was introduced. But in the debate on the report of the German commission the Polish delegate seized the occasion to make another attack on Domski, who had attempted to reduce the whole issue to one of " individual errors ", and was still a supporter of " the international ultra-Left ".[3]

After the session of the enlarged IKKI, Lenski made a further attempt to assess the prospects and tasks of the KPP. Pilsudski had increased his stature as the dominant figure in Polish politics, and it was urgently necessary to define the party attitude towards him. It was an embarrassing problem. Lenski was careful to distinguish Pilsudskism, which relied primarily on the army and secret police, from Fascism which had a social basis in reactionary capitalism. He evolved a formula which did not entirely write off Pilsudski's supporters :

While directing the united front of workers and peasants against the black Fascist reaction of capitalists and landowners,

[1] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 241-243 ; Lenski appeared on this occasion under his real name of Leszczynski. For Skrypnik's remarks see p. 386, note 4 above.

[2] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 207.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 569-570 ; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 54, April 9, 1926, p. 770.

the communist party should in every way show up Pilsudskism as one of the masked forms of bourgeois reaction and as a tool of English imperialism against the USSR, endeavouring to extricate the masses from its influence and to draw them over to the side of the proletarian revolution.

And he concluded with an appeal for " a worker-peasant government brought into existence by revolutionary struggle ".[1] These vague prescriptions were to prove inadequate guidance in the ordeal which was soon to confront the KPP.

(*g*) *The Bulgarian Communist Party* (*BKP*)

The complex problems confronting the BKP after the fiasco of its dealings with IMRO [2] did not lend themselves to discussion by the fifth enlarged IKKI in Moscow at its session of March–April 1925. It was not only in Bulgaria that past denunciation of " Rightist " passivity led in the first months of 1925 to an equally reprehensible ultra-Left deviation.[3] While Kolarov and Dimitrov pursued their tortuous manœuvres and negotiations abroad, impatient spirits in the underground party clamoured for action. Dimitrov read the danger signals, and took steps to counteract " the imminent danger of an ultra-Left deviation disastrous for the party and for the revolutionary movement ".[4] On February 1, 1925, a cautious warning was issued by the central committee of the BKP to " toilers in town and country " not to allow themselves to be provoked by the persecutions of the Tsankov government into rash action which would serve as a pretext for further reprisals ; and this was published in the Comintern press with a commentary by Dimitrov proclaiming the hostility of the BKP and of Comintern as a whole to " senseless individual terror ".[5] When the fifth IKKI met in March 1925,

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 4 (53), April 1926, pp. 118-122.

[2] See pp. 218-219 above.

[3] In Poland ultra-Leftism had also been criticized for having encouraged terrorism (see pp. 389, 394 above).

[4] G. Dimitrov, *Politicheski Otchet na TsK na BRP(K)* (1948), p. 28 ; an official history published in 1930 spoke of the development in the BKP in the first part of 1925 of an " ultra-Left tendency ", which " sought to replace the activity of the masses by partisan forays and individual terror " (Kh. Kabakchiev *et al.*, *Kommunisticheskie Partii Balkanskikh Stran* (1930), p. 122).

[5] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 30, February 27, 1925, p. 442.

Marek spoke in conventional terms of the " white terror " in the Balkans, and in Bulgaria in particular ; [1] and the session occupied itself with the opposition in the Yugoslav party.[2] But no special emphasis was placed on the Macedonian question, and the affairs of the BKP were not publicly discussed, though the general resolution on the Bolshevization of the parties, in a brief section relating to the Balkans, called pointedly for " the coordination of the actions of the communist parties by way of strengthening the Communist Balkan Federation ".[3] During the session the Bulgarian delegates met privately with representatives of IKKI and, " after a thorough study of the situation in agreement with Comintern ", decided that a policy of armed insurrection, though " unavoidable in the past ", was no longer appropriate, and that the party should concentrate on the day-to-day demands of the working masses and on the restoration of their political rights.[4]

The warning came, however, too late to avert disaster. The Bulgarian Government had already embarked on a campaign of repression against the BKP,[5] when on April 14, 1925, a Bulgarian general, who was also a Right-wing deputy in the Sobranie, was assassinated. Two days later official Bulgaria assembled *en masse* in the Sofia cathedral for the funeral. A bomb exploded, killing more than 100 persons and wounding 300, though all the members of the government miraculously escaped. The outrage was plausibly attributed to the communists. Two leading members of the military organization of the BKP, Yankov and Minkov, were killed resisting arrest. Hundreds of communists were arrested ; confessions were obtained under torture ; and many

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 15-22.

[2] See pp. 402-404 below.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 491 ; for this resolution see pp. 297-298 above.

[4] *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 238.

[5] An alleged instruction from Comintern to the BKP to start an insurrection on April 15, 1925, was published by the Bulgarian Government at the beginning of April : it was almost certainly a forgery, since this was in contradiction with Comintern policy at the time (J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), p. 259, notes 1 and 4 ; the forger was said to have been Druzhelovsky, later also accused of having forged the Zinoviev letter). The Bulgarian Government also announced that a list of members of the central committee of the BKP had fallen into its hands (*Le Temps*, April 10, 1925).

of those arrested were executed with or without trial. Firm denials of complicity in the outrage were at once issued by IKKI on behalf of Comintern or of " any of its sections ", by Kolarov and Dimitrov on behalf of the " foreign delegation " of the BKP, and by Chicherin on behalf of the Soviet Government.[1] The denials were probably true of the organizations on whose behalf they were made, and were repeated in more and more categorical language over a long period.[2] But a resolution of the sixth enlarged IKKI in February–March 1926 admitted that, " in spite of the sharply negative attitude of the central committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party ", some workers had felt " a certain attraction towards acts of the kind of the Sofia cathedral explosion " ;[3] and more than 20 years later Dimitrov openly declared for the first time that the outrage had been the product of an " ultra-Left deviation ", and one of a series of " desperate actions by leaders of the party's military organization ".[4] The perpetrators must have had accomplices in high places. In the web of conspiracy, intrigue and assassination in which political activity in Bulgaria had become involved precise lines of responsibility can rarely be disentangled.

The bomb outrage of April 1925 and the reprisals which followed virtually ended all activity of the BKP on Bulgarian soil for several years. No further attempts were made to renew contacts with IMRO, now firmly fixed in its allegiance to the Bulgarian Government, and once more committed to the cause of a Bulgarian Macedonia ; Kolarov, in an article in the Comintern journal, sourly referred to " nationalist elements which, under cover of the Macedonian organization, seek to uphold aggressive Bulgarian nationalism ".[5] But something could be done to counter and undermine the authority of IMRO abroad, if not in Bulgaria itself. The abortive negotiations with IMRO

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 66, April 24, 1925, p. 891 ; No. 84, May 19, 1925, p. 1148 (this statement included a denial of preparations for an insurrection on April 15) ; *Izvestiya*, April 23, 1925.

[2] Stalin at the fourteenth party congress in December 1925 referred to the outrage and repeated, in particularly emphatic terms, that " communists had not, have not, and cannot have, anything to do with the theory and practice of individual terror " (Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 293).

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 553.

[4] G. Dimitrov, *Politicheski Otchet na TsK na BRP(K)* (1948), p. 28.

[5] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 8 (45), August 1925, p. 73.

had left behind them one useful legacy — a journal not overtly communist, but sympathetic to the policies of the Soviet Government. For seven-and-a-half years *La Fédération Balkanique*, while professing independence of Moscow (Vlakhov afterwards stated that he joined the BKP in 1925,[1] but this was not revealed at the time), kept before the western public the cause of Balkan revisionism and of nationalities oppressed by Balkan régimes under the tutelage of imperialist western Powers.[2] In October 1925 Vlakhov founded in Vienna, evidently, though not professedly, under communist auspices, a new organization called "United IMRO" to sustain the cause of Macedonian independence abandoned by IMRO at the behest of the Bulgarian Government.[3] Propaganda in this sense was carried on for some years in *La Fédération Balkanique*, and in a Bulgarian journal of the Vlakhov group, *Makedonsko Delo*, also published outside Bulgaria. Meanwhile the Communist Balkan Federation continued to agitate for the independence of the Dobrudja;[4] and in the latter part of 1925 emissaries of the BKP were apparently engaged in fomenting a revolutionary movement for a "free and independent Thrace".[5] But none of these efforts sufficed to shake the firmly repressive authority of the Bulgarian Government and of its IMRO backers. At the beginning of 1926 Tsankov resigned and was succeeded as Prime Minister by Lyaptev, who had closer links with IMRO than his predecessor, and appears to have been a cleverer, though not necessarily more unscrupulous, politician; the change was noted in a statement by the central committee of the BKP, which greeted both outgoing and incoming Prime Ministers in terms of equal abuse.[6]

The bankruptcy of methods of underground organization and direct action dictated a return to the tactics of the united front,

[1] See J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), p. 194, note 4; V. Serge, *Mémoires d'un Révolutionnaire* (1951), p. 198, describes a visit to Vlakhov in Vienna in the summer of 1925 and the elaborate precautions taken to protect him from assassination.

[2] A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *10 Let Kominterna* (1929), p. 375, presumably refers to *La Fédération Balkanique* as the organ of the Communist Balkan Federation; but it did not officially have that character.

[3] J. Rothschild, *The Communist Party of Bulgaria* (1959), p. 196.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 35, March 13, 1925, p. 530.

[5] *Ibid.* No. 2, January 5, 1926, p. 12.

[6] *Ibid.* No. 19, January 26, 1926, pp. 261-263.

which in a country like Bulgaria could only mean an attempt to camouflage communist propaganda in legal forms. Dimitrov described the chief task of the Balkan federation as "*the creation of an all-Balkan workers' front* (a coordination of the workers', peasants' and national-revolutionary movements in the Balkans)".[1] In August 1925 the central committee of the BKP, presumably meeting in Moscow, and at a moment when Comintern policy was everywhere turned against the ultra-Left, issued a directive on the old united front lines, propounding a programme of trade union unity, defence of civil rights, and cooperation with the radical wing of the peasantry.[2] In pursuance of this policy, an attempt was made to revive the independent trade unions which, after the suppression of the Red unions in 1923, had struggled into life in 1924, only to be once more crushed after the cathedral outrage of April 1925.[3] Early in 1926 an Independent Trade Union Federation, not affiliated to Profintern and without overt communist associations, but in opposition to the Free Trade Union Federation affiliated to IFTU, was founded in Sofia with a journal called *Edinstvo*. It at once approached the rival federation with proposals for joint action, and embarked on a campaign, in accordance with the current directive of Profintern, for trade union unity.[4] But the Independent Federation never seems to have claimed more than a few thousand members,[5] and it made little impact on the Bulgarian scene. A diversion was created when IFTU organized in Sofia on April 9–10, 1926, a conference of Balkan trade unions affiliated to it, to which "sympathizing" organizations were also invited.[6] By way of response to the unity

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 7 (44), July 1925, p. 66.

[2] *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 239; the text of the resolution has not been traced, and it may not have been published.

[3] According to a Bulgarian work reviewed in *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*, No. 1, 1962, p. 203, the independent unions had 20,000 members before April 1925; in 1926 they had 5000 members divided between 17 unions.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 9, January 12, 1926, pp. 119-121.

[5] *Ibid.* No. 123, December 16, 1927, p. 2850; its journal *Edinstvo* circulated in 6000 copies (Kh. Kabakchiev *et al.*, *Kommunisticheskie Partii Balkanskikh Stran* (1930), p. 125).

[6] This gesture was initially condemned by the central council of Profintern as "an attempt to perpetuate the split created by the social-democrats" (*IV Sessiya Tsentral'nogo Soveta Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoyuzov* (1926), p. 135).

propaganda of the Bulgarian Independent Federation, the conference passed a resolution authorizing the Free Federation to open negotiations with it.[1] As a preliminary gesture of unity, the two federations organized a joint demonstration on May 1, 1926. In the negotiations which followed, the Independent Federation appeared at the outset to secure a surprising measure of success. On July 21, 1926, the negotiators signed a protocol providing for a unity congress to be summoned within six months; in the meanwhile the Free Federation agreed to suspend its affiliation to IFTU and maintain only "informational links" with Amsterdam. When, however, the protocol came up for ratification by the Free Federation, the influence of IFTU was once more in the ascendant, and the equivocal nature of the agreement became apparent. The federation was willing to ratify only on the understanding that the unified federation, when it was achieved, would affiliate to Amsterdam. The whole matter ended in mutual recriminations; and the unity congress was never held.[2] These were years of the almost total eclipse of the BKP. It was not till December 1927 that the party leaders in exile could muster the personnel and the material for another party conference.

(*h*) *The Yugoslav Communist Party* (*KPJ*)

When the fifth enlarged IKKI met on March 21, 1925, the situation in Yugoslavia offered few grounds for optimism. Since the elections six weeks earlier, the Pašič government had been more firmly than ever in power. The KPJ and the NRPJ were now equally prohibited parties; and the latter, having served its short-lived purpose, faded out of existence. Nothing had happened to heal the breach within the KPJ; and Comintern, anxious as ever to bring about unity where this was compatible with the maintenance of its own authority, had invited "comrades from all groups" to attend the session.[3] The stubborn

[1] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 6 (65), 1926, pp. 450-451; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 62, April 23, 1926, pp. 905-906.

[2] *Ibid.* No. 108, August 24, 1926, pp. 1803-1804; No. 126, October 19, 1926, pp. 2172-2173; No. 134, November 5, 1926, pp. 2330-2331; *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 2 (60), September 24, 1926, pp. 41-46.

[3] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 474.

Markovič appeared among the Yugoslav delegates under the name of Semič; and his presence ensured that contentious issues would be well ventilated. But about one embarrassing question the less said the better. Radič was in prison; and the present position of his party was obscure. Zinoviev in his main report remarked, in the course of a single discursive paragraph on the Balkans, that " at first sight the government may seem to have mastered the Radič movement ", but did not pursue the matter.[1] It was at this moment that Radič's nephew, Pavle Radič, embarked on the negotiations which would lead, three months later, to his surrender and reconciliation with Pašič. On March 27, 1925, two days after Zinoviev had spoken in Moscow, Pavle Radič announced in the diet in Belgrade that the Croat Republican Peasant Party loyally accepted the Yugoslav constitution and the monarchy. As regards the Peasant International, the powers exercised by Radič when he adhered to it in Moscow were purely personal, and the party as such was bound by no obligation. As soon as the central committee of the party could meet, it would decide to have no relations with the Peasant International.[2] The project of harnessing Radič and the Croat Republican Peasant Party through Krestintern in an alliance with communism had suffered shipwreck; and a conspiracy of silence on the whole affair prevailed in Moscow throughout the proceedings of the fifth IKKI. Bošković, who represented the majority of the KPJ,[3] speaking on the peasant question, noted that Radič's party was a purely national party, and that agrarian and other social issues counted for little in its policy. But, when he went on to refer to the party's adhesion to the Peasant International, and added that " the leaders now affirm that this adhesion was only a matter of form ", the remark was cut out of the official record.[4]

The debate on the affairs of the Yugoslav party was reserved

[1] *Ibid.* p. 48.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 51, April 7, 1925, p. 722; for a slightly different version of Pavle Radič's statement see *ibid.* No. 116, August 4, 1925, p. 1614.

[3] Bošković (pseudonym of F. Filipovič) had been secretary of the legal KPJ in 1919–1920, and secretary of the legal NRPJ in 1923–1924.

[4] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 334; the reference to the Peasant International, which does not appear in the Russian or German record, is preserved in the French version (*Exécutif Élargi de l'Internationale Communiste* (1925), p. 156).

for the Yugoslav commission. Kolarov, the Bulgarian leader, who presided, was unlikely to show undue indulgence to the KPJ or to Markovič in particular.[1] Markovič took the field as the champion of the anti-national standpoint of the opposition, quoting both from Lenin and from Stalin's famous essay *On the National and Colonial Question* in support of his argument.[2] His attack drew interventions from both Stalin and Zinoviev, neither of whom had originally been named as members of the commission.[3] Stalin, who accused Markovič of attempting to separate the national question from the question of revolution and from the question of the peasantry, and to reduce it to an issue of constitutional reform, confined himself to argument, and made no proposal; and, when Zinoviev wound up the debate, though a large part of his speech was devoted to a refutation of Markovič, the desire to avoid a split was once more apparent. Zinoviev's conclusion was that, since a party congress or conference could not be held in Yugoslavia, " we must regulate the common work here in Moscow ", and that " we must work with Semič and with the best elements of the opposition ".[4] Kolarov reported to the

[1] When the Bulgarian party was in disgrace after the disaster of June 1923, articles by Markovič and Milojkovič attacking it appeared in the Comintern press (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 124, July 27, 1923, pp. 1086-1087; No. 134, August 17, 1923, p. 1171).

[2] For Markovič's views see p. 226, note 3 above. His speech in the Yugoslav commission was not published; but, according to Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 70, he again referred to Stalin's pamphlet of 1912, " trying to find in it some indirect confirmation of his own rightness ". This may have been why Stalin thought it necessary to reply. This controversy may have been the occasion of a dispute between Zinoviev and Stalin later referred to by Skrypnik (*XV Konferentsiya Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1927), p. 84). According to this account, Zinoviev had favoured the principle of autonomy (as opposed to secession) as a solution of the national question in Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Poland (for this issue in the Czechoslovak and Polish parties see pp. 176-178, 387 above); these views, which represented " a certain revision of Lenin's views on the national question ", were afterwards " rejected at the enlarged plenum of IKKI after a long struggle in which the decisive word was spoken by comrade Stalin ". This " struggle " has left no trace in the records; nor did Stalin ever refer to it in his subsequent attacks on Zinoviev. Skrypnik probably exaggerated it in his desire to associate the cause of " autonomy " with the discredited name of Zinoviev.

[3] For the original list see *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 29.

[4] Zinoviev's speech appeared in *Pravda*, April 11, 1925, and in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 64, April 21, 1925, pp. 861-863; Stalin's speech *ibid.* No. 76, May 8, 1925, pp. 1013-1014; the other speeches were not

plenary session on the differences which had arisen in the commission. The first was the question of the stabilization of capitalism: the opposition exaggerated its extent, whereas the central committee thought that it had little or no application to Balkan conditions (the theory of the "revolutionary situation" in the Balkans).[1] The second was the national question: the opposition argued that the national movement was a bourgeois movement which did not concern the workers, and that Croat or Slovene nationalism was just as obnoxious as Serb nationalism. The third was the question of the peasantry: the opposition rejected the policy of a worker-peasant bloc or of a united front with the peasants. The fourth was the question of the trade unions, which were encouraged by the opposition to pursue a policy independent of the party, and had been exploited by it in its fractional struggle against the party. The main task, Kolarov concluded, was "to carry out the systematic Bolshevization of the party", which would enable it to "take its place in the common Balkan front".[2]

The commission had been unable to agree on a resolution, and had not had time to consider a draft prepared for it by a sub-commission. Kolarov's only formal proposal was to entrust the presidium of IKKI with the drafting of a resolution which would settle "all questions of an organizational and personal character" relating to the Yugoslav party. His report was followed by three brief Yugoslav statements — from a spokesman of the party central committee, who agreed with everything that had been done and urged "all honest revolutionary elements of the opposition" to acknowledge their errors and accept the decision of IKKI; from a spokesman of the opposition, who accepted the draft resolution in principle, but thought that "certain parts must still be changed"; and from Markovič, who, belonging "neither to the party central committee nor to the opposition which has left the party", pointed to "various

published. Stalin's speech is also in *Sochineniya*, vii, 69-76. Markovič defended himself against Stalin's strictures in a further article (*Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 120, August 11, 1925, pp. 1729-1730), to which Stalin again replied (*Sochineniya*, vii, 216-226).

[1] The report of IKKI a year later remarked categorically that "nowhere is stabilization so slight as in the Balkans" (*Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 237).

[2] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 475-477.

shortcomings" in the draft resolution, but accepted in advance the decision of the presidium.[1] The resolution on the Yugoslav question, when finally issued, proved to be little more than an emphatic confirmation of earlier pronouncements. Having noted the prospect of "a further sharpening of the crisis in the Balkans, and in particular of the crisis in Yugoslavia, to the point of *a profound revolutionary crisis*", it demanded that all revolutionary efforts should be united "against the principal enemy, *against the ruling Serb bourgeoisie and against its militarist monarchy*". It dealt in detail with the national and peasant issues. It insisted that the revolutionary potentialities of the national question had been underestimated in the Yugoslav party. Self-determination and the right of secession for Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians and Montenegrins must be proclaimed, the ultimate goal being "a federation of worker-peasant Balkan republics". The nationalism of the Croat and Slovene bourgeoisie could not be denounced in the same terms as that of the Serb bourgeoisie: this was to ignore its potentially revolutionary character. "No fear of inflaming national passions", declared the resolution, "must prevent the party from appealing with all its might to the masses in this most important question." In the peasant question "alliance between the proletariat and the peasant masses must be made by the party the foundation of all its activity": the party could in no case afford to "show indifference to *peasant movements and peasant organizations*". At the very end of the resolution — it looked like a last-minute addition — a fleeting reference was made to the fiasco of the Radič venture:

> The example of Radič, who renounced the fundamental demands of the programme of his party, warns communists of the necessity of keeping always ready the weapon of the sharpest criticism in respect of petty bourgeois peasant leaders.[2]

The most significant decision was not formally recorded. It was to confirm the expulsion of Milojkovič from the KPJ, but to readmit to the party all those members of the opposition who had

[1] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 478-480; "the opposition which has left the party" referred to Milojkovič and his supporters (see p. 231 above).

[2] For the final text see *ibid.* pp. 588-602; A. Tivel and M. Kheimo, *10 Let Kominterna* (1929), p. 333, dates it May 5, 1925.

left it in November 1924 and were now prepared to accept the Comintern line.[1] The desire of Comintern to heal the split in the party was to this extent satisfied. But to make the KPJ a coherent and effective unit was scarcely possible.

A few days after the fifth enlarged IKKI ended its session, the Sofia cathedral explosion threw fresh discredit on communist parties in the Balkans, and especially on those groups which had diagnosed an approaching revolutionary situation. Shortly afterwards, a fresh disgrace fell on the communist cause in Yugoslavia. The negotiations conducted with Pašič by Radič's nephew on behalf of the Croat Republican Peasant Party bore fruit. In July 1925 Radič was released from prison, and in November joined the government. The price of the settlement had been outlined by Pavle Radič in his speech of the previous March: the Croat party proclaimed its acceptance of the constitution and of the monarchy (it shortly afterwards dropped the word "republican" from its title), and its severance of all relations with Krestintern and with Moscow. This ignominious collapse of a policy which the opposition had always disliked and denounced was a further blow to the ruling group in the KPJ and to the authority of Comintern. The party central committee issued a manifesto describing Radič's surrender as "a shameful capitulation" and "a betrayal of the most elementary interests of the peasantry", and tracing the hand of British imperialism in support for Tsankov in Bulgaria, for Zog in Albania and for "the monarcho-militarist bankers' clique in Belgrade".[2] But protests could not relieve the atmosphere of gloom and despondency. A later official account admitted that, in the latter half of the year 1925, the continued illegal status of the party and "new Draconian persecutions" led to dangerous moods of "depression, passivity and despair", and to "a disintegration of the former leading group in the party". The opposition, though it had accepted the IKKI resolution, continued to spread "a spirit of sectarianism and fractionalism". Party activity appears to have come almost to a standstill.[3] In January 1926 an attempt to hold a conference of

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 4 (41), April 1925, p. 61.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 129, September 8, 1925, pp. 1878-1881 The date of the manifesto is not stated; internal evidence suggests that it was drafted in Moscow.

[3] *Istorijski Arhiv KPJ*, ii (1950), 95-96.

independent trade unions led to a mass arrest of leaders to the number of 350.[1] The sixth enlarged IKKI in February–March 1926 ignored the affairs of the KPJ; but its presidium adopted a resolution referring to "the Radič agreement with the Serb monarchy", reproaching the KPJ with not having taken advantage of it to win over the peasants and oppressed nationalities betrayed by it, and laying down directives for the "forthcoming party congress".[2] In May 1926 an attempt was at length made to breathe fresh life into the KPJ by convening a party congress in Vienna.

(*i*) *The Workers' Party of America*

The fifth enlarged IKKI of March 1925 could not, as the fifth congress had done nine months earlier, evade serious discussion of the American party and its affairs; for both the embattled factions had been summoned to attend it.[3] Foster and Cannon came to speak for the majority group; Ruthenberg and Lovestone represented the minority, and found a powerful ally in the still faithful Pepper, now firmly established in Moscow. Foster, Ruthenberg and Lovestone had travelled on false passports, and appeared at the session under the names of Dorsey, Sanborn and Powers. In the general debate which followed Zinoviev's main report on stabilization and Bolshevization, Pepper once more exercised his ingenuity on behalf of a policy of supporting, and, if necessary, organizing, a labor party (the "farmer" element in the title was tacitly dropped). Cannon argued that, without mass support in the trade unions, such a party would prove ineffective, and warned the party against "becoming the victim of theoretical experiments".[4] But, if Cannon was more keenly aware of American political realities, Pepper alone spoke, literally and figuratively, a language which was understood in Moscow. He alone knew that the Comintern leaders, disappointed and alarmed by the results of the encouragement to the Left at the fifth congress, were now executing an unavowed turn toward the Right, and that

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 23, February 5, 1926, p. 339.

[2] *Istorijski Arhiv KPJ*, ii (1950), 443-447, where the resolution is dated "April 1926"; the Russian text has not been traced.

[3] See p. 247 above.

[4] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 188-204.

united front tactics, in the fullest sense of the term, were once more the order of the day.

The American question was referred to a commission, where both groups evidently gave full vent to their mutual resentments.[1] In these conditions the only hope seemed to reside in an agreement imposed from above. The decisive factor was the analogy drawn from European tactics. Since Comintern policy now required a guarded support by communists of other Left parties, even though these were unmistakably bourgeois and were branded as such, this policy must also be applied in the United States. The embarrassment that it was regarded by those in closest touch with the American workers as impracticable, and was supported only by a minority of the American party, must somehow be overcome; and once more the truth was illustrated that no faction in the party could long resist serious pressure from Moscow. The commission prepared a lengthy resolution which noted that American capitalism, like capitalism elsewhere, had overcome its immediate crisis; that the class consciousness of the workers was growing, though slowly; that the defeat suffered by the Workers' Party in the presidential election was inevitable, and not blameworthy; that the resulting refusal of the majority to continue the policy of support for a labor party or farmer-labor party had been a mistake; and, though the resolution referred at one point to the unduly "narrow" views of the minority, it substantially endorsed them. The party should still aim at the formation of a "labor party" which would not be directly revolutionary, but would rally sympathizers to the cause. At the same time (this accorded with the views of the Foster-Cannon group) active support was to be given to the TUEL, and every effort made to develop it into "a powerful opposition movement of a Left bloc". The resolution ended with an exhortation to both factions to work together for the common good.[2] On one issue this exhortation at once proved effective. While the American commission

[1] Gallacher, who was a member of the commission, gave a naïve but revealing account of its proceedings to the seventh congress of the CPGB a few weeks later (*Report of the Seventh Congress of the CPGB* (n.d.), pp. 80-89); though "it was very obvious that there was no serious political difference between the groups", nevertheless "no opportunity was lost by these factions to aggravate the differences that existed between them".

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 511-518.

was at work, the plenary session had passed its unanimous judgment on Trotsky.[1] Ruthenberg eagerly made his contribution to the spate of denunciation, and devoted special attention to the American Trotskyite Lore; Foster, slightly embarrassed by his previous alliance with Lore, followed suit more guardedly.[2] The American resolution contained a paragraph describing Lore as guilty of a non-communist deviation, and inviting the new party congress to take a " definite decision " about him.[3]

A more knotty point, however, remained. Though IKKI had on the whole endorsed the Ruthenberg line, the Foster group still had a majority in the party and in the principal party organs. This opened up a prospect of half-hearted measures and mutual frustration. What happened in the American party mattered little to the leaders of Comintern; and Zinoviev was at first content to stipulate that at the forthcoming American party congress one-third of the places in the central committee should be promised to the minority, i.e. to the Ruthenberg group. But this, too, seemed inadequate. Under pressure from Ruthenberg or Pepper or both, Zinoviev reversed his position and put forward a new proposal. In the interval before the congress, the affairs of the party were to be placed in the hands of a " parity commission " with both groups equally represented, and a " neutral " chairman to give the casting vote. Whatever the result of the congress, the minority was to be assured of a " large representation " in the central committee. Zinoviev, in his final report to the enlarged IKKI, was frank about the change of front, and professed impartiality between the factions; and the resolution was unanimously adopted.[4] But the key to the situation was the neutral chairman of the parity commission, who would be chosen by Comintern, and who would in effect be undisputed arbiter of party affairs till the congress met. By that time much could be done; the party had, after all, invited Comintern to make up its mind for it. The Comintern nominee proved to be Gusev, who

[1] See p. 299 above.

[2] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 405-407, 409-411.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1953), p. 517.

[4] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 243-246; for the relevant passage in the resolution see *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 518.

had specialized as a savage critic of Trotsky in military affairs.[1] His first connexion with Comintern seems to have been his appearance at the fifth enlarged IKKI in March 1925, when, as a member of the central control commission of the Russian party, he became a member of the joint committee which reported on the heresies of Brandler, Thalheimer and Radek.[2] This accident no doubt suggested the choice.

Notwithstanding the show of reconciliation in Moscow, the two American factions remained entrenched in their positions. In the period which elapsed before Gusev reached Chicago, Foster was eager to do everything to consolidate his authority while his majority still held, Ruthenberg to delay every decision pending the appearance of the "neutral" chairman.[3] Gusev arrived in the latter part of June 1925, and took charge of a parity commission consisting of Foster, Cannon and Bittelman for the majority, and Ruthenberg, Lovestone and Bedacht for the minority. Gusev, who used while in the United States the name of Green, was neither so fluent nor so ingenious as Pepper. But he had less need of these adventitious aids, since he enjoyed unlimited power in the American party as well as the full backing of Comintern. So effectively did he work that, before the party congress assembled, the parity commission had drawn up agreed resolutions on the principal issues, and an arrangement had been come to by which the Ruthenberg faction was to have 8 representatives, as against 13 for the majority, on the central executive committee to be elected by the congress, and to comprise one-third of the membership of other party organs. In other centres, however, where Gusev's writ did not run, no such unanimity reigned. Fierce factional struggles occurred in almost all the local branches over the appointment of delegates to the congress, and split delegations were the rule.[4]

The fourth congress of the Workers' Party opened in Chicago in August 21, 1925. After lengthy recriminations in the mandates commission about the conditions in which some of the delegates had been elected, Foster emerged with 40 delegates behind him

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

[2] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala*, pp. 412-413; for this affair see pp. 316-317 above.

[3] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), p. 140.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 142.

as against only 21 for Ruthenberg. This resounding victory seems to have gone to Foster's head. Feeling himself at last in full command, he began to talk boldly of removing Ruthenberg from the secretariat, excluding Lovestone from the central committee, and assuming full control of the *Daily Worker*, hitherto the joint organ of both factions. This was too much for the minority; and acrimonious altercations broke out on the floor of the congress. It was also too much for Gusev, who evidently reported to Moscow that all control over the party would be lost if Foster had his way. On August 28, 1925, after the congress had been quarrelling for a week, Gusev presented to the parity commission a telegram of instructions just received from Moscow. This declared the Ruthenberg group to be " more loyal to decisions of the Communist International " and " closer to its views " than the Foster group, which was accused of " excessively mechanical and ultra-factional methods ". The Ruthenberg group was to obtain 40 per cent of the membership of the central committee, and parity in all other party organs. A veto was placed on the removal of Ruthenberg from the secretariat, on the expulsion of Lovestone from the central committee, and on the taking over of the *Daily Worker*. In the event of resistance to these proposals, Gusev was to declare the congress invalid on the ground of electoral irregularities, to reconstitute the parity commission with himself as chairman, and to expel from the party anyone who refused to submit.[1] Foster, stunned by this sudden reversal of fortune, thought at first of resistance, and threatened to boycott the proceedings. But Cannon was more realistically alive to the impossibility of opposition to the will of Moscow, and divided the group against him. On the following day, August 29, 1925, Foster came to heel. The old parity commission met and unanimously decided that the central executive committee should be constituted on a parity basis, and that the congress should empower " the representative of the Communist International " to preside over the committee with a casting vote.[2] The congress ended with the committee constituted on these lines. But Foster and

[1] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 143-144, where it is rightly pointed out that so detailed an instruction can have been inspired only by Gusev himself; the decision of the presidium of IKKI was taken on August 27, 1925 (*Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 11).

[2] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 145-146.

Cannon had apparently not foreseen the logical issue of the situation. The Ruthenberg group, thanks to Gusev's casting vote, now had an effective majority in the central committee, and proceeded to elect a majority of its supporters to the political commission and other party organs.[1] By these manœuvres the leadership of the American party had been transferred to the group which, though enjoying minority support in the party, seemed " more loyal " to Comintern and " closer to its views ". Gusev, having done his work, departed and did not reappear on the American scene. Once again a clash had occurred between the American conception of decisions taken by a majority and the Comintern conception of decisions taken in accordance with a correct line laid down, on the basis of theory and experience, by a central authority. Once again the view of Moscow had prevailed, and had been accepted by the majority. The extreme weakness of American communism provided the logic behind these events. Both groups knew that the party existed by the grace, and with the support, of Moscow, and that the withdrawal of the favour of Comintern meant its annihilation. The choice was between a conformist party and no party at all. Apart from these changes in the leadership, the fourth congress adopted a resolution on the Bolshevization of the party and a party statute on the lines of the model statute for foreign communist parties approved by IKKI. This involved not only a change in the official name of the party to " Workers' (Communist) Party of America ", but the substitution of an organization based on the cell system for the existing division of the party into language federations, though minor linguistic units were allowed to survive under the name of " language fractions ".[2] Within three months, 70 per cent of the party members had been organized in cells.[3] The reorganization, combined with other recent events, had a catastrophic effect on the party membership, which fell from 16,325 in the first half of 1925, and 14,037 in September 1925, to 7213 in October 1925.[4]

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 147-148 ; the two accounts in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 134, September 22, 1925, pp. 1955-1957 ; No. 143, October 20, 1925, pp. 2103-2104, were both written by supporters of Ruthenberg.

[2] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), p. 160 ; for the model statute and the cell (or " nucleus ") system see pp. 913, 930 below.

[3] *Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 377.

[4] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), p. 187 ; part of the loss was attributed to the abolition of the " dual stamp " under which husband

In October 1925 Foster and Bittelman travelled to Moscow to see whether anything could be salved from the shipwreck of their ambitions. That they were allowed to make the journey shows that they had not been entirely written off in Moscow; that they spent the whole winter there suggests that they did not find it easy to win the ear of the authorities. During their absence, Ruthenberg launched an attack on Foster's last potential stronghold. Since the TUEL had been outlawed by the A.F. of L. in the autumn of 1923,[1] its importance had steadily declined. In November 1924 its journal *The Labor Herald* ceased publication and was merged in the party *Workers' Monthly*.[2] At the organization conference in Moscow in March 1925 Foster confessed that membership of the TUEL was practically confined to communists, though he claimed that it had begun to attract non-party workers.[3] So long as Foster had a commanding position in the party, the dividing line between party and TUEL could without inconvenience be left undefined. But, after the fourth party congress of August 1925, with Foster reduced to a subordinate rôle in the party, the independence of the TUEL again became a bone of contention. At a session of the party central committee in December 1925, Ruthenberg proposed the creation of a new party organization to carry on work in the trade unions, the main purpose of which was to swallow up what was left of the TUEL. Foster's few remaining followers, one of whom was Browder, were so far successful in their opposition that the committee, while adopting the proposal by a large majority, agreed not to put it into force till the approval of Comintern and Profintern had been received. At this point Lozovsky, no doubt apprised by Foster in Moscow of what was on foot, sent a curt telegram asking for the text of the resolution for consideration, and adding that, since the TUEL

and wife had hitherto been allowed to register jointly and pay a single subscription. For an official account of the reorganization see *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), pp. 268-289.

[1] See pp. 240-241 above.

[2] This attracted little notice at the time, but was belatedly described by the central committee of Profintern in March 1926 as a set-back for the TUEL (*IV Sessiya Tsentral'nogo Soveta Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoyuzov* (1926), p. 13).

[3] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 40, March 25, 1925, p. 606; this passage reads differently in the edited version of the speech in *Der Organisatorische Aufbau der Kommunistischen Partei* (1925), p. 55.

was a part of Profintern, no decisions affecting its status could be taken in Chicago.[1] Ruthenberg's anger at the veto was understandable. But, owing his position entirely to the intervention of Comintern, he could hardly raise his voice against the dictates of Moscow. Foster and Bittelman improved the occasion by issuing a long statement in defence of the TUEL entitled " New Orientations in the American Workers' Movement and the Problem of Creating a Mass Movement of the Left Wing ".[2] On January 13, 1926, the presidium of IKKI set up a commission to decide, in consultation with members of the party, on the line to be taken at the forthcoming session of the enlarged IKKI.[3] The future of the Workers' Party and of the TUEL was now dependent on what would be done at the sixth enlarged IKKI due to meet in Moscow in February 1926.

[1] T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 219-220.
[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 1 (50), January 1926, pp. 192-206.
[3] *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 11.

CHAPTER 32

AFTER LOCARNO

(*a*) *Great Britain*

LOCARNO was a landmark in European diplomatic history, and exercised an important, though sometimes intangible, influence on Soviet relations with all the leading European countries. Its effect on the Soviet attitude to Great Britain was the simplest and clearest. The abortive treaty of August 1924 lay buried beneath the Zinoviev letter and the Conservative victory at the polls. Locarno was rightly seen as a triumph for the British policy of restoring the balance of power in western Europe by bringing back Germany into the community of western nations. It was a part of this policy — in British eyes a subsidiary, but none the less necessary, part — to drive a wedge between Germany and the Soviet Union, to weaken German dependence on an eastward orientation, and thus to isolate the Soviet Union in Europe ; and it was natural that this part of the Locarno policy should be thought of in Moscow as its essence and fundamental aim. Austen Chamberlain in his farewell interview with Rakovsky on November 5, 1925, referred angrily to Chicherin's " obsession that my whole policy was directed to the isolation of Russia ".[1] But this was the aspect of British policy which concerned and alarmed Moscow. " Locarno is directed against the Soviet Union ", repeated Zinoviev at the fourteenth party congress in December 1925 ; ". . . its edge is turned against the USSR ".[2] Only Stalin at the same congress pointed hopefully to the contradiction in the attitude of " the English Conservatives ", who sought " both to preserve the *status quo* against Germany and to utilize Germany against the Soviet Union ".[3]

[1] *A Selection of Papers dealing with the Relations between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government, 1921–1927*, Cmd. 2895 (1927), p. 40.

[2] *XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), p. 652.

[3] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 274.

The year 1925 would have been entirely barren in Anglo-Soviet relations but for the signature of the most extensive concession agreement hitherto concluded by the Soviet Government. Among the former British owners of property in Tsarist Russia who had pressed their claims at the time of the Anglo-Soviet negotiations of 1924 the Lena Goldfields Company had been conspicuous, the company having, under an agreement of 1908, held a large area in Siberia on lease for the mining of gold and other minerals. From discussions with the company in 1924 the proposal had emerged that the Soviet Government should release the same area to the company as a concession, the company pledging itself to mine and develop its mineral resources through further capital investment. After long negotiations, in the course of which the company secured the financial backing of the New York bankers Kuhn, Loeb, the agreement was signed in Moscow on April 30, 1925, by representatives of the company and by Pyatakov as president of the chief concessions committee. Pyatakov signed *ad referendum* and subject to the final confirmation of Sovnarkom, to which the agreement was to be submitted. The concession was valid for 30 years for the major mining area and for 50 years for subsidiary enterprises. It extended to the mining of all "useful minerals" except platinum, radium, helium and wolfram, which were reserved to the government. The company was under an obligation to mine gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc. Of gold and silver mined, 25 per cent was to be available for export; 75 per cent was to be sold to the government at world prices. Not more than 15 per cent of workers, or 50 per cent of technical staff, were to be of foreign nationality; a stipulation was made for the training of Soviet managing personnel. A court of arbitration with a Swiss or Swedish "super-arbiter" was to rule on disputes arising under the agreement. In order to bring the mines back into production and carry out the agreement, the company required a substantial fresh investment of capital. This was obtained through Kuhn, Loeb, whose representative Lyman Brown was one of the signatories of the agreement on behalf of the company.[1] Brown was a former associate of Hoover,

[1] *The Times* reported the agreement throughout in its city columns as if to minimize its political importance; in announcing the signature of the agreement in its issue of May 4, 1925, it reported that arrangements had been completed with American interests for the provision of additional capital. I. Maisky,

now at the height of his influence as Secretary of Commerce: it was to be assumed that the transaction had Hoover's backing.[1] Harriman, now in the final stages of negotiation for a Soviet concession for manganese,[2] had close connexions with Kuhn, Loeb, and may also have been directly or indirectly concerned.

The Soviet negotiators, mindful perhaps of the fate of an earlier concession agreement,[3] remained cautious. Pyatakov, in an interview in *Pravda*, justified the agreement by the need for an investment of capital for the development of natural resources, but pointed out that more had been yielded by the Soviet Government than under any previous concession.[4] The agreement was received with satisfaction on the British and American side. The directors of the company in a public statement paid tribute to "the competent and judicial manner in which the terms of this agreement have been discussed by the representatives of the Soviet Government", and called it "a practical scheme of co-operation . . . to the mutual advantage of all parties".[5] On July 30, 1925, a meeting of the company authorized acceptance of the agreement, which was approved by the Soviet authorities on August 11, 1925.[6] From New York Gumberg reported to Krasin that the agreement was regarded in Wall Street as "a very advantageous business".[7] The company's engineers took possession of the properties on October 1, 1925.[8]

But, in spite of this practical achievement, which received little publicity or encouragement in official British circles, the political situation continued to deteriorate. When at the beginning of April 1925 Rakovsky sought an interview with Chamberlain — his first since January — and suggested "a review of all the possible points of difference between us in different parts of the

Vospominaniya Sovetskogo Posla v Anglii (1960), p. 50, states that (after 1925) the "lion's share" of the property was in American hands, and that Austen Chamberlain held 1000 shares.

[1] For Brown see p. 482, note 3 below. Gumberg in a letter of September 11, 1925 (see note 7 below), noting the share of Kuhn Loeb in the transaction, added: "It is possible that Brown's former chief is also interested"; the reference is evidently to Hoover.

[2] See pp. 483-485 below.

[3] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 432-433.

[4] *Pravda*, May 12, 1925.

[5] *The Times*, May 13, 1925.

[6] *Ibid.* July 31, August 13, 1925.

[7] Letter of September 11, 1925 in the Gumberg archives.

[8] *The Times*, December 7, 1925.

world", Chamberlain rejected "general conversations of this kind" or "fresh negotiations" as useless.[1] In his speech at the third Union Congress of Soviets in May 1925 Chicherin struck a plaintive note:

> We are willing at any moment and with the utmost readiness to begin and carry on negotiations, but we would like to know what precisely, in the treaty signed with MacDonald, is unacceptable to the new English government. We cannot make new proposals if we do not know what makes the former proposals unacceptable.

Later in the speech he continued, in apparently sincere bewilderment:

> England's policy consists in officially denying any hostile intentions against us, while in fact, wherever we turn, we are met by the opposition of English agents. What are they after? What do they want? Is the English government trying to prepare to strangle us, or is it rather trying to isolate us and to strengthen its own position in relation to us?[2]

But the reaction on both sides was emotional rather than rational. Excited British die-hards eagerly read the hand of Moscow in the disturbances which flared up in China in the summer of 1925.[3] On June 29, 1925, Birkenhead, then Secretary of State for India, attacked Soviet activities in Asia, and especially in China, in his most trenchant style, and openly threatened a breaking off of relations; and anti-Bolshevik speeches in highly-coloured language by Joynson-Hicks and Churchill — both also ministers — helped to fan the flame. Chicherin replied sharply to these attacks in an interview published both in *Pravda* and in *Izvestiya* on July 2, 1925. In the first days of July 1925 it seemed in Moscow as if "the question of a breach of relations between England and the USSR hung on a thread".[4] On July 15, 1925, *Pravda*, reviving a rumour which had been current throughout the summer, featured conspicuously a message from Helsingfors alleging that, according to "absolutely reliable reports", negotiations were in progress between the British and Estonian Governments

[1] *A Selection of Papers dealing with the Relations between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government, 1921–1927*, Cmd. 2895 (1927), pp. 37-39; for the January meeting see p. 34 above.

[2] *Tretii S"ezd Sovetov SSSR* (1925), pp. 92-93, 95-96.

[3] See pp. 719-721 below.

[4] *Izvestiya*, January 7, 1926.

for a long-term lease of the Baltic islands of Dagö and Oesel to serve as a British naval base.[1] At the climax of the Locarno negotiations little attention was paid in Great Britain to Soviet affairs. But the arrest of ten leading British communists in October 1925 and the seizure of papers at party headquarters [2] looked like another stroke in a concerted anti-Soviet campaign. When Chamberlain told Rakovsky, who called on November 5, 1925, to take his leave on transfer to Paris, that " though we had ample grounds on which to base a rupture with the Soviet Government ", he " desired, if possible, to avoid a rupture ",[3] the words were plainly intended as a threat.

The signature of the Locarno treaties in London on December 1, 1925, found Chamberlain at the pinnacle of his glory and self-assurance. Chicherin, who had just arrived in Paris, allowed a hint to be dropped that he would welcome an invitation to come to London. Chamberlain in reply " authorized " Briand, who was in London, " to let M. Chicherin know that, if he desired an interview, I should not refuse it ".[4] The message was so chilling that Briand apparently preferred not to deliver it ; [5] and Chicherin did not visit London. From the time of Rakovsky's departure till the belated arrival of Krasin, now a dying man, to succeed him in July 1926, the Soviet Union was represented in London by Rozengolts, the head of the trade delegation. But relations were virtually non-existent. Litvinov, in his speech as TsIK in April 1926, reiterated that the Soviet Government, since the advent of a Conservative government to power in Great Britain, had never ceased to proclaim its readiness to negotiate, and detected a faint ray of hope in the debate in the House of Commons on March 1, 1926, when a handful of Conservatives joined the opposition in voting against the government's refusal to extend export credits to the Soviet Union.[6] But a few days after Litvinov's speech, the outbreak of the general strike in Great

[1] See p. 251 above. [2] See p. 414 above.

[3] *A Selection of Papers dealing with the Relations between His Majesty's Government and the Soviet Government, 1921–1927*, Cmd. 2895 (1927), p. 40.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 42-43.

[5] L. Fischer, who was in Chicherin's confidence, states explicitly (*The Soviets in World Affairs* (1930), ii, 623) that Chicherin did not receive it.

[6] *SSSR : Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 3 Sozyva : 2 Sessiya* (1926), p. 1057.

Britain introduced a fresh and complicating element into Anglo-Soviet affairs.

(*b*) *France*

The summer of 1925, which was occupied by the Locarno negotiations, brought a slow deterioration in the prospects of a Franco-Soviet agreement on the questions left outstanding when France recognized the Soviet Union in the previous autumn.[1] As the fighting in Morocco became more severe, and communist propaganda against it more intense and more effective, exacerbation against the Soviet Union in French official quarters increased. In August 1925 Krasin was impelled to issue a statement to the press in which he denied that the USSR had " sent envoys to Abd-el-Krim and given financial help to the Rif leader ". He explained that everyone in the Soviet Union had " the most sincere desire to see your country settle the Morocco affair in the most satisfactory manner ", and that, " if at times opinions are expressed in the Soviet press which are not shared by everyone here, they are nevertheless inspired by desire to see France freed from the anxiety which the Moroccan affair represents ".[2] But this was cold comfort. Nor was any progress made towards a settlement of the debts. Painlevé, the Prime Minister, was more hostile than Herriot, Briand, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, less interested; and Caillaux, the Minister of Finance, was uncompromisingly opposed to financial concessions. At some time during this period discussions took place between Krasin and *Le Temps*, which offered to send a correspondent to Moscow, to print dispassionate and increasingly favourable reports, to refrain from adverse editorial comment on Soviet affairs, and to support " a line favourable to the USSR in foreign relations ": the payment demanded for these services was a million francs a year. Krasin offered 500,000 francs, then 750,000; at this point the matter was referred to the Politburo, which refused to go higher, so that the transaction fell through, and the Soviet Union continued to have a bad press.[3] Early in September 1925 a complete

[1] See pp. 40, 44 above.

[2] Slight variants occurred in the records of the interview in *Pravda* and *Le Temps*, August 8, 1925.

[3] Trotsky, recalling this incident ten years later (*Trotsky's Diary in Exile* (1958), pp. 30-31), could only date it " in 1925 (or 1924 ?) ".

deadlock was reached in the leisurely negotiations between the French and Soviet financial experts in Paris. On September 1, 1925, Krasin brought matters to a head by submitting an outline of a projected agreement. The dependence of a debt settlement on credits was firmly asserted; the amount of the credits must match the extent of the obligations assumed by the Soviet Union.[1] The draft had a chilly reception, and Krasin left in protest for Moscow.

With Locarno looming on the horizon, and Germany moving in step with Great Britain, any worsening of Franco-Soviet relations was highly unwelcome to the makers of Soviet policy. When Chicherin was in Berlin at the moment of the departure of the German delegates for Locarno, his friend Stein arranged at his request a private meeting between him and the French Ambassador De Margerie, which took place on October 5, 1925.[2] Whether the conversation went beyond generalities about the improvement of Franco-Soviet relations, or whether any further meetings took place, is not known. But a week later Chicherin asked Stein to sound De Margerie as to the possibility of a visit to Briand in Paris after his projected stay in Wiesbaden.[3] Krasin's future rôle may also have been one of the topics under discussion. In the Russian party Krasin's position, never strong since Lenin's death, had suffered a further set-back with the decline in Soviet hopes of agreement with the west; and he was now under attack from those who wished to weaken the foreign trade monopoly.[4] Rakovsky's disappointment at his failure to obtain the Paris embassy [5] was shared by his French friends, who included De Monzie and Herbette; these seem to have instilled in Chicherin's ear the impression that Krasin had m de himself personally unpopular in Paris by his outspoken comments on the French colonial war in Morocco, and that Rakovsky would have more chance of bringing the Franco-Soviet negotiations to a successful conclusion. It was, therefore, no surprise when Rakovsky's appointment as Krasin's successor was announced at the end of

[1] *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, i, No. 2 (January–March 1960), pp. 235-236.

[2] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155928-30.

[3] *Ibid.* 4562/155954; for these meetings see also *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, i, No. 4 (July–December 1960), p. 585.

[4] See Vol. 1, pp. 447, 451-452.

[5] See pp. 40-41 above.

October 1925.[1] The imaginative Brockdorff-Rantzau called Rakovsky's appointment to Paris a "retribution for Locarno", since Rakovsky was well known as a Francophile, and had once declared in an interview that a Franco-Russian understanding would be the best guarantee of peace in Europe.[2] In an article on the first anniversary of French recognition of the Soviet Union, *Izvestiya* taunted France with following in the wake of Great Britain and having "no independent national policy of her own".[3]

Rakovsky reached Paris in time to preside on November 1, 1925, at the anniversary banquet.[4] His arrival marked the beginning of an intensive Soviet campaign to improve Franco-Soviet relations, and to set on foot serious discussions of outstanding issues. Chicherin's offer to visit Paris in the course of his sojourn in western Europe had been favourably received. When he arrived in Paris on the last day of November 1925, Briand had gone to London for the signature of the Locarno agreements, and Paris was in the throes of a ministerial crisis. This caused some delay, during which Chicherin tactfully retired to the Riviera. But on December 10, 1925, Rakovsky belatedly presented his credentials to the French President;[5] and during the following week a series of conversations was held between Chicherin and Rakovsky on one side and Briand and Berthelot on the other. Once again deadlock resulted, and the only positive conclusion was an agreement to open formal negotiations early in the new year. In public Chicherin expressed the utmost satisfaction with the results of his visit. In an interview published simultaneously in *Le Temps* and in *Izvestiya* on the day of his departure from Paris, December 17, 1925, he referred to "the profound change in the state of mind and in public opinion in

[1] Krasin wrote from Moscow on October 23, 1925, to his wife in Paris, saying that he had been transferred to London and would be replaced in Paris by Rakovsky (L. Krasin, *Leonid Krasin: His Life and Work* (n.d. [1929],) p. 259); the announcement appeared in the Soviet press on October 27, 1925.

[2] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/156012-14; for Rakovsky's interview see p. 39 above.

[3] *Izvestiya*, October 28, 1925.

[4] Rakovsky's speech on this occasion was reported in *Le Temps*, November 3, 1925.

[5] *Izvestiya*, December 12, 1925. The ceremony had apparently been held up by Rakovsky's unwelcome insistence that the Internationale, considered as the national anthem of the Soviet Union, should be played with the Marseillaise at the ceremony; the request was eventually shelved.

France in regard to my country " and to " the new spirit which now prevails ". He recognized that " tendencies inimical to us " still existed, but believed that they would " continue to lose strength ".[1] In a farewell interview published on the following day he revealed more frankly the essence of his hope or belief, and the mainspring of the Soviet attitude towards France at this time :

> The mutual confidence already shown in our conversations during these few days has convinced me that France will not lend herself to any grouping directed against my country.[2]

Chicherin's last act in Paris was to sign with the Turkish Ambassador a treaty of neutrality and non-aggression with Turkey.[3] The publication of this treaty a few days after Chicherin's departure was the occasion for an outburst of irritation in the French press.

The Soviet Government, still alarmed by the implications of Locarno and mistrustful of the German attitude, continued to plead the cause of a Franco-Soviet *rapprochement*. In Berlin, on his way back to Moscow, Chicherin gave yet another press interview. The negotiations in Paris had, he said, " established that no serious differences exist between France and the USSR " ; and he contrasted French affability with " the consistently hostile attitude of the English Government ".[4] Rakovsky, on a short visit to the Soviet Union,[5] delivered a speech on January 10, 1926, in which he compared the Franco-Soviet with the Anglo-Soviet negotiations, and gave reasons for hoping that the French Government would prove more reasonable than the British. He spoke openly of the isolation of France after Locarno, and suggested

[1] The last sentence quoted was omitted by *Le Temps*.

[2] *Le Temps*, December 18, 1925.

[3] See pp. 641-642 below.

[4] *Izvestiya*, December 21, 1925.

[5] During this visit Rakovsky delivered three speeches or lectures on international questions : on January 4, 1926, on the USSR and the League of Nations (*Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, January 6, 1926 — for this see p. 457 below) ; on January 10, 1926, on relations with Great Britain and France (*Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, January 14, 1926) ; and on January 13, 1926, on the consequences of Locarno (*Izvestiya*, January 15, 1926 ; *Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 1, 1926, pp. 33-50). The three speeches were reprinted in a pamphlet, Kh. Rakovsky, *Liga Natsii i SSSR* (1926), with Chicherin's statement of December 23, 1925, on the League of Nations (see pp. 428, 459 below) as an appendix.

that France held the key to the situation in western Europe: " formerly the road led to Paris through London, now it leads to London through Paris ".[1] In a further speech a few days later, he incurred some indignation in the Paris press by alleging that Locarno had given Germany " a certain liberty of action in the east ", and using this as an argument for a reinsurance of the Polish frontier with the Soviet Union.[2] Trotsky, while refusing to pin any " extraordinary hopes " on the forthcoming Franco-Soviet financial negotiations, suggested, in an article which bore the sub-title " Thinking Aloud ", that France should grant the Soviet Union a credit for 30 million rubles at 11 per cent, of which 7 per cent would be treated as interest and the remaining 4 per cent used in payment of the debts.[3] Early in February 1926, the Soviet delegation for the debt negotiations arrived in Paris, Pyatakov and Preobrazhensky being among its members.[4] The negotiations took the form, no longer of informal conversations between experts, but of a full diplomatic conference. Briand himself presided at the first meeting on February 25, 1926. Rakovsky, in a tactful reply to Briand's speech of welcome, pleaded for a " purely practical " approach to the problem of debts and credits, and hinted at the " considerable number of Frenchmen of all classes of society, and particularly the most modest ", who would be interested in a settlement.[5] In fact neither party had shifted its position. The Soviet Government was prepared in principle to recognize the debts. But any payment of them depended on French credits ; and no way could be found of squaring this circle. The high spots of the conference were two memoranda handed in on March 24, 1926, by the Soviet delegates, one dealing with debts, the other with credits, but neither of them naming any figures ; a French memorandum

[1] *Izvestiya*, January 14, 1926 ; *Le Temps*, January 14, 1926.

[2] *Izvestiya*, January 15, 1926 ; *Le Temps*, January 18, 1926.

[3] *Pravda*, January 17, 1926 ; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 19, January 26, 1926, pp. 263-264.

[4] Rakovsky, in a press interview, announced that it included representatives of Narkomfin, Vesenkha, Narkomtorg and Gosbank (*Izvestiya*, February 2, 1926).

[5] *Izvestiya*, February 26, 27, 1926. The French negotiators had always insisted on this point ; in January 1925 Krasin wrote ironically of the French creditors as " a group two million strong of French middle and poor peasants " (L. Krasin, *Voprosy Vneshnei Torgovli* (1928), p. 330).

of March 30, 1926, proposing a detailed scheme for resumption of the service of the debts, with annual payments beginning at 30 per cent of the amount due and rising to 50 per cent (the precedent of the Dawes plan was clearly in French minds); and a sharp Soviet rejoinder of April 14, 1926, describing the French proposals as "inadmissible" and utopian. Though this Soviet reply was followed a week later by another note holding out the bait of commercial exchanges and of Soviet orders for French industry, it was clear that the negotiations had once again ended in a deadlock.[1]

The tone of open intransigence in the Soviet note of April 14, 1926, could be attributed to political factors. In March 1926 France ratified the Locarno agreements, and such slender hopes as had been entertained in Moscow of detaching France from her partners vanished altogether. In the same month the fiasco of the first attempt to introduce Germany into the League of Nations seemed to prove that Germany's place in the Locarno system was less secure than had been feared. Simultaneously with the dissipation of these hopes and fears, the Soviet-German negotiations which had been languishing for many months took a favourable turn; and Germany, unlike France, was willing to grant credits. When the Soviet reply of April 14, 1926, was handed to the French delegation, agreement with Germany was in sight. The Soviet-German treaty was signed in Berlin ten days later.[2] The usual diplomatic assurances abounded. Litvinov, in his speech to VTsIK on the treaty, continued to attach the "utmost significance" to the prospects of agreement with France.[3] Rakovsky denied to the French press that the Soviet-German treaty was in any sense "a reply to the Locarno pact".[4] The French Ambassador in Berlin told D'Abernon that the treaty "seemed to him more directed against England than against France", and that Franco-Soviet relations were "quite friendly, outside the question of the debt".[5] But the shock had been

[1] For these negotiations see *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, i, No. 4 (July–December 1960), pp. 588-589, 592-593; De Monzie presided at the conference.

[2] For the treaty and the negotiations leading up to it see pp. 435-438 below.

[3] *SSSR: Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 3 Sozyva: 2 Sessiya* (1926), p. 1057; for this speech see p. 438 below.

[4] *Le Temps*, April 26, 1926.

[5] D'Abernon, *An Ambassador of Peace*, iii (1930), 246.

considerable. In fact, though this treaty meant less than Rapallo, it marked a change. The vision of a special relation with France, which would compensate for the deterioration in relations with Great Britain on the one hand and Germany on the other, had floated vaguely before the eyes of harassed Soviet policy-makers throughout 1925. It was now discarded as unrealistic; and its abandonment had an immediate, though indirect, effect on the debt negotiations in Paris. Negotiators who had hitherto striven to conceal the deadlock in a flood of talk now brought it to the surface for all to see. Negotiations dragged on till the beginning of June 1926, and were then formally adjourned till November, with the proviso that unofficial discussions should meanwhile continue.[1] Before the interval had elapsed, the reappearance of Poincaré as Prime Minister in July 1926 with the spectacular mandate to save the franc provoked a fresh crisis, and made agreement more remote than ever.

(*c*) *Germany*

On October 19, 1925, two days after the return of the German delegation from Locarno to Berlin, Stresemann received a visit from Krestinsky, who reminded him that negotiations for the proposed Soviet-German neutrality pact had been delayed at his request till agreement had been reached with the west: they could now presumably start.[2] Stresemann put off the discussion to a further meeting, which took place on October 29, 1925, and then explained to Krestinsky that he would prefer to await the arrival in Berlin of the German Ambassador from Moscow, who was expected at any moment.[3] Brockdorff-Rantzau in fact arrived on November 4, 1925, and began a violent campaign against the Locarno treaty, in the course of which he appealed direct to Hindenburg, and once more prepared to tender his resignation.[4] While this campaign was in progress, Krestinsky

[1] *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique*, i, No. 4 (July–December 1960), p. 597.

[2] *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, ii (1932), 528.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/156003-5.

[4] Brockdorff-Rantzau addressed an appeal to the President on November 7, 1925, and, when he failed to obtain satisfaction, wrote a letter of resignation and sought an interview with the President on November 28 in order to present

paid two further visits to Stresemann, on November 16 and 21, 1925.[1] On the second of these visits he submitted an alternative Soviet draft for the ill-fated preamble, and invoked the precedent of the Soviet-Czechoslovak commercial treaty of June 6, 1922, which recognized in its preamble " the necessity of the mutual observance by each contracting party of neutrality in the case of a conflict between one of them and a third party " ; the importance of this precedent was that Czechoslovakia was a member of the League of Nations.[2] The attitude of Stresemann made it clear that he was unwilling to proceed further before the formal signature of the Locarno agreements, which was to take place in London on December 1, 1925. In a conversation with Schubert on the eve of the departure of the German delegation for London, Krestinsky " laughed and said that he hoped that we should return from London with a little more backbone ".[3]

This landmark in relations with the west having been safely passed, Stresemann was ready to turn his attention to the east, and on December 11, 1925, opened discussions with Krestinsky on the basis of the latest Soviet draft pact. Stresemann followed his usual tactics and started with an attack, complaining of leading articles in *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, which had perverted the meaning of his speech in the Reichstag on the security pact.[4] He was represented as having admitted that, in the event of the Soviet Union being recognized by the League of Nations as an aggressor, Germany would be bound to abandon her neutrality ; what he had said was that Germany would be free to decide whether

it ; as the result of the conversation with Hindenburg, he was induced to keep it in his pocket (for records of the conversation by Brockdorff-Rantzau and by Hindenburg see *Brockdorff-Rantzau Nachlass*, 9101/224024-7, 224029-30, for the undelivered letter *ibid.* 9101/224031-2 ; the appeal of November 7 has not been found, but was referred to in the letter of resignation). Brockdorff-Rantzau's views were expounded in a conversation with Wallroth on November 15, 1924 (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/156024-8).

[1] *Ibid.* 4562/156030-1, 156209-15 ; on the eve of the second visit, previous German and Soviet drafts were set forth as an annex to a departmental memorandum by Dirksen on the negotiations (*ibid.* 4562/156038-9).

[2] For the Soviet-Czechoslovak treaty see *SSSR : Sbornik Deistvuyushchikh Dogovorov, Soglashenii i Konventsii*, i-ii (1928), No. 38, pp. 145-149.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/156081-4.

[4] A leading article in *Izvestiya*, November 27, 1925, entitled " The Minister Gave Himself Away ", concluded that " *the association of Germany with the bloc of victorious Powers is developing strongly and at a rapid rate* " ; no similar article has been traced in *Pravda*.

another Power was an aggressor and shape her action accordingly. This reopened the argument about article 16. A long wrangle followed about the Soviet-Czechoslovak agreement of June 6, 1922. Stresemann had discovered that this agreement was not registered with the League of Nations, and suggested that it was not in force, since Czechoslovakia was bound by article 18 of the covenant to register all valid treaties. Krestinsky weakly retorted that, if the Czechoslovak treaty did not constitute a precedent, it was open to Germany to create one. Turning to the Soviet draft, Stresemann observed that, by insisting on the obligation of neutrality, it appeared to contemplate too openly the contingency of war, whereas what was required was common action by both countries to maintain peace — a vague and sentimental formula which had no attraction for Soviet diplomacy. What was evidently an unhelpful conversation was terminated by an assurance from Stresemann that " Germany desires to reach agreement with Russia ", and that Germany would make counter-proposals through Brockdorff-Rantzau on his return to Moscow.[1]

The atmosphere had somewhat improved when Chicherin stopped in Berlin in the latter part of December 1925 on his way back from Paris. Fear of what Chicherin might have achieved in his conversations with the French Government in Paris clearly affected the German negotiators; and Chicherin had also strengthened his hand by securing an unconditional neutrality treaty with Turkey.[2] Much of his conversation with Schubert on December 19, 1925, was devoted to the bad state of Anglo-Soviet relations; Chicherin feared that Great Britain, having now secured a dominant position in Europe, would use it to separate Germany from the Soviet Union. When told that a German counter-draft of the proposed pact was in course of preparation, he expressed pessimism about the result.[3] Three days later, he had a two-hour conversation with Stresemann.

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/156111-32; Krestinsky's share in the conversation, which seems inadequately represented in this record, is omitted altogether from the version in *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, ii (1932), 529-534.

[2] For Chicherin's visit to Paris see pp. 421-422 above.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/156914-206; for counter-drafts prepared in the ministry see *ibid.* 4562/156176-82.

Stresemann made a fresh attempt to dispel Chicherin's fear of an anti-Soviet bloc in the League of Nations :

> England was not the League, and, even if England pursued an anti-Russian policy, it was quite certain that France and Italy would not follow her. On whose support could England then rely ?

Fresh from his meeting with Briand, Chicherin seemed to be reassured by this argument. When Stresemann read to him a proposed protocol recording Germany's interpretation of her obligations under article 16, Chicherin expressed pleasure at the attempt to meet Soviet wishes, and apparently allowed himself to be persuaded that German participation in military sanctions against the Soviet Union was a remote and unreal hypothesis. But he was still acutely afraid of participation in an economic or financial boycott. Stresemann parted from his visitor with the impression that " the nightmare of a continent arrayed against Russia has been removed ".[1] But a statement given to the German press by Chicherin before his departure for Moscow did not altogether confirm this impression, and suggested that the old apprehensions were still very much alive :

> The Soviet Government's fears of the consequences of Locarno do not in the least extend to the intentions of the German Government, whose good will is not in doubt. These fears relate to the objective circumstances which will be created for Germany by the Locarno treaty.[2]

Stresemann, however, evidently believed that something had been achieved, and on December 29, 1925, sent a personal letter to Chicherin enclosing the draft of a protocol which bore an unmistakable resemblance to the old preamble.[3] This did not help. Chicherin's reply of January 12, 1926, contained criticisms both of form and of substance. As regards form, Chicherin explained that, in acquiescing in Stresemann's proposal for a protocol, he had never meant that this should replace a treaty ; the Soviet Government desired to have the main engagements

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/156218-27, abbreviated in *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, ii (1932), 535-536.

[2] The statement appeared in *Izvestiya*, December 23, 1925.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/156357-64.

inscribed in a treaty, supplemented, if necessary, by an explanatory protocol. As regards content, the old complaint was repeated: the draft protocol was full of theoretical arguments and conclusions, and empty of precise obligations.[1] Stresemann, uncertain exactly how far the "interpretation" of article 16 could be stretched, and unwilling to risk an explosion in the west, was in no hurry. The admission of Germany to the League of Nations was to take place at Geneva in March. Stresemann hoped to postpone his next favourable gesture to the east till Germany was safely installed in the League.

Other episodes occurred to favour delaying tactics. Arrests on charges of espionage in December 1925 of three German business men, who had functioned as German "consular agents" in Baku, Poti and Batum, but had never been officially recognized as such by the Soviet Government, caused renewed friction between Berlin and Moscow. In a conversation with the Soviet chargé d'affaires on December 30, 1925, Dirksen, correctly or incorrectly, attributed the postponement of Brockdorff-Rantzau's return to Moscow to this incident.[2] At the end of January 1926, with the episode of the consular agents on the way to settlement, Brockdorff-Rantzau at last made up his mind to return to his post. Schubert, on whom he paid a farewell call, thought that the negotiations for the protocol should be pursued in Berlin; the ambassador surprisingly acquiesced, though he suggested that the negotiations might be transferred later to Moscow and the agreement signed there.[3] On his arrival in Moscow on February 3, 1926, Brockdorff-Rantzau was greeted with the utmost warmth and relief by Chicherin,[4] whose apprehensions of a worsening in Soviet-German relations after Locarno had been confirmed by the ambassador's prolonged absence. Common hostility to the Locarno policy sealed the growing intimacy between the German Ambassador and the People's Commissar; and for the next two years they worked together in almost unbroken concord for the cause of Soviet-German friendship.

On February 11, 1926, the ratifications of the commercial

[1] *Ibid.* 4562/156435-7.

[2] *Ibid.* 4562/156355; G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), pp. 150-151. The archives are full of material on this affair and on an alleged case of interference with the consular bag of the German consul in Tiflis.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/156529-30.

[4] *Ibid.* 2860/556688-92.

treaty of October 12, 1925, were exchanged in Berlin;[1] and Krestinsky seized the occasion to impress on Schubert the importance attached by the Soviet Government to the proposed new treaty.[2] Stresemann now decided to give way on the issue of form; and during the next few days the German proposals were re-drafted in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the form of a treaty and supplementary protocol. On February 24, 1926, they were discussed and approved by the Cabinet, and on the following day were presented by Stresemann to Krestinsky in the course of a long conversation.[3] This concession reduced the serious differences between the parties to one. The Soviet Government wanted each party to assume a straightforward and unconditional obligation not to participate in any hostile action or combination, military or economic, directed against the other. The German Government feared that the acceptance of so sweeping an obligation might be held to conflict with article 16 of the Covenant, even as interpreted at Locarno, and wished to limit the obligation to cases in which the other party (i.e. the Soviet Union) might be involved in hostilities through the unprovoked aggression of a third party. But any restriction of this kind was resisted by the Soviet Government on two grounds, one avowed, the other unavowed. The first was that any implication that the Soviet Union might be involved in hostilities in any other way than through the unprovoked aggression of another Power was insulting. The second was that the phrase "unprovoked aggression" would open the door to endless argument at the critical moment, and that the League of Nations would certainly allege Soviet provocation to justify any act of aggression against the Soviet Union by members of the League. The latest German draft met this difficulty by a heavy-handed attempt to argue it away. A new clause was added to the draft protocol explaining that the hypothesis of "an armed conflict provoked by Russia through an attack on a third Power" was "a purely theoretical possibility without practical political significance". Stresemann, in forwarding the new draft, and a report of his conversation with Krestinsky,

[1] *League of Nations: Treaty Series*, liii (1926), 8.

[2] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/156548-9.

[3] For the cabinet proceedings see *ibid.* 3491/767848-61; for the draft presented to Krestinsky, *ibid.* 4562/156604-10.

to Brockdorff-Rantzau, consoled himself with the reflexion that, even if final agreement were now reached, the signature could not take place till after the League session in March.[1]

Simultaneously with these discussions of the treaty and protocol, negotiations were in progress for an increase in the amount and the duration of the credits extended to the Soviet Government in October 1925.[2] At the same moment as the revised draft was communicated to the Soviet Ambassador, the German Government declared itself ready to guarantee long-term export credits of 300 million marks to cover 60 per cent of the value of goods exported to the Soviet Union, 35 per cent being provided by the Reich, and 25 per cent by the states; the balance of 40 per cent would have to be covered by the banks. In writing to announce this decision to Brockdorff-Rantzau, Dirksen explained that it was not final and conclusive. The terms of the credit had still to be settled with the German banks; but "the government of the Reich has no means of any kind of exerting further influence on the group of banks".[3] Any further delay could now be attributed to the intransigence of the German banks, which demanded interest at the rate of 11¾ per cent per annum, whereas the Soviet Government offered 8½ per cent — the rate for the short-term credit of the previous year — subsequently going up to 10 per cent.[4] At this moment Harriman, the American banker, arrived in Berlin, and, in conversation with Stomonyakov, the head of the Soviet trade delegation there since its inception in 1921,[5] encouraged the belief that the Soviet Government could obtain more favourable terms from American banks; and in the latter part of March 1926 Maltzan reported

[1] *Ibid.* 4562/156613-16. [2] See p. 279 above.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/1556619; G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), pp. 184-185.

[4] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/556859. For further information on these negotiations see *SSSR: Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 3 Sozyva: 2 Sessiya* (1926), p. 1056; *Izvestiya*, June 27, 1928. Quotations from German departmental archives in *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'*, No. 1, 1957, pp. 188-190, and in *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, v (1957), No. 3, pp. 482-483, show that important German firms interested in exports to the Soviet Union were pressing for these credits.

[5] In a pencilled noted dated July 3, 1924, and preserved in the Trotsky archives (T 822), Krasin called Stomonyakov "a first-class and most devoted worker, better than Kopp"; the occasion appears to have been a proposal to transfer Stomonyakov, which was evidently not carried out.

from Washington that no objection was seen there to joint American-German financing of Russian trade.[1] Later, Harriman appears to have made an offer to cover the 40 per cent of the value of German exports to the Soviet Union not covered by the German Government guarantee. But the German banks resisted this proposal, and the United States Government also came out against the deal.[2] By this time, it had become increasingly clear that the real reasons for the delay were political, and that agreement with Moscow would eventually be reached at the moment chosen by the German Government.

The course of Soviet-German amity rarely ran smoothly. The month of March 1926, with the negotiations for the treaty in their final phase, was a time of almost incessant recriminations. On March 4, 1926, Chicherin went out of his way to inform Brockdorff-Rantzau that the Soviet Government, then engaged in desultory conversations with Poland about an "eastern Locarno", had offered to the Polish Government a non-aggression pact which would include a guarantee of Poland's eastern frontier: he added by way of consolation that the Soviet Government had no thought of guaranteeing Poland's western frontier.[3] This news was received with anger and consternation by the German Government, which apparently had not been informed of previous Soviet overtures in the same sense.[4] If the Soviet Government

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4829/242220, 242230-3; the project was sponsored by "Kuhn, Loeb and other American bankers" (H. Heyman, *We Can do Business with Russia* (N.Y., 1945), p. 90).

[2] On March 17, 1926, a law firm representing A. W. Harriman and Co. Inc. enquired of the State Department whether any objection was seen to "a credit to be extended to German industries who sell to Russia" on the terms proposed; a reply was returned on April 2, 1926, that the department "would not view the proposed financing with favour at the present time" (*Foreign Relations of the United States, 1926*, ii (1941), 906-907). In July 1926 a similar application on behalf of the New York Trust Co. received the same reply (*ibid.* ii, 907-910). In December 1921 the State Department had favoured a plan for "cooperation between American and German business interests" in trade with Soviet Russia, which encountered strong opposition from Hoover and the Department of Commerce (National Archives: Record Group 59: 661.6215.1,1a; for a further quotation from Hoover's letter of December 6, 1921, see pp. 476-477 below).

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/556856-8; for the conversations with Poland see p. 477 below.

[4] For previous overtures see pp. 444, 446 below; G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), pp. 155-156, recalls the impression created by Chicherin's communication.

lost interest in the revision of its own frontier with Poland, it was unlikely to press very strongly for a revision of the German-Polish frontier; and, if Poland was assured of security in the east, her hands would be free to concentrate on defence in the west. In an interview with Chicherin on March 14, 1926, Brockdorff-Rantzau described the proposed pact with Poland as "extraordinarily serious for our relations", and recalled the famous conversations of December 1924 in which the common aim of "pushing back Poland to her ethnographic frontiers" had been recognized. Chicherin attempted to excuse the Soviet Government on the ground that nothing more than a short-term pact — for a duration of three or five years — was in contemplation, and gave a formal assurance that the Soviet Union would never guarantee Poland's western frontier. Negotiations with Poland for a revision of frontiers were not practical politics in the foreseeable future; and the Soviet Union urgently needed peace for its own economic development. Chicherin agreed, however, that this policy must not be allowed to prejudice Soviet-German relations, political and economic, which would be "of crucial importance to Russia, if it comes to the conclusion of the treaty now being negotiated between Berlin and Moscow". Brockdorff-Rantzau retorted that any guarantee to Poland would make a German-Soviet agreement worthless.[1]

These arguments about the Polish dilemma proceeded side by side with still more heated discussions of another embarrassing topic. On March 4, 1926, *Izvestiya* published the text of Voroshilov's speech delivered at the customary Red Army anniversary celebrations of February 23. In a long discussion of the disarmament proposals now being canvassed at Geneva, he argued that none of the capitalist countries seriously intended to disarm, and named Germany among these countries. Germany, he remarked, was busily restoring her military budget, which had now reached one-half of the 1913 total, though her army had nominally been reduced to one-seventh. This meant that "Germany is furtively and secretly maintaining strong armed forces, which cannot be counted in tens or hundreds of thousands". Brockdorff-Rantzau immediately made "the sharpest protest" to Chicherin against this "unheard-of scandal", referring ironically

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/156666-71.

to the Soviet Union as " a Power which professes to be on friendly terms with us and is suspected by our enemies of being in a military conspiracy with us ". Chicherin, obviously embarrassed, could excuse the indiscretion only on the plea of Voroshilov's naïvety — an explanation which, though probably true, was unlikely to carry conviction in Berlin.[1] The publication in *Izvestiya* of March 7, 1926, of a correction of the statement in Voroshilov's speech about Germany's secret forces, which was now attributed to " the Entente press ", did little but draw fresh attention to the original offence, particularly as a German translation of the speech appeared two days later in a Comintern publication abroad with the offending passage reproduced in its original form.[2] This incident was unfortunately capped by another. At almost the same moment the German Government was confronted by a semi-official Soviet publication on *Foreign Armies* issued by the Military-Scientific Society with a preface by Voroshilov, to which attention had first been drawn by the Russian émigré newspaper in Berlin, *Rul*, on December 11, 1925.[3] With some delay the pamphlet was duly procured from Moscow and translated in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The section on the German army was found to contain undisguised references to secret military formations and hidden stocks of arms.[4] On March 10, 1926, instructions were sent to Brockdorff-Rantzau to protest against this new enormity.[5] Willingness on the Soviet side to embarrass the German Government by lifting a corner of the veil which shrouded Soviet-German military relations was further shown by the publication in *Pravda* of March 23, 1926, of an article on the Junkers aeroplane factory at Fili. But, though devoted mainly to complaints about shortcomings, the article was

[1] For Brockdorff-Rantzau's report of March 7, 1926, see *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/556861-2.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 39, March 9, 1926, p. 531.

[3] The publication is described as a second edition; according to a report from Brockdorff-Rantzau (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/556906-8), it had originally appeared in 1924, but had not been noticed. The fact that the second edition carried a preface by Voroshilov suggests that it appeared after he became People's Commissar for War early in November 1925; whether the offending references also appeared in the first edition was never made clear.

[4] For a memorandum on the case and a translation of selected passages, circulated in the ministry on March 3, 1926, see *ibid.* 9524/671544-8, 671550-7.

[5] *Ibid.* 2860/556889-1.

not unfriendly in tone, and ended with an expression of hope for an improvement.[1]

These incidents did not, however, exhaust the unexpected turns of fortune of this eventful month. The German delegation duly arrived at Geneva on March 7, 1926, for the ceremony of admission to the League of Nations and election to the League council, only to find that the way was barred by demands from Poland and Brazil for simultaneous election to the council. Ten days' negotiations failed to break the deadlock. On March 17, 1926, the special assembly convened to admit Germany adjourned without result; and the German delegation left Geneva humiliated and discomfited. *Pravda* in leading articles of March 18 and 20, 1926, wrote of the "shocking defeat for the 'spirit of Locarno'", and expected "a strengthening of the pressure of the United States on capitalist Europe" as a result of the Geneva fiasco. Soviet opinion significantly regarded what had happened as a defeat not so much for Germany as for Great Britain. This was the theme of the concluding passage of a general statement on foreign policy by Chicherin published in *Izvestiya* early in April 1926. The Geneva collapse was due to the "inner contradictions" in Chamberlain's policy. He had sought to draw both Germany and Poland into a united front against the USSR without counting on the antagonisms between them. It was "the break-up of the united front which we have witnessed in Geneva".[2] At the same time, what had happened at Geneva inevitably strengthened the Soviet position. The much dreaded *rapprochement* between Germany and the west had suffered a dramatic set-back. Germany must now willy-nilly turn once more to the east.

On March 8, 1926, before the Geneva fiasco, Chicherin had replied to the proposals made to Krestinsky on February 25.[3] He accepted the German draft treaty and protocol with three reservations. He still vigorously rejected any mention of "unprovoked aggression"; he desired the omission from the clause prohibiting participation in an economic boycott of the words "in time of peace", which seemed to leave the door open for economic sanctions in the event of war; and he proposed that an exchange of notes should take the place of the protocol.[4] On

[1] For this article see p. 1011 below. [2] *Izvestiya*, April 6, 1926.
[3] See p. 430 above. [4] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 6698/107494-5.

March 25, 1926, after Stresemann's return from Geneva, Krestinsky made a formal communication to him in this sense. He also proposed that the treaty should be signed before April 10, so that it might be ratified at the forthcoming session of TsIK. Stresemann parried by rehearsing the grievances of recent weeks, and asked time to consider these drafting details. In reporting this conversation to Brockdorff-Rantzau, Stresemann testily reverted to the Polish question, and added that " the conclusion of a German-Russian treaty is out of the question so long as we have no certainty that Russia will not in any form, whether through a guarantee treaty or a non-aggression pact or an arbitration treaty, satisfy Poland's need for security on her eastern frontier ".[1] Stresemann's ill humour at his Geneva experience had not made him more malleable in regard to the Soviet negotiations. Two days after the interview with Krestinsky, on March 27, 1926, he again telegraphed to Brockdorff-Rantzau complaining that the Soviet draft would bind Germany to " unconditional neutrality ", and protesting against the Soviet negotiations with Poland. He concluded with the suggestion — which would have infuriated Chicherin if it had ever been communicated to him — that the Soviet-German treaty should be provisionally initialled, and that its formal signature should be postponed till Germany had been admitted to the League of Nations.[2] Elsewhere, however, wiser counsels prevailed. A few days later, Schubert had an unusually friendly conversation with Krestinsky. He maintained the objection to dropping the word " unprovoked ", but accepted Chicherin's two other proposals, and held out hopes of the signature of the agreement when Stresemann returned from his Easter holiday about April 20 : the protocol was at once re-drafted in the form of an exchange of notes.[3]

The pressure on Stresemann from German supporters of an eastern orientation had been increased by the rebuff from the west,[4] and was now irresistible. At the beginning of April 1926

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/156694-8, 156704-7.

[2] *Ibid.* 6698/107519-22 ; this was also the moment of the military conversations with Unshlikht (see Note A : " Soviet-German Military Collaboration ", p. 1015 below), which do not, however, appear to have affected the issue.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/156717-20, 156724-9.

[4] The supposition in D'Abernon, *An Ambassador of Peace*, iii (1930), 245, that the treaty was signed out of pique at the Geneva rebuff is unfounded, so far

Dirksen wrote that, if Germany did not sign the agreement, " strong French and Polish tendencies will prevail in Moscow ".[1] In fact, both sides assumed that the signature was imminent and inevitable, though neither showed any sign of budging from the stand which it had taken on " unprovoked aggression ". This deadlock remained unresolved till the very last moment. A further conversation between Schubert and Krestinsky on April 12, 1926, did nothing but register that this was the one outstanding point of difference.[2] A few days later Litvinov told Brockdorff-Rantzau in Moscow that the Soviet refusal to accept " unprovoked aggression " was final.[3] The solution was found in Berlin. On April 21, 1926, Stresemann suggested to Krestinsky a formula by which each party should undertake to remain neutral in a war incurred by the other " in spite of its own peaceful attitude " through an act of aggression.[4] This proved acceptable in Moscow; and the treaty was signed — not, as Brockdorff-Rantzau had originally expected, by Chicherin and himself in Moscow, but by Stresemann and Krestinsky in Berlin [5] — on April 24, 1926. The first article recalled the Rapallo treaty as the basis of the friendly relations between the two partners. The second provided that, if either country, " in spite of its peaceful attitude ", became the victim of aggression, the other would maintain its neutrality. The third article ruled out participation by either party in an economic or financial boycott directed against the other. The fourth fixed the duration of the treaty at five

as Stresemann himself was concerned. Stresemann would still have preferred to postpone it; but his political position at home had obviously been weakened.

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4829/242241-5.
[2] *Ibid.* 6698/107697-700.
[3] *Ibid.* 2860/557272-3.
[4] *Ibid.* 2860/557304-7.

[5] This was a " disappointment " to Brockdorff-Rantzau (G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), p. 152), who was, however, consoled to find that in Moscow the treaty was commonly called " the Rantzau treaty " (letter to his brother of July 9, 1926, cited in *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte*, ii (1955), 322, note 130); Hindenburg wrote to Brockdorff-Rantzau on July 14, 1926: " I fully agree with you that this treaty is not only of great importance for Germany's special position in the constellation of world politics, but is also calculated to remove and substantially reduce the embarrassments and difficulties caused by Germany's entry into the League of Nations " (*ibid.* ii, 326, note 153). The statement in H. von Dirksen, *Moskau, Tokio, London* (Stuttgart, n.d. [? 1949]), p. 77, that Brockdorff-Rantzau " declined the proposal which I made to him that the pact should be signed in Moscow ", since " he wished to have his name as little as possible associated with this transaction ", is a striking instance of the unreliability and self-importance of this source.

years, but provided that, before the end of that time, the parties would conclude a further treaty to regulate their political relations. In the exchange of notes which replaced the proposed protocol, Stresemann undertook that, if the League — contrary to Germany's expectations — developed anti-Soviet tendencies, Germany would " most energetically oppose " them. Stresemann recorded, and Krestinsky took note of, Germany's interpretation of her obligations under articles 16 and 17 of the covenant: since these articles could be invoked only against a declared aggressor, and since no decision to declare a country an aggressor could be binding on Germany without her assent to it, Germany could never be automatically bound by her obligations to the League to participate in action against the Soviet Union. Finally the two parties agreed to negotiate a further treaty to provide for the settlement of all future conflicts between them by conciliation or arbitration.[1] The issue of the 300 million mark credit, which was still outstanding at the moment of signature was settled two months later by a compromise which fixed the annual rate of interest at 9 4 per cent.[2]

The treaty was regarded on all sides as a victory for Soviet diplomacy, and as restoring the balance in German foreign policy unduly tilted towards the west by the Locarno agreement. An article in *Izvestiya* hailed it as the second step, the Soviet-Turkish treaty of December 17, 1925, having been the first, in a system which provided an answer to the question " on what basis true co-existence between this state and the [capitalist] world can be attained ".[3] Litvinov, speaking in TsIK on the day when the treaty was signed, called it " an amplification, or rather a refinement, of the Rapallo treaty " ;[4] and a semi-official commentator

[1] *SSSR : Sbornik Deistvuyushchikh Dogovorov, Soglashenii i Konventsii*, iii (1932), No. 138, pp. 59-96 ; for the original German and Russian texts with French and English translations see *League of Nations : Treaty Series, liii*, (1926), 386-396.

[2] *Izvestiya*, June 27, 1926 : for an account of the operation of these credits see *Ost-Europa*, i (1925–1926), No. 10, pp. 551-559. Rykov remarked with satisfaction a year later that the credits " were used entirely for the purchase of machinery and equipment required for the industrialization of our country " (*SSSR : 4 S"ezd Sovetov* (1927), p. 25).

[3] *Izvestiya*, April 27, 1926 ; the same point was repeated *ibid.* September 29, 1926, when two further treaties, with Afghanistan and Lithuania, had been added to the series.

[4] *SSSR: Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 3 Sozyva: 2 Sessiya* (1926), p. 1054.

described it as being, " like the Rapallo treaty, an answer to the desire of England to draw Germany into the net of her anti-Soviet policy ".[1] Supporters of the eastern orientation in German policy recalled with enthusiasm Bismarck's " Russian reinsurance treaty " of 1887.[2] The German Chancellor a few weeks later, supporting its ratification in the Reichstag, described it more cautiously and more accurately as an attempt to adapt the German-Soviet relationship established at Rapallo to " the new political situation created by the Locarno treaties ".[3] The new Soviet-German treaty paved the way for a further development of practical cooperation between the two countries, and could in this sense be represented as a continuation of Rapallo. It remained nevertheless true that German policy was no longer turned exclusively or predominantly towards the east, as in the early days of Rapallo, but rested on a standing balance between east and west. This was the new factor of which Soviet policy had also to take account.

(*d*) *The Western Borderlands*

Soviet relations with Poland, which generally set the tone for relations with the smaller countries of eastern Europe, were subsidiary to relations with western Europe, and were powerfully, though not always consistently, influenced by them. Soviet ties with Germany were still the strongest single factor in Soviet foreign policy; and the Soviet attitude to Poland, Germany's most persistent antagonist, tended to vary inversely to the cordiality of these ties at any given moment. The Polish attitude towards the Soviet Union was subject to similar variations. When the Polish Government felt assured of western support, it could afford to be intransigent in its dealings with its great eastern neighbour. But, when the western countries seemed to be aiming

[1] *Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 3, 1926, p. 3.

[2] *Gustav Stresemann Vermächtnis*, ii (1932), 537. An unsigned memorandum of April 9, 1926, in the archives headed " A Reinsurance Treaty ? " deprecated the use of this catchword in relation to the treaty; it argued that Germany's position was radically different from that of Bismarck's day, but admitted that Locarno " in a certain sense needs complementing *vis-à-vis* Russia " (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 6698/107615-18). The memorandum may have been intended to brief the press or German missions abroad; if Stresemann was not its author, it represented his views.

[3] *Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, cccxc (1926), 7435.

at a *rapprochement* either with Germany or with the Soviet Union, Poland was overtaken by fears of isolation and sought reinsurance in an improvement of Polish-Soviet relations. These relations were, therefore, at the mercy of too many uncertain and sometimes conflicting influences to follow a regular and consistent pattern. Latent animosity surviving from the war of 1920 and the peace treaty of 1921 was still alive on the Soviet side. But relations with Poland and with other eastern European countries were not a primary factor in Soviet foreign policy; and, though in Soviet relations with Germany the common aim of "pushing back Poland to her ethnographic frontiers" was constantly invoked, nobody seriously wished to challenge the *status quo* in eastern Europe at the cost of sacrificing more important interests elsewhere.

The German disturbances of 1923 and the abortive revolutionary coup of October had made Soviet-Polish relations throughout that year uneasy and precarious. The year 1924 opened more calmly. The first formally accredited Polish minister presented himself in Moscow;[1] and the negotiation of a railway agreement and a consular convention[2] marked the establishment of more normal relations. But frontier incidents and recriminations about the alleged persecution of national minorities in eastern Poland continued unabated throughout the year. Under article 7 of the Treaty of Riga of March 18, 1921,[3] Poland had recognized "all rights ensuring the free exercise of culture, language and religion by persons of Russian, Ukrainian and White Russian nationality in the Polish republic". At the second Union Congress of Soviets in January 1924 Skrypnik protested against Poland's disregard of her obligations towards "the millions of Ukrainians, White Russians and Russians" incorporated under the Riga treaty in Polish territory.[4] The same theme was taken up again in a Soviet note to the Polish Government on May 10, 1924. On May 15, 1924, the Polish Government rebutted this attempt of the Soviet Government to intervene in Polish affairs; and on May 23, 1924,

[1] *Izvestiya*, March 9, 1924.

[2] *SSSR: Sbornik Deistvuyushchikh Dogovorov, Soglashenii i Konventsii*, v (1930), No. 215, pp. 123-138; *Sobranie Zakonov, 1926*, No. 33, article 282.

[3] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 216.

[4] *Vtoroi S"ezd Sovetov Soyuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik* (1924), pp. 107-108.

the Soviet Government repeated its allegations.[1] Further protests on both sides fell on equally stony ground. In August 1924 Rakovsky in London seized the occasion of the conclusion of the Anglo-Soviet treaty to denounce the Polish Government for its annexation of the predominantly Ukrainian territory of East Galicia.[2] This provoked a sharp protest from the Polish Government, which was answered in turn by Narkomindel;[3] and the Polish delegation to the assembly of the League of Nations in the following month retaliated in kind by censuring the Soviet Union for its suppression of the Georgian insurrection.[4]

But behind these demonstrations of discord, more favourable signs were not altogether lacking. The "democratic-pacifist" era which brought the Labour government to power in Great Britain, and the radical Herriot government in France, found a mild and belated echo in Poland. In August 1924 Dmowski, the national-democratic Minister for Foreign Affairs and the faithful adherent of the Poincaré policy, was replaced by Skrynski, who stood less far to the Right in Polish politics, and favoured policies of international conciliation. The first anxieties caused in Moscow by Germany's approach to the western powers were in turn reflected in a milder attitude towards the Polish Government; and Chicherin, speaking in TsIK in October 1924, looked forward amicably to "an improvement of relations with Poland".[5] The secret and tentative Soviet-German conversations of December 1924 on the revision of the frontiers of Poland as a common aim [6] illustrated the determination of the Soviet Government to neglect no opening, but at the same time to assume no commitment that would irrevocably tie the hands of future Soviet policy. At the turn of the year Skrynski was still in a conciliatory mood towards Moscow. In a statement to the press on New Year's day 1925, he went out of his way to distinguish between the operations of the Soviet Government and those of Comintern,

[1] For the text of these notes see *Russian Review* (Washington), July 1, 1924, pp. 17-18.

[2] See p. 27 above.

[3] *Russian Review* (Washington), October 15, 1924, pp. 154-155.

[4] See p. 453 below.

[5] *SSSR: Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 2 Sozyva: 2 Sessiya* (1924), p. 73.

[6] See pp. 254-257 above.

and announced that he would prefer a settlement with the Bolsheviks to combinations against them.[1]

This statement seemed to be belied by the next move in the game, which showed that the Polish Government was no less disposed than the Soviet Government to ride two horses at once. The chronic tension of Soviet-Polish relations was aggravated by a conference of the Foreign Ministers of Finland, Poland, Latvia and Estonia which met at Helsingfors on January 16, 1925. The earlier attempt of Poland to create a bloc of Baltic states against Soviet Russia broke down when Finland refused to ratify the treaty signed at Warsaw in March 1922.[2] The complications of Poland's dispute with Lithuania hampered Polish relations with the other Baltic countries; and Poland was economically too weak to offer these countries either the supplies which they needed or a market for their exports. This made them dependent on the west, and especially on Great Britain. In Soviet eyes the three small Baltic states — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with a combined population of less than four millions — had been artificially created by the western Powers to serve as watchdogs and outposts of the capitalist world on the frontiers of Soviet Russia.[3] In November 1923, Latvia and Estonia had concluded a treaty of alliance and a treaty providing for the conclusion of a customs union between them;[4] even this move was viewed with a jaundiced eye by the Soviet Government, which detected French inspiration in the agreements, and thought that the "healthy development" of these small countries could come about "only through friendly economic and political agreement with Russia".[5]

[1] Quoted in L. Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (1930), ii, p. 519.

[2] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 348-349.

[3] Tomsky, at a dinner given to members of the Soviet delegation by the TUC in London on March 14, 1924, spoke of them with his wonted frankness: "Their independence is nominal. Economically speaking, they are, in actual fact, entirely dependent upon Great Britain and France. They are mercenaries set up by western Europe as a menace to Soviet Russia" (M. Tomsky, *Getting Together* (n.d. [1925]), p. 24). An article in *Izvestiya*, February 5, 1925, following the Helsingfors conference, depicted the Soviet Union as encircled in the Baltic by states in the pay of the bourgeois west; for the rumour of the acquisition by Great Britain of the islands of Oesel and Dagö see pp. 251, 417-418 above.

[4] *League of Nations: Treaty Series*, xxiii (1924), 82-85; xxv (1924), 360-367; the agreement for a customs union was never carried out.

[5] See interview with Chicherin in *Manchester Guardian*, December 24, 1923.

The Helsingfors conference of January 1925 was regarded with acute suspicion in Moscow as an attempt to revive the anti-Soviet Baltic bloc. Its participants were on the whole careful to refrain from overt anti-Soviet pronouncements, and the only ostensible outcome of the conference was a colourless arbitration treaty.[1] It was, however, believed in Soviet circles that the occasion had been used for a conference between general staffs; and in March 1925 the chiefs of staffs of the four countries held a conference in Riga, which was also attended by a representative of Rumania. These proceedings were loudly denounced in the Soviet press.[2] Soviet-Polish relations at this time were rendered still more bitter by the assassination, with the alleged connivance of the Polish police, of two Polish communists who were about to be exchanged for two Polish political prisoners in the Soviet Union, and by the alleged complicity of the Polish consul in Minsk in subversive activities in Soviet White Russia.[3] At the third Union Congress of Soviets in May 1925 Rykov referred to "an almost unbroken series of bandit raids from across the Polish frontier", and to "the quite extraordinary campaign conducted in the columns of the Polish press against the USSR". He reverted to the Helsingfors and Riga conferences, and warned "the Poles, Lithuanians, Estonians, Latvians and Finns" to "take into account that any other government but the Soviet Government would not merely not have given them independence, but would have destroyed them at the first opportunity."[4] The resolution of the congress cited the meetings of chiefs of staff, together with a recent Little Entente conference at Bukharest, as symptoms of an aggressive intention against the Soviet Union.[5] Given the relations between the countries concerned, these military meetings were perhaps unlikely to have had the sinister implications conjured up in the nervous atmosphere of Moscow.

[1] *League of Nations: Treaty Series*, xxxviii (1925), 358-369.

[2] See, for example, a leading article in *Izvestiya*, March 27, 1925.

[3] Correspondence in the first week of April between Narkomindel and the Polish Minister on both these subjects was published in *Izvestiya*, April 2, 3, 4, 1925, and *Pravda*, April 10, 1925; the offending Polish consul was replaced. At the same time the fifth enlarged IKKI passed a strong resolution of protest against the assassination of the two communists (*Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 244-245, 293-295).

[4] *Tretii S"ezd Sovetov SSSR* (1925), pp. 44-45.

[5] *Id.: Postanovleniya* (1925), p. 39.

The Helsingfors conference of January 1925 proved to be the last attempt at common action between Poland and the Baltic countries. The notion born in 1919 of a screen of border states under Polish hegemony inserted between Germany and Soviet Russia collapsed with the gradual revival both of German and of Soviet power.

Yet neither this dissatisfaction with Polish attempts to set on foot a political or military alliance against the Soviet Union, nor continued protests against frontier incidents and other exhibitions of Polish hostility, prevented tentative excursions by Soviet diplomacy in a very different direction. By the spring of 1925 the increasingly evident desire of Germany to reach an accommodation with the western Powers, and especially with Great Britain, led the Soviet Government to look around for reinsurance elsewhere. Radek was early in the field with an article significantly headed " About the Frontiers of Poland ", in which he claimed that responsible Poles had been alarmed by " the news that England refuses to guarantee the Polish frontiers ", and realized that " *the international situation of Poland has considerably deteriorated* ". Poland was burdened by her military alliances; the aim of Soviet policy was simply " a strengthening of peace on all the frontiers of the republic ". The article concluded with an appeal to Poland to " think again ".[1] The implication was that the Soviet Government was willing to enter into a pact with Poland guaranteeing the existing Soviet-Polish frontier; and, though not all kites flown by Radek represented official policy, it seems clear that some overture in this sense was made, directly or indirectly, to the Polish Government in the spring or summer of 1925, while Germany was engaged in her negotiations with the west.[2] At the third Union Congress of Soviets in May 1925, after Rykov had delivered his warnings and reproaches, Chicherin reverted to the Polish question in a markedly different tone. He rounded with unusual asperity on those who had denounced Poland's failure to carry out her obligations to her national minorities.

> In fact, what do the comrades who make this criticism want? Do they want us to start a war? A couple of such

[1] *Pravda*, March 8, 1925.

[2] For a repetition of the offer see p. 446 below.

extremists may reason like that, but that is not the opinion of the Soviet public. We do not desire, and are not preparing, to wage war.

After a disquisition on the fundamentally pacific character of Soviet policy, Chicherin spoke again of Poland. "Our policy of peace towards Poland is only part of our policy of peace as a whole." He detected "two chief trends" in Poland, one "adventurist, imperialist, militarist", the other pacific and desirous of good relations with the Soviet Union. The aim of Soviet policy must be to encourage the second element, and reach "a lasting agreement with Poland".[1] A new Soviet *polpred*, Voikov, who had arrived in Warsaw at the end of 1924, announced his intention of taking up the question of a Soviet-Polish trade agreement, which had been provided for in the Riga treaty of 1921, but never seriously discussed since that time; and the watchful German minister in Warsaw judged that "we are moving into a period of attempts at a Russian-Polish understanding".[2] Whatever incidental frictions continued to disturb the course of Soviet-Polish relations, the movement of Germany towards the west inevitably produced a certain *détente* between the two eastern countries; and an agreement to deal with the endemic nuisance of frontier incidents was signed on August 3, 1925.[3]

The ground was, therefore, to some extent prepared when Chicherin paid his only official visit to Warsaw[4] in the last days of September 1925. Though the visit was designed primarily as a warning to Germany,[5] it had a minor place of its own in the history of Soviet-Polish relations. On the day of Chicherin's arrival in Warsaw, September 27, 1925, *Izvestiya* carried an unusually ingratiating article by Radek on Soviet-Polish relations. Chicherin was warmly greeted by Skrynski, and polite diplomatic speeches were exchanged at a banquet given in his honour.[6]

[1] *Tretii S"ezd Sovetov SSSR* (1925), pp. 88-89.

[2] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155515-21.

[3] *SSSR: Sbornik Deistvuyushchikh Dogovorov, Soglashenii i Konventsii*, iii (1932), No. 137, pp. 55-58.

[4] At this time the normal route between Moscow and Berlin was through Riga, where the change was made from Russian to European gauge railway; later a direct service ran through Warsaw with the change at the Soviet-Polish border.

[5] See p. 274 above.

[6] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155876-8; the banquet was reported in *Izvestiya*, October 1, 1925.

Outside official circles, the warmth of the welcome was not unqualified. Articles in the Polish press expressed the view that it was impossible to establish close relations with a neighbour " who carries a blazing torch in his hand ", and treated the visit as " simply a diplomatic trick to make an impression on Germany ".[1] But Chicherin, in a particularly fulsome interview given on September 28, 1925, to a Polish journalist, hoped for " an enduring *rapprochement* between our two countries ", described his friendly reception by the Polish Government as " a political fact of real importance ", and thought that " a firm *rapprochement* between us should have a profound influence on the whole complex of forces and relations ".[2] He spoke confidently of the prospects of a commercial treaty and of an agreement on railway communications. The offer to Poland of a non-aggression pact, which would constitute a guarantee of the existing Soviet-Polish frontier, appears to have been repeated; and Skrynski cautiously rejected any pact which did not cover all the western frontiers of the Soviet Union.[3] Bukharin, in a careful leading article in *Pravda*, sought to dissipate the idea that the Soviet-Polish *rapprochement* was " a diplomatic trick to influence Germany ". In particular, he rebutted " the old hypnosis according to which Moscow must inevitably strive together with Germany for a partition of Poland ". Skrynski was quoted with approval as having said that friendly relations " correspond to the unchanging and solid interests of both countries ".[4]

It is doubtful whether Chicherin's Warsaw visit contributed much to the limited success which he enjoyed in putting pressure on Stresemann on the eve of the Locarno conference. Nor was its effect on Soviet-Polish relations durable. A month later *Pravda* printed without comment in a conspicuous place an

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 140, October 9, 1925, pp. 2046-2047.

[2] *Izvestiya*, October 4, 1925; *Izvestiya*, September 30, 1925 had carried the optimistic headline: " Poland seeks a *Rapprochement* with the USSR ".

[3] See the Polish source quoted in *Journal of Modern History* (Chicago), XXX, No. 2, June 1958, p. 116; Chicherin in the following year mentioned this as one of several occasions on which such an offer had been made (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/157998).

[4] *Pravda*, October 4, 1925; the article was unsigned, but was reproduced in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 140, October 9, 1925, pp. 2046-2047, over the initials N. B.

interview given to an Italian newspaper by the Polish diplomatic representative in Moscow, who had referred to " the historical frontiers of Poland " and declared that her present frontiers " are not in accord with the national feelings of the Poles ".[1] Soviet diplomacy throughout the winter of 1925–1926 was concentrated primarily on Germany, secondarily on France: Poland seemed to have slipped out of the picture. But the Polish card, in one form or another, still had its uses. In February, or early in March, 1926, at a time when German procrastination in the negotiations of the proposed Soviet-German treaty had severely tried Soviet patience,[2] the head of the eastern department of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Moscow in pursuit of the mirage of an " eastern Locarno "; [3] and in the course of these discussions Chicherin repeated the offer, already made more than once in the previous year, of a Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact which would include a guarantee of Poland's eastern frontier.[4] But, as before, while the Soviet Government offered a bilateral pact, the Polish Government was interested only in a multilateral guarantee extending to the Soviet Union's other western neighbours.[5] When on March 26, 1926, Poland signed with Rumania a new " treaty of guarantee " to replace the expired treaty of March 3, 1921,[6] the Soviet Government may fairly have assumed that Poland still preferred the faded laurels of the *cordon sanitaire*. The irritation felt by the Soviet Government at these proceedings was openly expressed by Litvinov in his speech at TsIK a month later:

> We do not recognize, and are not willing to recognize, a Polish protectorate, open or concealed, over the Baltic. The stubborn refusal of the Polish Government to confine itself to speaking on behalf of its own country has hitherto nullified all our attempts at a *rapprochement*.

And Litvinov added that the renewal of the Polish-Rumanian treaty " diminishes our hopes of reaching an agreement with

[1] *Pravda*, October 27, 1925. [2] See pp. 429-432 above.

[3] For this Polish project see p. 449 below.

[4] Information about these discussions comes from the account of them given by Chicherin and Brockdorff-Rantzau in conversations on March 4 and 14, 1926 (see pp. 432-433 above). [5] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2945/572112-14.

[6] *League of Nations: Treaty Series*, lx (1927), 163-167; for the earlier treaty see *ibid.* vii (1921–1922), 78-83.

Poland ".[1] No further landmark was reached in Soviet-Polish relations till the Pilsudski coup in Warsaw in May 1926 gave a fresh turn to the wheel.

The turn of the year 1925–1926 showed the Soviet Union and Poland locked in keen, though short-lived, rivalry for a predominant influence in the three Baltic states. On his return journey from Paris and Berlin to Moscow in December 1925, Chicherin balanced his visit to Warsaw on the outward journey by a stop in Kovno, where he spent the day of December 23, 1925. Here he offered to the Lithuanian Government a neutrality treaty on the lines of the recently concluded Soviet-Turkish treaty.[2] Lithuania was the most isolated of all the eastern European states. The Polish occupation of Vilna estranged her from Poland, her own occupation of Memel from Germany. Bad relations with Poland complicated her relations with the other Baltic countries ; she had not been invited to take part in the Helsingfors conference of January 1925. She had no common frontier with the Soviet Union, and no current incidents disturbed Soviet-Lithuanian relations. Nevertheless, the Lithuanian Government hesitated on two counts to respond to Chicherin's overtures. It would have liked to obtain from the Soviet Government some more positive promise of assistance against Poland in the dispute about Vilna ;[3] and it feared that the agreement might be construed as incompatible with its membership of the League of Nations.[4] Early in January 1926 it was announced that Soviet-Lithuanian negotiations were about to begin ;[5] and they continued for some time in a leisurely way. In March 1926 the Soviet Government was still pressing Lithuania to conclude the proposed treaty, and had extended the same proposal to Latvia and Estonia,

[1] *SSSR : Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 3 Soyuza : 2 Sessiya* (1926) p. 1060.

[2] *Izvestiya*, December 29, 1925; for the Soviet-Turkish treaty see p. p641-642 below.

[3] According to an unconfirmed report of the German minister in Kovno, negotiations between the Soviet Union and Lithuania in May 1924 had broken down on the Soviet refusal of a Lithuanian demand for a promise to support the Lithuanian claim to Vilna (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 4564/162636-8).

[4] These were the obstacles named by the Lithuanian minister in Berlin in a conversation with Schubert some weeks later (*ibid.* 6698/107768).

[5] *Izvestiya*, January 6, 1926.

[6] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/556872, 556913-16, 556918-19, containing reports from the German ministers in Kovno and Riga.

and — according to some accounts — to Finland.[6] A sense of growing Soviet strength was reflected in an article which reproached Latvia with her western orientation, and stressed her dependence on imports of Soviet rye and on Soviet transit trade for her prosperity.[1] Meanwhile the Polish Government, not unfairly judging that Locarno had added neither to Polish prestige nor to Polish security,[2] conceived the ambitious project of an "eastern Locarno", which would link Poland with the Baltic States (excluding, of course, Lithuania) and the Soviet Union in a pact of mutual guarantee. Early in 1926 soundings were taken in Riga, Tallinn and Helsingfors; according to one doubtful report, an approach was even made to Sweden.[3] At the end of February an emissary of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Moscow to canvass the project.[4] It was firmly rejected in Moscow, where a leader in *Izvestiya* criticized Poland's desire to speak in the name of the Baltic states, and made it clear that the Soviet Government would recognize no "special Polish interests in the Baltic".[5] The project was received without enthusiasm elsewhere, and was soon allowed to drop. The Soviet approach to Latvia and Estonia met with no greater success. Lithuania was in a special position, due to her unsettled quarrel with Poland about Vilna and to the absence of a common frontier with the Soviet Union. Here negotiations with the Soviet Government continued, and finally culminated in the treaty of September 28, 1926.[6]

[1] *Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 5-6, 1926, pp. 131-141.

[2] After Locarno, a proposal for the recognition of the Soviet Union by Czechoslovakia is said to have been canvassed in the winter of 1925–1926; Beneš himself was in favour of it (*Izvestiya*, February 18, 1926). The proposal was abandoned after the signature of the Soviet-German treaty of April 24, 1926, and a visit of Skrynski to Prague (*ibid.* April 24, 1926).

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/556693, 556771, 556798-800.

[4] See p. 447 above.

[5] *Izvestiya*, March 9, 1926; Brockdorff-Rantzau reported on March 7, 1926, that Chicherin had rejected the "eastern Locarno" (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/556863-4).

[6] This will be discussed in a later volume.

CHAPTER 33

USSR AND LEAGUE OF NATIONS

BEFORE 1923 the only link between Moscow and the League of Nations had been some tenuous Soviet participation in the work of the League Health Committee.[1] In June of that year a reference of the East Karelian question by the League to the Permanent Court of International Justice for an advisory opinion provoked from Moscow a firm denial of jurisdiction :

> The Russian Government categorically refuses to take any part in the examination of this question by the League of Nations or by the Permanent Court. Apart from legal considerations . . . the Soviet Government is obliged to state that it cannot regard the so-called League of Nations and Permanent Court as impartial in this question.[2]

In November 1923 an invitation from the League of Nations to an international transport conference met with a sharp refusal.[3] But the question of disarmament remained in a special category. As a weak country, Soviet Russia had the same interest as Germany in promoting the disarmament of the stronger Powers. What was more important, the campaign for disarmament was part of the campaign against war waged by the Bolsheviks from the moment of their accession to power, and had the same appeal to radical and Left-wing opinion in the west. Chicherin had scored a notable success when he raised the issue of disarmament in the context of a plea for peace at the Genoa conference in April 1922 ; and the eastern European disarmament conference in Moscow at the end of the same year kept Soviet good will in this matter well in the picture.[4]

When, therefore, the League of Nations proposed to organize

[1] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 167.

[2] *Publications of the Permanent Court of International Justice*, Series C, No. 3, i (Leyden, 1923), 67-70.

[3] *Izvestiya*, November 18, 1923.

[4] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 373-374, 440-441.

a session of the naval sub-commission of the Permanent Advisory Commission on Disarmament, and invited all Powers possessing capital ships to participate, the ground had been prepared. Chicherin in a note of March 15, 1923, after reciting at length the reasons for the undiminished hostility of the Soviet Union to " the so-called League of Nations ", " this pseudo-international organization ", none the less accepted the invitation.[1] The purpose of the conference was to extend to all Powers possessing capital ships the principle, accepted by the five major naval Powers at the Washington conference, of the limitation of capital ships in a fixed ratio. When the conference finally took place in Rome in February 1924, it soon transpired that the *amour-propre* of the non-Washington Powers made them unwilling to adapt themselves to rules laid down in their absence in Washington ; and the Soviet delegate, a former admiral named Berens, won ready sympathy at the conference as the leader of the malcontents. Including the ships detained at Bizerta, which accounted for the lion's share of the whole, the Soviet Government declared its existing holding of capital ships at 340,000 tons.[2] In the course of debate, having formally reserved the attitude of the Soviet Government to the League of Nations, Berens estimated legitimate Soviet requirements in capital ships at 490,000 (which would have ranged the Soviet Union as a naval Power between Great Britain and the United States on the one hand and Japan on the other). He subsequently reduced these in a spirit of compromise to 280,000 tons, but only on the condition that both the Baltic and Black Seas were permanently closed to the warships of all countries not having coast-lines on these seas.[3] The session was a total failure ; and, though this was not due primarily to the Soviet attitude, it did nothing to promote better feeling between Moscow and Geneva. On the other hand, when the Soviet Government signed the Straits convention on July 24, 1923,[4] it

[1] Klyuchnikov i Sabanin, *Mezhdunarodnaya Politika*, iii, i (1928), 238-239.

[2] *League of Nations : Naval Sub-Commission of the Permanent Advisory Commission* C.76.1924. IX (1924), p. 16.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 26-27, 86-87 ; a leading article in *Izvestiya*, March 4, 1924, argued that the figure of 490,000 tons was " not at all exaggerated ", and stressed the need for a strong fleet " to maintain the achievements of the October revolution ".

[4] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 489.

accepted the obligation to furnish information on its naval forces in the Black Sea to a commission functioning " under the auspices of the League of Nations " ; and, though it failed to ratify the convention, it continued for some time to supply the stipulated information.[1]

Meanwhile, a fresh approach had been made. At the end of 1923, the council of the League decided to send to non-member as well as to member states for their observations the so-called Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance which had been provisionally adopted by the League assembly of that year. On March 12, 1924, Chicherin returned a long and argumentative reply. Having reaffirmed the " negative attitude " of the Soviet Government to " the ' League of Nations ' in its present form and as at present constituted ", Chicherin proposed to " separate the question of the limitation of armaments from that of establishing an international organization for the prevention of war ". This was the converse of the approach envisaged in the draft treaty, which, in accordance with the view insisted on at this time by the French Government, made disarmament dependent on the organization of security, and which was subjected by Chicherin to a detailed and devastating criticism. Conscious of its position at this time as a weak and isolated outcast among the nations, the Soviet Union declared itself inexorably opposed to any system providing for a decision as to which party in case of conflict was an " aggressor ", and for the imposition of sanctions on this aggressor. The note ended with the remark that the objects in view — disarmament and the prevention of war — " cannot be achieved, even partially, or indeed in any degree whatever, without the participation of the Soviet republics ". The concluding words suggested that an invitation to participate in the further discussion of these objects might not, in suitable conditions, be declined.[2] Rakovsky devoted a lengthy passage in his opening speech at the Anglo-Soviet conference in London on April 14, 1924, to the question of peace and disarmament, but went on to explain that a League of Nations would be acceptable to the Soviet Union only if it

[1] See Vol. 2, p. 418, note 4 ; at one time it seems to have sent the information to the Turkish Government, which passed it on to the commission (*League of Nations : Official Journal*, March 1927, p. 318).

[2] Klyuchnikov i Sabanin, *Mezhdunarodnaya Politika*, iii, i (1928), 301-304 ; *League of Nations : Official Journal*, No. 5, May 1924, pp. 752-754.

" excluded coercion and measures of reprisal which can merely result in serving the selfish interest of certain powerful states ".[1] The dominant mood of suspicion and hostility towards the League was reinforced when, in September 1924, Great Britain, France and Belgium brought the question of the Georgian rising of the previous month [2] before the League assembly; and, though the only resolution adopted was to refer the matter to the League council (which was unlikely to take it up),[3] the ventilation of the question was enough to provoke an indignant protest from Chicherin against this offensive of world imperialism and intervention in Soviet affairs.[4] In a letter to the secretary-general of the League of Nations on October 30, 1924, Chicherin declined an invitation to the Soviet Government to participate in a conference on the traffic in narcotics on the ground that, under cover of instituting control of the traffic, " the various governments are endeavouring to gratify their own commercial interests and obtain business advantages for themselves ".[5]

The years 1924 and 1925, during which the League of Nations was continuously preoccupied with security, witnessed no further progress in discussions of disarmament. In April 1925 the Soviet Government replied with a tart refusal to an invitation to attend a League conference on international traffic in arms which was to meet in the following month. The purpose of its sponsors, as was shown by a draft convention forwarded with the invitation, was to place all trade in arms under the control of a licensing authority at Geneva, and to prohibit the export of arms to backward or disturbed regions of the world: this seemed to the Soviet Government only a fresh device to strengthen " the rule of the imperialist Powers over the weaker peoples ". Finally, the draft convention involved " an interference on the part of the League of Nations in the internal affairs of the Union of Soviet

[1] For this speech see p. 23 above; according to *Entsiklopediya Gosudarstva i Prava*, i (1926), 749, the Soviet delegation at the conference declined a British proposal that a Soviet observer should be sent to Geneva "as a first step to the entry of USSR into the League".

[2] See Vol. 1, pp. 198-199.

[3] For the discussion and the resolution see *League of Nations: Official Records of the Fifth Assembly* (1924), pp. 158-160, 440.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 126, September 26, 1924, pp. 1673-1674.

[5] *Pravda*, November 1, 1924.

Socialist Republics ".[1] Yet Chicherin, in speaking of this episode at the third Union Congress of Soviets, took care to add that " we do not always absolutely boycott the League of Nations ", and had already entered into relations with it " for technical or humanitarian purposes, such as the reduction of the burden of armaments ".[2] Cooperation with the Health Committee of the League of Nations continued throughout this time. In October 1925 the decision was taken to adhere to the International Office of Public Health set up in 1907 and to the International Sanitary Convention of January 17, 1912; and the appropriate notifications were made to the Italian and French Governments.[3] By way of exception to the usual negative attitude, a Soviet delegate participated in a conference of experts on inland navigation held in Paris under League auspices in 1925, and signed a convention on tonnage measurement of vessels employed in inland navigation,[4] though he qualified his participation with a statement that the " full execution " of the convention could not be guaranteed till the Soviet Government was admitted, fully and officially, to all international commissions regulating navigation on international waterways[5] — a reference to the exclusion of the Soviet Union from the reconstituted Danube commission.

The Locarno negotiations, centring round the admission of Germany to the League, created a new situation. Hitherto membership of the League had been a virtual monopoly of the victors of Versailles. Now that this monopoly was to be broken down, League enthusiasts began to dream of a further advance towards universality by drawing in the only important European country besides Germany still outside the circle; and the practical inconveniences of exclusion were, from the Soviet standpoint, greater and more apparent. When the British Labour government first took office and recognized the Soviet Union, MacDonald had declared it to be desirable that both Germany and

[1] *Dokumenty Vneshnei Politiki SSSR*, viii (1963), 229. A summary appeared in *Izvestiya*, April 28, 1925; a full translation was circulated to members of the League council as document C 259. 1925. IX.

[2] *Tretii S"ezd Sovetov SSSR* (1925), p. 86.

[3] *Sobranie Zakonov, 1926*, No. 69, articles 528, 529, 530.

[4] *League of Nations: Treaty Series*, lxvii (1927–1928), 63-89.

[5] See *League of Nations*, C 621, M 203, 1925, p. 4.

the Soviet Union should be brought into the League.[1] Germany, it was clear, would have liked to be followed into the League by her Rapallo partner. Chicherin, in a conversation in Berlin with Stein on October 12, 1925,[2] replied to the question whether the Soviet Union would now join the League, not by a blank negative, but by asking whether in that event Great Britain and France would undertake not to attack the monopoly of foreign trade and the distribution of land. That this was no mere debating point seems to be shown by the fact that Chicherin also asked Stein to approach the Swiss Minister with a view to a private meeting to discuss whether anything could be done to heal the breach in Soviet-Swiss relations following the murder of Vorovsky in 1923; this would be a necessary preliminary to the appearance of Soviet emissaries at Geneva.[3] But the minister applied to Berne for instructions, which either did not arrive in time or were unfavourable; and no meeting took place. Officially nothing had changed. Rumours of an impending *rapprochement* with the League of Nations were stoutly denied in Moscow, though Litvinov and Rotshtein, as spokesmen of Narkomindel, were quoted as hinting that, if Germany was represented at Geneva by someone not unsympathetic to the Soviet Union, things might not be too bad, and that an invitation to send a Soviet observer might receive a positive answer.[4] Chicherin, in a press interview in Berlin a few days after the Stein conversation, offered a reasoned restatement of the Soviet attitude which ended with a firm *non possumus*, but for the first time openly contemplated the sending of an observer to Geneva:

> The Soviet Government has declared on many occasions that it thinks it impossible to find an arbiter who would observe sufficient objectivity in making decisions on differences between the Soviet Government and governments of another "type". Consequently the Soviet Government considers it impossible to submit itself to the collection of Powers called the League of

[1] The statement was prominently featured in *Pravda*, February 5, 1924, without comment; for a statement by MacDonald at Geneva in September 1924 see p. 65, note 2 above.

[2] See p. 420 above.

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/155952-5; for the dispute with Switzerland see *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, pp. 172-173.

[4] *Auswärtiges Amt*, K 1908/483492; the date of the report is October 16, 1925.

Nations, which partly adheres to the principle of arbitration, and partly applies the principle of majority decision with consequent reprisals and punitive measures. The Soviet Government cannot subordinate its actions and decisions, which are based on the principles of the Soviet system, to the decisions of a majority of states based on wholly different foundations. All this shows that the despatch of an observer is quite acceptable, but entry into League membership absolutely unacceptable, for the USSR. I see no way of constructing a bridge here to avoid possible misunderstandings. I should like to emphasize once more that a change in Soviet policy towards the League of Nations is quite impossible.[1]

Speculation on the future course of Soviet policy continued throughout the winter. In November 1925, when rumours of a change in the Soviet attitude, attributed to " the optimistic mood created after Locarno in European and American political circles ", again began to circulate, a categorical statement to the press was issued in Moscow by Litvinov. It described the League of Nations as " a cover for the preparation of military action for the further suppression of small and weak nationalities ", and " a diplomatic *bourse* where the strong Powers arrange their business and settle their mutual accounts behind the back and at the expense of the small and weak nations ". The conclusion was " that all rumours of some kind of change in the Soviet Government's attitude to the League of Nations, and incidentally to Locarno, are without foundation, and that the government of the USSR, like the government of the United States, is firmly determined, in the future as in the past, to stand aside from such organizations ".[2] The politician speaking to a party audience was still more emphatic in his disclaimer of any inclination to " join the League ". Rykov at the Moscow provincial party conference in December 1925 called the League " an instrument not of peace, but of war, not of liberation, but of oppression ", and went on :

In the present situation and under the present relations of forces, we can be convinced in advance that, if any bourgeois country belonging to the League of Nations starts a war against

[1] *Izvestiya*, October 17, 1925.

[2] *Pravda*, November 24, 1925 ; Klyuchnikov i Sabanin, *Mezhdunarodnaya Politika*, iii, i (1928), 334-335.

the Soviet Union, the League of Nations will find the necessary formula to represent us, and not its own member, as the aggressor.[1]

A press attaché of the Soviet legation in Vienna was reported at this time as saying that, if the Soviet Union joined the League, it would follow the example of the British Commonwealth, and demand seats for the various republics[2] — a hint that the issue was still being canvassed in Soviet diplomatic circles. But Chicherin in a press interview in Paris repeated firmly that " our negative attitude to the League of Nations is unchanged ",[3] and on his way back to Moscow assured Schubert in Berlin that it was out of the question for the Soviet Union to become a member of the League.[4] Early in January 1926 Rakovsky, on leave in Moscow from Paris, reviewed the situation in a speech on " The League of Nations and the USSR ". The Soviet Government was willing to cooperate with the League on certain practical matters, but abstained in principle from an organization which had military designs ; the League system was contrasted with the " pacific " treaty concluded by the Soviet Union with Turkey. " The principal rôle and the leadership in the League of Nations have fallen to England " : this was sufficient to demonstrate its anti-Soviet character.[5] A few days later the central committee of the Russian party, in a letter to foreign communist parties, denied as a " counter-revolutionary slander " a rumour that the Soviet Union intended to enter the League of Nations.[6]

In spite, however, of these uncompromising pronouncements, the forces that impelled the Soviet Government in the direction of Geneva were evidently gaining ground. It had been easy to denounce and ignore an institution from which Germany was also an absentee : the boycott formed a solid link between the Rapallo partners. But absence from an institution which included Germany as well as every other important European country could only intensify the sense of isolation already induced by Locarno.

[1] *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, December 8, 1925.
[2] *Auswärtiges Amt*, K1908/483493-6.
[3] *Le Temps* and *Izvestiya*, December 17, 1925.
[4] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 4562/156206.
[5] *Pravda*, January 6, 1926 ; for this speech see p. 422 note 5 above.
[6] For this letter see p. 493 below.

In particular, the question of disarmament began to bulk large in Soviet calculations. In the year of Locarno the fear of hostile military action against the Soviet Union had become something more than a conventional bugbear. To keep the disarmament question to the fore was the way to conjure this fear, either by persuading the western powers to disarm or by discrediting them for their failure to do so; and this enterprise, in which Soviet and German interests once more coincided, would help to maintain the Soviet-German partnership. Above all, fear of war, and the demand for disarmament as the best security against it, was deeply embedded in Left-wing and radical opinion in the western countries, where it was often coupled with an optimistic belief in the efficacy of the League of Nations. To appeal to this sentiment, by constant propaganda for peace and disarmament, was a powerful means of wooing the sympathy of the Left for the Soviet Union, and thus promoting the policy of the "united front". The solidarity of the workers in the cause of peace and disarmament became a favourite theme of Soviet publicists and orators. A leading article in *Izvestiya* on December 11, 1925, pointedly associated itself with a remark by Coolidge in his message to the American Congress that Locarno without disarmament was not enough, and indicated the willingness of the Soviet Government to "go at any time to a disarmament conference which really showed the desire to pose the question seriously and in a business-like way". "The vision of the coming war", said Zinoviev at the fourteenth party congress in December 1925, floated before the eyes even of that part of the working class "which still follows the reformists", and would infallibly lead it to cooperate with the workers of the Soviet Union in the struggle for peace.[1]

The ground was thus prepared in Moscow when, on December 12, 1925, the council of the League of Nations decided to set up a preparatory commission to make plans for a general disarmament conference, and invited to participate in this commission, in addition to its own members, certain other countries, not being members of the League, "whose geographical situation creates a special position as regards disarmament"; the non-member states so invited were Germany, the United States and

[1] *XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (*B*) (1926), p. 675.

the Soviet Union.[1] When Chicherin gave an interview to the press on his way through Berlin on December 21, 1925, this invitation had just been received in Moscow. No decision had yet been taken on it, and Chicherin was obliged to hedge: he was afraid, he said, that the proposed commission might turn out to be a "commission for the burial of disarmament".[2] But, when he reached Moscow, the decision was quickly cast in favour of acceptance.

Here, however, a new complication arose. The Swiss Government had turned a deaf ear to overtures for a settlement of its long-standing quarrel with the Soviet Government; and the invitation to attend the preparatory commission for the disarmament conference provoked a recrudescence of the campaign against Switzerland in the Soviet press.[3] The official Soviet reply of January 16, 1926, while affirming willingness in principle to participate in such a commission, expressed "intense amazement" that it should have been convened in a place where the attendance of Soviet representatives would be impossible.[4] Radek improved the occasion by an article in which he explained that the western Powers deliberately sought to bar the Soviet Union from the disarmament discussions because it was the only country which sincerely desired disarmament.[5] The month of January 1926 was occupied by unavailing attempts at mediation undertaken, simultaneously but independently, by the French and German Governments, both apparently acting at Soviet instigation. On January 6, 1926, the Soviet chargé d'affaires in Berlin asked Schubert whether the German Government proposed to accept the Geneva invitation and, on receiving an affirmative answer, explained the embarrassment caused to the Soviet Government by Swiss intransigence. This was evidently intended as a feeler for German mediation, and was followed on the next

[1] *League of Nations: Official Journal*, February 1926, pp. 165-166; the communication in which the invitation was conveyed was dated December 15, 1925, and was circulated to members of the League council as document C. 155. 1925. IX.

[2] *Izvestiya*, December 23, 1925.

[3] *Ibid.* December 19, 25, 1925, January 5, 9, 14, 1926.

[4] *Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 4, 1926, pp. 133-134; *League of Nations: Official Journal*, No. 4, April 1926, pp. 635-636.

[5] *Pravda*, January 17, 1926; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 19, January 26, 1926, p. 259.

day by a written request in this sense.[1] When, however, the appropriate instructions were sent a few days later, these crossed with a telegram from the German minister in Berne reporting on the efforts of the French Government to mediate between the Swiss and Soviet Governments in this affair.[2] This coincidence annoyed the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was not mollified by Soviet explanations and withdrew from the field.[3] French efforts were, however, unavailing. The Swiss Government was unwilling to go beyond the qualified regrets which it had already expressed at the time of the assassination, or to do anything which implied recognition of the Soviet Government. Public statements by the Swiss and Soviet Governments respectively on February 9 and 14, 1926, marked no advance, and were tantamount to a breakdown of the negotiations.[4] Voroshilov in his speech at the Red Army celebrations on February 23, 1926, explained that the imperialist powers had two motives in wanting preparatory discussions for a disarmament conference: "to lull to sleep the vigilance of the masses of workers who sincerely stand for disarmament", and "to disarm their neighbours as much as possible and in secret to strengthen themselves still further".[5] In a press interview later in February 1926 Chicherin once again defined the Soviet position:

> Our attitude towards the League of Nations remains precisely what it was, but we have always declared that, where disarmament is concerned, we are for its sake ready to take part even in meetings summoned by the League of Nations.[6]

The resolution of the sixth enlarged IKKI a few days later spoke of the "pacifist illusions connected with the activity of

[1] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/556617-22.

[2] *Ibid.* 2860/556629-33.

[3] For an angry interview between Schubert and the Soviet chargé d'affaires on January 13, 1926, see *ibid.* 1841/419229-30; as late as January 26, 1926, the ministry professed not to know on whose initiative the French mediation had been undertaken (*ibid.* 4562/156516-20). The Soviet Government published a rather fulsome *communiqué* thanking the French Government and the French Ambassador in Moscow for their efforts (Klyuchnikov i Sabanin, *Mezhdunarodnaya Politika*, iii, i (1928), 337-338).

[4] *Ibid.* iii, i, 337; *Izvestiya*, February 17, 1926.

[5] *Ibid.* March 4, 1926; for other repercussions of this speech see pp. 433-434 above.

[6] *Manchester Guardian*, February 27, 1926.

the League of Nations and particularly with Locarno", which were in fact merely "methods of preparing new wars".[1]

The whole issue of Soviet participation in the disarmament commission was momentarily eclipsed by the Geneva sensation of March 1926, when Germany's first application for membership of the League suffered shipwreck. But the League refused to change the meeting-place;[2] and Chicherin gave an extended interview to the press, in which he explained once more that "it is absolutely impossible for us to send any representatives whatever into Swiss territory", and that, if the League of Nations persisted in convening the commission at Geneva, that would be proof that it did not desire the presence of Soviet representatives.[3] A further note to the League of April 7, 1926, treated the attitude of the League as proof that the western Powers did not seriously want disarmament.[4] This intransigence in the disarmament question, as well as the discredit incurred by the League through the March fiasco, inspired some unusually sharp anti-League pronouncements in Moscow. Chicherin in his interview openly treated the League as the instrument of British imperialism; and a declaration issued by IKKI reached the conclusion that "there is only one way of escape from the fatal gamble of the imperialists, the bloody gamble with the lives of peoples: a break with the League, a struggle against the League, the annihilation of the League".[5] When later in April 1926 the preparatory commission for the disarmament conference held its first meeting in Geneva in the absence of a Soviet delegation, and adjourned at the end of a week without the semblance of a result, Soviet taunts seemed to have some foundation. Meanwhile, Chicherin responded to another League invitation by nominating Krzhizhanovsky as Soviet member of a committee to prepare for a world economic conference, but once more made representation conditional in practice on the meeting being held

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 538.

[2] For the decision of the council of March 18, 1926, see *League of Nations: Official Journal*, April 1926, pp. 538-539.

[3] *Izvestiya*, April 6, 1926.

[4] Klyuchnikov i Sabanin, *Mezhdunarodnaya Politika*, iii, i (1928), 340-341; *League of Nations: Official Journal*, No. 5, May 1926, pp. 661-662.

[5] *Pravda*, April 10, 1926.

in " some country other than Switzerland ".[1] On the other hand, a League questionnaire on international traffic in arms met with a refusal to supply information based on the same grounds as the refusal to attend the conference on the question in the previous year.[2]

[1] *League of Nations: Official Journal*, No. 4, April 1926, p. 532; the Soviet chargé d'affaires in Berlin informed Stresemann on April 13, 1926, that the Soviet Government had refused the invitation to the disarmament commission, and would refuse the invitation to the economic conference owing to Swiss intransigence (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 6698/107715-16).

[2] *League of Nations: Official Journal*, No. 8, August 1926, p. 1068.

CHAPTER 34

USSR AND USA

THE three years which followed Chicherin's overtures to the newly-elected President Coolidge, and the snub administered by Coolidge's Secretary of State, Hughes, in December 1923[1] were barren of any noteworthy development in official Soviet-American relations. Senator Borah, almost single-handed, forced the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations to hold hearings in the first part of 1924 on the recognition of Russia; but these merely served to emphasize the strength of the opposition.[2] When Lodge died in November 1924, and Borah succeeded him by right of seniority as chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate, Borah seized the occasion to deliver a speech in favour of recognition of the Soviet Union, which was duly reported in the Soviet press,[3] but otherwise attracted little attention. The resignation of Hughes and his replacement by Kellogg in January 1925 caused a flicker of hope in Moscow that "America is preparing to recognize the USSR".[4] Chicherin, in a statement to the press,[5] more cautiously welcomed the retirement of Hughes, but refrained from prediction. Karakhan greeted the Soviet-Japanese treaty of January 20, 1925, which he had just signed, as a happy omen for negotiations with the United States: "the issues dividing us and America are not so numerous as those that arose in our negotiations with Japan".[6] Rykov pointed out that, after the conclusion of the Soviet-Japanese treaty, the United States was the only major Power which had not recognized the Soviet Union: it was no longer the Soviet Union, but the United

[1] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 248.

[2] For an account of these hearings see L. Schuman, *American Policy Towards Russia* (n.d. [1928]), pp. 236-237.

[3] *Izvestiya*, November 14, 1924; in a leading article of November 18, 1924, *Izvestiya* complained of the hostile attitude of the American press.

[4] This was a headline in *Pravda*, January 15, 1925.

[5] *Izvestiya*, January 21, 1925.

[6] *Ibid.* January 25, 1925.

States, which was isolated.[1] The theme of an impending change in American policy was kept up for some time in the Soviet press; a leading article in *Izvestiya* entitled (in English) *Last Not Least* was provoked by a report that Coolidge had set up a "special commission" to consider the recognition of the Soviet Union.[2] But Hughes's resignation had no such far-reaching implications. If the aggressive intolerance of Hughes had given way to the polite indifference of Kellogg, the change had a personal rather than a political character. In a widely publicized speech of July 1925 Castle, a leading official of the State Department, insisted, in language which did not differ materially from that of Hughes, that fulfilment of international financial obligations and non-intervention in internal affairs were indispensable conditions of recognition.[3] At no time during this period did recognition of the Soviet Union become an issue in Washington. Its few advocates in American political life, such as Borah and Robins, were reduced to silence. The only Soviet agent in Washington was Skvirsky, who had originally arrived in 1921 to represent the Far Eastern Republic, and remained after the republic's demise as the unofficial spokesman of Moscow. His functions were in fact confined to the setting up of an "information bureau", and the publication of a documentary monthly journal *Russian Review*.[4]

Absence of official relations was no bar to an intense and growing curiosity in Soviet circles about the course of American policy. The year 1924 saw the drafting of the Dawes plan in April by an allied commission under an American president, the

[1] *SSSR: Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 2 Sozyva: 3 Sessiya* (1925), p. 12. The isolation of the United States had been depicted in a cartoon in *Izvestiya*, January 25, 1925: "Uncle Sam is Left on his Own"; Rykov reverted to the same theme at the third Union Congress of Soviets in May 1925 (*Tretii S"ezd Sovetov SSSR* (1925), p. 41).

[2] *Izvestiya*, February 24, 1925.

[3] The speech was reported in *Pravda*, August 2, 1925; Maltzan, the German Ambassador in Washington, wrote in a letter of May 27, 1925 that events in Sofia, experiences in Paris and London, and "an innate fear of the danger to capital" made American official opinion "very sceptical *vis-à-vis* Russia" (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 4829/242063).

[4] It was not till June 30, 1922, that recognition by the State Department of Bakhmetiev, the Ambassador appointed by the Provisional Government in 1917 was withdrawn — ostensibly at his own request, but apparently as the result of an attack by Borah in the Senate: even then the financial attaché of the embassy continued to enjoy diplomatic recognition as the custodian of Russian Government property (*New York Times*, June 5, 1922).

acceptance of the plan by the London conference in August, and the floating in October of the Dawes loan of which the lion's share was subscribed in the United States. The significance of this active re-emergence of the United States on the scene of world affairs was not lost on the Soviet leaders. In theory, the changed balance of economic power resulting from the war, and the overwhelming predominance of the United States, had been recognized in the Soviet Union as elsewhere. In practice, this predominance had been masked by isolationist strains in American policy, which had seemed to shrink from the active exercise of its new power in European affairs. The main political theses submitted to the fifth congress of Comintern in June 1924, and adopted by it, contained a section on the Dawes report which did not mention the American share in it at all, and was more concerned with the parallel between social-democratic support for the plan and the earlier social-democratic betrayal of the workers through support of the imperialist war of 1914.[1] Varga in his economic report did not venture beyond the diagnosis of " one of the most serious economic crises " and " a sharp fall in production " in the United States.[2] But the manifesto on the tenth anniversary of the war of 1914, drafted by Trotsky during the congress, though also concerned with the guilt of the social-democrats, observed that " American capital is preparing, with the help of its experts, to ' control ' Europe, that is, to rule it ", and denounced " this monstrous plan to enslave the European working masses to Anglo-Saxon capital with the aid of French militarism ".[3] The full revelation of American readiness to make political use in Europe of preponderent American economic power seems to have come with an " unofficial " visit of the hated Hughes to western Europe in July 1924, the purpose of which was evidently to impress on

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 398-399; the economic theses noted that " with the end of the boom, and the need to sell on the world market goods which have found no buyers on the home market, interest in Europe is increasing, and the exploitation of Germany is more attractive to the American bourgeoisie " (*ibid.* p. 422).

[2] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 121; for Varga's speech see pp. 75-76 above.

[3] For this manifesto see pp. 85-86 above; in a speech of June 21, 1924, Trotsky accused the United States of " organizing a complicated system for the oppression of the European working masses " (L. Trotsky, *Zapad i Vostok* (1924), p. 137).

European governments and financiers the keen American interest in the acceptance of the Dawes plan. A speech by Trotsky of July 28, 1924, struck the new note in resounding tones. " The central figure in the current history of mankind " was the United States : " the master of capitalist mankind " was now New York and Washington. " The superiority which Great Britain in its heyday enjoyed *vis-à-vis* Europe is insignificant in comparison with the superiority which the United States of America has gained over the whole world, including Great Britain." General Dawes had been brought from America to sit at the round table : " as some people say, he even puts his feet on the table ". American imperialism, though still cloaking itself in a mantle of pacifism to distinguish it from " the imperialist rascals of the old world ", was no less " mercilessly savage, rapacious and brutal ".[1] Kamenev more mildly described the Dawes plan as an American product " thought out on American lines " ;[2] and Stalin wrote that, as the result of the London conference, " we have the hegemony of America in the place of the hegemony of France ".[3] It was no longer Great Britain or France, but the United States, which was taking the initiative and calling the tune in a European issue of primary importance. An article in the party journal on *The Colonization of Europe by American Capital* described the Dawes plan as " a cunning plan to create a capitalist International ".[4]

The deterioration of Soviet relations with western Europe in the winter of 1924–1925, followed by western attempts, culminating at Locarno, to detach Germany from her eastern orientation, sharpened Soviet mistrust of the United States. American policy was now clearly seen as the aider and abetter, if not the instigator, of western hostility to the Soviet Union. The colonial commission of the fifth enlarged IKKI in March–April 1925, under the chairmanship of Foster, the American party leader, produced the first specifically anti-American resolution in the history of Comintern. It cited " Hawaii, Cuba, the Philippines, etc." as " American colonies ", and declared that the United States " pursue an active imperialist policy, mainly in China and

[1] For the whole speech, which has already been quoted on pp. 85-86 above, see L. Trotsky, *Europa und Amerika* (1926), pp. 9-49.

[2] L. Kamenev, *Stat'i i Rechi*, xi (1929), 99.

[3] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vi, 289.

[4] *Bol'shevik*, No. 12-13, October 20, 1924, pp. 28-37.

in Persia ", and " seek to subject to their rule all North, Central and South America ". It exhorted the American Workers' Party to resist American imperialism in all these countries, and to join with the Mexican party in promoting an " anti-imperialist league ".[1] Early in May 1925 Houghton, the newly-arrived American Ambassador in London, in a much-publicized speech, pleaded for the early conclusion of the proposed guarantee treaty between Great Britain, France and Germany : [2] a few days later President Coolidge in a message to congress made it clear that the projected treaty had American support.[3] Chicherin, commenting at the third Union Congress of Soviets in the same month on Houghton's speech, observed that " since the world war most of the gold has piled up in the vaults of American banks, and, since America is the chief creditor and chief potential creditor in the future for the whole world, it is quite clear that this threat of financial pressure can be decisive in international affairs ".[4] On May 25, 1925, Trotsky in a speech at the Gosplan club dilated on the growing strength of American imperialism, and compared the present position of the United States with that of Germany before the war.[5] In a speech of October 25, 1925, after the conclusion of the Locarno agreements, he reverted to the expansion of American power in more violent terms :

> The imperialist war destroyed Europe for the benefit of America. . . . We are entering an epoch of the aggressive unfolding of American militarism. . . . The United States is the only country with active *international* tasks ; its plans embrace the whole earth — and *only* the earth because the other planets cannot for the moment be reached.[6]

Stalin at the fourteenth Russian party congress in December 1925 argued that " Europe has purchased her temporary stabilization at the price of financial subjection to America ", and that in consequence " the European countries, while continuing to exploit their colonies, . . . are themselves in turn exploited, and

[1] See p. 310 above; like the other resolutions drafted by this commission, it was approved by the plenary session, but not published in full.

[2] *The Times*, May 5, 1925.

[3] *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1925, i (1940), p. xii.

[4] *Tretii S"ezd Sovetov SSSR* (1925), p. 91.

[5] *Planovoe Khozyaistvo*, No. 6, 1925, p. 181; for this speech see p. 292 above.

[6] *Pravda*, November 5, 1925.

will be exploited, by America ".[1] Great Britain, Trotsky declared in January 1926, was " not exactly a second-class Power, but a Power which lags a colossal distance behind the present first Power ".[2] Finally in a long speech of February 15, 1926, Trotsky summed up once again his analysis of American predominance in the capitalist world, and of " the economic hopelessness " of Europe faced by an expanding and ever more aggressive American imperialism.[3] The theses issued by IKKI in January 1926 on the anniversary of Lenin's death recalled that the United States, having acquired after the war " an uncontested financial and economic hegemony ", had been drawn by the limitations of the home market to " abandon their isolationist attitude towards Europe ".[4] The sixth enlarged IKKI of February–March 1926 pronounced an uncompromising judgment:

> On all the most important international " agreements " of recent years — Washington, the Dawes plan, in part Locarno — lies the indelible imprint of the hegemony of American imperialism.
>
> . . . By drawing off the sap from Europe, American capital is objectively aiding the revolutionization of Europe.

The partial reservation in regard to Locarno was explained by a later passage in the same resolution. The Locarno agreements meant that American capitalism was strengthening its interests " against the whole of capitalist Europe "; but at the same time they represented " a first feeble attempt " of the debtors to unite against America.[5] In April 1926 a Soviet writer declared that " America and the USSR confront each other as two worlds which are mortal enemies ", and drew a graphic picture of the Soviet Union standing between a " Dawesified Europe " and a " terrorized China " as the principal obstacle to the domination of the world by American capital.[6]

While, however, the increasing strength and self-assertiveness of American capital was not in doubt, opinions were divided about the immediate consequences of the change. Did it portend a

[1] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 268-269.
[2] *Planovoe Khozyaistvo*, No. 1, 1926, p. 195.
[3] L. Trotsky, *Europa und Amerika* (1926), pp. 50-91.
[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 10, January 14, 1926, p. 125.
[5] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 531, 538.
[6] *Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 4, 1926, pp. 92-93.

bitter struggle for the mastery of the capitalist world between Great Britain and her trans-Atlantic rival and supplanter? Or would it lead to an Anglo-American partnership in the kind of "super-imperialism" which had sometimes been foreseen in party literature? An article appearing early in 1925 in a volume sponsored by Narkomindel [1] drew attention to the ambivalent attitude of European countries towards American economic power. Some looked to it for their own salvation; others feared American competition and domination. Great Britain seemed to fall within the second category. The belief in an impending struggle for power between the United States and Great Britain was held and promulgated at this time by Trotsky with his usual incisiveness. To Trotsky's clear-cut and logical mind, it seemed inconceivable that Great Britain, with her record of long-established and well-entrenched supremacy, would yield the palm to the United States without making a fight for it. Already in 1921 he had momentarily looked forward to the prospect of an early war between the two English-speaking powers, and then repented his rashness.[2] In 1924, though his predictions no longer took this crude form, the vision engendered by the Dawes plan of American imperialism stretching out its hands over Europe made the ultimate clash of interests between the United States and Great Britain seem inescapable. In a casual jotting passed to Krasin during a meeting at this time, Trotsky thought that Anglo-American relations must become strained "*in view of the return of the United States* to the world market".[3] The manifesto on the tenth anniversary of the outbreak of war in 1914 drafted by him a few weeks later for the fifth congress of Comintern contained a firm pronouncement on what would happen as the United States impinged more and more on British supremacy in world markets:

> The most powerful world antagonism is slowly but steadily developing along the line where the interests of the British Empire clash with the interests of the United States of North America. . . . The period of Anglo-American agreements is

[1] *Mirovaya Politika v 1924 godu*, ed. F. Rotshtein (1925), pp. 40-41.

[2] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 384, note 4.

[3] Pencilled note in the Trotsky archives, T 3490; Krasin in an answering note took the view that a quarrel between Great Britain and the United States was unlikely in the near future. The date of both notes was June 18, 1924.

> bound to give place to a continuously growing struggle, which in its turn means a danger of war on a scale not yet seen in the world.[1]

In his speech of July 28, 1924, Trotsky reiterated his view of the coming clash with Great Britain :

> People often say that America goes with Britain, that an Anglo-Saxon bloc has been formed. People often talk of Anglo-Saxon capital, Anglo-Saxon policy. The basic world antagonism, they say, is the enmity between America and Japan. But those who say this do not understand the situation. The basic world antagonism is to be found in the conflict of interests between the United States and Great Britain.

He coolly assessed the British dilemma while avoiding direct prophecy :

> England will be obliged to reflect ten times before deciding on war. But, if she does not decide on war, she will be obliged to retreat step by step under the pressure of American capital.[2]

Belief in the persistence of Anglo-American antagonisms, though more constantly expressed by Trotsky than by anyone else, was not peculiar to him. Stalin in the autumn of 1924 noted that " the London conference not only solved none of the European contradictions, but added new ones — between America and England ", and thought that " England will hardly reconcile herself " to the new situation created by the control of French and German heavy industry by American capital.[3]

The contrary view of Anglo-American relations was far less fully represented among the Soviet leaders. Marxists might have been expected to argue that the British ruling class, having forfeited its supremacy and being alarmed for its survival, would naturally, and irrespective of national loyalties, seek security in an alliance with its now more powerful American counterpart.

[1] For this manifesto see pp. 85-86 above. According to a statement by Kreibich some months later, Trotsky's original draft " presented the Anglo-American antagonism as the central antagonism of the future " (*Exécutif Élargi de l'Internationale Communiste* (1925), p. 97 — the remark did not appear in the Russian version) ; this suggests that Trotsky's first draft was even more uncompromising than the final version.

[2] See p. 466, note 1 above.

[3] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vi, 291 ; a year later Stalin believed that British failure to ratify the Anglo-Soviet treaty was " undoubtedly " due to American pressure (*ibid.* vii, 290).

Oddly enough, this argument does not seem to have been heard. It was those who were most versed in the practice of diplomacy — Krasin, Chicherin, Radek — who were most sceptical of the justice of Trotsky's prediction. Chicherin in a press interview in September 1924 regarded the Dawes plan as heralding the end of American isolation, but also the appearance of " a very active Anglo-American bloc as the chief force in the policy of the bourgeois states ".[1] At the third congress of Soviets in May 1925, Chicherin believed that " the chief part is still played by England ", though " England forms a close bloc with America ".[2] Radek, in a " discussion article " published in the journal of Comintern in February 1925, admitted the fact of Anglo-American rivalry, but added emphatically that " *anyone who draws from this fact the conclusion of the non-existence of Anglo-American cooperation* simplifies world politics in a childish way ", and that " the year 1924 was marked by this cooperation ".[3] In the same month, in an address to the Communist Academy, he associated the dramatic rise of American economic power, and of American investment in Europe, with the so-called " stabilization " of capitalism, and attacked the view which denied the reality of Anglo-American cooperation. He admitted that in a few years Great Britain and the United States " will be at one another's throats ". But for the present they were united by a common interest in the stabilization of capitalism and in holding back Japanese encroachments in the Far East.[4] Six months later, the triumph of Locarno and disturbances in China had relaxed the tensions in Europe and increased them in Asia; and Radek depicted Great Britain caught helplessly between a rising American imperialism and an insurgent east. She could not afford to fight the United States, and was struggling to retain her position in Asia.[5] Another picture sometimes conjured up in Soviet minds was of a suppliant Great Britain seeking to draw the United States into an anti-

[1] *Izvestiya*, September 26, 1924.
[2] *Tretii S"ezd Sovetov SSSR* (1925), p. 91.
[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 2 (39), February 1925, pp. 83-84.
[4] *Mirovaya Politika v 1924 godu*, ed. F. Rotshtein (1925), pp. 11-13, 20-21.
[5] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 152, November 6, 1925, pp. 2279-2280; No. 153, November 10, 1925, pp. 2293-2295; a cartoon in *Izvestiya*, December 2, 1925, the day after the signature of the Locarno treaties, depicted Chamberlain as the subservient underling of an arrogant Uncle Sam.

Soviet bloc.[1] But this was hardly the prevailing view. Trotsky in *Where is Britain Going?* written in April 1925, repeated his former analysis in slightly more cautious terms:

> The "cooperation" of America and Great Britain is the momentarily peaceful form in which Britain's increasing capitulation to America will take place. . . . Nevertheless the fundamental antagonism of the world is that between Britain and America. . . . The very fact that, in following the path of "reforms", i.e. compulsory accommodations with America, Britain will abandon one position after another, must ultimately compel her to offer resistance.[2]

The outbreak of a "rubber war" between Great Britain and the United States in south-eastern Asia as a result of the notorious Stevenson plan was noted with a certain glee.[3] The political theses issued by IKKI in January 1926 for the second anniversary of Lenin's death treated existing "competition between England and America" in the "world area" as a successor of the pre-war "competition between England and Germany"; and the economic theses issued on the same occasion saw the United States as trying to "break up the English world empire from within" by the economic penetration of Canada and Australia.[4] Two months later Zinoviev, in a speech to the Moscow party organization on the results of the sixth enlarged IKKI, spoke of Anglo-American antagonism as the "chief antagonism" replacing the pre-war antagonism between Great Britain and Germany.[5]

By this time a more realistic view of the rise of American power, and of its implications both for Anglo-American and for Soviet-American relations, was already beginning to percolate in Moscow. The vision of an Anglo-American world war which might finally spark off the world revolution faded away. War had been avoided, said Trotsky in January 1926, because "England gave in without fighting, by way of diplomacy".[6] Whether

[1] M. Tanin, *10 Let Vneshnei Politiki SSSR* (1927), p. 217.

[2] L. Trotsky, *Kuda Idet Angliya?* (1925), p. 11; for this pamphlet see p. 346 above.

[3] An article in *Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 1, 1926, pp. 51-66, was devoted to this subject.

[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 7, January 11, 1926, p. 97; No. 10, January 14, 1926, p. 126.

[5] *Pravda*, April 30, 1926.

[6] *Planovoe Khozyaistvo*, No. 1, 1926, p. 195.

the United States acted as a brake on British imperialist designs against the Soviet Union, or encouraged such designs, was a question which could not be discussed solely or primarily in terms of Anglo-American antagonism or collaboration. The resolution of the sixth enlarged IKKI drew the familiar picture of the two worlds confronting each other in a situation of temporary and precarious stabilization, but defined them with a new precision: "on the one side, the world of capital, headed by *America*, on the other side, the world of the proletarian revolution, at the head of which stands *the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*". The Anglo-American antagonism was relegated to its place as one of the antagonisms within the capitalist world.[1] The polarity of the United States and the USSR now became a familiar theme. Rykov, addressing the Leningrad Soviet on March 3, 1926, while the sixth enlarged IKKI was in session, said that only Washington and Moscow could now be regarded as fully independent centres of foreign policy.[2] Lozovsky, in an article on the impending session of the central council of Profintern, considered that the question now was "which of the two Great Powers has the greater attraction for the working class: *America or the Soviet Union*".[3] Bukharin at the seventh congress of the Komsomol described the United States and the USSR as "the two poles of a single international axis", between which stood a declining capitalist Europe".[4]

But this picture of the United States as the dominant Power of the capitalist world, and therefore the major antagonist of the Soviet Union, was complicated by the persistence of traditional bonds of sympathy. If the United States seemed to have replaced Great Britain as the principal bugbear and target for Soviet politicians and propagandists, this replacement was not altogether

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 537-538.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 43, March 16, 1926, p. 590.

[3] *Ibid.* No. 35, March 5, 1926, p. 481. Later in the year Lozovsky opened his speech at the fifteenth party conference with a passage describing the A. F. of L. and the Soviet trade unions as "the two poles . . . of the world trade union movement", and concluded it with the remark that the movement had to choose between "Americanization and Sovietization" (*XV Konferentsiya Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (*B*) (1927), pp. 306, 314).

[4] *VII S"ezd Vsesoyuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soyuza Molodezhi* (1926), p. 235.

congenial to Moscow. Unlike Great Britain, the United States of America, even when considered as the enemy, could still at this time excite feelings of envy and admiration. In the first place, the United States was the home of industrial progress and industrial efficiency — the pattern and exemplar for a country which regarded industrialization as its goal. Whatever was, or had been, good in the capitalist system survived, as nowhere else, in the United States. The need to learn from America was a commonplace among the first generation of Bolsheviks. It was in this sense that Bukharin had spoken of " Marxism plus Americanism ", and Zinoviev of the need to " combine the best traits of Americanism with the best existing traits of the Russian people " ; [1] and Trotsky, in the full flood of his denunciation of the new American imperialism, concluded that " Americanized Bolshevism will conquer imperialist Americanism ".[2] Secondly, the revolutionary tradition, the tradition of national liberation from the imperialist yoke, had not yet been wholly expunged from American thought and American policy. British colonial possessions and the attitudes of a colonial Power exposed Great Britain to constant criticism in the United States, and nourished a long-standing and deep-seated anti-British sentiment. Radek discovered that, while British and American interests in Europe could be reconciled through Locarno, they were fundamentally opposed in Asia, where the United States sympathized with national movements directed against British imperialism. He even thought that, in the countries of the east, this might " lead to a parallelism of the interests or activities of the Soviet Union and of the United States ", and that, since the United States wanted peace, this was an obstacle to aggressive British designs against the Soviet Union.[3] Notwithstanding the Dawes plan and everything that had happened in Europe, the United States still loomed in Soviet eyes as a bulwark of resistance to the

[1] For these quotations see Vol. 1, p. 131, note 5.

[2] L. Trotsky, *Europa und Amerika* (1926), p. 49; this was the peroration of Trotsky's speech of July 28, 1924 (see p. 466, note 2 above).

[3] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 167, December 22, 1925, pp. 2495-2496; Chicherin at VTsIK in March 1925 had observed that in the east " America is abandoning the coalition of the Great Powers and is out to win the sympathy of the Chinese people ", and that this constituted " a rather notable rift in Anglo-American relations " (*SSSR: Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 2 Sozyva: 3 Sessiya* (1925), p. 31).

imperialism of the older capitalist Powers in Asia. It was American pressure which had at length obliged Japan to evacuate Soviet territory in Asia, and was still the best protection against fresh Japanese or western encroachments in China; in the last resort, the United States could still be counted on to "do everything not to permit a further strengthening of Japan".[1] These considerations had, perhaps, as much influence in shaping day-to-day Soviet policy towards the United States as recognition of the new American rôle as the leading Power of the capitalist and imperialist world.

Trade between Soviet Russia and the United States on any significant scale began only after 1923. From the time of the revolution down to July 7, 1920, a formal embargo of the State Department was placed on trade with Soviet territory;[2] when the embargo was removed, the concerted refusal of the banks to finance Soviet trade, combined with the veto by the Treasury on acceptance of Soviet gold,[3] remained for two years longer an equally effective obstacle. Under pressure from Washington, leading American bankers had agreed in May 1921 to sponsor no loans to foreign governments which had failed to meet their obligations.[4] Soviet initiatives had been ignored. The memorandum which Robins had brought back from Moscow in the summer of 1918 was shelved in the State Department.[5] Litvinov's appeal to the allies, addressed to Wilson on December 24, 1918, to "withdraw foreign armies from Russian territory and raise the economic blockade", and the hope expressed to Harding, on the latter's inauguration as president in March 1921, that "the new American Government will clearly understand what immense advantage will accrue to both republics from the

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 4 (53), April 1926, p. 11.

[2] For the embargo and its removal see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 279.

[3] For the origin of the ban and subsequent evasions of it see F. L. Schuman, *American Policy Towards Russia* (n.d. [1928]), pp. 256-257.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 255.

[5] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 280-281; for other vague hopes of opening commercial relations with the United States at this time see *ibid.* Vol. 2, p. 131.

re-establishment of business relations "[1] were not even acknowledged. Martens, during his short-lived mission in New York, assiduously propagated the idea of American-Soviet trade, and claimed before his deportation to have placed orders with American firms to the value of 50 million dollars, which could not be executed owing to the embargo.[2] In January 1920 firms interested in the Soviet orders offered by Martens formed themselves into an American Commercial Association to Promote Trade with Russia, its aim being to re-establish "friendly and direct trade relations with Russia" and to "make a demand on the officials of this country" to facilitate this policy.[3] But the association obtained no support from large or influential concerns, and soon faded away.

Some sections of American official opinion were, indeed, impressed with the opportunity offered to American trade and finance to secure a foothold, in advance of their rivals, in a potentially vast and expanding Russian market. But such ambitions proved incompatible with the prevailing isolationist mood and with the desire to see, and to promote, the early downfall of the hated communist régime. Lansing's vague project of December 1919 seems to have been stifled by officials of the State Department.[4] The imagination of Hoover, who became Secretary of Commerce in March 1921, was fired by the far-flung operations of the American Relief Administration in Soviet Russia,[5] which seemed a natural prelude to the profitable penetration of a revived Russian market by American commerce. In a letter to Hughes of December 6, 1921, Hoover conjured up a vision of future opportunities:

> At the present moment, although other Powers have recognized the present Russian government and we have refused to do so, yet Americans are infinitely more popular in Russia and our government more deeply respected by even the Bolsheviks than any other. The relief measures already initiated are greatly increasing the status and kindliness of

[1] *Sovetsko-Amerikanskie Otnosheniya 1919–1933* (1934), pp. 33-35, 46.

[2] *New York Times*, December 28, 1920; for Martens see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 114, 278.

[3] *New York Times*, January 26, February 3, 1920.

[4] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 278.

[5] See *ibid.* Vol. 3, pp. 342-343.

> relations, and their continuation will build a situation which, combined with other factors, will enable the Americans to undertake the leadership in the reconstruction of Russia when the proper moment arrives. . . . The hope of our commerce lies in the establishment of American firms abroad distributing American goods under American direction, in the building of direct American financing and, above all, in the installation of American technology in Russian industries.[1]

In July 1922, after the failure of the Genoa and Hague conferences, Hoover proposed the sending of " a strong, technical mission to Russia to study the economic situation " ; but, though the scheme was at first sympathetically received by Hughes and welcomed by the Soviet authorities, it seems to have foundered on obstruction in the State Department.[2] No effective steps to develop American trade with Soviet Russia were, or could be, taken so long as fear of doing anything that might strengthen or perpetuate a régime assumed to be on the verge of collapse predominated over every other interest. Hoover, who recognized more clearly than anyone the potentialities of the Russian market, but was also the most implacable enemy of the Soviet Government, was the personification of this dilemma. Figures of exports to Soviet Russia which appeared in official American statistics for 1920 had represented mainly supplies to " white " armies or to territories under their control: corresponding figures for 1921 and 1922 represented relief supplies.[3] By 1923 even this form of " trade " had ceased to exist.

The ice was finally broken by the arrival in New York in November 1923 of Nogin, the head of the Soviet textile trust, probably the largest and certainly the most efficient industrial organization in the Soviet Union at this time. The problem of purchasing raw cotton for the revival of the Russian textile industry had from the first been acute ; and orders had hitherto

[1] National Archives: Record Group 59: 661.6215/1 ; these passages occur in the same letter in which Hoover opposed American financing of German trade with Soviet Russia (see p. 432, note 2 above).

[2] For the correspondence between Hoover and Hughes see National Archives: Record Group 59: 861.50, Am 3/25 ; for subsequent State Department action see *ibid.* 861.50, Am 3/6,7.

[3] For these figures see A. Baykov, *Soviet Foreign Trade* (Princeton, 1946), p. 89 ; for the corresponding Soviet figures see *Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR za 20 Let, 1918–1937*, ed. S. Bakulin and D. Mishustin (1939), p. 29.

been placed in Liverpool, Bremen or Rotterdam. Who first suggested a direct approach to the American market is not known; Nogin arrived as the representative of his trust, but apparently without any mandate from Vneshtorg or Narkomindel.[1] He seems to have behaved, throughout his visit, with tact and vigour. Soviet contacts in the United States were virtually non-existent. Nogin addressed himself to two former members of the American Red Cross mission of 1917, Thacher and Gumberg. Thacher, who broadly shared Robins's views, was a member of a large New York law firm: from Thacher Nogin obtained legal advice and his first introductions to the American business world. Gumberg, who had been Robins's secretary and interpreter in 1917–1918, and had since been an active advocate of American trade with Soviet Russia, now became general factotum and business manager for Nogin's mission, accompanying Nogin on a tour of the cotton-growing states. The cotton market was passing through a lean period, and the resumption of direct sales to Russia for the first time since the revolution was an attractive prospect.[2] The results of the mission were a contract with Anderson, Clayton & Co., one of the largest American cotton exporters, for Soviet purchases of cotton, an agreement with the Chase National Bank to finance the purchases,[3] and the establishment in New York of an American company, the All-Russian Textile Syndicate, Inc., to carry on the business. Gumberg was the general manager of the company, Thacher one of the directors.[4] During the period from December 13, 1923, when the All-Russian Textile Syndicate was incorporated, to September 30, 1924, the syndicate shipped

[1] See Vol. 1, p. 448.

[2] Six months later Clayton, in a letter of July 2, 1924, wrote that " we have found a sorely needed outlet in Russia, which has materially served to sustain the cotton market " (Gumberg archives).

[3] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 246; the Chase National Bank opened a credit of 2 million dollars. Payment had, however, to be made on arrival of the cargoes in Bergen, since there was no United States consul in any Soviet port to certify bills of lading (*Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 5-6, 1926, p. 61); it was impossible to discount Soviet bills in the United States.

[4] A letter from Thacher to Gumberg of October 22, 1925 (Gumberg archives), recalled how he had advised Nogin, instead of looking for " an expert American cotton man " to manage the business in the United States, to choose " the man he could more implicitly trust, regardless of experience "; this was the origin of Gumberg's appointment.

cotton to the Soviet Union to the value of over 39 million dollars, almost all purchased in the United States from 13 American cotton firms. Payment had been made from Moscow in the form of remittances or letters of credit.[1] In the financial year 1923–1924 imports to the Soviet Union from the United States rose to the substantial figure of 223 million roubles, as compared with 346 million in 1913; in this year, cotton accounted for 171 million roubles or 77 per cent of the total, in succeeding years for more than a half.[2] "The Columbus who discovered America for the Soviet Union", wrote a Soviet commentator two years later, "was the textile syndicate."[3] Early Soviet-American trade was carried entirely in American or foreign ships. In March 1925 the experiment was made of sending a Soviet ship, the *Vatslav Vorovsky*, direct to Galveston to load cotton. But prohibitive port dues were levied on the ship of a country not having a commercial treaty with the United States; and the experiment was not repeated.[4]

The breach thus opened was restricted to a single commodity. The entry of American manufactures into the Soviet Union, and the development of general trade was a slower process. The Allied American Corporation organized in the summer of 1923[5] was concerned mainly with small business. In September 1923 a New York group formed a Committee on Foreign Trade, which issued a manifesto on the danger of being permanently ousted from the Russian market by British, German and other firms already active there.[6] Shortly before or after Nogin's visit, Khurgin arrived in New York as *de facto* representative of

[1] These particulars are given in two letters from Gumberg to Wardwell of March 11, 1925 (Gumberg archives).

[2] *Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR za 20 Let, 1918–1937*, ed. S. Bakulin and D. Mishustin (1939), pp. 29, 246.

[3] *Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 5-6, 1926, p. 65.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 61. The ship sailed from Kiel on February 1, 1925, on a voyage which took her to the United States, Brazil, Uruguay, Cuba, Barbados and Trinidad (*Pravda*, October 10, 1925); the visit to Havana provoked a mass strike and demonstration of dock workers (*Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 292).

[5] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 246. In 1925 Hammer, the director of the Allied American Corporation, secured a concession for a factory producing pens, pencils and office supplies, which enjoyed a great, though short-lived, success (A. Barmine, *One Who Survived* (1945), p. 157); it was said to have made a profit of 125 per cent in 1926 (*New York Times*, June 9, 1928, p. 21).

[6] *Ibid.* October 7, 1923; a copy of the manifesto is in the Gumberg archives.

Vneshtorg, though in public he disclaimed that or any other official function.[1] At the beginning of 1924, Arcos-America was established in New York as branch of the London Arcos, but was quickly transformed, in July 1924, into an independent trading organization under the name of Amtorg.[2] Tsentrosoyuz, the union of consumer cooperatives, and Selskosoyuz, the union of agricultural cooperatives, set up offices in New York in 1924, but these were soon incorporated in Amtorg.

Thanks to these moves, Soviet-American trade began to expand rapidly, but predominantly in one direction. In the years before 1914 Russian imports from the United States had been slightly higher than Russian exports to the United States.[3] In the nineteen-twenties this disparity enormously increased. In the financial year 1924–1925, Soviet imports from the United States amounted to 883 million roubles, or almost four times the total of the preceding year, and two and a half times the total for 1913.[4] In this year the United States provided 27 per cent of Soviet imports, or nearly twice as much as any other country. In the year 1925–1926 the United States ran third to Germany and Great Britain as a supplier of the Soviet Union, and for the next three years second only to Germany.[5] Cotton remained in these years the major American export to the Soviet Union. Otherwise, apart from an exceptional Soviet purchase of grain in 1924–1925 due to the harvest failure,[6] the largest items were machinery and spare parts, agricultural machinery and implements and tractors.[7]

[1] W. Reswick, *I Dreamt Revolution* (Chicago, 1952), p. 50, places Khurgin's arrival in the summer of 1923; but there is no evidence of his activity before 1924. According to the same source, Khurgin secured an American visa as representative of Derutra, the Soviet-German transport company.

[2] See sources quoted in W. A. Williams, *Russian-American Relations, 1781–1947* (1952), p. 212, note 114; the formation of Amtorg was announced in *Russian Review* (Washington), July 1, 1924, p. 19, where Khurgin (Hoorgin) was named as chairman of the board of directors.

[3] For the figures from official American sources see A. Baykov, *Soviet Foreign Trade* (Princeton, 1946), p. 89 (where import and export figures have been accidentally reversed).

[4] *Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR za 20 Let, 1918–1937*, ed. S. Bakulin and D. Mishustin (1939), p. 29.

[5] A. Baykov, *Soviet Foreign Trade* (Princeton, 1946), Appendix, Table VII.

[6] See Vol. 1, p. 193.

[7] *Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 5-6, 1926, p. 66; C. D. Martin, *Foreign Markets for Agricultural Implements* (Washington, 1927), p. 14. The latter source, a Department of Commerce publication, gives the following

During the same period, Soviet exports to the United States, though they rose by slow degrees, failed to reach the pre-1914 level; furs were the largest item, followed by manganese ore.[1]

As trade relations between the two countries were slowly resumed, the theme originally mooted in Lenin's memorandum to Robins of May 1918 [2] of a marriage between American capital and underdeveloped Russian resources was also revived. Hitherto American financial investment in Soviet Russia had been on a negligible scale, and had been prompted by political or philanthropic motives. The mining concession at Kemerovo in the Kuznetsk basin granted in 1921 to a group of American engineers and miners under the leadership of Bill Haywood of the IWW was an investment not of American capital, but of American skill and labour.[3] The same impulse inspired the establishment by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, whose president was Sydney Hillman, of a Russian-American Industrial Corporation, with a capital subscribed by workers in 10 dollar units, to finance textile factories on a cooperative basis in Moscow, Petrograd, Nizhny-Novgorod and Kazan. Machinery, raw materials and some specialized workers were sent to Soviet Russia: part of the output of the factories was to be exported to discharge the debt.[4] In 1923 an American named Ware, a former member of the IWW, representing a group of American radicals interested

figures of Soviet purchases of tractors from the United States (in number and value):

1924	361	$207,416
1925	6760	$3,259,893
1926	9703	$4,497,692

Agricultural implements to a total of $7 m. were purchased in 1925 and to a value of $6·5 m. in 1926. A German report of October 1925 noted that American agricultural machines were being sold to the Soviet Union "on relatively long credit", and were "the strongest competitors of German exports in this market" (*Auswärtiges Amt*, 4829/242071).

[1] *Vneshnyaya Torgovlya SSSR za 20 Let, 1918–1937*, ed. S. Bakulin and D. Mishustin (1939), p. 244.

[2] See p. 475 above.

[3] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 354. In 1924 the central committee of the Russian party occupied itself with labour difficulties at Kemerovo; it passed a resolution inviting party and trade union organizations to study the "new forms of work and payment of the labour force" introduced by the management, and the management to take account of any comments from party or trade union organizations on methods of application of the new forms (*Izvestiya Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Rossiiskoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (Bol'shevikov)*, No. 10 (15), December 8, 1924, p. 4).

[4] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 246 and the sources there cited.

in the Soviet Union, including Roger Baldwin, Paxton Hibbin and Stuart Chase, was granted a concession to operate model farms in the north Caucasian region. The purpose of the concession was to train Russian peasants in American farming methods and to obviate the danger of future famines. Tractors were imported from the United States and instruction given in their use. It was also intended to import pedigree sheep and cattle. The concession was to be exploited by a joint company formed by Ware and his associates, who were to subscribe a capital of 200,000 roubles, and by the agricultural trust of the North Caucasian Region which was to subscribe 210,000 roubles, mainly in kind. Three Sovkhozy were included in the area of the concession. Some difficulty was at first experienced by the American group in raising the necessary capital; and it appealed to sympathizers for donations under the title "Russian Reconstruction Farms".[1] The concession agreement was not finally signed till July 10, 1925, though the concession was apparently in full operation in that year.[2]

These various enterprises, though symptomatic of the pro-Soviet sympathies still prevailing at this time among American radicals, had no economic importance. A more significant initiative was taken when in November 1923, at the time of Nogin's visit to the United States, Lyman Brown, a mining engineer and an old associate of Hoover, who had played a leading part in the organization of ARA (he was the American signatory of the agreement of August 20, 1921), visited Moscow with two other former officials of ARA. He defined the purpose of his journey as being "to look into the possibilities of cooperation with Russian economic development", and expressed the hope of seeing Litvinov, who was said to be "acting as head of the government's concession committee".[3] No record appears to

[1] Two letters addressed to Raymond Robins on January 5 and February 4, 1925, have been preserved among the Robins papers; according to the first of these, "we must raise $35,000 before February 1 to get agricultural machinery on its way to Russia in time for the spring sowing".

[2] The most detailed account is in M. Latsis, *Sel'skokhozyaistvennye Kontsessii* (1926), pp. 37-40, where it is compared, much to its advantage, with the Krupp agricultural concession on the Manych (see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 368).

[3] *New York Times*, November 30, 1923; Brown had arrived in Moscow on November 23. The fullest information about Brown's career is in an

have been published of the results of the visit. But in July 1924, at a moment when Soviet platforms were ringing with denunciations of the new American imperialism, Rykov, in an interview with an American correspondent, pronounced " cooperation between Russia and America inevitable " in the light of Russia's immense resources awaiting capital for development.[1] At the beginning of 1925, hopes inspired by the retirement of Hughes as American Secretary of State encouraged Chicherin to reiterate previous assurances of Soviet receptivity to overtu es from American capitalists :

> America is literally overflowing with free capital which seeks investment, while the USSR presents a magnificent picture of natural resources waiting to be brought to fruition by capital. Great prospects, not only for the well-being of our two countries, but for the enrichment of the world economy are linked with the future penetration of American capital into our country in fruitful work.[2]

Trotsky in an interview with an American correspondent in July 1925 argued that the only obstacle in the way of Soviet-American relations was political : the fear of revolution in capitalist countries. The economic difficulty was imaginary ; " the trustified industry of North America " had nothing to fear from the Soviet monopoly of foreign trade. Trotsky harped once more on the need for capital for the mechanization of agriculture and the renewal of the basic equipment of industry.[3] This reiteration represented, not a new departure in Soviet policy, but a realization that investment in the Soviet Union had at length become potentially attractive to American capital.

It appears to have been in 1924 that negotiations began between the Soviet Government and the American financier Harriman for a concession to work the manganese deposits at Chiaturi

obituary notice in *Engineering and Mining Journal* (N.Y.), December 1951, pp. 117-119. For the agreement with ARA see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 342 ; for Brown's share in the Lena concession agreement of 1925 see p. 415 above.

[1] A. I. Rykov, *Stat'i i Rechi*, iii (1929), 176.

[2] *Izvestiya*, January 21, 1925 ; Chicherin also recalled the plan submitted by Lenin to Robins in 1918.

[3] *Pravda*, July 30, 1925 ; this was followed by a leading article *ibid.* August 8, 1925, on the practical advantages for the United States of trade with the Soviet Union.

in the Caucasus. The United States was a substantial importer of manganese, and before 1914 Russia produced about half the world supply. The manganese mines of Chiaturi had been one of the baits which had drawn the Germans into Georgia in 1918.[1] But in the chaos of the civil war and its aftermath production had fallen almost to nothing: [2] to restore the mines to full efficiency required capital which Soviet sources could not supply. The Deutsche Bank was interested, but could not compete with the growing power and ambition of American capital. In October 1924 negotiations with Harriman's representatives in Moscow were actively in progress; Chicherin told the German Ambassador that the final conclusion of the agreement had been postponed till December 15, 1924, in order to give the Deutsche Bank a last chance to intervene.

> The Soviet Government [he added] prefers the Deutsche Bank to Harriman, but the latter has made such favourable proposals . . . that the Soviet Government could not refuse his offers.[3]

The assurance was perhaps more diplomatic than sincere; and the negotiations with Harriman were far less advanced than Chicherin pretended. Chicherin in his speech at VTsIK on March 4, 1925, referred to the claims of two German firms to the manganese of Chiaturi; [4] and on March 21, 1925, Brockdorff-Rantzau was instructed to make further representations to Chicherin reserving rights of German nationals in the manganese properties.[5] It was not till June 12, 1925, that the concession agreement was finally signed in Moscow. Under the agreement Harriman and his associates bound themselves to instal plant and equipment at Chiaturi for mining and handling the ore at a cost of not less than a million dollars, to build or reconstruct railways connecting the mining area with the port of Poti, at a cost of 10

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 1, p. 343.

[2] In 1923 the Soviet Union produced only 74,000 tons of manganese ore of which 52,000 came from Chiaturi; by 1924 total production had risen to 493,000 tons and by 1926 to over a million tons (J. Budish and S. Shipman, *Soviet Foreign Trade* (N.Y. 1931), p. 40).

[3] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/554609-10.

[4] *SSSR: Tsentral'nyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet 2 Sozyva: 3 Sessiya* (1925), p. 44.

[5] *Auswärtiges Amt*, 2860/554957.

million dollars and to provide loading facilities at Poti at a cost of a million dollars. They undertook to produce a minimum of 300,000 tons of manganese ore in the first year of working, 400,000 tons in the second year, and 500,000 tons a year thereafter: a royalty of 3 dollars during the first three years, and 4 dollars thereafter, was to be paid to the Soviet Government on every ton exported. The Soviet labour code was to apply to workers employed by the concessionnaires; not more than 15 per cent of the workers, or 50 per cent of the technical staff, might be foreign. The duration of the concession was 20 years. The Harriman concession was not only the most important agreement of this type ever concluded by the Soviet Government with an American firm, it was also a test case, and was frankly treated as such in an article in the *New York Times*:

> Conditions for the investment of American capital are at present not such that the Russian market can be neglected. The fate of the Harriman concession will be followed with interest, since the future may possibly show that stability and security can be guaranteed by the Soviet Government.[1]

The Harriman concession did not exhaust American financial interest in the Soviet Union as a potential field of investment for American capital. Six weeks before the Harriman agreement, the agreement with the Lena Goldfields Company, in which the American banking firm Kuhn, Loeb held a large interest, had been signed in Moscow.[2] In the summer of 1925 two significant visits of Americans to the Soviet Union took place. The first was paid by Goodrich, the Republican governor of Indiana, Haskell and Golder, all former members of the ARA and associates of Hoover. The Soviet authorities welcomed them as "advisers of Hoover and of the American Government on the Russian question"; and this impression was apparently so widespread that Hoover issued a statement disowning responsibility for their trip.[3] The other visit was that of Gumberg who returned to Moscow for the first time since 1918, accompanied by Reeve

[1] *New York Times*, June 15, 1925.

[2] See p. 415 above.

[3] *Mezhdunarodnaya Zhizn'*, No. 4-5, 1925, p. 50; a letter of December 30, 1925, from Gumberg to Goodrich in the Gumberg archives indicates that Goodrich did in fact report to Hoover and Coolidge on his return.

Schley, vice-president of the Chase National Bank. Part of July was spent in Paris in discussions with — among others — Krasin, and August in the Soviet Union.[1] Among the American financiers visiting Paris in the summer of 1925 was Dwight Morrow, a former partner in the same firm of corporation lawyers as Thacher, and now a partner in J. P. Morgan & Co., and a personal friend of Coolidge. Gumberg, who probably knew Morrow through Thacher, tried unsuccessfully to put him in touch with Krasin.[2] Morrow " continued to be interested in the Russian question " ; and, on the return of Schley and Gumberg to New York, he persuaded Wiggin, the president of the Chase National Bank, to give a lunch to a number of leading Wall Street financiers, at which Schley would report on his visit to the Soviet Union and answer questions. The lunch took place on September 14, 1925. Afterwards Morrow and Gumberg had a discussion on ways and means of bringing Krasin on a visit to the United States, which, however, came to nothing.[3] Three months later, on December 10, 1925, a larger and more important lunch — also organized by the Chase National Bank, apparently at Gumberg's instigation — was held at the Bankers' Club in New York to discuss financial and commercial openings in the Soviet Union. Charles Schwab of Bethlehem Steel and representatives of several of the leading New York banks — including J. P. Morgan, Guaranty Trust and Dillon, Reed — were among the guests. Though no formal record was made, the occasion attracted much publicity,[4] and was commented on in the Soviet press, which saw in it " a change in favour of the Soviet Union . . . in United States business circles " [5] — something comparable to the " recognition by the city " [6] which had occurred in London some time in advance of diplomatic recognition. Borah about this time

[1] No record of the doings of Schley and Gumberg in the Soviet Union has been traced.

[2] B. Baruch, *The Public Years* (1960), pp. 187-188, records a meeting with Krasin at Versailles in the summer of 1925, at which Krasin held out alluring prospects of Soviet concessions available for American investment, but which came to nothing.

[3] Letters of September 11 and 15, 1925, from Gumberg to Krasin in the Gumberg archives.

[4] *New York Times*, December 11, 13, 14, 1925.

[5] *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn'*, January 3, 1926; *Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 4, 1926, pp. 91-92.

[6] See *The Interregnum, 1923–1924*, p. 245.

recorded visits to him by " at least a dozen representatives of business interests . . . within the last ten days ", all concerned with the improvement of relations with the Soviet Union.[1]

In 1925 another fruitful initiative was taken. Some Soviet mining engineers came to New York and visited Charles Stuart, head of the firm of consulting engineers, Stuart, James and Cooke, to whom they had been recommended by British engineers. Stuart gave them facilities to visit American coal mines, and was invited in turn to send engineers to the Soviet Union to advise Donugol', the Donets coal trust, on the management and development of the coal mines of the Donets basin. The first party of American engineers arrived in the spring of 1926, and made a " highly critical, but well received ", report on the condition of the mines and on ways to improve them.[2] They were the forerunners of an army of American technicians who, in the next ten years, were to play an important part in the building of many branches of Soviet industry. Though the initiative came from the Soviet side and was taken up by private American citizens, it was too much in line with the ambition expressed many years earlier by Hoover for " the installation of American technology in Russian industries ",[3] and with the growing belief of American financiers in the profitability of the Soviet market for American investment, to have lacked support in Washington and in Wall Street. It was part of a prolonged process by which, in the middle and later nineteen-twenties, American industrialists, financiers, officials and politicians combined to make it clear that the American rejection of the Versailles treaty and of the League of Nations did not portend a retreat into isolation, and that the American colossus, strengthened by the war, was eager to resume and continue the drive for expansion, which had begun in the eighteen-nineties and which would ultimately win for it commanding positions all over the world.

In the winter of 1925–1926 a further move was undertaken from Moscow to improve relations with the United States and, if possible, secure recognition. In October 1925 Serebryakov,

[1] Unpublished letter to Gumberg of November 16, 1925 quoted in W. A. Williams, *Russian-American Relations* (1952), p. 217.

[2] H. Heymann, *We Can Do Business with Russia* (N.Y., 1945), pp. 24-25; W. A. Williams, *Russian-American Relations* (1952), p. 212.

[3] See p. 477 above.

deputy People's Commissar for Communications, visited New York, apparently to inspect Amtorg; and about the same time Osinsky arrived for an extensive tour of the United States.[1] Chicherin in the press interview given during his visit to Paris on December 21, 1925, welcomed "the marked expansion of economic relations with the United States", and suggested that all difficulties would be removed "only after diplomatic relations are established". He added that the Soviet Government was still willing to examine all questions in dispute "including the question of the loan granted to Kerensky".[2] In February 1926 the popular American monthly, *Current History*, published an article by Trotsky in his capacity as president of the chief concessions committee in Moscow. Trotsky harped on the theme of harmonious cooperation between the two countries:

> The Soviet Union needs American capital . . . to increase its rate of development. For good capital and good technique the Soviet Union is ready to pay good dividends. This is not absolute harmony, but in our imperfect world one should not reject even relative harmony.[3]

While, however, it was gratefully noted that the State Department under Kellogg no longer practised the "aggressive anti-Soviet policy" of the Hughes epoch,[4] signs were few of any positive change in American official attitudes. Coolidge's message to congress of December 8, 1925, mentioned Russia only once — in a passage relating to unpaid and unrecognized debts. When the Soviet Government desired at this time to send Besedovsky to Washington as an unofficial agent to replace the inactive Skvirsky, an American visa was refused.[5] An attempt to send Pyatakov on a similar mission met with the same rebuff.[6] In the

[1] Both these visits are referred to in papers in the Gumberg archives. Osinsky reported on his visit in three articles in *Pravda*, May 1, 13, June 5, 1926, the main argument of which was that the United States had become a predominant industrial power before the war, and that the relative weight of the United States in the world economy had not increased since.

[2] *Izvestiya*, December 23, 1925.

[3] *Current History* (New York), xxiii, February 1926, pp. 618-622.

[4] *Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 5-6, 1926, p. 42.

[5] G. Besedovsky, *Na Putyakh k Termidoru* (Paris, 1931), i, 237.

[6] This is mentioned in letters of Trotsky to Orjonikidze of February 21 and March 18, 1927, in the Trotsky archives (T. 928, 937); Pyatakov's application for a visa was refused by "an official of the American Embassy in Berlin, a

summer of 1926 Sokolnikov actually set out for Washington in the hope of negotiating a financial settlement, but had to " interrupt his journey mid-way " owing to a " rescinding by Kellogg of the promised permission for entry into the United States ".[1]

former white-guardist ", on the ground that he was " a man who had condemned to death the best citizens of Russia ".

[1] *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar' Russkogo Bibliograficheskogo Instituta Granat* xli, iii (n.d. [1927]), Prilozhenie, col. 87.

CHAPTER 35

COMINTERN: THE SIXTH IKKI

ON August 20, 1925, the presidium of IKKI decided to convene a session of the enlarged IKKI for October or November 1925, little more than six months after its predecessor: one of its prescribed tasks was to make preparations for a sixth world congress of Comintern.[1] As commonly happened, the time required for the organization of such gatherings proved to have been underestimated. On this occasion the uncertainties of the international situation after Locarno, and the acute crisis in the Russian party culminating at the fourteenth congress in December 1925, both provided reasons for postponement. The sixth enlarged IKKI finally met in February 1926; the sixth congress was relegated by common consent to a remoter future.

During the ten months which separated the end of the fifth from the opening of the sixth session of the enlarged IKKI, theoretical discussions had continued to revolve round the conception of the "stabilization of capitalism". The recognition of this stabilization by the fifth enlarged IKKI [2] had been received with misgivings, and none of the reservations with which it had been hedged around entirely reconciled party opinion to it. In the summer of 1925 the war in Morocco and the outbreak of troubles in China suggested that the revolutionary tide was once more beginning to flow, if only in extra-European channels. When, in June, 1925 Zinoviev was moving towards a break with Stalin, and was anxious to proclaim his loyalty to the cause of world revolution, he published an article entitled *The Epoch of Wars and Revolutions*,[3] which insisted, with far more emphasis than anyone had done in the enlarged IKKI three months earlier, "on the limits of stabilization, on the *relativity* of the stabilization

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 124, August 25, 1925, p. 1796.

[2] See pp. 288-290 above.

[3] See Vol. 2, p. 61, note 1.

of capitalism", and harped on the expanding revolutionary prospect; the essence of the conclusions reached by the enlarged IKKI was graphically, though tendentiously, described as "a penn'orth of stabilization, a dollar's worth of Bolshevization". But this revival of optimism did not last. For the capitalist countries of Europe, and for the United States of America, the year 1925 was, in spite of minor "colonial" set-backs, a time of achievement and reassurance. The Dawes plan had begun to work, and was endorsed almost everywhere by the non-communist Left as a contribution to economic recovery. Locarno was a triumph for those who sought to heal the rifts between the European Powers, actually or potentially at the expense of the Soviet Union. The signs of growing tension in some of the capitalist countries, and the growing friendship for the Soviet Union among some elements of the Left, did not alter the sense of the increasing isolation of the Soviet Union and of increasing danger from the west.

When the fourteenth party congress met in December 1925, Stalin spoke in his main report of a "provisional equilibrium of forces", and of "a phase of 'peaceful co-existence' between the land of the Soviets and the lands of capitalism". A "stabilization of capitalism" had been secured in Europe "at the cost of the financial subordination of Europe to America". Western and central Europe had witnessed "an ebb in the revolutionary movement", though "an evident Leftward movement of the European working class" was now in progress.[1] The general resolution of the congress noted "the consolidation and extension of the 'breathing-space', which has been converted into a whole period of so-called peaceful co-existence of the USSR with the capitalist countries".[2] Agreement still held between the warring factions to keep international issues, including the affairs of Comintern, outside the arena of party strife; and Zinoviev introduced the customary debate on Comintern. He struck a cautious, even pessimistic, note, which may in part have reflected his own predicament, but led up to approved conclusions. He admitted that Comintern could register "no great successes" since its last congress. Some people talked as if a new era had dawned

[1] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 261-268.
[2] *VKP(B) v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1941), ii, 48.

for capitalism: this was the result of "simplifications" and "exaggerations" of the thesis of the stabilization of capitalism. Nevertheless, "the partial stabilization of capitalism is a fact". Zinoviev, anxious to propitiate his Left wing supporters without breaking away from the party line, admitted that "some comrades in our party and in other parties thought that we were wrong in using the word 'stabilization', that it grates on the ear, that it is too pessimistic, that it gives undue credit to international capital"; he supported it by the analogy of Lenin's recognition of "a relative balance of forces" at the third congress. In difficult times it was all the more necessary to compete with social-democratic parties in using everyday economic demands to win over the workers. "*The tactic of the united front is only just* beginning".[1] Manuilsky slyly suggested that, since Zinoviev was throwing over the policy of the united front with the peasantry in the Soviet Union, he could no longer pursue united front policies in Comintern, and that the appearance of the Zinoviev opposition in the Russian party was bound to encourage the ultra-Left in Comintern.[2] But nobody else took up this point. In one of the shortest resolutions on record on so important a subject, the congress approved the work of the Russian party delegation to IKKI in helping, "in conditions of the partial stabilization of capitalism", to overcome "dangerous deviations" in other parties, and encouraged it to intensify the struggle for trade union unity and for the winning over of "the broad masses of non-party and social-democratic workers".[3] A few weeks later, in the economic theses issued on the second anniversary of Lenin's death, IKKI declared confidently "that we once more *stand on a rising curve of the revolutionary movement, that large parts of the world are even in an immediately revolutionary situation*". But this belief was based mainly on the outlook in China, and it was again admitted that "in Europe the situation is not immediately revolutionary".[4]

In the preparations for the enlarged IKKI, which met on February 17, 1926, the first preoccupation of the Bolshevik leaders was to prevent the dissensions in the Russian party from repro-

[1] *XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), pp. 639-681.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 693-695; see also p. 337 above.
[3] *VKP(B) v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1941), ii, 58-59.
[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 10, January 14, 1926, p. 128.

ducing themselves in foreign parties or from in any way diminishing the prestige and influence of the Russian party in Comintern. Wide publicity was given to a circular letter addressed by the Russian party on January 13, 1926, to other member parties. The letter admitted that the delay in the international revolution and the relative stabilization of capitalism had bred " some moods of depression " in the party. It gave a brief and reasonably fair synopsis of the issues dividing the minority from the majority (internal evidence pointed to Bukharin as the author), and invited the parties to study these questions in the light of the documents. But it ended with the firm pronouncement that " a carrying of the discussion of the Russian question into the ranks of the Communist International is undesirable ".[1] In order to enforce this ban, it was essential for the party to speak in Comintern with a single voice. Zinoviev, though cast out from the inner circle of party leaders and prohibited from opening his mouth on controversial party affairs,[2] was still the president of IKKI and party spokesman in Comintern: in this capacity it was inevitable that he should preside over the session of the enlarged IKKI and make the principal report. Trotsky, no longer a member of IKKI, was not a delegate. But he participated as a member of the Politburo in the preparation of the lengthy set of theses on " Current Problems of the International Communist Movement ", which were as usual published in advance, and formed the basis of the main resolution of the session.[3]

When the session opened, Zinoviev's principal speech [4] was balanced and colourless. The year 1924 had been the era of

[1] *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, January 14, 1926. [2] See Vol. 2, p. 153.

[3] They were published in *Pravda*, February 16, 1926, in the form approved by the Politburo; the original draft submitted to the Politburo was not published, but two notes on it by Trotsky dated February 13, 1926, are in the Trotsky archives (T 2979, 2980). The first sought to amend the section relating to the united front by stipulating that cooperation was out of the question " so long as the social-democrats work hand-in-glove with the bourgeoisie in coalition governments "; this was not adopted. The second proposed that, with the revival of the slogan of the United States of Europe, the slogan of the " worker-peasant government " should also be revived, " at any rate for some countries "; this found its place in the Politburo text of the theses. For the theses as adopted by the enlarged IKKI see p. 504, note 2 below; they contained only minor amendments of the Politburo text.

[4] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 10-56.

democratic pacifism noted by the fifth Comintern congress; the year 1925 and the fifth plenum of the enlarged IKKI marked the period of the stabilization of capitalism. In 1926 the stabilization itself was subject to a phase of oscillation:

> The year 1926 is already a period of tottering, far more insecure, stabilization. I think that the delineation of this trait of the period through which we are living will be the characteristic feature of the present plenum.

Zinoviev did not venture to choose between the two alternative prospects which he had presented to the fifth congress: either a rapid ripening of the revolution and the victory of the proletariat in four or five years, or a slow and gradual ripening extending over a long period.[1] For the first time he confessed to some doubts, not only about the tempo of the proletarian revolution, but about the route which it might take. He admitted that in the past hopes had been too exclusively concentrated on central Europe. Now Great Britain had supplanted Germany in the forefront of the picture; the Scarborough resolution on imperialism[2] was quoted later in the speech as evidence of "the revolutionizing of the English workers' movement". But, though Zinoviev devoted some attention to China, he repeated the traditional assumption that the revolution would come, first in Europe, then in the east, and finally in America. In any case, if Lenin was wrong in thinking that the Russian revolution would hasten the proletarian revolution in other countries, then "the ground on which the Third International stands is all rotten". Of later speakers only Varga attempted to contribute to the theme of stabilization. He distinguished between four sectors of the world. First came the Soviet Union with a rising socialist economy, then the United States of America with a rising capitalist economy: "the whole world exhibits a certain polarization of forces round these two centres". Thirdly, Asia and northern Africa were in a state of "revolutionary ferment" which might lead to the formation of states on the Soviet model. Fourthly, in Europe the "shattering of capitalism" had proceeded to its furthest point: stabilization was "based on a deterioration in the position of the workers all over Europe".[3] After the acri-

[1] See p. 78 above. [2] See p. 344 above.

[3] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 94-95.

monious debates of the fourteenth party congress in Moscow in the preceding December, nobody in the Russian party — and least of all Zinoviev — cared to incur the imputation of leaning towards the Right or of expressing pessimism about the prospects of world revolution.

But behind these pronouncements a new emphasis was apparent on the increasing strength and authority of the Soviet Union. The theme of the "two stabilizations", tentatively launched in the spring of 1925,[1] had now become a commonplace. After the fourteenth party congress, the Soviet Union was no longer merely a source of revolutionary ferment: it could be set over against the capitalist world as an independent force in its own right. In the days of "socialism in one country", the Soviet Union commanded the respect and support of the workers of the world, no longer merely for its revolutionary fervour, but for its power and efficiency in the building of a socialist society. A striking passage in Stalin's report to the fourteenth party congress in December 1925 had been devoted to the workers' delegations from western countries which had visited the Soviet Union during the past few months. These "pilgrimages of workers to our country", declared Stalin, had "inaugurated a new phase in the development of the labour movement in the west". The delegates had been received as "persons empowered by the working class of the western world to make a friendly and fraternal inspection of our constructive work and of our workers' state"; they were the living proof that "the working class of Europe, or at least the revolutionary section of the European working class, regards our state as its own child". The moral of this solidarity was obvious:

> If the workers refuse to make war against our republic, if they regard our republic as their own child whose fate is of supreme importance to them, then war against our country becomes impossible.[2]

These workers' delegations were not composed mainly of communists. They repeated the experience already learned in Great Britain that more spectacular successes could be won, and more influence exercised, by appealing to the sympathies of a non-communist Left wing among the workers than through the

[1] See pp. 291-292 above.

[2] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vii, 285.

direct efforts of foreign communist parties to win new recruits to communism.

This outlook was, gradually and imperceptibly at first, reflected in the attitudes of Comintern. If the most urgent task of foreign communists was to win friends and sympathizers in the non-communist Left for the Soviet cause, and thus help to paralyse the striking arm of their hostile governments, the emphasis naturally fell on the policies of the united front and of trade union unity. But these policies were far more likely to appeal to the Rightist, or what had once been called " opportunist ", elements in the foreign parties, who had never been unwilling to cooperate with social-democrats and other radical parties, than to the purists of the ultra-Left, who lay in wait to denounce any deviation from the strait and narrow path of revolution. Hence the drive against the ultra-Left, which had gathered momentum throughout 1925, now became the dominant attitude in Comintern practice. The new note was sounded, audibly but discreetly, in the later passages of Zinoviev's main speech. In preaching the virtues of the united front policy, he rehearsed a number of recent failures in its application. After a long catalogue made up exclusively of " ultra-Left errors ", he admitted that " there are also Right errors " ; but the only ones he thought worthy of mention were the old failure of 1923 in Saxony and a recent German example of local and trivial importance. Later he admitted the existence of a Right danger in the French party. But this was evidently eclipsed by " a certain recurrence of ultra-Left deviations in certain parties, in Germany, in Poland, partly in Italy, partly in France, partly in Norway ".[1] The admission that the enemy was to be found on the ultra-Left rather than on the Right was the real hall-mark of the sixth enlarged IKKI.

The danger which began to take shape, and to alarm the Comintern leaders, at this time was the appearance of an international ultra-Left opposition which would present a direct challenge to Russian leadership, and to the uniform theory and practice of international communism, based on an alleged lack of identity of interest between the Russian and other communist parties. The charge that the Bolsheviks were responsible for a

[1] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 41-42, 46.

specifically Russian variant of Marxism (or even a deviation from it) was not new. During the war Lenin's views had been denounced by German social-democrats and Russian Mensheviks as "Bakuninism" and "Russian tactics".[1] The debate was eagerly pursued in the first years of the revolution. In 1918, shortly after the Bolshevik victory, Lenin had declared Bolshevism to be "valid as a pattern of tactics for *all*".[2] "For a time — though, of course, only for a short time", wrote Lenin in an article on the foundation of Comintern in 1919, "the hegemony in the revolutionary proletarian International has passed to the Russians".[3] In 1920, when Europe seemed on the crest of the revolutionary wave, he had opened his essay on *The Infantile Disease of "Leftism" in Communism* with the claim that, while it had originally seemed as if "the immense differences between backward Russia and the leading western European countries will make the revolution in those countries very unlike ours", it had now been established "with complete certainty" that "some fundamental traits of our revolution have not a local, not a peculiar national, not a purely Russian, but an international significance", and that "the Russian model reveals to *all* countries something, and something very essential, of their own inevitable and not remote future".[4] At the Halle congress in the autumn of the same year,[5] the defeated minority of the USPD believed itself to be defending a pure or European Marxism against a semi-oriental Russian distortion. In 1921, Paul Levi denounced the "March action" of the KPD as a "Bakuninist *putsch*",[6] and ironically referred to Bela Kun and Guralsky who had promoted it as "Turkestanis".[7] In the debates on the programme of Comintern at the fourth congress of Comintern in November 1922 Bukharin based his argument on the general assumption of the validity of the lessons of the Russian revolution for western countries, and was answered by Thalheimer with specific reference

[1] Lenin, *Sochineniya*, xix, 14. [2] *Ibid.* xxiii, 386.

[3] *Ibid.* xxiv, 249; this article was quoted by Zinoviev in his report of March 26, 1926, to the Moscow party organization on the sixth enlarged IKKI, as a justification for "ideological hegemony of the VKP in Comintern" (*Pravda*, April 28, 1926).

[4] Lenin, *Sochineniya*, xxv, 171.

[5] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 218-222.

[6] See *ibid.* Vol. 3, p. 337.

[7] P. Levi, *Unser Weg* (2nd ed. 1921), p. 54.

to NEP which, though a progressive measure in Russian economic conditions, would represent a process of retrogression in more advanced western conditions.[1] After the congress Varga, who had been attacked by Bukharin for opportunism, wrote an article in which he expounded, at greater length than had been done elsewhere, the underlying differences between Russian and western attitudes. These turned, according to Varga, on three main points. In the first place, in Russia the masses of workers outside the party were still unorganized; in the west they were organized in trade unions and attached to political parties. Secondly, the peasants, who in Russia formed an amorphous mass, appeared in western countries as small capitalists working for the market. Thirdly, the western intelligentsia, unlike the Russian, was closely associated with the ruling class and with the ideology of bourgeois democracy. These differences led to the conclusion that "it is impossible without further reservations to apply the experience of the Russian revolution to western Europe".[2]

The full danger of this line of thought did not immediately appear. But the issue received an insidious impetus from the campaign against Trotsky — the counterpart of the cult of Leninism — when Trotsky was accused of inclining "towards a 'western European Marxism'" and of preaching "a falsification of communism in the spirit of approximation to 'European' patterns of pseudo-Marxism".[3] Stalin, when he first approached the question in his lectures on Leninism in 1924, admitted the "grain of truth" in the statement that "Leninism is the application of Marxism to special Russian conditions", but none the

[1] For this debate see pp. 1000-1001 below.

[2] *Kommunisticheskaya Revolyutsiya*, No. 4 (43), February 15, 1923, pp. 61-63. At the fourth congress of Comintern, Lenin criticized a resolution on organization adopted by the third congress of 1921 as being "almost entirely Russian, i.e. everything taken from Russian conditions" (see *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 393); and Souvarine, on the strength of this incident, afterwards alleged with some exaggeration that "Lenin untiringly instructed his international disciples not to 'copy' the Russian revolution, but to make a German revolution in Germany, an Italian revolution in Italy, a French revolution in France" (*Bulletin Communiste*, No. 15, April 11, 1924, p. 367). Varga was one of those who, in the debates of this period on the programme of Comintern, argued that the lessons of NEP did not apply to western communist parties (see p. 1000 below).

[3] For these quotations see Vol. 1, p. 146.

less attacked it as " one-sided ": Leninism was not " a purely national and purely Russian factor ", but " an international factor having its roots in international development ".[1] Bordiga, at the fifth congress of Comintern in June–July 1924, attributed the rise of Bolshevism in Russia to the fact that its leaders had been compelled " to live in the environment of western capitalism, where there was a proletariat ", and still firmly identified Leninism with " revolutionary Marxism " as a " world-doctrine "; Lenin, he declared, " belongs not simply to Russia, but to the whole world, to us all ".[2] But in 1925, when " socialism in one country " was first preached in Moscow, and new leaders of the Left, more addicted to theoretical speculation than their predecessors, were in the saddle in the leading foreign parties, it began to be widely asked whether doctrinal and tactical prescriptions laid down for the work of the Russian party were equally valid for the foreign parties in their now quite different situation; whether a distinction might not be drawn between two variants of current communist doctrine, one applicable in Russian conditions, the other to the west; and whether it was not the former alone which merited the special name of " Leninism ", and constituted a variant from the original " Marxism ". At the fifth enlarged IKKI in March 1925, Zinoviev reproached the veteran French communist Rappoport for having discovered in Bolshevization " a tendency to substitute Leninism for Marxism "; [3] and the most damaging of the charges brought against the Left leaders of the KPD in the summer of 1925 was that they had endeavoured to turn the party against Leninism and the leadership of Moscow.[4] About the same time the ultra-Left leaders of the KPP were accused of attempting to set up a " western communism " in opposition to " Russian communism ".[5] Bordiga, in an article in the Italian

[1] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vi, 70; two years later Stalin insisted more emphatically that Leninism was " the generalization of the experience of the revolutionary movement of all countries ", and therefore valid for all (*ibid.* viii, 15).

[2] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 404; Bukharin, however, at the same congress accused Bordiga of treating himself and his friends as " communists, orthodox and Marxists ", and the members of IKKI as " opportunists " (*ibid.* ii, 603).

[3] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 77; for the similar charge against Bordiga see pp. 368-369 above.

[4] See pp. 325-327 above.

[5] See p. 387 above; Zinoviev later recalled the arrival of " the four " in Berlin early in 1924 (see p. 193 above) " to defend the ' Polish ' ultra-Left

party journal *Unità* entitled *The Opportunist Danger and the International*, argued that, since Lenin was not a revisionist but an orthodox Marxist, it was incorrect to replace the familiar terms "Marxism" and "Communism" by "Leninism" and "Bolshevism".[1] The objection to the substitution of a Russian for a western terminology had implications which were readily understood. It now became apparent to the Comintern leaders that Bordiga, fresh from his success in organizing a "Left fraction" in the PCI, was attempting to "form a 'Left fraction' inside Comintern".[2] It was admitted that Lenin had added something to Marxism and provided a fresh interpretation of it. It was also admitted that Lenin had applied Marxism to specifically Russian conditions, and that what he had done was influenced by those conditions. But from these admissions it was a long step to the conclusion that Leninism was a specifically Russian doctrine designed to take account of Russian backwardness and not applicable to the more advanced countries of the west. This step, which implicitly denied the Russian claim to leadership in Comintern, no Bolshevik could take. In Bolshevik doctrine Leninism meant the adaptation of Marxism to the conditions not of a particular country, but of a particular historical period. As such, it claimed universal validity; and no distinction could exist between a Marxism of the west and a Marxism-Leninism of the east. Socialism in one country was an attempt, not to drive a wedge between Russia and the west, but to build a new bridge to unite them. It rejected the view of a socialist revolution in which the west was the predominant factor and Russia lagged behind, in order to replace it by a picture in which Russia had taken the lead and the west would one day follow.

At the sixth enlarged IKKI in February 1926 Bordiga moved completely into the open, and launched the only serious opposition heard throughout the session. Bordiga, in a four-hour speech which won the respect of opponents by its sincerity and intel-

point of view", and went on: "I do not think that the ultra-Left campaign against the line of Comintern arose as the result of an immaculate conception; it was to a certain extent organized" (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 46).

[1] Quoted by Zinoviev *ibid.* p. 445.

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 7 (44), July 1925, p. 120; for the situation in the PCI see pp. 368-371 above.

lectual power,[1] declared that the slogan of the united front had led to serious misunderstandings, especially after the fourth congress had supplemented it with the erroneous slogan of a workers' government. In opposition to united front tactics, Bordiga conjured up once more " the prospect of a final dissolution of capitalism " ; a revolutionary party was not " a scientific group for the study of social relations ", and could not renounce the revolutionary perspective. Practically, it was far from certain that " the existence of a Left bourgeois government creates a favourable political situation for our struggles and our preparatory work " : the reverse might be true. The Russian party, Bordiga now argued, had won its victory in special conditions, " in a country where the feudal aristocracy had not yet been conquered by the capitalist bourgeoisie " ; simply to transfer the experience of the Russian party to other countries was inadequate. Bordiga disclosed the full force of those ultra-Left " anti-Muscovite tendencies " which had been laid at the door of Maslow and Ruth Fischer in Germany.[2] He plunged more deeply into the nature of the discrepancy between the Russian party and the rest. When the cult of Leninism was harnessed at the very outset in 1924 to the " Face to the countryside " campaign then sponsored by Zinoviev, it was easy for foreign critics to allege that the Russian party was adapting policy and doctrine to the needs of a predominantly peasant country and of a revolution dependent at all times on peasant support, and that this was what Leninism as a specific variant of Marxism meant. The appeasement of the peasant under Bukharin's leadership in 1925 had made the problem more acute. Bordiga boldly declared that it was necessary for Comintern to concern itself with " the state policy of the Russian Communist Party " and to struggle against " the growing influence of the peasant class and of the rising semi-bourgeois

[1] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 107-125. " When he speaks ", said Togliatti of Bordiga, " he makes an impression of revolutionary sincerity, his personality imposes itself " (*ibid.* p. 192); Lominadze described him as being " distinguished from the other ultra-Lefts as a sincere, straightforward, convinced, honourable, Left oppositionist " (*ibid.* p. 558); Stalin later paid him a rare, though back-handed, compliment with the remark that he could " respect and believe Bordiga . . . because he says what he thinks ", whereas Ruth Fischer " never says what she thinks " (Stalin, *Sochineniya*, viii, 114).

[2] See pp. 325-327 above.

strata ". This was " the fundamental question of the historical relations between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world ". The current evils in the Russian party and in Comintern could be remedied only by the united efforts of a " general staff of world revolution " drawn from all communist parties. The delay in world revolution had made it essential " to conduct the whole Russian policy in close contact with the general revolutionary policy of the proletariat ".[1] In a shorter second intervention, Bordiga concluded that " the comedy offered by this plenary session " held out " gloomy prospects " of reform, and announced his intention of voting against Zinoviev's theses.[2]

This powerful, though solitary, assault contained everything that the leaders of Comintern most disliked and feared, and provided a focus for the rest of the debate. Almost every subsequent speaker took up the challenge by denouncing the ultra-Left, though most of the non-Russian delegates passed over in silence Bordiga's attack on the Russian party and on its rôle in Comintern, which cut too near to the bone. Thälmann denounced Bordiga as being " not only a deviator, but against the line of Comintern ", and accused him of attempting to oppose the Russian party to Comintern. Togliatti refuted his compatriot on theoretical grounds : by rejecting the united front and the workers' government, and by refusing to distinguish between bourgeois parties of the Left and of the Right, Bordiga had abandoned that degree of elasticity and manœuvre which was essential to Leninism.[3] The major reply to Bordiga was undertaken by Bukharin, who also evaded the main issue. Bordiga, like Levi, had denounced the mechanical application of the Russian experience to western parties ; but nobody proposed to apply it mechanically. Bordiga was no dialectician, and did not understand that different periods

[1] The argument which Bordiga was attacking had been developed by Manuilsky in the form of an attack on the ultra-Lefts at the tenth congress of the KPD in July 1925 : " If the German ultra-Left is not in a position to put its foot on the neck of its capitalists, the Russian Communist Party is obliged to defend itself against the attack of international capital ". This necessitated dependence on the Red Army and the alliance with the peasantry : " The new peasant policy of the USSR is above all a policy of defence against the Chamberlains " (*Bericht über die Verhandlungen des X. Parteitags der KPD* (1926), p. 311).

[2] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 252-257.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 172, 190-200.

called for different tactics. Finally Bukharin countered Bordiga's demand that other parties should share in curing the defects of Comintern by recalling that both the Russian party and IKKI had passed resolutions urging parties to send their best people to work in Moscow. What more did Bordiga want?[1] The reply as a whole was perfunctory and unconvincing. But a debate which proceeded on both sides on the assumption of a formal equality between all the parties of Comintern, and of a right of Comintern, as an independent international organization, to pronounce on the policies of the Russian party as of other parties, was bound to be unreal. Skrypnik more pointedly attacked Bordiga's argument that "Leninism is a product of Russian conditions and cannot be applied to the conditions of western European countries", and thought that this belief should be resisted "with the utmost vigour".[2] Zinoviev summed up the debate on well-worn lines with an attempt to equate ultra-Left and Right. The consistent ultra-Leftist was "an anarchist or almost an anarchist", the consistent Rightist an opportunist. But "anarchism and opportunism are the two sides of one and the same medal". Having thus balanced the two deviations, Zinoviev devoted most of the remainder of his speech to the ultra-Left, tracing its history in detail in Italy and especially in Germany, where "the so-called German Lefts (Maslow, Ruth Fischer, etc.)" were the only group, apart from Bordiga, which had attempted to set up "a line radically diverging from the policy of Comintern". Zinoviev continued:

> The substance of the matter is not in isolated mistakes of the Left. The most significant fact is that the leaders of the German Left held the view, though they did not express it openly, that the Leninist leadership of Comintern was in error, that the "Russian" leadership, which had come into being in a backward peasant country, was not capable of pointing out the right paths to the western European workers' movement. The substance of the matter is that the leaders of the Left have tried to discover some new, improved, "western European" Leninism.[3]

The attempt of the ultra-Left to discover a rift in the seamless garment of Leninism and in the monolithic unity of the Communist International was denounced and repelled. Bordiga,

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 201-213. [2] *Ibid.* pp. 239-240. [3] *Ibid.* pp. 434-466.

in spite of his declared opposition to the theses, explained at the last moment that he approved the intention exhibited in them to " alter the internal régime of the International ", and apparently abstained from voting.[1]

The resolution, which was carried unanimously and embodied almost without amendment the theses originally approved by the Politburo, began by insisting that the " partial stabilization " discerned at the session a year earlier did not imply that capitalism had healed its wounds or overcome its contradictions: " the period of the decline of capitalism continues ". But within that period partial and temporary improvements might occur; it was in this sense that the " stabilization " of 1925 must be understood. " The relativity and insecurity of this ' stabilization ' are becoming especially apparent at this very moment." Such stabilization as had been achieved had been achieved at the expense of the workers of Europe and of the east. This contrasted sharply with the consolidation of power in the Soviet Union:

> The successes achieved in the field of socialist construction in the USSR are becoming more and more the test for the successes of international socialism in general. The USSR is becoming the centre of attraction for the proletarians of all countries, the pivot of the international proletarian revolution.

The theses cautiously condemned both the denial of any " ' stabilization ' of capitalism " and the belief that " capitalism has been consolidated for another historical epoch ". The present " partial and insecure stabilization of capitalism " did not affect the Leninist course, which was still set for a world proletarian revolution.[2]

An unexpected feature of the theses was the reappearance of the slogan of " the United States of Socialist Europe ". During the war both Lenin and Trotsky had called for " republican United States of Europe ", though the precise application and context of the demand was disputed between them.[3] After 1917

[1] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 466, 589.

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 529-539.

[3] Lenin advocated " the transformation of all the separate states of Europe into republican United States of Europe " in September 1914 (*Sochineniya*,

the question was forgotten. In the first years of the Soviet régime, when it was assumed that world revolution was imminent, references were occasionally made to a world Soviet republic or federation of Soviet republics. But no great inclination was felt to speculate on future forms of world government. It was not till after the session of the enlarged IKKI of June 1923, which endorsed the slogan of the " worker-peasant government " originally put forward at the fourth congress of Comintern six months earlier,[1] that Trotsky, in an article in *Pravda* on June 30, 1923, proposed that the slogan of United States of Socialist Europe should be introduced side by side with the slogan of the worker-peasant government.[2] France was accused — this was the period of the Ruhr occupation — of " Balkanizing Europe " and reducing it to impotence; European unity, Trotsky argued, was essential in order to resist the domination of Europe by American capital. But the two slogans were unrelated except in the sense that both were " united front " slogans designed to appeal to the non-communist Left. Some time in the latter half of 1923, the slogan of the United States of Europe was approved by Comintern — according to Trotsky, " after a rather protracted internal struggle ".[3] But no use seems to have been made of it at this

xviii, 46); Trotsky in *The War and the International* published later in the same year called for " republican United States of Europe as a foundation for the United States of the world ". A conference of social-democrats in Berne in February 1915 (for this, and for the theses of September 1914, see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 1, p. 66) pronounced the discussion too exclusively political, and adjourned it for further consideration of its economic implications (Lenin, *Sochineniya*, xviii, 124). In August 1915 Lenin wrote an article entitled *The United States of Europe Slogan*, in which he argued that under capitalism any such project was " either impossible or reactionary ", and showed fear that the use of this slogan might dissuade the workers of separate countries from revolutionary action (*ibid.* xviii, 230-233); this was the article containing the passage on which the doctrine of socialism in one country was to be based (see Vol. 2, p. 41, note 2). Trotsky reverted to the slogan in an article in the following year (*Sochineniya*, iii, i, 88-89).

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 368-373; for the decision of the fourth congress see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 453.

[2] The article was reprinted in L. Trotsky, *Europa und Amerika* (1926), pp. 92-99.

[3] The approval in 1923 was recorded in the resolution of the sixth enlarged IKKI of March 1926 (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 547); no reference to the discussion or approval of the slogan has been found in any earlier Comintern document. For Trotsky's account see L. Trotsky, *The Third International after Lenin* (N.Y., 1936), p. 10.

time. On April 11, 1924, when the Dawes plan had just been completed in Paris, Trotsky spoke again of the need for "a worker-peasant United States of Europe, without which Europe is threatened with an unavoidable economic and political collapse";[1] and two months later he repeated that only a united Europe could remain economically independent, and "defend itself in open struggle against the American counter-revolution".[2] No mention was made of the slogan in the debates of the fifth congress of Comintern in June–July 1924. But the manifesto on the anniversary of the outbreak of war in 1914, drafted for the congress by Trotsky and adopted by it, looked forward to the day when, after the victory of the proletariat, "the states of Europe will come together in a Soviet federation, the United Workers' and Peasants' States of Europe".[3] This gave a revolutionary turn to the slogan in keeping with the turn to the Left which was the keynote of the congress.

The fifth congress gave the slogan of the worker-peasant government an honourable burial by identifying it with the proletarian dictatorship. The slogan of the United States of Europe was silently abandoned with it. For 18 months nothing was heard of it. Then, in January 1926, after the rift between Stalin and Zinoviev, Trotsky revived the project as a potential counter-weight to growing American domination: "the United States of Europe against America — such a prospect is completely realistic, such a prognosis can be made".[4] In the following month, with Trotsky once more feeling his way back to participation in party affairs, the slogan of the United States of Socialist Europe reappeared conspicuously in the main theses of the sixth enlarged IKKI,[5] as one of the means by which communist parties should "unfold to the popular masses their programme for the

[1] L. Trotsky, *Zapad i Vostok* (1924), p. 18.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 138.

[3] For this manifesto see p. 85 above; in the peroration of his speech of July 28, 1924 (see p. 86, note 2 above), Trotsky also spoke of "the United Soviet States of Europe" and "the proletarian United States of Europe".

[4] *Planovoe Khozyaistvo*, No. 1, 1926, p. 199.

[5] For Trotsky's note of February 13, 1926, see p. 493, note 3 above; in a speech of February 15, 1926, he again commended the slogan as a means of uniting a proletarian Europe against American imperialism (L. Trotsky, *Europa und Amerika* (1926), p. 90).

salvation of Europe". Care was taken, in linking the slogan with the victory of the proletarian revolution, to avoid the implication that this victory would occur simultaneously throughout Europe: nothing must be done to invalidate the doctrine of socialism in one country. But, combined with the worker-peasant government slogan in the form of "the United States of Workers' and Peasants' Republics of Europe", it could become the focus for an alliance of a united Europe with the USSR, with the oppressed peoples of the world, and with "the socialist core of the American proletariat", against which American imperialism would be powerless. It would also provide a counterblast to such capitalist devices as the summoning by the League of Nations of economic and disarmament conferences.[1] The IKKI theses for May 1, 1926, also featured "the United States of Socialist Europe", which would "stretch out a brotherly hand to the Soviet Union, the colonial peoples and the American proletariat".[2]

Apart from the main resolution, the general issues on which the sixth enlarged IKKI was called on to pronounce were the trade union question,[3] the question of the formal organization of parties,[4] and "the reorganization of the work of IKKI".[5] But the sixth enlarged IKKI also passed an unusual number of resolutions on individual parties — the symptom of a period in which the establishment of the firm and orderly discipline of a centralized authority over important parties appeared to the Soviet leaders as the main desideratum in Comintern. The parties dealt with

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 547-548; in the debate Bela Kun gave the slogan a topical turn by citing the fashionable "pan-Europe" project of Coudenhove-Kalergi (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 216). Lominadze later described the slogan as especially topical "because consciousness of an irreconcilable clash of interests, and of the inevitability of a collision, between capitalist America and bourgeois Europe is penetrating the broadest masses, not only of the workers, but of all employed persons, in Europe" (*Die Jugend-Internationale*, No. 9, May–June 1926, p. 7); its revolutionary appeal was subtly combined with an appeal to the European Left for a united front against American imperialism.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 61, April 20, 1926, p. 878; a pamphlet by Pepper, *Die Vereinigten Staaten des Sozialistischen Europas*, was published by Comintern in 1926. An article opposing this slogan to the Coudenhove-Kalergi project appeared in *Pravda*, August 28, 1926.

[3] See pp. 592-594 below.

[4] See pp. 934-935 below.

[5] See pp. 907-908 below.

in specific resolutions of the sixth IKKI were the German, the British, the French, the Czechoslovak, the Norwegian, the American and the Chinese.[1]

The KPD remained the central focus of every major division of opinion in Comintern; and it was round the KPD, whatever the ostensible theme, that the main debates of the sixth enlarged IKKI revolved. Though Bordiga appeared as the only articulate champion of the ultra-Left, it was against the German Left and ultra-Left that the principal shafts were directed. Zinoviev in his opening speech had dwelt on the ultra-Left danger in the KPD, and had included Ruth Fischer in the ultra-Left category.[2] Ruth Fischer hastened to rebut the charge by declaring her approval of Zinoviev's theses and of the open letter to the KPD of the previous August, and proclaimed that the ultra-Left danger was now the most serious, though it could not be combated without also taking action against "Right tendencies and groups". Klara Zetkin, who had perforce remained in the background during the period of Left-wing predominance in the leadership of the KPD, now re-emerged to take her revenge. In a speech breathing personal as well as political antipathy, she mocked at Ruth Fischer as "a repentant political Magdalene", who hoped through open confession of her sins to be reinstated in "the list of communist saints", accused her of confusing all the issues and, by incompetent leadership, playing into the hands of the ultra-Left, paused to pay a passing compliment — such as had not been heard from a Comintern platform for more than two years — to Brandler and Thalheimer, and ended with a fresh appeal for the united front policy as the way to win the masses.[3] Zinoviev in his reply to the debate distinguished between three ultra-Left groups in Germany — the group of Ruth Fischer and Maslow, who vainly pretended not to be ultra-Lefts, the group of

[1] For the resolution on the Chinese party see pp. 765-766 below.

[2] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 46-47.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 142-158, 222-231. According to R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 553, Stalin listened admiringly to Zetkin's speech "with a translator at his side", and called her "a wonderful old witch"; Zetkin spoke twice more in the plenary session, and again in the German commission.

Scholem and Rosenberg, who were hesitating whether to maintain their ultra-Left position or to adhere to the party line, and the group of Katz and Korsch,[1] who were simply petty bourgeois intellectuals. Zinoviev ended with a gesture of conciliation, which was general in form and may have been partly inspired by his own predicament, but in this context was directed mainly to the Right: he declared himself not in favour of the "life-long banishment" of those who had made even "big mistakes in the German question".[2]

But the serious debate on the past and future of the KPD was reserved for the German commission, the importance of which was marked by the fact that Bukharin was its president and Stalin and Zinoviev among its members. The proceedings were as usual private, but were evidently stormy. The major speeches were delivered by Bukharin and Stalin: these were afterwards published, apparently in an abbreviated form.[3] Bordiga was once again the most forceful exponent of the ultra-Left position in the KPD, as elsewhere. Urbahns defended the uneasy intermediate position occupied by Ruth Fischer and her group. A scandalous episode was the reading to the commission of extracts from Ruth Fischer's private correspondence intercepted by a party censorship. In the plenary session Thälmann had quoted from a letter from Maslow in Berlin to Ruth Fischer in Moscow, which had been handed by an unnamed comrade to an unnamed member of the German party Politburo, and in which Maslow abused IKKI, protested against the threatened "liquidation of the party", and spoke of the KPD moving towards "a Heidelberg", i.e. a split.[4] Letters from Ruth Fischer to Maslow and to other members of the KPD, which reflected the situation after the fourteenth Russian party congress, and which had apparently never reached their destinations, were now read to the commission.

[1] Korsch, in spite of attacks on Comintern and Soviet policy, was still at this time a party member; on March 1, 1926, he started an independent monthly journal, *Kommunistische Politik*, and was expelled two months later.

[2] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 450-459.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 3 (52), March 1926, pp. 92-103, 104-107; Stalin's speech is also in *Sochineniya*, viii, 109-115.

[4] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 180.

In a letter to Maslow Ruth Fischer had written :

> We are condemned to death, since terror reigns in Leningrad. Of the fifth congress only fragments remain. The dream of Bolshevization has dissolved.

Another letter reported that voices had been raised in the party for " immediate unconditional entry into the Amsterdam International " and for joining the League of Nations ; another spoke of " difficulties the roots of which go back to the Russian party congress ".[1] Elsewhere Ruth Fischer was quoted by Bukharin as saying that the Soviet Union had been " smashed in pieces ", and the Communist International was " in process of dissolution ".[2] These revelations were hailed as further proof of Ruth Fischer's " double book-keeping ". Stalin summed up, denying that the interests of the Soviet Union could ever demand " a Rightist policy " from western communist parties, and denying also that " the absence of intellectuals " was a source of weakness in the present central committee of the KPD. He criticized Meyer on the Right, and Scholem, Urbahns and Ruth Fischer on the Left — Ruth Fischer most sharply of all. But he contrived to give his usual impression of tact and moderation.[3] The principal achievement of the debate was to split the ultra-Left group, already weakened by the defection and expulsion of Katz. Rosenberg now joined the majority in accepting the resolution proposed by the commission, leaving Scholem to speak in the plenary session for the rump of the former ultra-Left faction. The resolution was a characteristic amalgam of well-worn propositions representing different points of view : its significance consisted in the distribution of emphasis between them. It began with the picture of a Germany driven slowly but irresistibly towards economic and political crisis by the pressure of reparations, the Dawes plan and

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 3 (52), March 1926, pp. 95-96 ; *Bol'shevik*, No. 11, June 15, 1926, p. 24. R. Fischer, *Stalin and German Communism* (Harvard, 1948), p. 552, states that passages of a personal nature were also read ; texts with the personal passages omitted were circulated to the commission.

[2] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 580 ; Lominadze also quoted Ruth Fischer as having written that " the fifth congress is smashed in pieces " and " the dream of Bolshevization has dissolved " (*VII S"ezd Vsesoyuznogo Leninskogo Kommunisticheskogo Soyuza Molodezhi* (1926), p. 268).

[3] For Stalin's speech see p. 509, note 3 above.

Locarno, with the consequent demand for unity in the working class for defence against it. The resolution then launched its main attack on the ultra-Left, naming Scholem and Rosenberg as well as the declared renegades, Korsch and Katz. "*The ultra-Left wing has been the chief brake on the process of winning over the masses.*" A special section was devoted to the group of Ruth Fischer — "the most unstable and unprincipled element in the German Communist Party". "The danger of Right deviations" was then more briefly dealt with. Nobody seriously supposed that the party would return to the position of Brandler before 1923. But exception was taken to Meyer's claim that the party had moved towards the Right: it was for Meyer to move towards the party. Finally, the blessing of Comintern was given to the leadership of Thälmann, whose shortcomings were magnanimously excused: "the workers' group which stands at the head of the German Communist Party forms the kernel of a genuinely Leninist party central committee".[1]

Resolutions discussed and drafted in commission were rarely debated over again in plenary session, and then only on some challenge from objectors. On this occasion Bukharin, in submitting the resolution, proposed that it should be thrown open for discussion. Evidently the crisis in the KPD was too acute to be smoothed over; and the leaders of Comintern wanted to drive home the lesson. Bordiga reiterated his objection in principle to the victimization of the Left, and denounced what he called "the ideological terror", i.e. the practice of branding dissentients as "enemies of IKKI, enemies of communism, etc.". Hansen, the Norwegian delegate, announced that he would join Bordiga in voting against the resolution on the ground that the censure passed on the German Left would encourage Right deviations in other parties. Representatives of every faction in the KPD, ranging from Scholem on the ultra-Left to Meyer on the moderate Right, re-stated their case. Whatever other purpose

[1] Bukharin's speech presenting the draft resolution to the plenary session is in *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 517-521; for the final text of the resolution (only minor amendments were made in the plenary session) see *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 577-586; a brief passage in the main resolution of the session was also devoted to the errors of the ultra-Left in the KPD (*ibid.* p. 545).

may have been served by this procedure, it illustrated the growing depth and bitterness of the rifts dividing the now numerous splinter groups in the KPD, and particularly on its Left wing. The most significant speeches were those of Lominadze and Manuilsky, who revealed the fears in the minds of the Russian party leaders. Lominadze enquired rhetorically what common aim united " all shades of the ultra-Lefts ", and answered :

> Their aim is the attempt *to bring about a union of the ultra-Lefts on the ground of a struggle against the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Comintern.* What is in the air is the threat to found an *international Left fraction*, if not a new International. . . . Such an attempt is undoubtedly being made.

The debate, said Manuilsky, had " somewhat unexpectedly taken on the character of an organized offensive on the part of the international group of the ultra-Lefts " ; and he added that the alleged " Right " from which Ruth Fischer proposed to rescue Comintern was in reality the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the whole present central committee of the KPD. The ban on discussion of the dispute in the VKP(B) by foreign communist parties [1] was maintained. The name of Zinoviev was not pronounced ; and nothing was said to incriminate him in the conspiracy of an international ultra-Left against Soviet policy and against Comintern. But many must have guessed that this was what lay behind the apprehensions of the Soviet spokesmen. After Thälmann had wound up the debate in his forceful but undistinguished style, Bukharin replied in terms of studied moderation. He cast the mantle of IKKI over the present leadership of the KPD and concluded :

> *We shall support this party Zentrale in the struggle against all harmful deviations — against the Right, against the ultra-Left and against the most unprincipled of all groupings, against the grouping of Ruth Fischer.*[2]

The resolution was then adopted against the vote of Hansen, Bordiga being absent.[3] Urbahns read a declaration on behalf of Ruth Fischer, himself and two other German delegates who had

[1] See p. 493 above.

[2] For the whole debate see *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 521-584.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 584-585 ; for Hansen's vote see p. 519 below.

only " consultative " status to the effect that, if they had been voting delegates, they would have voted against the resolution, but that they would submit to it as a matter of discipline.[1] The journal of Comintern celebrated " the liquidation of the ultra-Lefts in the KPD " in an unsigned article which named Souvarine, Paul Levi and " in part " Thalheimer, Hoeglund, Maslow, Korsch, Katz and Bordiga as those who had " attempted to oppose to Russian Leninism a ' genuine ' European communion ".[2] Bukharin, in a brief article in the German party journal, restated the official view, impartially denouncing Right and ultra-Left deviations and refusing to decide which was the more dangerous. This was followed by another article in the same issue by an anonymous member of the KPD, who asserted with emphasis that " today the ultra-Left danger is incomparably greater than the Right danger ".[3] The KPD, at any rate, was unwilling to leave it in doubt that the decisions of the sixth enlarged IKKI represented a turning away from the Left.

In contrast to the severe handling of the KPD, the verdict on the British Communist Party continued to be almost wholly laudatory. Bennett submitted a guarded report in which he lamented the small numbers and weak organization of the CPGB : " *the disproportion between the influence of the communist party and its numerical size is the fundamental problem of the party* ".[4] But this did not unduly damp the prevailing optimism. The short and formal resolution approving the report of IKKI on its work since the previous session singled out the British and Chinese parties as having " won great successes ".[5] Zinoviev confirmed the claim of the CPGB to be regarded as the model communist party by placing it first in his review of the foreign parties in his main report ; and he foresaw a " mighty struggle " ahead when the agreement on miners' wages ran out in May.[6] The resolution

[1] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 525-529.

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 3 (52), March 1926, p. 54.

[3] *Die Internationale*, ix, No. 8, April 15, 1926, pp. 225-227, 234.

[4] *Pravda*, February 20, 1926.

[5] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 52, April 6, 1926, p. 735.

[6] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 462-463.

on " the English question " was based an optimistic diagnosis of " the uninterrupted decay of British imperialism " [1] and " the revolutionizing of the working class ". The CPGB had been free from internal dissensions since 1924; it had achieved immense successes in the trade unions and among the unemployed; and it had given unwavering support to the miners in their struggle with the employers. The only faint note of anxiety sounded in the resolution was the exhortation to the party " at least to double its membership " in 1926.[2] The principal British delegate spoke hopefully of the increase in unemployment and of the inability of the capitalist employers to make further wage concessions to the workers, but refrained from any revolutionary prognostications.[3] In his concluding speech Zinoviev hoped that other parties would follow the example of the British party, which had reported to the plenum " not on its crises, but on its successes "; [4] and in his report to the Moscow party organization after the session he referred to the CPGB as " gradually transforming itself into a mighty organization which will lead the millions of workers in its train ".[5] Rarely had any party enjoyed such unqualified approval and confidence in Moscow as the CPGB in the first months of 1926.

The main function of the sixth enlarged IKKI in regard to the French party was to confirm the steps already taken at the

[1] Zinoviev at the fourteenth Russian party congress two months earlier had said: " That the economic development of England is moving not upwards, but downwards, has become almost a truism, and is universally recognized: from it ensue colossal consequences for the whole direction of the tactics of Comintern " (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (*B*) (1926), p. 647).

[2] *Kommunistic ıeskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 610-615.

[3] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 258-270.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 602. In an unpublished memorandum of June 9, 1926 (Trotsky archives, T 2987), Trotsky wrote that at the sixth IKKI " some British comrades warned against an overestimate of the critical condition of British capitalism ", and that they " thereby revealed their own under-estimate of the crisis and of the nearness of social convulsions ": this was written after the British general strike, but before its total failure became apparent. No other evidence has been found of such " warnings ". In the same memorandum Trotsky criticized " the insufficient ideological ruthlessness " of the British Left.

[5] *Pravda*, April 30, 1926.

party conference of December 1–2, 1925, and the session of the central committee of January 31–February 2, 1926.[1] But no major discussion of French affairs had taken place at a Comintern session since the fourth congress in November 1922; and an inexperienced and insecure party leadership was constantly under fire not only from Souvarine, Monatte and Rosmer, who had already been expelled, but from a powerful Right opposition remaining in the party. It was probably for these reasons that the PCF received more attention at the session than any other party except the KPD. Zinoviev in his opening speech dealt emphatically with the Right opposition, including in this category syndicalists who followed Rosmer, " liquidationists " who followed Souvarine, and social-democrats who followed Loriot. He left the " symptoms of an ultra-Left danger " to be dealt with in the French commission.[2] Sémard, who led the French delegation, spoke at some length of the " Left errors " committed before December, and then turned to the more familiar task of denouncing the " Rightists " inside and outside the party.[3] A spokesman of the opposition, Engler by name, claimed that the criticisms of the Right had been justified by the change made in the party line at the December conference, and killed two birds with one stone by calling Ruth Fischer " the German Suzanne Girault ". He was answered at length by Thorez,[4] who was making his first appearance in Moscow, and whose unimpeachably proletarian credentials (he came from a family of miners) marked him out for the same rôle in the PCF which Thälmann already played in the KPD.

The debates of the commission were as usual held in private ;[5] and, when Humbert-Droz, who presided over it, presented to the plenary session the long resolution on the affairs of the French party drafted by it, he revealingly remarked that, while the draft insisted mainly on the " fundamental danger " threatening the PCF from the Right, the commission had devoted most of its attention to " the Left deviations and organizational errors of the

[1] See pp. 361-362, 366 above.

[2] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 48-52.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 74-81.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 100-106, 231-234.

[5] The only speeches to be published were those of Zinoviev (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 3 (52), March 1926, pp. 81-91) and Stalin (*Sochineniya*, viii, 100-107).

party ".[1] The resolution firmly re-asserted the principle behind the united front policy :

> To carry the broad mass of the proletariat along the path of the revolutionary struggle, to draw into it strata of the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry, placing them under the political leadership of the proletariat, to take a stand in the centre of the revolutionary movement against large-scale capital — such is the chief task of our party.

And later came the warning that " without overcoming internal opposition to the current tactics of the united front neither the party nor the trade unions will be capable of winning over the broad masses ". The resolution dwelt insistently on the need not only to win over the trade unions, but to bring into the unions " the overwhelming majority of the working class " (the low proportion of organized workers in France was remarked on). The proletarianization of the party was described as a condition of its Bolshevization. A section on " the under-estimate of the Right danger " was followed by one on " the ultra-Left errors " committed during the campaigns of 1925 (the resolution several times returned to them) ; and at this point Treint was censured by name. The conclusion was to approve the decisions of the conference of December 1–2, 1925, which had, by implication, removed the source of these errors. But a passing criticism of Suzanne Girault for adopting too " mechanical " an attitude to the trade unions showed that IKKI had no intention of allowing her to step into Treint's shoes. The resolution demanded with emphasis " a broadening of the basis of party leadership ", which was to become " a genuine unifying centre " for all members of the party. It ended with a further long attack on the Rightists ; the 250 were summoned once again to " renounce their false views on important tactical questions, and their association with *Bulletin Communiste* and *Révolution Prolétarienne* ". The resolution was adopted without discussion in the plenary session, and only Bordiga voted against it.[2] What had happened

[1] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 512.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 516 ; Engler had voted against some parts of it in the commission. For the text of the resolution see *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 586-610.

was that, under the cover of strong language directed against the Right, the PCF was being carefully steered in the new direction of Comintern and Soviet policy, and taught to regard the doctrinnaires of the ultra-Left as the greatest potential enemies of the party and of Comintern. Sémard, now probably the most powerful man in the PCF, wrote an article hailing " the unity of the working class " as the " central idea " of the session. This implied the use of " slogans of the most modest kind " ; and to this end IKKI had " underlined the faults of the Leftists in the French and German parties ".[1]

The situation in the Czechoslovak Communist Party, following its third congress in September 1925, and its success at the Czechoslovak election two months later,[2] was so satisfactory that it seemed unlikely to engage the special attention of the enlarged IKKI in February 1926. Neurath was the only one of the leaders to speak in the general debate, and he unconditionally accepted Zinoviev's theses. At the same time he marked his traditional position on the Left wing of the party. While it was necessary " resolutely to carry on the struggle against the ultra-Lefts ", the great danger still came from the Right : " the enemy of the Communist International stands on the Right ".[3] This distribution of emphasis failed to keep abreast of the current Comintern line. Thälmann, representing a party in which the main opposition came from the ultra-Left, sounded a critical note ; and the Czechoslovak delegation found it prudent to put in a declaration recognizing both the Right and the ultra-Left deviations as equally dangerous.[4] The trade union imbroglio continued to be a source of embarrassment. A congress of the MOS at Prague in January 1926 made an appeal to all Czechoslovak workers without distinction of nationality or political affiliation " to unite in order to put an end to the splitting of the trade unions ".[5] But this counsel of perfection fell on deaf ears — not least those of the

[1] *Cahiers du Bolchevisme*, No. 47, April 15, 1926, pp. 883-886.

[2] See pp. 379-380 above.

[3] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 59.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 170, 214.

[5] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 4 (63), April 1926, pp. 274-277.

communist workers, who were no more inclined than before to belong to social-democratic trade unions, and were in particular opposed to the policy of forming communist fractions in the social-democratic unions instead of encouraging workers to leave them and join the Red unions.[1]

As if, however, to demonstrate that the real opposition in the Czechoslovak party came from the Right, a group of Rightist members of the party, led by Hula, a former adherent of Šmeral, addressed a memorandum to IKKI protesting against the policies of the party central committee; among the seven signatories was Handlir, the leader of the Red timber workers' union, which had obstinately refused to join the MOS or to submit to party directives. The protest was considered sufficiently important to be referred to a commission, which prepared a suitable rebuttal. The " reply to the memorandum of a group of Rightists in the Czechoslovak Communist Party " was endorsed without debate in plenary session. It expressed unqualified approval of the " firm and reasonable policy " of the party central committee, referred to " the brilliantly conducted campaign " which had brought striking success at the elections, and denounced the attitude of the signatories in the trade union question. It particularly condemned passages in the memorandum which sought to deduce arguments favourable to the Right from the open letter to the KPD and from the debates of the fourteenth congress of the Russian party. It called on the Czechoslovak party to carry on a decisive struggle with the group, which amounted to an " organized fraction ".[2] After the session of IKKI had ended, the central committee of the Czechoslovak party passed a resolution welcoming the reply and promising that " any kind of fractional work will be made impossible ".[3] The immediately following session of the central council of Profintern also denounced the " failure " to unite all Red unions in MOS, which it attributed to one Tetenka, president of the building workers' union, and renewed its exhortation to

[1] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 343-349.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 504-505, 705-707; *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 623-625. The protest of the seven does not appear to have been published.

[3] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 50, March 26, 1926, pp. 699-700.

achieve unity in the trade unions.[1] It was significant, however, that throughout these proceedings, no expulsions were pronounced or threatened. The leadership of the Czechoslovak party, after the struggles of 1924, had been formed, like that of the CPGB, by a coalition between Left and Right in the party; like that of the CPGB it was unimpeachably faithful to the guidance of Comintern. It had also succeeded in establishing for itself a position of influence in the non-communist Left. The opposition, whether of a Leftist or of a Rightist hue, was not formidable so long as the coalition leadership held. In these circumstances, Comintern could afford to be content with what had been achieved and to let well alone.

The Norwegian Communist Party became, somewhat unexpectedly, the subject of a resolution of the sixth enlarged IKKI. Since the secession from Comintern of Tranmael's Norwegian Workers' Party in 1923,[2] the Norwegian Communist Party had remained small, inconspicuous and orthodox. More faithfully and enthusiastically than any other party except the British, it had pursued united front tactics both in the trade unions and in the political arena, where it promoted the foundation of a "labour party" consisting mainly of dissidents from Tranmael's party. It would not now have emerged, even momentarily, into the limelight but for the eccentric behaviour of its leader, Hansen, who at the session of the presidium of IKKI in January 1926 had supported Ruth Fischer in demanding that the errors of the Right should be condemned equally with those of the ultra-Left — a demand resisted by no less an adversary than Stalin.[3] Hansen now had the boldness to vote against the German resolution of the enlarged IKKI on the ground that it was directed primarily against the Left and ignored the danger from the Right; this bias was, he declared, likely to encourage Right deviations in other parties and in the Norwegian party in particular.[4] Thus provoked, the Scandinavian commission drafted a resolution "on the Norwegian question". The resolution approved the initiative

[1] *IV Sessiya Tsentral'nogo Soveta Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoyuzov* (1926), pp. 130-131.

[2] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 458-459.

[3] See pp. 339-340 above.

[4] See p. 512 above.

taken by the Norwegian Communist Party for the creation of a "labour party" independent of Tranmael's Norwegian Workers' Party. This was declared to be "no question of some equivocal manœuvre", but an attempt to unite "the class forces of the Norwegian proletariat". It was not suggested that the Norwegian Communist Party should merge itself in a labour party: that would be a Rightist deviation. But nothing in the proposal justified an outbreak of "ultra-Left nervousness". The resolution ended by announcing that "the founding of a labour party is a pre-condition for the shattering of the capitalist offensive" — an outstanding example of the application of united front tactics. It was unanimously adopted without discussion in plenary session.[1] Though primarily inspired by Hansen's ultra-Left aberration, this was a characteristic, if minor, expression of the trend of Comintern policy at this time.

The troublesome, yet trivial, problems of the American party were once again thrust on the sixth enlarged IKKI. Throughout the winter of 1925–1926 Foster and Bittelman had been in Moscow striving to undermine Ruthenberg's predominance in the party and to uphold their own stronghold in the TUEL.[2] When the sixth IKKI met in February 1926, Ruthenberg appeared to defend his position and again found an ally in Pepper; Browder also arrived to reinforce Foster and Bittelman. An American commission was set up which included Zinoviev, Bukharin and Stalin;[3] and Stalin is known to have taken part in the proceedings. The wrangle between the two factions was conducted with great bitterness. Foster attempted to persuade IKKI to reshuffle the membership of the central executive committee of the party in such a way as to restore to him the majority of which Gusev had deprived him at the Chicago congress in the previous August.[4] Ruthenberg complained of Foster's "continuous, shameless lying". Foster, catching the fashionable slant against

[1] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 509. For the text of the resolution see *ibid.* pp. 699-700; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 68, May 5, 1926, p. 1062.

[2] See pp. 412-413 above.

[3] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 31, February 26, 1926, p. 440.

[4] See pp. 410-411 above.

the ultra-Left, not only indulged in an attack on Ruth Fischer and Maslow which earned him the ironical applause of Pepper, but convicted Ruthenberg of an ultra-Left deviation in the trade union policy of the American party. Foster seems as usual to have enjoyed the backing of Lozovsky; and Lozovsky at this time generally stood close to Stalin.[1]

The decision was a judgment of Solomon, but gave Foster more than he can have expected after his rout in Chicago. The resolution drafted by the commission, after the strangely optimistic prediction that "an immense, in many respects *decisive*, rôle awaits the Communist Party of America", warned the party that its "historical mission" could not be fulfilled without "an unconditional cessation . . . of the fractional struggle". It saw no reason to alter the line laid down by the fifth enlarged IKKI. It solemnly pronounced that no question could arise of "new changes in the composition of the present central committee of the American communist party", since "the party itself at the party congress decides on the composition of the central committee". On the other hand, it expressed confidence that the present majority would not seek to "abuse the apparatus" or "dominate" the minority, "whose loyalty the Communist International has no reason to doubt". This cautious but unequivocal refusal of Foster's main demand was, however, balanced by an equally cautious concession on the trade union front. The resolution recommended that "far more attention" should be paid to work in the trade unions, that this work should continue to be entrusted to Foster and his group, and that the majority group in the central committee should do everything possible to facilitate it. On the other hand, the programme of the TUEL should be "radically reviewed"; it should not attempt to set itself up as a party or communist organ, but simply as an instrument for carrying out united front tactics.[2] When the resolution was submitted to the plenary session, representatives of both

[1] A flickering light is shed on what went on behind the scenes in the account in T. Draper, *American Communism and Soviet Russia* (1960), pp. 226-229, based partly on unpublished American documents; the proceedings in the commission were not published. For Foster's attack on Ruth Fischer and Maslow and Pepper's comment on it see *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 547-549, 550-551.

[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 615-619.

groups made declarations emphasizing those parts of it which respectively gave them satisfaction, and thereby demonstrated their fundamental lack of concord. But both concluded by accepting it, and it was carried unanimously without further discussion.[1] Both the leaders and the European members of IKKI were relieved to be able to record a formal agreement on an issue which they failed to understand, and which seemed mysteriously to fit into the accepted categories of Right and ultra-Left deviations.

Zinoviev's speech at the winding up of the session struck, as befitted such occasions, an optimistic note. " Stabilization " and " Bolshevization " were the catchwords of this session, as of its predecessor a year earlier ; but the orator contrasted " the tottering stabilization of capitalism " with " the strengthening Bolshevization of Comintern ". IKKI had upheld the cause of Leninism, and dealt faithfully both with Right and with ultra-Left deviations : " attempts to portray the situation as if the present session had fought only on *one* front are contradicted by the facts ". Great Britain was " on the eve of gigantic struggles " ; capitalism was also on the decline in Germany and France. " In the decisive countries of Europe and in the east " the turning-point had been reached. In spite of all difficulties, " the power of attraction of the proletarian revolution in the Soviet Union is growing and will grow, not only among the communist proletariat, but among the whole proletariat of the world ".[2] It was, in more than one way, a significant conclusion. Bordiga and the ultra-Left had offered a sweeping challenge to the unity of the revolutionary process. By treating Leninism as a variant of Marxism which fitted only Russian conditions, they denied the validity of the Russian experience for international communism and the Russian claim to uncontested leadership in Comintern. By pretending that the policies of the Russian party and of the Soviet state should be geared to the aims of the revolutionary

[1] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 586-589.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 590-602 ; Zinoviev also delivered the customary lengthy report on the session to the Moscow party organization at the end of March (*Pravda*, April 28, 29, 30, 1926).

proletariat,[1] they rejected the underlying assumptions of "socialism in one country", and reverted to the old theme of an ineradicable Russian "backwardness". By insisting on the separateness of Russia from the west, they broke the world-wide unity of the proletariat, and shattered the fundamental conception of a homogeneous workers' movement marshalled and organized by Comintern on uniform lines. Zinoviev turned the tables on the ultra-Left. If the failure of the western proletariat to follow the Russian example had temporarily divided the world proletariat into two geographical categories, unity must be restored, pending the consummation of world revolution, by making Moscow the centre and focus of the whole workers' movement. To assert this "power of attraction" was the essential aim and purpose of Comintern.

But Zinoviev's conclusion had another implication which went perhaps beyond anything consciously intended by the speaker. In Soviet eyes the drawing power of the Soviet Union seemed by 1926 a more solid ground for confidence than the elusive prospect of the overthrow of capitalism in the west. Socialism in one country had replaced world revolution as the proximate goal; and, since it had been firmly asserted that the barrier to the complete realization of socialism in the Soviet Union was not the absence of material aid from proletarian régimes in the more advanced countries, but the threat to the Soviet Union from existing capitalist governments,[2] it followed that any measure which promoted the security of the Soviet Union would be welcome in Moscow, even if it fell short of proletarian revolution in the capitalist world. However much it might be explained that any long-term antithesis between socialism in one country and world revolution was false, and that the indefinite postponement of revolution in other countries had made the survival and security of the Soviet Union the main asset of the revolutionary cause and the pledge of ultimate victory, all hopes in Moscow were now turned inward. The priorities had been reversed. The victory of socialism had become primarily a Russian, and secondarily a world-wide, affair. It was no longer, as the Bolsheviks had at first believed, the Russian revolution which depended for its survival on world revolution; the prospects of world revolution were now seen to depend on the triumph of the Russian revolution

[1] See pp. 501-502 above. [2] For this argument see Vol. 2, pp. 44-45.

and on its successful advance towards socialism in the Soviet Union.

In Comintern the change marked the culmination of a process which had been at work ever since the retreat had first been sounded at the third congress of 1921.[1] It had become apparent then, if not earlier, that, though the ultimate synthesis of long-term interests would still be found in world revolution, the short-term interest of a country where the seizure of power in the name of the proletariat had already taken place might easily diverge from that of a country whose proletarian revolution still lay in the future. As time went on, the growing strength of the Soviet régime, and the continued failure of other parties to bring about revolution in their respective countries, made it less and less possible to believe in the dependence of the Russian revolution on revolution elsewhere, or to dispute the predominance of the Russian party in Comintern. The party where this predominance was most resented was the KPD, the only party that could pretend to rival the Russian party in prestige and intellectual authority. But the German party was divided against itself, and the protests of the isolated individuals and groups of intellectuals who formed the core of the ultra-Left found few echoes in the rank and file. The intervention of Bordiga — also by this time an isolated intellectual — was the last attempt in Comintern to contest the Russian party's monopoly of leadership, and to appeal to a competing source of doctrine and authority. When it was defeated, Comintern became, like the Russian party itself, " monolithic ". Thereafter the only divisions in Comintern were those directly reflecting divisions in the Russian party. Uniformity of policy and, so far as possible, uniformity of organization were laid down in Moscow; and the same methods which proved effective in the Russian party were employed to exclude the recalcitrant and to reward the faithful.

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 394-397.

CHAPTER 36

COMINTERN AND THE TRADE UNIONS

(*a*) *The Unity Campaign*

THE peculiar intensity and bitterness of the communist struggle for mastery in the trade unions was explained by two factors. On the one hand, the trade unions were essentially proletarian organizations: of all workers' organizations, as Trotsky put it, they were "most free of alloy in their class composition".[1] Opposition in them to communism was attributable not to any real conflict of interest, but either to a deficiency of class consciousness among the workers, which could be dispelled by propaganda and by the right leadership, or to betrayal by the existing leaders, who did not represent the real interests of the workers. On the other hand, the trade unions in the capitalist countries had retained their cohesion during the war far better than the political parties of the Left, and emerged from it more powerful and more self-assured, and with more faith in the leaders among the rank and file: the International Federation of Trade Unions (IFTU) at Amsterdam proved a more effective body, and put up a more stubborn resistance to the assaults of communism, than the moribund Second International. In the Moscow of 1920, with revolutionary optimism at its peak, the decision to create a Red International of Trade Unions to conquer and supersede IFTU seemed the natural corollary of the creation of a Third International to replace the Second. If Lenin on the same occasion emphatically urged communists to remain "at whatever cost" in the trade unions, this was the counterpart of the injunction to British Communists to remain in the Labour Party, and carried, in regard to the existing leaders, the same implied comparison with the support given by the rope

[1] L. Trotsky, *Kuda Idet Angliya?* (1925), p. 58.

to the man in process of being hanged.[1] World revolution was just round the corner. The winning over of the trade unions, and the substitution of Moscow for Amsterdam as the focus of the world trade union movement, was a prospect of the immediate future. The manœuvres of the sharp but short struggle with recalcitrant leaders of the old dispensation which would precede the final victory fell legitimately under the rubric of *ruses de guerre.*

The promptitude of the reaction to these tactics in Amsterdam was perhaps not foreseen in Moscow. Even before Profintern actually came into being, the management committee of IFTU at a session of May 18–21, 1921, had declared that it was " not permissible for trade union organizations to be affiliated to two trade union Internationals at the same time ", and that " consequently every organization which affiliates to the political trade union International of Moscow places itself automatically outside the International Federation of Trade Unions ".[2] The embarrassments of a dual attitude to the international trade union movement, as of the policy of Comintern or of Soviet foreign policy in general, sprang from the unexpected delay in the consummation of the revolution. To capture the trade unions for communism, and to work within them in their existing form, seemed in the short run perfectly compatible aims, since the latter was merely a means of achieving the former. The policy of working in the unions, pursued systematically over a long period, raised issues of allegiance which proved difficult to reconcile with the policy of capture. But the practical difficulty of the manœuvre of " breaking every contact with Amsterdam " and, at the same time, of working " within " unions affiliated to Amsterdam, of pursuing revolutionary policies as members of " reformist " organizations, which was immediately apparent to an experienced British trade-unionist like Tanner,[3] seemed petty and meaningless to the leaders of Profintern in Moscow.

By the time that Profintern actually came into being in the

[1] For pronouncements on the trade union at the second congress of Comintern see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923,* Vol. 3, pp. 201-203.

[2] *First Report on the Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions (July 1919–December 1921)* (Amsterdam, n.d.), p. 73; the ban was cited in a resolution of the founding congress of Profintern (*Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), p. 68).

[3] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923,* Vol. 3, p. 208.

summer of 1921, four months after the introduction of NEP, and immediately after the third congress of Comintern, the atmosphere had changed. The third congress of Comintern proclaimed a slowing down of the tempo of revolution and gave the signal for a " retreat " from advanced positions ; [1] and the new emphasis was quickly communicated to Profintern. Like the senior institution, Profintern in theory abated nothing of its ultimate revolutionary aims ; in practice, it devoted a major part of its attention to day-to-day tactics, involving it in apparent compromises even with organizations whose leaders it condemned root and branch and sought eagerly to overthrow. The resolution on tactics adopted by the founding congress of Profintern in July 1921 denounced " neutralism " and declared that " the creation of this centre of the revolutionary trade union movement is the starting-point for an embittered struggle within the world trade union movement under the slogan : Moscow or Amsterdam ".[2] But the resolution of the same congress on organization condemned slogans such as " The Destruction of the Unions ", or " Out of the Unions " :

> This tactic of the withdrawal of revolutionary elements from the unions, and the abandonment of the many-million mass of workers to the exclusive influence of traitors to the working class, plays into the hands of the counter-revolutionary trade union bureaucracy and should therefore be sharply and categorically rejected.

The policy was not " to snatch out of the unions the best and most conscious workers, and to form small organizations ", but to remain in the existing unions in order to " revolutionize " them. The conquest of the unions did not " mean the conquest of the funds [3] and property of the trade unions, but the conquest of the members of the unions ". The resolution introduced, however, a careful distinction. Cases had occurred in which national trade union federations had affiliated both to IFTU and to Mezhsovprof. This double allegiance was roundly condemned : " a break with Amsterdam is for national trade union

[1] *Ibid.* Vol. 3, pp. 384-392.

[2] *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), pp. 49-50.

[3] The Russian text has the odd misprint *massy* for *kassy*, making it appear that the conquest of the " mass " of the unions was not desired.

centres a condition precedent for entry into the Red International". On the other hand, in countries where the national organization belonged to the Amsterdam International, "individual unions, federations or minorities organized on a national scale can belong to Profintern, even though they remain in the old trade unions".[1] This instruction was reflected in the statute of Profintern adopted at the same congress. The conditions of admission to Profintern for "any economic proletarian class organization" included "a break with the yellow Amsterdam International". But a cryptic section headed "Unity of Action and Unity of Organizations" attempted to deal with situations where this clear-cut solution did not apply:

> Minorities belonging to Profintern in general trade union and national centres, and individual organizations belonging to it, are under an obligation to coordinate all their activities. If the general trade union centre of a country belongs to Profintern, individual organizations cannot belong to it independently. Revolutionary organizations which sympathize with Profintern should enter the general trade union organization of their country.[2]

Read in conjunction with the resolution on organization, this implied that, where the national trade union centre of a country was affiliated to Amsterdam, minority groups or unions belonging to Profintern should none the less remain members of the central organization and thus accept a dual allegiance.

The foundation of Profintern was the starting-point of a conflict which found expression in fierce mutual accusations of "splitting". The solidarity of the trade unions had long been, for obvious reasons, a watchword of the workers' movement; the basic slogan of Marxism was "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" Anyone who could be convicted of "splitting" the movement stood *ipso facto* condemned. The appearance of a rival International in Moscow caused anger and apprehension in Amsterdam; and, when Profintern and its supporters sought to exercise an influence over individual trade unions and their members, the leaders whose authority was threatened reacted with violent hostility. Communists early began to be expelled,

[1] *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), pp. 65, 71.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 275.

or threatened with expulsion, from " reformist " trade unions, and communist trade unions from " reformist " federations. The charge of violation of trade union rules and discipline was, no doubt, often justified. Turbulent minorities commonly incur the imputation of disloyalty, especially where the struggle is so bitter, and the rift so deep, as it soon became in the trade union movement. To the supporters of IFTU Profintern seemed to be engaged in deliberately splitting hitherto homogeneous unions; to the supporters of Profintern the splitting seemed to result from the attempt to create a monopoly in favour of Amsterdam, and from the policy of expulsions applied by the majority leaders. The proclamation by Comintern of united front tactics in December 1921 [1] merely intensified the struggle. Nowhere was the principle of a united front so clearly applicable as in the trade unions. Unity in the trade unions seemed the very epitome of the united front of workers. Yet Lozovsky greeted the new slogan with a careful reservation :

> We are willing to create a united front with any workers' organization, but only a front for revolutionary struggle, not for class collaboration.[2]

The dilemma " with " or " against " Amsterdam could be resolved only on the hypothesis of a united front " from below " against the leaders of IFTU, of a revolt of the rank and file of the unions. Incompatible conceptions of loyalty confronted one another, and led to embittering mutual accusations of bad faith.

The dual policy was reviewed by the enlarged IKKI at its session of February–March 1922. On the one hand, the obligation of communists not to secede from " reformist " unions was unequivocally laid down :

> In the immediate future the task of communists is to expand their influence within the old reformist unions, to combat the policy of splitting pursued by the Amsterdam leaders, and to carry out thoroughly and consistently the tactics of the united front in the trade union movement. However insignificant the minority in a trade union or trade union federation, the communists must act in such a way as to induce it to remain

[1] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 406-407.
[2] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 11, December 31, 1921, p. 8.

in the organization and struggle for the programme and tactics of the minority.

But this instruction to remain in the reformist unions was balanced by a passage which condemned " resolutely and categorically " the " false hope that the Amsterdam leaders will shift to the Left " — a miscalculation which had been responsible for " liquidationist trends in regard to Profintern " in some countries.[1] The hand of friendship proffered to the Amsterdam unions was combined with a declaration of war on the Amsterdam leaders. But the resolution also faced the awkward problem of " minorities organized on a national scale " which, in accordance with the injunctions of Profintern, " remain in the old trade unions ". In the resolution on organization adopted by the first congress of Profintern, it had been assumed that these minorities would belong to Profintern.[2] Since, however, as it now transpired, profession of allegiance to Profintern would expose these minorities to expulsion from the unions and thus defeat the end in view, the enlarged IKKI introduced a new proviso : " Affiliation to the Red International of Trade Unions of trade union minorities which have to remain in the old organizations may be only ideological ".[3] Henceforth therefore the adherents of Profintern outside the Soviet Union were divided into two categories : members of Red trade unions or trade union organizations affiliated to Profintern, and minority members of unions or organizations affiliated to IFTU, whose membership of Profintern was not formalized and consisted simply of ideological adhesion to the policies of Moscow.[4] The two categories continued to appear for many years in Profintern statistics.

The complex international structure of the trade union movement rested, not only on the International Federation of Trade

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 270-271.

[2] For this resolution see p. 528 above.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 270.

[4] The distinction was clearly drawn in a resolution of the second congress of Profintern in December 1922 : " Side by side with minorities which belong only ideologically to Profintern, we have in almost all countries independent revolutionary organizations which are affiliated to Profintern " (*Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), p. 96).

Unions at Amsterdam to which national trade union organizations were affiliated, but on international organizations of particular trades and industries, which had their own secretariats and held their own periodical congresses. These were officially called " federations " or " unions ", but were generally known in the literature of the subject as " trade Internationals ", " international trade secretariats " or simply " Internationals " ; among the most powerful of them were the International Metal Workers' Federation and the International Transport Workers' Federation. Before 1914, 32 such trade Internationals existed, and were loosely affiliated to IFTU.[1] Most of them quickly revived after the war ; and, by the time the founding congress of Profintern met in Moscow in July 1921, the principle had been laid down by IFTU that recognition of IFTU was a condition of admission to trade Internationals affiliated to it.[2] The decision was reached at the congress not to attempt to break up the Internationals by persuading Red unions to secede from them, or to set up rival Internationals for the industries concerned, but to work within the existing organizations in the hope of eventually winning them over ; this policy was said to have been followed from the very beginning, i.e. since the establishment of Mezhsovprof a year earlier. The resolution of the congress on organization contained a section devoted to " international trade and industrial organizations ". It recognized that " the revolutionary unions should remain in the former international organizations of separate trades and industries for the purpose of capturing them ". This procedure was to be supplemented by establishing for each trade or industry a body known as an International Propaganda Committee (IPC), attached to Profintern and having its seat in Moscow. The creation of the IPCs was justified by the charge that IFTU had " taken the initiative of splitting the workers' movement by expelling from the organization all who promised their moral solidarity to the International of revolutionary action and class struggle ". The committees were to popularize the ideas of the

[1] *Malaya Entsiklopediya po Mezhdunarodnomu Profdvizheniyu* (1927), cols. 638-639 ; *The Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions, 1922–1924* (Amsterdam, 1924), pp. 33-34, lists 28 trade Internationals with a total membership of 16,641,878.

[2] The Amsterdam ban on simultaneous membership of IFTU and Profintern (see p. 526 above) was explicitly declared to apply to the trade Internationals.

revolutionary struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat by convening conferences, distributing literature and collecting funds. They were to work under the supervision of the executive bureau of Profintern, in the work of which their representatives were to participate as non-voting delegates: conferences were to be convened by them only with the consent of Profintern.[1] The first and most successful IPC was set up by a conference of transport workers which met during the founding congress of Profintern, and was composed of 22 delegates who had come to Moscow for the congress: they represented the Russian, Ukrainian and Georgian Soviet republics, Germany, Bulgaria, France, Holland, the Netherlands East Indies, Great Britain and the United States of America.[2] The establishment of 14 IPCs was announced in a circular letter of August 1921 from the executive bureau of Profintern to all organizations affiliated to it.[3] The executive bureau did not propose directly to subsidize the committees, but undertook to finance their publications.[4] A department of the secretariat of Profintern was set up to deal with the IPCs; but this was soon absorbed in the general organization department.[5] The importance attached in Moscow at this time to the IPCs was shown by Lozovsky in his speech at the second session of the central council of Profintern in February 1922, when he bracketed them with the executive bureau as the two channels through which Profintern could influence and guide workers' organizations.[6]

[1] *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), pp. 67-68; further instructions were issued to the IPCs by the central council of Profintern at its session in February–March 1922 (*ibid.* pp. 79-81).

[2] *Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoyuzov*, No. 1, August 30, 1921, p. 5. The conference contained no representatives of seamen's unions; a seamen's conference met in Moscow on August 10–12, 1921, and split on the question whether to join the transport workers' IPC or to set up a special organization for seamen (*ibid.* pp. 8-11). On August 15, 1921, a joint session of the executive bureau of Profintern and the transport workers' IPC was held in Moscow to draw up instructions for the work of the IPC in different countries; this meeting also issued an appeal to the seamen to join with other transport workers in the IPC and not set up a separate organization (*ibid.* No. 2, September 10, 1921, pp. 27-28, 35-36).

[3] *Ibid.* No. 1, August 30, 1921, pp. 37-39; two months later 15 committees were named with lists of their members, *ibid.* No. 5, October 10, 1921, pp. 189-190.

[4] *Ibid.* No. 2, September 10, 1921, pp. 27-28.

[5] *Otchet Ispolnitel'nogo Byuro Profinterna II Mezhdunarodnomu Kongressu* (n.d. [1922]), p. 119.

[6] *Trud*, February 22, 1922.

The foundation of the IPCs made little impact on the predominant influence of IFTU in the trade Internationals. The executive committee of the Metal Workers' International, meeting at Berne on August 27, 1921, rejected an application from the Russian metal workers' trade union for affiliation, and brought the counter-charge of splitting.

> The Metal Workers' International is not to blame for the fact that the Russians do not belong to it. The Russians themselves have broken off relations, in the first instance by giving the word for separation, but principally through the founding of the Red Trade Union International.

In accordance with the rule that simultaneous membership of the two Internationals — Amsterdam and Moscow — was inadmissible, the executive committee resolved that the Russian metal workers' union could not be admitted to the federation so long as it remained affiliated to Profintern.[1] In October 1921 the general council of the Transport Workers' International went a step further by pronouncing membership of the transport workers' IPC incompatible with membership of the International: the Dutch Transport Workers' Federation, which had participated in the founding both of Profintern and of the IPC, was expelled. In April 1922 the Bulgarian and Finnish transport workers were expelled on similar grounds. Protests by the IPC against these expulsions and disclaimers of any desire to weaken or split the International were ignored.[2] No answer was returned to an application from the Russian transport workers' union for admission to the International.[3] The only trade International to prove at this time more receptive to Russian overtures was the newly-founded International Union of Organizations of Workers in the Food and Drink Trades, commonly called the Food Trade Workers' International, which, by a decision of its executive of March 27, 1922, admitted the Russian food trade workers' union

[1] The decisions are quoted in *The Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions, 1922–1924* (Amsterdam, 1924), p. 42.

[2] *3ya Mezhdunarodnaya Konferentsiya Revolyutsionnykh Transportnikov* (1923), pp. 16-18; *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 5-6 (16-17), May–June 1922, p. 381. In August 1922, the Dutch Transport Workers' Federation voted by a large majority to join Profintern (*ibid.* No. 9 (September 20, 1922), p. 590).

[3] *Ibid.* No. 7 (18), July 1922, p. 483.

to membership.[1] A Russian delegate attended a session of the executive in Vienna on May 27–29, 1922. But the debates, which centred round an application for admission from a Red section of the French food trade workers' union, were stormy; and the only result was to postpone a decision of principle to the congress of the International to be held in 1923.[2] Besides the Food Trade Workers' International, no other trade International was prepared at this time to admit trade unions affiliated to Profintern to membership, and the influence of IFTU and its supporters was regularly exercised to bar such applications. At the congress of IFTU in Rome in April 1922 it was once more laid down, after discussions with representatives of the trade Internationals, that only trade unions affiliated through their national centres to IFTU could become members of their respective trade Internationals.[3]

The systematization of united front tactics at the fourth congress of Comintern in November 1922 placed fresh emphasis on the cause of trade union unity. Lozovsky once more threw the onus of disunity on Amsterdam:

> The split in the trade union movement has not been provoked by us communists. During the last few years we have attempted to fight in the ranks of the trade unions, to guide the trade unions into new channels, to revolutionize the workers' organizations; but we have systematically advocated the conquest of the trade unions rather than their destruction. . . . The expulsion of communists has become an everyday occurrence. . . . Each country has its own method of persecuting the communists.[4]

The congress reverted to the question in three separate resolutions — "The Tactics of the Communist International", "The United Workers' Front" and "The Tasks of Communists in the Trade Union Movement". "Nothing weakens the strength of proletarian resistance to the capitalist offensive so much as the splitting

[1] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 4 (15), April 1922, p. 301.

[2] *Ibid.* No. 7 (18), July 1922, pp. 472, 474, 483-484.

[3] *The Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions, 1922–1924* (Amsterdam, 1924), pp. 35-36.

[4] *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1923), p. 471.

of the trade unions." On the other hand, " in supporting the slogan of maximum unity of all workers' organizations in every *practical action against the capitalist front*, communists can . . . in no case renounce the expression of their own views " : the united front must be understood to mean " the unity of all workers who desire to struggle against capitalism ". The campaign against expulsions of communists must be carried on unceasingly : " the reformist leaders, retreating under the pressure of the bourgeoisie on the whole front, have none the less started an offensive against the revolutionary workers ".[1] The same note was struck at the immediately following second congress of Profintern itself. In the first place, membership of a trade union was an absolute obligation for party members : " no worker, male or female, must be outside the trade unions ". On the other hand, " the great mass of supporters of Comintern is found within the reformist unions ". The need for " close collaboration and continuous mutual help " between revolutionary organizations and revolutionary minorities in reformist organizations was imperative. But neither the founding of new revolutionary unions nor the abandonment of the reformist unions was to be tolerated :

> Any splitting of the workers' movement is tantamount to strengthening the capitalists. . . . Any tactic which leads to a splitting of the trade unions must be rejected. No concessions must be made to those impatient comrades to whom the process of conquest seems long, and who deem it necessary to found new organizations. We must struggle just as decisively against the movement to withdraw from the trade unions.[2]

The campaign for trade union unity conducted on these lines had less embarrassing implications in countries, such as Great Britain and Germany, where the initial successes of Profintern had been small, than in countries where a substantial part of the trade unions had joined Profintern. The fourth congress of Comintern for the first time directly faced this problem :

> In those countries where two parallel trade union centres are in existence (Spain, France, Czechoslovakia, etc.), communists must begin a systematic struggle for the reunion of

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 299, 308, 310, 311, 316-317.

[2] *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), p. 107.

these parallel organizations. Having in view the reunion of the split trade union federations, it would be unpractical to withdraw individual communists and workers from reformist unions in order to enrol them in their own revolutionary unions. Not one reformist union should be left without a certain leaven, without a communist ferment.[1]

The only country where the whole trade union movement had been won over at the outset, and had affiliated *en masse*, first to Mezhsovprof, and then to Profintern, was Bulgaria; and even here a split occurred in 1922 which set up a Free Federation of Trade Unions in opposition to the All-Bulgarian Federation.[2] In France, the split in the trade union movement which led to the creation of the CGTU at a congress in Paris on December 22–24, 1921, though generally hailed as a triumph for communism, had been received with misgivings in Moscow.[3] The CGTU was a powerful body which, at the fourth congress of Comintern, had been strong enough to insist on the dissolution of the formal link between Comintern and Profintern.[4] The resolution of the congress on the united workers' front admitted that this question presented itself in France "somewhat otherwise than in other countries". Nevertheless it was "essential that the whole responsibility for the split in the united camp of the workers should rest on our opponents". The slogan of the political as well as the economic unity of the movement was essential; and

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 315. The second congress of Comintern in 1920, not in its special resolution on the trade union movement, but in its general resolution on the tasks of the proletariat, had laid down the principle that "communists do not in the least remain aloof from non-party mass organizations of workers, even, in certain circumstances, where they have a plainly reactionary, black-hundred character (yellow unions, Christian unions, etc.)"; the purpose was to "demonstrate to the workers that the idea of non-party status as a principle is consciously promoted among the workers by the bourgeoisie and its hangers-on in order to divert proletarians from the organizational struggle for socialism" (*ibid.* p. 107). But the issue of "parallel" trade unions had not arisen at this time.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 11, January 15, 1923, p. 183; a total of 35,000 workers in the All-Bulgarian Federation was claimed in 1923 as against 10,000 in the Free Federation (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 26-27, August 24, 1923, col. 7297).

[3] Lozovsky afterwards stated that a telegram was sent to the congress by Profintern warning it against a split, but was ignored or came too late (*Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.) ii, 931).

[4] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 460-461.

" before the beginning of any mass strike or revolutionary demonstration or any other kind of direct action by the masses " a request for collaboration should be made to the reformist unions, and every refusal by them to " support the revolutionary struggle " denounced.[1] When the Czechoslovak trade union movement split in October 1922, the Red unions formed a federation of their own which affiliated to Profintern ; but, though in Czechoslovakia members of Red unions outnumbered the members of the Amsterdam unions, Lozovsky, speaking at the fourth congress of Comintern in November 1922, tempered his approval of this step with a cautious warning :

> A unitary trade union movement is our watchword, and the communists should not therefore pull their members out of the reformist trade unions ; for, if we take them out of these and transfer them to the revolutionary trade unions, we cannot influence the reformist organizations in the way we desire and force them into union with the revolutionary organizations.[2]

The resolution of the congress drew attention to the similarity of the situation in Czechoslovakia to that in France, and instructed the Czechoslovak party to " popularize the slogan of a united workers' front against the bourgeoisie ".[3] And the resolution of the immediately following second congress of Profintern, speaking of the new Red trade union organization (MOS) in Czechoslovakia, declared that the main tasks were " the restoration of general trade union unity ", the struggle " against national unions and for class unions ", and " the unification of the whole Czechoslovak proletariat ".[4]

Throughout 1923, Profintern, while abating nothing of its hostility to IFTU, strove to avert further splits in national trade union movements, and stoutly presented itself as the champion of trade union unity against the splitting tactics of Amsterdam. When the Norwegian trade union congress met in February 1923, the instructions addressed by Profintern to its supporters referred to IFTU as the " Amsterdam cemetery ", and declared that

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 306.

[2] *Protokoll des Vierten Kongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1923), p. 469.

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 307.

[4] *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), p. 100 ; for MOS see p. 172 above.

" live revolutionary workers have nothing to do in the Amsterdam International ". But this was no reason for hastening a split: " for us it is of the greatest importance that the trade union movement of your land should remain united, a closed unit, ready for battle ". The Finnish trade union congress, which took place in May 1923, counted 65 communists or communist sympathizers out of 76 delegates. But, having in the first instance voted to adhere to Profintern, it later preferred to postpone a final decision " in order to give the social-democrats no ground for a split " : [1] this attitude was approved, and may indeed have been inspired, by Moscow. When a small revolutionary Dutch trade union federation, the Nationaal Arbeider Syndikat (NAS), composed partly of communists and partly of anarchists, voted by a majority to adhere to Profintern, while a minority seceded to join the anarchist International in Berlin, Profintern advised its supporters against affiliation in order to avoid responsibility for splitting the federation.[2] The third enlarged IKKI of June 1923 reaffirmed its devotion to trade union unity and its opposition to the splitting tactics of Amsterdam. In countries such as France, Czechoslovakia and Spain, where two parallel trade union organizations existed, it conceded that unions excluded by the reformist federation must join the Red federation, but at the same time " individual members and groups — even in these countries — must struggle for their readmission to the reformist unions, in so far as this is practicable, in the interests of the international workers' movement ". The same resolution pronounced that " every member of a communist party is under an obligation to join the appropriate trade union organization and work actively in the communist fraction or revolutionary opposition ".[3] The central council of Profintern, at a session immediately following that of the enlarged IKKI, repeated the injunction laid down for countries possessing parallel trade union organizations, and insisted still more firmly

[1] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 2 (25), February 1923, pp. 186-189; No. 8 (31), August 1923, p. 756. The word " live " in the former document is omitted in the German text, but appeared in the Russian version in *Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoyuzov*, No. 2 (25), February 1923, pp. 339-342.

[2] *L'Activité de l'ISR : Rapport pour le III^e Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), p. 84; one of the leaders of NAS was Sneevliet, who had worked in Comintern under the name of Maring (see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 251, and ch. 23 *passim*).

[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 379.

on the limits to be placed on transfer from reformist to Red unions :

> Even here the opposition elements in reformist unions must not be called out and attached to the parallel revolutionary organization. Individual persons or groups excluded from the unions must, in combination with the whole revolutionary minority, employ all means at their disposal and exert all their powers to bring about the reinstatement of those excluded.[1]

And another resolution of the same session applied the same principle to the task of combating Fascism in Italy :

> Where Fascist trade unions already exist, the revolutionary elements are required to use all their energies in order to penetrate them and disintegrate them from within. . . . Their activity can have the result of transforming these auxiliary organs of the bourgeoisie into class organs of the proletariat.[2]

The persistence with which united front tactics in the unions were pursued by Profintern at this time in face of every discouragement is shown by the example of Rumania. In preparation for a Rumanian trade union congress which was to meet on September 15, 1923, an open letter was addressed to Rumanian adherents of Profintern exhorting them to " remain at the congress and in the unions irrespective of the decision to which the congress comes ".[3] The congress — allegedly after police intervention — voted for affiliation to IFTU ; but this did not prevent a further instruction from Profintern to its supporters to " avoid the pretext of a split, and sacrifice to unity everything that is possible without injuring the interests of the proletarian class ".[4] In spite of these efforts, the movement split into " reformist " and " general " unions, the latter comprising both communists and syndicalists.[5] Even in Germany, where during 1923 everything else was overshadowed by the revolutionary situation and by preparations for revolutionary action, this was the period of the most determined efforts of the KPD, under the leadership of Brandler, to establish a

[1] *Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrats der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (1923), p. 77.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 79 ; for the reference to reactionary unions in the resolution of 1920 see p. 536, note 1 above.

[3] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 8 (31), August 1923, p. 764.

[4] *Ibid.* No. 10-11 (33-34), October–November 1923, pp. 881-882, 929-930.

[5] *Ibid.* No. 12 (35), December 1923, pp. 974-975.

united front with social-democratic workers in the trade unions, and of the strongest participation and influence of communists in the unions affiliated to the ADGB and to IFTU. The tactics pursued by the KPD, with the approval of Comintern, on the eve of the October rising of 1923, were the perfect expression of the current hope and belief that cooperation within the existing unions was the road to the revolutionary seizure of power and to the conquest of the trade union movement as a whole. On the other hand it was at this moment that an independent Belgian trade union, the Knights of Labour, formed by a break-away from the Belgian Mineworkers' Union, affiliated with its 14,000 members to Profintern;[1] the majority of Belgian unions remained affiliated to the Belgian Labour Party and to IFTU. But this implied no wavering in the policies of Moscow. When the CGT at its congress on January 30, 1924, categorically rejected an invitation to unite with the CGTU, the executive bureau of Profintern issued, on February 14, 1924, a statement pressing the CGTU to make proposals for a joint congress with the CGT for the re-establishment of unity in the French trade union movement, and went on:

> Profintern would hail with satisfaction a fusion of the two federations. And Profintern has stipulated that it will not demand the organic adhesion to Profintern of the revolutionary section of the [proposed joint] federation, if this section is in a minority at the unity congress.[2]

At the Lyons congress of the PCF in January 1924, and at the Frankfurt congress of the KPD in the following April, Lozovsky pursued the uphill struggle to persuade French and German communists to remain and work in the Amsterdam unions.[3]

The campaign for unity waged within the trade unions was also actively pursued in the sectional trade Internationals through the medium of the IPCs. The fourth congress of Comintern in November 1922 did not deal in detail with the work of the IPCs, merely noting that communist parties should energetically sup-

[1] *L'Activité de l'ISR : Rapport pour le III^e Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), p. 239.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 318.
[3] See pp. 105-106, 142 above.

port them " in order to rally existing revolutionary forces for the purpose of creating unitary international trade union federations ", and that " the whole struggle should be waged under the slogan of the accession of all unions to the international trade union organization, irrespective of their basic orientation or particular political tendencies ".[1] The second congress of Profintern repeated Comintern's admonition, and urged the IPCs " to undertake, in addition to propaganda, active work in the way of mutual support and solidarity, as well as an energetic struggle for the restoration of the unity of the international trade union movement on the basis of a concrete and carefully worked out programme of action ", and to extend their operations to non-European countries, thus helping to create " a genuine International ".[2] After the two congresses had adjourned, the third international conference of the revolutionary transport workers was convened in Moscow. The first conference in July 1921 had given birth to the transport workers' IPC.[3] The second conference held at Hamburg in August 1922 had been dominated by the recently admitted German seamen's union, the Schiffahrtsbund ;[4] and among the decisions of the conference was one to set up port bureaus for work among seamen in Hamburg, Amsterdam and Le Havre.[5] The Schiffahrtsbund, which stood on the extreme Left of the movement, but was syndicalist rather than communist, secured considerable support at the conference for

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 316.

[2] *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), p. 103.

[3] See p. 532 above.

[4] For the seamen's movement see p. 532, note 2 above. The Deutscher Schiffahrtsbund, founded in 1918 by a dissident revolutionary group as a breakaway from the German transport workers' union, belonged to the syndicalist Freie Arbeiterunion Deutschlands : it sent delegates to the founding congress of Profintern, but refused to join it. On May 3–4, 1922, at a congress in Hamburg, it voted to resume negotiations with Profintern (*Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 5-6 (16-17), May–June 1922, pp. 361-362) ; in the same month, the executive bureau of Profintern decided to transfer " the seamen's section of the transport workers' IPC to Hamburg (*ibid.* No. 7 (18), July 1922, p. 484) — an evident move to win over the Schiffahrtsbund. As a result of the negotiations the Schiffahrtsbund joined the transport workers' IPC.

[5] *Ibid.* No. 10 (21), October 1922, p. 674 ; a representative of the Russian union was stationed permanently in Hamburg — presumably to direct the bureau there. According to G. Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml* (1955), pp. 108-109, seamen's homes were established at this time in Odessa, Murmansk and other Soviet ports, in which foreign seamen were subjected to propaganda, often successful, to leave their ships and settle in " the fatherland of all proletarians ".

the proposal to found a Red transport workers' International in opposition to the existing International. But this was decisively vetoed by Profintern as contrary to Comintern policy.[1] The same issue arose again at the third conference of the IPC in December 1922 in the form of a proposal that the IPC should be transformed into a new transport workers' International, and was again rejected on the ground that " it would merely give the Amsterdamers a pretext to accuse us of establishing a parallel organization and of splitting the trade union movement ".[2] The conference attempted, however, to meet the opposition by stressing the active rôle of the IPC, which was renamed the International Committee for Action and Propaganda, and was given an elaborate new statute.[3] The statute provided for a separate seamen's section which would draw up a statute of its own. It also made regulations for the port bureaus for propaganda among seamen.[4] Railway agencies were to perform similar functions at frontier points ;[5] but there seems to be no evidence that these ever materialized. A decision was taken by the executive committee of Profintern on January 5, 1923, to set up port bureaus in Rotterdam and Vladivostok ;[6] and the session of the central council of Profintern in June–July 1923 described work among seamen as " the most important task of Profintern ".[7] The qualified success achieved by the transport workers' IPC both encouraged imitation, and sharpened the resistance of IFTU and its supporters, elsewhere. In December 1922 the Russian metal workers' union again applied for membership of the International Metal Workers' Federation. On May 18, 1923, on the eve of the transport workers' Berlin conference,[8] three representatives of the metal workers' federation and two of the Russian union met at

[1] *3ya Mezhdunarodnaya Konferentsiya Revolyutsionnykh Transportnikov* (1923), pp. 18-19 ; *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 9 (20), September 1922, pp. 588-589.

[2] *3ya Mezhdunarodnaya Konferentsiya Revolyutsionnykh Transportnikov* (1923), p. 55.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 80-82.

[4] Representatives of port bureaus in Hamburg, Archangel, Petrograd and Sevastopol attended the conference (*ibid.* p. 7).

[5] *Ibid.* p. 70.

[6] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 5-6 (28-29), May–June 1923, p. 579 ; No. 8 (31) August 1923, p. 743. Special importance was attached to the bureau in Vladivostok, which issued a bulletin in Chinese (*L'Activité de l'ISR : Rapport pour le IIIe Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), p. 155).

[7] *Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrats der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (1923), p. 85.

[8] See p. 548 below.

Friedrichshafen and reached an agreement recommending the central committee of the federation to admit the Russian union to membership.[1] The Russian union was now invited to send delegates as guests to the session of the executive of the federation which was to meet in Berne on August 15, 1923, to consider the terms of its admission. The union replied that, owing to the dispute with Switzerland resulting from Vorovsky's murder, its delegates could not attend a meeting on Swiss soil, and asked that the session should be held elsewhere.[2] This request was refused; and when the executive met to consider the Friedrichshafen agreement, a chillier mood prevailed. Some members of the committee doubted whether it was possible to count on loyal cooperation and observance of the rules of the federation from the Russian union, and further enquiries were called for to clear up the "points in dispute".[3] This, as the sequel showed, was tantamount to a shelving of the application.

Another experience was similar, though slightly more favourable. The executive of the Food Workers' International at its session on April 22–23, 1923, decided, by 9 votes to 4, in view of the continued propaganda of the Russian union against Amsterdam, to recommend to its forthcoming congress not to confirm Russian membership of the International.[4] When the congress met in Brussels in October 1923, Russian membership became the subject of a fierce debate, the attacks of the opposition being concentrated on the work of the food workers' IPC and on a journal *Der Rote Nahrungsmittelarbeiter* published by the bureau of Profintern in Berlin. After the Russian delegation had

[1] For the text of the agreement see *The Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions, 1922–1924* (Amsterdam, 1924), pp. 42-43; the agreement was summarized by the secretary of the metal workers' IPC as follows: "In principle the affiliation of the Russian metal workers to the International was approved, and it was resolved that the unification of the unions in Europe should be brought about as soon as possible" (*Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 8 (31), August 1923, p. 762).

[2] *Ibid.* No. 8 (31), August 1923, pp. 753-754; for the boycott arising from the dispute with Switzerland see p. 455, note 3 above.

[3] *The Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions, 1922–1924* (Amsterdam, 1924), p. 44.

[4] *The Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions, 1922–1924* (Amsterdam, 1924), p. 50; *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 8 (31), August 1923, p. 747. For a protest of the Russian union against this decision see *ibid.* No. 5-6 (28-29), May–June 1923, pp. 556-557.

disclaimed responsibility for these activities — a disclaimer formally correct, but dubious in substance — Russian membership of the International was confirmed by the narrow majority of 22 to 20.[1] By way of regularizing its position, the Russian Food Workers' Union withdrew from membership of the International Propaganda Committee, which none the less continued to function as before.[2] About the same time it was decided to transfer the headquarters of several of the IPCs to western Europe by way of minimizing their Russian affiliations. A minor success was scored in the International of Educational Workers established in Paris. In the latter part of 1923, the Russian and Bulgarian unions of teachers were admitted to this International; and the French union which already belonged to it now affiliated to Profintern. The corresponding IPC was considered to have completed its work, and was disbanded.[3] By this time, as the struggle between Moscow and Amsterdam for mastery in the trade union movement grew more intense, the initial hope of making the IPCs independent and financially self-supporting had to be abandoned. Contributions from affiliated organizations were insignificant; and by 1923 the committees were "financed exclusively by the Russian unions". Indeed the Russian unions "in a substantial degree carried out the functions" of the committees.[4] In the other camp, the bureau of IFTU held a conference on November 9–10, 1923, with representatives of the trade Internationals, and, by a majority of 14 votes to 6, secured "provisional" agreement to the principles that the trade Inter-

[1] Accounts in *Mezhdunarodnoe Rabochee Dvizhenie*, No. 37, October 1923, p. 11 and *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 4 (39), April 1924, pp. 229-230, differ in some details, but agree on the final result; for further comments on the congress see *The Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions, 1922–1924* (Amsterdam, 1924), pp. 51-52.

[2] *Malaya Entsiklopediya po Mezhdunarodnomu Profdvizheniyu* (1927), col. 650.

[3] *Mezhdunarodnoe Rabochee Dvizhenie*, No. 1-2, January 7, 1924, p. 15; *L'Activité de l'ISR : Rapport pour le III^e Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), pp. 228-229; *Malaya Entsiklopediya po Mezhdunarodnomu Profdvizheniyu* (1927), col. 1144.

[4] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 8 (31), August 1923, p. 742. It is difficult to estimate the extent of the activity of the IPCs, since few documents relating to them have been available, though each of them had its printed organ; an appeal of the chemical workers' IPC to workers engaged in the chemical industries, adopted at a "third conference" of this IPC on May 28-30, 1925, is printed from the archives in *Mezhdunarodnaya Solidarnost' Trudyashchikhsya, 1925–1927* (1959), pp. 58-59.

nationals should not take decisions on " general questions which lie outside the domain of their respective trades ", and should admit to membership only unions affiliated through their national centres to IFTU.[1]

It was, however, from developments in the most powerful and important of the trade Internationals, the International Transport Workers' Federation, that the impetus came in 1923 for an extension of the campaign for international trade union unity to the highest level — to relations between the headquarters organizations in Amsterdam and Moscow. Hitherto united front tactics had been practised mainly in the form of approaches to trade unions or trade union federations affiliated to IFTU. But instances had occurred of direct approaches by Profintern to the Amsterdam International itself. The first of these was made in the form of a public appeal for joint " international proletarian action " against the " white terror " in Spain and Yugoslavia which was launched in October 1921.[2] This appeal was ignored. Two months later, when the split occurred in the French CGT, a telegram was sent directly to IFTU proposing a joint conference to examine the causes of the split and to attempt to remedy it. This provoked a refusal of the proposal, and was followed by a recriminatory exchange of telegrams which lasted till March 1922.[3] In September 1922 an invitation from the executive bureau of Profintern to the bureau of IFTU to participate in joint action against Fascism was left without an answer.[4] At the second congress of

[1] *The Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions, 1922–1924* (Amsterdam, 1924), pp. 37-38 ; these rules were endorsed as " guiding principles " by a further conference on May 31–June 1, 1924 (*ibid.* pp. 363-364). For a Soviet comment see *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 6 (41), June 1924, p. 364.

[2] The decision of the executive bureau of Profintern of October 10, 1921, is recorded in *Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoyuzov*, No. 6, October 20, 1921, p. 222 ; for the text of the appeal see *ibid.* No. 7, October 29, pp. 254-255 ; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 15, October 27, 1921, p. 132.

[3] *Otchet Ispolnitel'nogo Byuro Profinterna, iyul' 1921–noyabr' 1922* (n.d.), pp. 23-27 ; *Report on the Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions during the Years 1922 and 1923* (Amsterdam, n.d.), p. 85. For a Norwegian proposal for a joint conference of the two Internationals see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 459.

[4] *L'Activité de l'ISR : Rapport pour le IIIe Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), p. 95.

Profintern in December 1922 approval was recorded of " the numerous appeals of the executive bureau to the Amsterdam International for common action against the bourgeoisie ".[1] In general, however, relations at the highest level between IFTU and Profintern had been limited to a display of mutual non-recognition, tempered by occasional exchanges of public abuse.[2] After the end of 1922 any such limitation on the tactics of the united front as pursued in Moscow disappeared. The unity campaign was extended to embrace not only unity on a national plane between Red and Amsterdam unions, or unity within the trade Internationals, but unity at the top level between the two Internationals themselves. The abortive peace conference at The Hague in December 1922, at which both Profintern and IFTU were represented,[3] and at which the Profintern delegates advocated common action with IFTU on a broad front, was followed by a burst of activity in Moscow. On January 12, 1923, Profintern addressed an appeal to the Second International and the Amsterdam International to discuss common action to avert the danger of war ; three days later Comintern and Profintern together sent a further appeal to the same recipients for joint action against Italian Fascism ; and on January 23, 1923, IKKI and the executive bureau of Profintern decided to set up a joint action committee to conduct campaigns of common concern.[4] The first

[1] *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), p. 91.

[2] A curious correspondence took place in October 1922. IFTU, stung by constant taunts from Moscow that it was the hireling of the capitalists, addressed a communication to the secretary of the " so-called Red International of Trade Unions " in Moscow enclosing the accounts of IFTU for 1919–1921, showing that its whole revenue was derived from members' contributions. The reply, signed by Lozovsky, pointed out that substantial numbers of the trade unionists of Czechoslovakia, France, Great Britain and Germany were affiliated to Profintern, and requested that corresponding percentages of contributions received from these countries should be paid to Profintern : the debt was meticulously calculated at 110,000 gulden and 240,000 German marks " at the average rate of exchange for 1919–1921 ". Lozovsky added : " If the statement is correct that the Amsterdam International . . . lives exclusively on the contributions of trade unions affiliated to it, we note with satisfaction that you render to the bourgeoisie *gratis* services for which large sums are customarily paid " (*Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 11 (22), November 1922, pp. 792-793).

[3] See *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, pp. 460-462.

[4] All these documents are in *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 1 (24), January 1923, pp. 80, 84-85 ; joint appeals of January 13, 1923, to workers, peasants and soldiers, and of January 16, 1923, to the Second, Two-and-a-half

of these appeals provoked an argumentative reply dated January 30, 1923 and addressed to " the secretary of the so-called Red Trade Union International ", rejecting the proposal, and adding that any further such appeals, being made " for propagandist purposes " and " not honestly and seriously meant ", would be left unanswered.[1] This course was, in fact, pursued : the letter of January 30, 1923, appears to have been the last ever addressed to Profintern by the Amsterdam International. A more successful venture was an international conference at Frankfurt sponsored by Profintern on March 18, 1923. Its 250 delegates comprised representatives of Red trade unions from most European countries and a sprinkling of dissident social-democrats and members of Left-wing groups : it passed a resolution denouncing the occupation of the Ruhr, the Versailles treaty and the threat of war, and proposing common action by the workers to avert the danger of war.[2]

While, however, these measures seemed ineffectual, the occupation of the Ruhr, following Mussolini's coup, had created widespread indignation and apprehension of war in Left circles throughout Europe, and evoked spontaneous sympathy for the only Power, and the only international organization, which unequivocally and unceasingly protested against these evils. These sentiments were now especially strong in the International Transport Workers' Federation, which, though affiliated to IFTU, had a strong Left bias both in its rank and file and in its leadership. Faced with an appeal from the transport workers' IPC in Moscow for a joint conference to consider measures against Fascism and

and Amsterdam Internationals, on the invasion of the Ruhr will be found in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 11, January 15, 1923, p. 75 ; No. 12, January 16, 1923, pp. 83-84. *L'Activité de l'ISR : Rapport pour le III^e Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), p. 96, mentions an anti-Fascist and anti-war committee set up " in the autumn of 1922 ".

[1] *The Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions, 1922–1924* (Amsterdam, 1924), p. 88.

[2] For the resolutions of the conference see *L'Activité de l'ISR : Rapport pour le III^e Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), pp. 98-102; Lozovsky's account, with the text of the resolutions, is in *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 4 (27), April 1923, pp. 443-464. Among the members of an " action committee " appointed by it to carry on the campaign were Klara Zetkin and Barbusse. In June 1923 the third enlarged IKKI in Moscow again called for the creation of an international committee in order " to organize international action to be directed, first of all at present, against Italian Fascism " (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 382).

the danger of war, the federation declined the proposal in that form, but declared itself willing to enter into discussions on the subject with the Russian trade union, and agreed to a meeting on these terms to open on May 23, 1923, in Berlin. The formal readjustment in Moscow to this situation was not difficult. On April 30, 1923, the executive bureau of Profintern decided to convene in Berlin on May 20, 1923, a preliminary conference of revolutionary transport workers; and this conference officially authorized the Russian transport workers' union to negotiate with the international federation in the interests of trade union unity.[1] The Berlin conference of May 23–24, 1923, consisted of nine men, five representing the international federation, and four the Russian union. The four included Lozovsky as representative of the Russian trade union central council, armed with powers to act on behalf both of the Russian trade union central council and of the transport workers' unions of other countries adhering to Profintern. The Russian case evidently made a powerful impact; and a resolution was adopted "to bring about unity among the transport workers of all countries and especially of those where the movement has been split, and in the future to prevent expulsions as well as the formation of parallel organizations". It was decided to form an action committee to carry on a joint struggle against Fascism and the danger of war, and to convene a world congress of transport workers of all countries and all political affiliations for the purpose of establishing a united international organization. An appeal in this sense to the transport workers of the world was signed jointly by Robert Williams and Fimmen, representing the existing International Transport Workers' Federation, and by the Russian delegates.[2] At the third enlarged IKKI in June 1923 Lozovsky hailed the Frankfurt and Berlin conferences as shining examples of united front tactics.[3] A resolution adopted at the session noted the attitude of the transport workers as evidence of "the formation of a Left wing within the Amsterdam International", and hopefully diagnosed "the

[1] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 5-6 (28-29), May–June 1923, pp. 467-470, 578.

[2] *Ibid.* No. 5-6 (28-29), May–June 1923, pp. 553-556; *L'Activité de l'ISR : Rapport pour le III^e Congrès* (n.d. [1924]), pp. 105-106.

[3] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolnitel'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1923), p. 178.

bankruptcy of the compromising policy " of IFTU and " the progressive revolutionizing of the masses of workers, thanks to our tactics of winning over the trade unions and of the united front ".[1]

This success was, however, followed by a swift reaction. The bureau of IFTU, outraged by this encroachment on its authority, met on May 30, 1923, and passed a resolution disclaiming responsibility for the Berlin conference, which had been held without its knowledge. In a lengthy declaration of principles it denied that the trade Internationals had any competence to decide questions of policy, adding, however, that IFTU was " always prepared to enter into relations with the Russian trade union organizations, but excluding the dissident minorities of the national federations affiliated with Amsterdam ".[2] Under this pressure, the general council of the International Federation of Transport Workers, at its meeting on June 17–18, 1923, approved the Berlin agreement with a proviso, which in effect nullified it, making it conditional on the willingness of Profintern " to cease along the whole line hostilities against organizations affiliated to IFTU " and " to use every available means of fighting war, reaction and Fascism in Russia as well as in other countries ".[3] Five days later, the bureau of IFTU adopted yet another resolution repudiating all responsibility for the Berlin conference and reaffirming its decisions of May 30–31, 1923.[4] The central council of Profintern, at its session in June–July 1923, replied to the rebuff by calling for " the organization of an international workers' congress to be convened jointly by Profintern with the Amsterdam International ".[5]

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 377.

[2] *The Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions, 1922–1924* (Amsterdam, 1924), pp. 47-48.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 46. Lozovsky, in reporting this to the central council of Profintern in June–July 1923, sarcastically asked : " Is there a united front among the transport workers ? ", and replied : " At present there is none " (*Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrats der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (1923), pp. 67-68) ; he later referred to this first attempt at unity as having been " smashed by the Amsterdamers " (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), p. 774).

[4] *The Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions, 1922–1924* (Amsterdam, 1924), p. 48.

[5] *Bericht über die 3. Session des Zentralrats der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (1923), p. 28.

In spite of its apparent failure, the transport workers' conference had opened a loophole for fresh developments. The precedent had been created at Berlin for a meeting of delegates of trade unions affiliated to IFTU with delegates not of Profintern, but of the Russian trade unions. Even IFTU had appeared anxious to underline this distinction, and expressed its willingness to " enter into relations with the Russian trade union organizations ". The Berlin precedent and the offer of IFTU now inspired a decision in Moscow to substitute the Russian trade unions for Profintern as principals for the negotiations with IFTU. If this decision caused any qualms in Profintern cricles, they have not been recorded. Tomsky later described it as " a concession " : the Russian trade union central council had " proposed to the Amsterdam International to conduct negotiations, not as equal with equal, International with International, Amsterdam with Profintern, but with a part of Profintern, namely with the Russian trade unions " ; he added that " we, of course, did this with the full consent and approval of Profintern ".[1] On June 10, 1923, a letter signed by all the members of the presidium of the Russian trade union central council, including Tomsky its president, Dogadov its secretary and Lozovsky, was despatched to IFTU.[2] It noted the willingness of IFTU, expressed in its resolution on the transport workers' conference, to enter into relations with the Russian trade unions, deplored the rebuffs incurred by the Russian transport workers in their quest for a united front, and by the Russian delegates at the international conference at The Hague, and begged IFTU to convene a con-

[1] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 310 ; Tomsky was no doubt a strong advocate of the decision, which enhanced the prestige of the Russian trade unions at the expense of Profintern. Signs of friction between Tomsky and Lozovsky, as rival heads of these two institutions, can be detected from time to time (see pp. 586-588 below). Nothing like the close link between the Russian party and Comintern existed between the Russian trade unions and Profintern : Lozovsky took his instructions from the party or from Comintern, not from Tomsky. Bukharin at the fifteenth party conference in October 1926 argued that " our trade unions " should aim at " playing in Profintern much the same rôle as the VKP plays in Comintern " (*XV Konferentsiya Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1927), p. 38) ; but this never happened, or could have happened.

[2] The letter appeared in *Trud*, June 10, 1923, and in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 100, June 16, 1923, p. 844 ; the letter is sometimes cited under the date June 11, 1923.

ference of representatives both of trade union federations affiliated to it and of those affiliated to Profintern in order to draw up a programme of joint action against war and against Fascism. It was suggested that a preliminary conference should be held in Berlin early in July. This appeal, no longer from the rival International, but from the official Russian trade union organization, was more difficult to reject out of hand. Six months elapsed; and after many heart-searchings the bureau of IFTU informed the central council of the Russian trade unions on December 11, 1923, that it was prepared to enter into negotiations with organizations affiliated to the Red International " on the sole basis of the rules and general policy of the International Federation of Trade Unions ". This uncompromising proviso provoked an equally haughty reply, in which a conference without prior conditions was demanded. Thereupon the bureau of IFTU decided to report the whole matter to the forthcoming congress of the organization, with a recommendation that the last letter of the Russian trade unions should be left without an answer.[1]

When the IFTU congress met in Vienna on June 2–6, 1924, feelings on both sides had reached a high point of exacerbation. Bramley on behalf of the British delegation formally moved " that the negotiations with the Russians be continued " — a straight rejection of the recommendation of the executive bureau to ignore the last Russian letter. The motion was seconded by Fimmen, the Dutch secretary of IFTU, who had been active in the Berlin transport workers' conference, but elsewhere won little support; nor was the cause likely to be advanced by a telegram from the central council of the Russian trade unions declaring its readiness " on certain conditions to support the motion of the English trade unions, which certainly coincides with the desires of the best trade union elements throughout the world ".[2] Even Bramley's position was equivocal. He was afterwards quoted as having justified his proposal by the hope that " the All-Russian Trade Union Congress, by force of circumstances and after reasonable discussion, might be persuaded to accept the policy of the

[1] *The Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions, 1922–1924* (Amsterdam, 1924), pp. 90-91.

[2] The telegram, which does not appear to have been published, was quoted by Tomsky at the sixth Soviet trade union congress in November 1924 (*Shestoi S"ezd Professional'nykh Soyuzov SSSR* (1925), p. 79).

IFTU ".[1] The hostile majority finally agreed to resume negotiations, but only on the old terms. A resolution was passed to continue negotiations with the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions, " in so far as this is compatible with the dignity of the IFTU ", for the purpose of admitting the Russian trade unions to membership on the basis of " unconditional acceptance of the statutes and resolutions of our International ".[2] But this rebuff did not make the British initiative any less gratifying to observers in Moscow. For the first time the British Left, which was already supporting the Soviet cause in the current diplomatic negotiations in London,[3] was regarded at Comintern headquarters as a major asset, and the CPGB, which was credited with having inspired these developments, as a model party.

(*b*) *The Congresses of 1924*

In the winter of 1923–1924 two opposite developments occurred in the two countries where the trade unions were most powerful: Great Britain and Germany. In Great Britain, where the short-lived attempt to affiliate unions and federations to Profintern had petered out, no difficulty arose about the policy of remaining and working in the reformist unions affiliated to Amsterdam: this was, indeed, the classic instance of that policy, and was facilitated by the unwillingness of the British unions to expel communist members. Instructions had already been drawn up by Profintern, at a special meeting with British delegates in July 1923, on these lines.[4] The general election of December 1923 and the advent to power of a Labour government in the following month indicated a swing of opinion towards the Left, and enhanced the already promising prospects of successful party work within the existing trade unions. In Germany, the fiasco of October 1923, and the resulting condemnation of Brandler, not only discredited the united front which he had so unsuccessfully practised, but revived the old party tradition of hostility to the trade unions. In the first half of 1924, while sympathy for Moscow

[1] *Report of the Fifty-Sixth Annual Trade Union Congress* (1924), p. 247.

[2] *The Activities of the International Federation of Trade Unions, 1922–1924* (Amsterdam, 1924), pp. 227-232, 260.

[3] See pp. 22-24 above.

[4] See pp. 122-123 above.

and support for cooperation with the Russian trade unions was rapidly gaining ground in the British unions, the exodus of communists from the German trade unions, and attempts to form splinter unions, proceeded apace, and the leaders of the KPD did not conceal their mistrust of the policies of Moscow, the campaign for trade union unity being dismissed as a move in the game of Russian foreign policy.[1] This was the situation which confronted the fifth congress of Comintern meeting in June 1924, and the immediately following third congress of Profintern.

The dispute about the united front, with the British and German delegations occupying the extreme positions on either side, was reproduced in a particularly acute form in the trade union question. The British delegates were strong supporters, nationally, of the policy of working in the existing unions and of refusing to form dissident unions, and internationally, of the policy of negotiating with IFTU on a platform of the international unity of the trade union movement. The German delegates accepted the first of these policies with reluctance, and stubbornly resisted the second. The French and Czechoslovak delegates were in the ambiguous position resulting from the preponderance of " Red " over " Amsterdam " trade unions in their countries; but their leaders were firmly wedded to the official line. The general debate at the Comintern congress brought only a few non-committal references to the trade union dispute. Zinoviev in his opening report mentioned the Vienna conference of IFTU in the context of the Leftward turn in the British trade union movement, but showed no inclination to plunge into controversy. Treint, the French delegate, suggested that trade union unity " could not be a question of principle for communists ". Policy depended on the " historical situation ". In a revolutionary period, the interest of the revolution might call for a policy of splitting the unions; in the present interval between two revolutionary wars, the right line was to work for unity, first on the international and then on the national plane. Ruth Fischer, anxious to forestall the coming attack, admitted that the KPD had wavered on the trade union question, but claimed that the attitude of Profintern had also been ambiguous; if beatings were the

[1] See pp. 97-100, 105-106 above.

order of the day, they should be fairly distributed all round.[1] But nobody seemed anxious to bring into the open the sharp divergencies of opinion that lay beneath the surface.

The congress had already been in session for nearly three weeks when the trade union question, which had been placed almost at the bottom of the agenda, was at last reached. The presidium now proposed that, " in order to hasten and shorten the labours of the congress ", the issue of the trade unions should be referred forthwith to IKKI. This proposal was regarded, no doubt rightly, as an attempt to evade a contentious debate. The German and Italian delegations protested, and were supported by the British delegation, whose point of view was the opposite of their own ; and the debate proceeded, occupying three full sittings of the congress and a part of a fourth.[2] At the last moment agreement was apparently reached to exclude from the discussion the most controversial issue of all — the approach of the Russian trade unions to the Amsterdam International. Lozovsky, in presenting his report to the congress, omitted altogether the section relating to this question, merely remarking that it was to be discussed at the ensuing session of IKKI and at the forthcoming third congress of Profintern.[3] But the pledge of silence was ignored by later speakers in the debate, including Zinoviev ; and Lozovsky returned to the question in his final speech.

Lozovsky's report was evidently intended to serve as a basis of theses to be adopted by the congress.[4] He started by dwelling

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), i, 76, 135, 206-207.

[2] In order to save its face, the presidium put forward a compromise proposal that the congress should decide about the debate after having heard the main reports, and this was carried by a large majority against the votes of the German, Italian and a few minor delegations (*ibid.* ii, 828-829) ; after the reports had been delivered, the question was not raised again, and the debate followed automatically.

[3] *Ibid.* ii, 844. Lozovsky specifically mentioned the agreement in the opening passage of his final speech ; this passage was omitted from the official record (*ibid.* ii, 934), but appeared in the text of the speech in a contemporary pamphlet, A. Lozovsky, *Nasha Taktika v Profdvizhenii* (1924), p. 46, together with an editorial note stating that, in view of this agreement, " the entire fourth section of the theses on the unity of the world trade union movement was omitted from Lozovsky's report ".

[4] The report (*Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 832-858) was originally divided into nine numbered sections. Of these,

on the importance of the trade unions as a " mass movement " and a " means to win the masses for the social revolution " : Great Britain was quoted as the shining example of this truth. By-passing the discussion at an earlier stage of the congress about the " offensive of capital ",[1] Lozovsky boldly declared that " the general retreat of the workers has come to a stop " and that " in many countries the working class has passed over to a counter-attack " : once more the British example seemed decisive, though he admitted that the formation of the British Labour government had brought about " a relapse into reformist illusions, a second youth of the League of Nations and of the International Labour Organization ", together with a more open alliance " between the ruling classes and the heads of the reformist trade unions ". The Amsterdam International had become " a tool of the Fascist reaction " and played " a strike-breaker rôle ". This had led to a " growth of communist influence in the trade unions ", which had in turn provoked an increase of anti-communist feeling and action among the trade union leaders. After denouncing the leaders of IFTU and describing the growth of a Left wing in that organization at the Vienna conference, Lozovsky left the issue of world unity in abeyance, and concluded with a long enumeration of the current weaknesses and current tasks of party work in the unions. For communists in the trade unions only two watchwords were possible : unity or splitting. It was the failure of the KPD that it had not faced this clear choice ; for party members who had left the unions, the slogan must be : " Back into the unions ". In France and Czechoslovakia, the separate organizations must be maintained. But the split should not be deepened, and the slogan should be " unity through a joint congress " ; the tendency in France to draw the maximum number of workers into the Red unions, and to have as little as possible to do with the reformist unions, was censured. The shift towards the Left in the British movement was once more quoted as the decisive argument for the policy of unity. The report

two (the original 1 and 4) disappeared, and two (5 and 6) were telescoped into one ; the remaining six sections, in a much abbreviated form, became the theses of the congress, with the addition of the omitted section (now numbered 4) on the unity of the world trade union movement. For the final form of the theses see p. 559, note 1 below.

[1] See p. 75 above.

ended with an uncompromising pronouncement :

> We shall not depart by a hair's breadth from the decisions which have been taken, and shall carry through to the end the conquest of the trade unions, i.e. the conquest of the masses.[1]

Heckert's reply for the German delegation struck a pessimistic note, and dwelt mainly on the difficulty of carrying out the declared policy in the German unions. The retreat of the working class, and the offensive of capital against it, had not come to an end in Germany ; and the decision of the ADGB to exclude communists made the campaign for unity derisory in the eyes of the German workers.[2] At the next meeting Schumacher, the leader of the German party opposition in the trade unions, made an impassioned attack on Lozovsky and on the policy of unity. He claimed to represent 20,000 Berlin workers who had formed themselves into a cartel of independent trade unions, and to have the support of a majority of party members. Appeals to the Amsterdam International and to the reformist unions merely invited humiliating rebuffs. Bordiga, consistently with his rejection of any united front tactics, took what was in essence the same line : to seek to unite Profintern with the Amsterdam International was to seek to liquidate it, and would sap the confidence of the workers in its usefulness.[3]

These frontal attacks brought Zinoviev on the scene. He began with the inevitable invocation of the authority of Lenin : " *Leninism in the trade unions means the struggle against splitting the unions* ", and " *the true Leninist Left is always where the workers are* ". To remain within the trade unions was the only way to win the masses away from the social-democrats. He denied that any question could arise of a " marriage " with Amsterdam (the word had been used in a memorandum circulating in the German delegation) ; " if the Russian trade unions went by themselves without Profintern to the Amsterdamers, that would really be a capitulation of Comintern and Profintern ". Zinoviev made a significant avowal of the embarrassments of Profintern :

[1] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 832-858.

[2] *Ibid.* ii, pp. 859-871 ; for the decision of the ADGB see p. 99 above.

[3] *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 875-885, 900-901 ; Schuhmacher later exclaimed that the liquidation of Profintern would in the end mean the liquidation of Comintern (*ibid.* ii, 927).

> Profintern was founded at a moment when it seemed that we should break through the enemy front in a frontal attack and quickly conquer the trade unions. . . . It was the moment when we thought that we should quite quickly win the majority of the workers. You know, comrades, that the movement later ebbed, that the whole problem, all the tactical difficulties, of Comintern in these five years arose from the fact that the development has gone on much more slowly than we expected. Social-democracy has in part consolidated itself — even in the trade union sphere. Now we must fight it in roundabout ways, which are slower and harder. That is the new fact which you *will* not understand.

Zinoviev attacked the failure of the KPD to deal decisively with deviations in this question: the party contained not only Schuhmacher, but also "semi-Schuhmachers, i.e. people who resist these false tactics more or less half-heartedly". Once more he drew attention to "the world-historical significance" of what was happening in Great Britain. The conclusion was "to win a majority in the existing trade unions, not only in the national, but in the international, sense". Ruth Fischer replied. She firmly dissociated the KPD from Schuhmacher. But this was not a question which could be settled by resolutions and declarations. Many German workers, and not only party members, were disillusioned with the reformist unions, and would prefer to form independent organizations. As for the Amsterdam International, its platform was still that of the Second International, and a complete reversal of attitude would be necessary in the SPD before a union between Amsterdam and Profintern could be thought of.[1]

The time had come to record a conclusion. The general resolution of the congress on tactics, in a brief passage on the trade unions, denounced "the provocation of the social-democratic leaders", and proposed to meet their attempts to split the movement "by more intensive work within the unions for trade union unity".[2] The theses based on Lozovsky's report gave more trouble. After the debate, the omitted section on "The Struggle for Unity in the World Trade Union Movement" had been restored to its place in the draft theses. The section called for

[1] *Ibid.* ii, 902-917, 920-925.
[2] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 404.

vigorous action on behalf of unity, and suggested that unity " might be re-established by the convening of a world congress at which all trade unions affiliated either to the Amsterdam International or to the Red International of Trade Unions would be represented on a proportional basis ". This section was, however, still resisted by the German delegation, which continued to maintain that the moment was not opportune for a further approach to Amsterdam and that time was required to educate mass opinion on the subject. The congress, on a proposal of the other principal delegations, approved the theses as a whole, and referred them to a drafting commission to complete the final text. The fourth section was, however, referred separately to IKKI for detailed consideration; and on the strength of this concession the German delegation voted for the theses, which were carried unanimously.[1]

When IKKI met after the end of the congress, further discussions took place behind the scenes, and Zinoviev was able to announce that differences of opinion had been " almost completely overcome ". He proceeded to read extracts from an agreed document, which was referred to as a " decision " or a " resolution ", but was not included in the resolutions of the congress or of IKKI and was apparently never published in full. Satisfaction was given to the German point of view by the usual jugglery with the conception of the united front " from above " and " from below ":

> We are against a united front exclusively from above; we are for the united front from below, and admit negotiations at the summit only where there is simultaneous preparation from below. . . . In this we recognize that right is on the side of the German comrades.

A new word, if not a new concept, was introduced to denote the proposed union between the Internationals:

[1] *Protokoll: Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1015-1016; for final text of the resolution see p. 559, note 1 below. The penultimate section of the resolution (6 in the German, 5 in the Russian version) contained the following clause (§ 6): " Where the trade union movement is split, systematic work must be carried on among the masses for the re-establishment of unity by convening a unity congress on the basis of proportional representation and freedom of the ideological struggle "; this was not challenged by the German delegates, presumably because it applied only to national trade union movements.

> The enlarged IKKI is in principle for the desired fusion of the two trade union Internationals on definite conditions.
>
> The fusion of the two Internationals will be possible only if this question is brought into the centre of the attention of the working masses, i.e. if success is achieved in creating a serious movement from below.

Zinoviev read further extracts laying down the conditions of the campaign for unity, and emphatically repeated the assurance that the Russian trade unions, in entering into separate negotiations with IFTU, considered themselves simply as agents of Profintern :

> The Russian trade unions are a part of Profintern, and will carry out the tactics of Profintern, not pursue any kind of independent policy.

He proposed the appointment of an " international commission " which would " visit England and Amsterdam in order to study the position of the trade union movement, and — if this seems necessary — to begin negotiations with Amsterdam ". Bordiga, who explained that he was not against trade union unity, but against the methods proposed to attain it, once more voted against the new resolution, which was carried against his vote. The composition of a delegation for eventual negotiations with IFTU was approved. Everyone had obtained something, and the matter was left in this confused and ambiguous position.[1] A separate resolution of the congress specifically

[1] *Pravda*, July 13, 1924 : *Protokoll : Fünfter Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale* (n.d.), ii, 1031-1032. The definition of the purposes of the proposed commission is in the *Pravda* account ; the official record merely mentions " a proposed commission for eventual negotiations " without further detail (probably because the commission never functioned). Neither account makes it clear whether the document read by Zinoviev was intended as an elaboration of the disputed fourth section of the main resolution or as a substitute for it ; the same uncertainty seems to have prevailed at the time. The main resolution, including its fourth section, was duly published in the official German and French records of the congress (*Thesen und Resolutionen des V. Weltkongresses der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1924), pp. 106-114 ; *V^e Congrès de l'Internationale Communiste* (1924), pp. 415-421), and in the Russian pamphlet, A. Lozovsky, *Nasha Taktika v Profdvizhenii* (1924), pp. 65-75. In the official Russian version of the proceedings the fourth section was omitted and the later sections re-numbered (*Pyatyi Vsemirnyi Kongress Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), ii, 109-115) ; and this was followed in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 438-444.

condemned the errors of Schuhmacher, and described abandonment of existing trade unions as " equivalent to desertion from the revolution ".[1]

The third congress of Profintern which opened on July 8, 1924, the day on which the congress of Comintern ended, could no longer avoid or play down the trade union issue, and much franker speaking was heard. Bukharin, in a formal speech of greeting from Comintern, insisted that the conquest of the trade unions as mass organizations was " a matter of life and death ", and that the appearance of a Left wing in IFTU was " one of the most important facts in our present political life ".[2] After a short introductory report by Lozovsky, the question of trade union unity was divided into three parts. Unity on the national plane was dealt with by Lozovsky in his main speech on the tasks of the revolutionary trade union movement. Yuzefovich was the *rapporteur* on the work of the IPCs in the trade Internationals. The question of international unity at the top level between Profintern and IFTU was reserved for a report by the French delegate Monmousseau ; the desire was obvious to avoid the imputation that this was a cause thrust on reluctant continental trade unions by Russian, supported by British, pressure.[3]

A critical note prevailed even in the debate on national unity. Lozovsky's slogan " Back into the unions ", and his plea for trade union unity and for the united front, were once more answered by Heckert, who thought that Lozovsky had neglected the aim of revolutionary action ; and another German spokesman bluntly said that the goal of the movement was not unity with the reformists, but " the organization and leadership of the proletariat's struggle for existence, for the annihilation of capitalist society ". A Polish delegate admitted that the united front had no meaning in Poland and that there, as in Germany, a " flight from the trade unions " was in progress.[4] On the other hand, the policy of promoting independent party trade unions produced a sharp retort from Sémard, the secretary of PCF :

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), p. 444.
[2] *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), pp. 19-21.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 39.
[4] *Ibid.* pp. 59, 63-64, 65.

It is not our task to found revolutionary sects. A trade union consisting exclusively of like-minded members contradicts Marxist principles. . . . This is an anti-Bolshevik tactic.[1]

The troublesome Czechoslovak problem was much in evidence. Hais, the recalcitrant Red trade union leader, said that he would submit to the decision of the congress, but that in his view " the tactics of remaining in the reformist unions postpone necessary action to the indefinite future " ; and another Czechoslovak delegate argued that, while individual secessions from reformist unions should not be tolerated, " the masses should be led out of the reformist unions into our own organizations ".[2] The general resolution of the congress went out of its way to express concern over the " splitting " tactics of Czechoslovak communists in the trade unions.[3] Delegates of two organizations of the much divided Dutch trade union movement expressed diametrically opposed views.[4] The American problem failed, as usual, to fit into any category. Dunne, speaking of work in the American trade unions, complained that " in the United States our work is more difficult than anywhere else in the world, since we lack revolutionary traditions and personnel, 90 per cent of which starts to quake at the mere mention of the word socialism ".[5] The congress was content to recommend three alternative ways of organizing unorganized workers in the United States — through the A.F. of L., through independent trade unions, and through the factory cells of the American Workers' Party : " all must be tried as expediency dictates ".[6] The problem of Fascist trade unions in Italy was particularly complex. The fifth congress of Comintern, except for a non-committal reference in the programme of action which it drew up for the PCI,[7] ignored it altogether. The third congress of Profintern canvassed two

[1] *Ibid.* p. 145.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 85, 89 ; Lozovsky accused Hais of developing " a complete philosophy of splitting " (*ibid.* p. 107). For Hais, see p. 377 above.

[3] *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), p. 137.

[4] *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), pp. 100-101, 104-105.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 222.

[6] *Ibid.* p. 387 (the resolutions of the congress relating to particular countries were not included in *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930)) ; the TUEL, in spite of its new statute (see pp. 244-245 above), was not mentioned. In March 1925, Lozovsky advised independent trade unions in the United States to enter the A.F. of L. (*Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 260).

[7] See p. 166 above.

alternative, and apparently contradictory, courses, and appeared to approve both. In its general resolution on the revolutionary trade union movement, it repeated what was now the accepted obligation for party members to remain in unions of a politically hostile complexion :

> The organization of illegal cells in Fascist trade unions is the best way to break up the Fascist organizations. Any means by which Fascism and the Fascists can be driven out of the sphere of the working class are good and should be utilized.[1]

But in a special resolution on " the struggle against the Fascist trade unions " more direct and aggressive measures were advocated. " Destruction of Fascist trade unions " was to be realized through " the restoration of proletarian trade unions " ; " out of the Fascist unions and into the class unions " was the new slogan, though this, too, was not incompatible with the injunction " to strengthen the activity of revolutionary cells within Fascist trade unions ".[2] In practice one policy proved as difficult to apply as the other.

A debate on the British movement provided an illuminating illustration of the lack of comprehension which was a serious factor in the policies of Comintern and Profintern at a time when Great Britain occupied a central place in their calculations. It was opened by a lengthy exposition from Tom Mann, who reported that the Left wing of the British miners had become " firm supporters " of Profintern, but that " it is convenient that this work should be carried on under the name of the miners' minority movement ". He concluded somewhat dubiously that, when the masses of trade unionists had had their eyes opened to the character of the Amsterdam International and of their own leaders, " an important part of them will go over to the Red International, and the present minority movement will become a movement of the majority ".[3] After Lozovsky and Kalnin, the two Russian participants in the discussion, had drawn the familiar picture of the workers' movement in Great Britain in revolt against their ineffective leaders and advancing step by step towards

[1] *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), p. 138.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 144-145.

[3] *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), pp. 174, 176.

revolution, a German delegate sourly remarked that, while the British trade unions were certainly the oldest, they also had " the most backward ideas in the trade union movement ".[1] Hardy, speaking in the name of " the British bureau of Profintern ", made it clear that its work consisted not in independent action, but in organizing " our minorities " in the trade unions.[2] The debate ended with two more lively speeches by MacManus and Larkin, both Irishmen, though the former spoke as a delegate of the CPGB. MacManus spoke earnestly of the need to " destroy the illusions present in the minds of numerous German and Russian comrades about the immediate possibilities of the modern workers' movement in England ", and advised his hearers to put no trust in the so-called Left trade union leaders, " since this Left wing is in the political sense not at all Left ". Larkin told the congress that the British worker was as much devoted to the British Empire as the Russian worker to the Soviet Union.[3] But such warnings were rarely heard, and in spite of the experience of 1914 never believed, in Moscow, and contributed to the bewilderment rather than the illumination of the delegates. A resolution on the tasks of Profintern in Great Britain followed conventional lines, but looked forward to the forthcoming conference of the NMM to be held in August 1924. A solitary German delegate voted against it in the commission.[4]

The work of the IPCs was subject to a variety of different appraisals at the congress. It was claimed, on unsubstantial evidence, that their influence now extended not only to western Europe, but to the United States, to Australia and even in some slight degree to the eastern countries.[5] Lozovsky more realistically deplored the failure of the committees to make any lasting impression in the key industries, though he believed that the influence of Profintern had been instrumental in " uniting a very large number of trade unions vertically ", i.e. in strengthening the trade Internationals, as against the national federations.[6] Yuzefovich spoke in conventional language of the " tremendous influence " of the committees among transport, metal, agricultural,

[1] *Ibid.* p. 192.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 189-190; the bureau was formally abolished after the congress (see p. 133, note 3 above).

[3] *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), pp. 197-200.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 330, 383-386. [5] *Ibid.* p. 16. [6] *Ibid.* pp. 32-34.

wood and leather workers.[1] The resolution adopted at the close of the debate declared that the entry of revolutionary trade unions, including Russian unions, into a trade International did not mean " a renunciation of the right to express their point of view within the International ". On the other hand, it was laid down that revolutionary unions admitted to a trade International were to leave the corresponding IPC, and that when all such unions had been admitted to the International, the IPC was to be dissolved.[2] The charge of dual allegiance was thus avoided, and the point made that the existence of the IPCs was dictated only by the refusal of the trade Internationals to admit Red unions.

The most contentious issue was, however, still that of union at the top between Profintern and the Amsterdam International. It was briefly touched on by Lozovsky in his reply to the opening debate. Those who urged that negotiations should take place with the Amsterdamers only " if they accepted our platform ", were saying nothing. On that hypothesis, there would be no need for negotiations : everything would have been settled. What was now proposed was not the entry of the Russian trade unions into IFTU or the liquidation of Profintern, but " unity which can be established only through a fusion of the two Internationals, only through an international conference, and not otherwise ".[3] Monmousseau's report on the subject came almost at the end of the agenda — the place reserved for either awkward or unimportant questions.[4] It was a tactful and well-balanced performance. Unity was necessary " *because unity is one of the greatest factors in the power of the workers' movement* ". This did not, however, mean unity attained by sacrificing " our programme, our tactics, our ideas on the altar of reformism ", but the penetration of " our ideas " into the whole trade union movement. Monmousseau put forward the favourite proposal of the French delegation — a world unity congress of the Red and Amsterdam Internationals with representation proportional to the number of

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

[2] *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), p. 152.

[3] *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), pp. 111-112.

[4] It took last place but one to " the tasks of Profintern in colonies and semi-colonies " ; for the latter subject, which the leaders had only just begun to take seriously, see pp. 620, 623 below.

trade union members affiliated to each; and he ended with a firm assurance that the Russian trade unions, like the CGTU, had no intention of "going to Amsterdam" and would remain faithful to Profintern.[1] The only other speaker was Tomsky, who normally did not concern himself with Profintern affairs, and professed himself no authority on the international movement, but had recently spent two months in Great Britain.[2] The purpose of his intervention was to reassure any who might still suspect the Russian unions of a desire to come to terms with Amsterdam on their own account and abandon Profintern; and he made an emphatic declaration that "*so long as Profintern exists*" the Russian trade unions would, "*exactly as hitherto, undertake no single step without the approval of Profintern and Comintern*".[3] Intentionally or unintentionally, he failed to dispel the suspicion lurking in the minds of some delegates that Profintern might, at the instigation of the Russian trade unions, dissolve itself.

After Tomsky's speech, the draft resolution proposed by Monmousseau was referred to a commission of 35 members, and the congress itself did not sit on the following day while the commission thrashed out the contentious issue. When the congress reassembled two days later, the ubiquitous Lozovsky, who acted as *rapporteur* for the commission, was able to announce complete agreement with only one adverse vote. This was cast by Schuhmacher, who in a final speech of protest argued that willingness to negotiate with Amsterdam meant willingness to abandon the old principles, and amounted to "the liquidation of Profintern with all its consequences".[4] In fact, the concessions made to the doubters had been few. The proposal for a unity congress between the two Internationals was put, as in the resolution of Comintern a few days earlier, in a permissive instead of a mandatory form: one of the next steps "*might*, after suitable preparation of the masses, be the convocation of an international unity congress of the trade unions". It was specified that any negotiations with Amsterdam undertaken by organizations belonging to Profintern and with the approval of Profintern should be

[1] *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), pp. 265-272.
[2] For this visit see pp. 22, 130 above.
[3] *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), pp. 280-281.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 283.

restricted to negotiations " about the realization of unity and of the united front ". Finally, a proposal to create a standing commission under Profintern auspices " for the unification of the trade union movements of the world ", which had originally been presented as a separate resolution, was to be embodied in the main unity resolution.[1]

In his concluding speech at the last session of the congress on July 22, 1924, Lozovsky once more declared that " the chief point on the agenda " had been the struggle for trade union unity. He reported the receipt by the central council of the Russian trade unions on the previous day of a belated letter from IFTU announcing the decision of the Vienna conference six weeks earlier,[2] and inviting the Russian trade unions to send a delegation of six to negotiate on the basis of this decision and of the statutes of IFTU. Lozovsky assured the congress that a reply would be sent in the spirit of its decisions.[3] The reply despatched a few days later was to the effect that the proposed negotiations were for the purpose of determining the conditions on which the Russian trade unions might associate themselves with IFTU, and should not be prejudiced by an attempt to lay down conditions in advance.[4] Lozovsky once more attempted to reply to the critics in an article in the Profintern journal :

> Some of our comrades are so afraid of reformism that they enquire cautiously : " And what will happen if Amsterdam accepts your proposal and agrees to an international unity congress ? " Our answer is : " Excellent ! We shall be the first to rejoice that the Amsterdam International has accepted our proposal, inasmuch as our resolution on unity has been designed *to realize* unity."
>
> " And suppose we should be in a minority at the unity congress ? " our comrades enquire. " If we are in a minority, we shall struggle so as to gain a majority, and we hope to gain it." " You are ready to go to the international unity congress without preliminary conditions of any kind ? " those comrades who

[1] *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), p. 232 ; for the final text of the resolution see *ibid.* pp. 351-352. For the resolution of Comintern see pp. 557-559 above. [2] See p. 552 above.

[3] *Protokoll über den Dritten Kongress der Roten Gewerkschaftsinternationale* (n.d.), pp. 334-355.

[4] Both letters are in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 103, August 8, 1924, p. 1328, and in *The International Federation of Trade Unions : Report on Activities during the Years 1924, 1925 and 1926* (Amsterdam, 1927), pp. 43-45.

are afraid of opportunism continue to ask us. "Yes, we are ready to go to the international unity congress without preliminary conditions. The correlation of forces at the unity congress will determine the programme and the tactics of the new International." "And if the Amsterdamers advance preliminary conditions, then what?" "The negotiations will disclose — if such negotiations do take place — which of the preliminary conditions advanced by both sides are acceptable to both and which are not. The working masses will judge us and the Amsterdamers." "And if the Amsterdamers refuse to negotiate altogether on unity?" the comrades persist. "If they refuse, so much the worse for them. We shall not give up our struggle for unity. The Amsterdamers did not want a united front, but this was not enough of a reason to give it up. Likewise with this issue." [1]

While few can have believed that the proceedings of the congresses of Comintern and Profintern in the summer of 1924 had brought trade union unity any nearer, only the German party was seriously perturbed by what had been done.[2]

(c) *The Struggle at its Peak*

The summer and autumn of 1924 were a period of optimism in Moscow when the revolutionary tide still seemed to be flowing on the trade union front. In Germany the KPD had failed to capture the trade unions; but the acceptance of the decisions of the fifth congress of Comintern and the expulsion of Schuhmacher [3] were thought to mark the end of the retreat. Any shortcomings in Germany were more than counter-balanced by continued progress in Great Britain. The NMM Conference held in London on August 23–24, 1924, passed a judicious resolution on trade union unity, which straddled all points of view. It welcomed the action of the British delegates at Vienna in "fighting for the admittance of the Russian trade unions to the IFTU", but thought it "futile" to ignore the powerful unions already affiliated to Profintern. The problem was to bring both the unions affiliated to IFTU and those affiliated to Profintern "under one common

[1] *Krasnyi Internatsional Profsoyuzov*, No. 7-8 (42-43), July–August 1924, p. 8; *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 7-8 (42-43), 1924, p. 5.

[2] For reactions in the KPD see pp. 113-115 above.

[3] See p. 115 above.

leadership expressed by one international trade union centre ".[1] Tomsky's triumphant reception at the trade union congress in Hull in September 1924 [2] was the occasion for much undiscerning enthusiasm in Soviet circles. But among the more experienced leaders elements of doubt persisted. Tomsky is said to have returned from Great Britain so much impressed with the standard of living of the British and western European worker that he doubted the possibility of revolution in the west.[3] Trotsky, never a great believer in the revolutionary efficacy of the trade unions, struck a frankly sceptical note. In *Lessons of October*, written at the moment of the Hull congress, he referred to the question recently asked " through which door the proletarian revolution in England will come : through the communist party or through the trade unions ". This way of putting the question he described as " basically false and dangerous ". At the end of the war no victorious revolution had occurred outside Russia, not because there were no trade unions, but because there were no parties ; and " this conclusion applies to Europe as a whole ".[4] Stalin offered a characteristically cautious assessment of the prospects of united front tactics in the trade union movement. Having noted that many revolutionary unions, " not wishing to cause a split in the trade union movement ", still remained faithful to Amsterdam, he subscribed to the view that this situation was in course of modification owing to the decline in the material prosperity and industrial predominance of Europe, and of Great Britain in particular. The proceedings at Vienna and at Hull were " a reflexion of the growing pressure of the masses on a reactionary trade union bureaucracy ". The conclusion was, however, that, while it was necessary to support the Left elements within the existing unions, the action of these elements would not be effective unless it were directed against " the reactionary leaders of Amsterdam " and the " hesitancy " of the Left leaders in their struggle with the reactionary leaders.[5] Manuilsky noted a danger of a " rigidity and stagnation in the workers' movement " which

[1] *Report of National Minority Conference* (n.d.), pp. 21-22 ; for this conference see p. 134 above.

[2] See p. 135 above.

[3] I. Deutscher, *Stalin* (1949), p. 402, note 1.

[4] Trotsky, *Sochineniya*, iii, i, pp. lix-lx.

[5] Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vi, 294-298.

would work in favour of the Amsterdam leaders.[1]

In fact, except in Great Britain, the cause of trade union unity was everywhere losing momentum. Since the days of the Berlin conference,[2] the transport workers' International had moved to the Right. Its congress in Hamburg on August 7–12, 1924, ignored the question of unity in spite of mild British and Swedish attempts to place it on the agenda.[3] The fourth conference of revolutionary transport workers, which immediately followed it, was rendered sterile by the absence of delegates from Moscow who had failed to obtain visas. The Czechoslovak delegates supported a Dutch resolution condemning the dealings of the Russian union with the transport workers' International, and proposing the creation of a Red International of transport workers. This was rejected, but nothing effective was found to put in its place.[4] The reply of the Russian trade union central council to the resolution of the Vienna congress of IFTU [5] had offered no prospect of further concessions. On September 11, 1924, IFTU reiterated its view that " something in writing as a basis of discussion " was desirable before negotiations could begin, and invited the Russian council to put forward " written proposals ". Finally, on October 23, 1924, the Russian central council returned a firm reply that unity could come only on the basis of the class struggle and of recognition of " the irreconcilable contradiction in interests between labour and capital ".[6] About the same time Nin, the Spanish member of the secretariat of Profintern, wrote with disarming frankness that " *the day on which we reach this goal* (i.e. trade union unity) *will be regarded by us as the day of the victory of Profintern and of the October revolution* ".[7]

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 122, September 19, 1924, p. 1612.

[2] See p. 548 above.

[3] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 9-10 (44-45), September–October 1924, pp. 118-119.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 119-120; this account described the Russian delegation as " partially " prevented from attending, but mentioned no Russian delegate as actually present.

[5] See p. 566 above.

[6] For these letters, see *The International Federation of Trade Unions : Report on Activities during the Years 1924, 1925 and 1926* (Amsterdam, 1927), pp. 43-47; *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 149, November 18, 1924, p. 2013.

[7] *Ibid.* No. 143, November 3, 1924, p. 1927.

But the deadlock with Amsterdam seemed less important than the good will generated between the Russian and British trade unions by the common quest for unity. Before leaving Hull, Tomsky had invited a British trade union delegation to pay a return visit to the Soviet Union, and to attend the Soviet trade union congress to be held in the following November. On November 11, 1924, a large and distinguished delegation, headed by Purcell, arrived in Moscow; and the executive bureau of Profintern heralded their arrival by passing a resolution to "lend every support to the trade union minority in England".[1] In opening the congress, Zinoviev devoted his highest flight of eloquence to the theme of unity:

> *The new stage of blackest reaction is enough to make every honest fighter of the working class say that with things in this state the international unity of the trade union movement is as necessary to us as air to man. . . . We stand firmly on our positions. The workers of the whole world will come to us. And, while remaining at our fighting posts, we stretch out a helping hand without any kind of diplomatic calculation to the organized trade unions of the whole world, we offer an alliance to the workers organized in the Amsterdam unions and we say: "Come let us unite on the elementary point, on the ABC of opposition to the bourgeoisie which is advancing to the attack with unprecedented audacity".*[2]

Purcell, Bramley and Ben Tillett once more exchanged complimentary speeches with Tomsky. The need for trade union unity was duly emphasized, though Purcell involuntarily revealed the equivocal nature of the British position when, speaking in the name of the British working class, he expressed the hope that the general council of the TUC would "use all its efforts to bring about the admission of the Russian trade union movement into the ranks of the international movement", and described the British rôle as that of "middlemen".[3] Tomsky in his main speech compared the correspondence of the Russian trade union central council with IFTU to "a very bad and cheap love story", in which the parties "love each other and at the same time abuse

[1] *Trud*, November 12, 1924.

[2] *Shestoi S"ezd Professional'nykh Soyuzov SSSR* (1925), pp. 22, 28-29.

[3] The speeches were reported *ibid.* pp. 48-58.

each other". He attacked Leipart and other SPD leaders who *de facto* directed the policy of IFTU, and tactfully excused Purcell, who, though one of the Amsterdam leaders, was in a minority and was obliged to sign documents "not always to his liking".[1] The attitude adopted to IFTU was criticized by many delegates, several of whom expressed distaste for "the romance with Amsterdam". What good, asked one, could come from an alliance with an organization led by such notorious traitors to the working class as Leipart and Jouhaux? Another protested that "the hands of the leaders of German social-democracy are not yet dry from the blood of the workers".[2] But these rank-and-file discontents were drowned in the general acclaim accorded to the visitors. Pollitt, the CPGB and NMM leader who was a member of the British delegation, defended communists against the charge of trying to split the trade unions through the minority movement.[3] Lozovsky ingeniously restored Profintern to a picture from which it seemed completely remote by explaining that, since "the trade unions of the USSR are the basis and foundation of Profintern, and the English trade unions are the foundation and basis of the Amsterdam International", an Anglo-Soviet agreement would pave the way for an agreement between the two Internationals.[4] On November 17, 1924, an agreement was reached behind the scenes for joint action by the general council of the TUC and the central council of the Soviet trade unions to request IFTU to convene "a free and unconditional immediate conference with representatives of the Russian trade union movement";[5] and the congress, informed by Tomsky of the agreement, welcomed this step towards trade union unity, and instructed the central council to hasten the formation of an Anglo-Russian joint trade union committee to give effect to it.[6] The main resolution of the congress described international trade union unity as "a sure guarantee against the continuing threat of a new world war and a bulwark in the struggle against Fascist reaction and the offensive of capital";[7] the order in which the objectives were named was not without significance. The congress over, the British delegates

[1] *Ibid.* pp. 78-81.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 125, 133.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 405-406.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 386.
[5] *Report of Fifty-Seventh Annual Trades Union Congress* (1925), p. 296.
[6] *Shestoi S"ezd Professional'nykh Soyuzov SSSR* (1925), p. 440.
[7] *Ibid.* p. 439.

toured different parts of the country, and were lavishly entertained with full press publicity, spending a month in the Soviet Union. The farewells on their departure for home from Leningrad were marked by intensive displays of enthusiasm. The issue of *Leningradskaya Pravda* of December 11, 1924, was almost entirely devoted to the delegation, carrying on its front page photographs of its six leading members and an article in English entitled *The Unity of the Trade Union Movement of the World*; and on the following day a message of thanks from Purcell and an article by Ben Tillett appeared in English, together with a facsimile of a farewell letter from the secretary of the delegation. On its return to Great Britain, the delegation published a lengthy, detailed and informative report in terms generally appreciative of all that it had seen and heard.[1]

The British trade union delegation of 1924 was an important landmark in the development of Soviet relations with the British Left, and the forerunner and prototype of workers' delegations from many countries which visited the Soviet Union during the next few years. But other forces were also at work. While the Soviet trade union congress was meeting in Moscow, the American Federation of Labour (A.F. of L.) held its annual congress at El Paso. It was attended by fraternal delegates from several European countries, and Gompers, the president of the A.F. of L., hinted at the possibility of the American, Canadian and Mexican unions affiliating to IFTU. Though this project was not pursued, it inspired a bitter attack by Bukharin on Gompers, who was accused of "beginning an 'intervention' in Europe like his American employers", of "imitating the late President Wilson", of trying to "save" Amsterdam from "the intolerable influence of our trade unions", and of being a "direct accomplice of the Curzons and the Churchills".[2] With the diplomatic situation turning everywhere against the Soviet Union, and a Conservative government firmly established in Great Britain, a chillier climate set in, and both sides hardened their positions. The rôle of the conciliators grew daily more ungrateful; Purcell and his colleagues were made to feel their ambiguous position in the British

[1] *Russia: the Official Report of the Trades Union Delegation to Russia and Caucasia* (1925).

[2] *Pravda*, November 21, 1924; the article was signed "N. B.".

trade union movement. A joint session of the Second International and of IFTU held in Brussels on January 1–6, 1925, resounded with denunciations of the Soviet Union and of its supporters in the British trade unions.[1] On January 25, 1925, another national conference of the NMM met in Battersea " to support the delegation returned from Russia ", and lasted for three days. It mustered 591 delegates claiming to represent 600,000 workers and 40 important trade unions, a prominent part being played by Tom Mann, who presided, and by Cook, the miners' leader. Its oratory was devoted to the twin causes of Anglo-Soviet friendship and trade union unity, and an appropriate resolution was adopted.[2] But opinion in Amsterdam was less favourably impressed. At a meeting of the bureau of IFTU on February 6–9, 1925, the British delegates mustered only 6 votes in favour of a proposal for an " unconditional conference " with the Russian trade unions against an adverse vote of 13 ; and a resolution was carried by 14 votes to 5 declining to take any further action unless the central council of the Soviet trade unions expressed its " desire to be admitted to IFTU " [3] — a demand for unconditional surrender which was certain to be refused. The deadlock was unbroken.

Meanwhile impatience increased at the failure of other communist parties to make any visible progress towards the capture of the trade unions themselves. Even the promise of the NMM in Great Britain had no counterpart elsewhere. The uphill struggle waged since the earliest days of Profintern to halt the secession of communists from " reformist ", i.e. non-communist, trade unions continued relentlessly. The issue underlay the hotly contested trade union debate at the fifth congress of Comintern in June–July 1924.[4] Three months later Manuilsky, as Comintern delegate at the Czechoslovak party congress, was

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 8, January 9, 1925, pp. 91-92 ; the attack was led by the Belgian Vandervelde and the Russian Menshevik Dan.

[2] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 2-3 (49-50), February–March 1925, pp. 127-129, where the resolution is given in full : for further accounts see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 19, January 30, 1925, pp. 251-252 ; No. 25, February 13, 1925, pp. 363-364. The conference was welcomed in *Pravda*, January 29, 1924.

[3] *The International Federation of Trade Unions : Report on Activities during the Years 1924, 1925 and 1926* (Amsterdam, 1927), p. 48.

[4] See pp. 544-557 above.

endeavouring to dissuade Czechoslovak communists from abandoning the social-democratic unions.[1] At the conference of the Orgburo of IKKI on December 15, 1924, Pyatnitsky brought the matter to a head by complaining of the failure of the French, Czechoslovak and German parties to form fractions in non-party institutions, and, in particular, in the trade unions.[2] The drive for communists to form fractions in non-communist unions was a sore point in the discussions of the organization conference held in advance of the session of the fifth enlarged IKKI in March 1925.[3] Pyatnitsky circulated to the conference an article in which he had expounded in uncompromising terms the obligation of communists to work in trade unions even of the most hostile political complexion.[4] In his speech to the conference, he complained that " so far it is impossible to speak of any regular fraction work ". There were no communists in the Christian unions in Germany, or in the CGT unions in France or in the reformist unions in Czechoslovakia, so that work in these unions could not be carried on. He ended by begging the delegates to study his article.[5] The ensuing discussion did little but confirm Pyatnitsky's charges. Zapotocky, the Czechoslovak delegate, admitted that, after the split in the movement, " the view prevailed that we, having our own trade unions, did not need to organize fractions in the Amsterdam trade unions ". The German delegate cautiously hinted at the opposition aroused even by the slogan " Into the free trade unions ", and thought that the slogan " Into the Christian trade unions " could remain only " a pious wish ". Suzanne Girault, speaking for the PCF, blamed the old Rightist leaders for calling party members out of the CGT unions at the time of the split, and sourly observed that, " in order to make possible the creation of new fractions, we are now obliged to transfer comrades from the CGTU to the CGT ". Nevertheless she claimed that communist fractions had been formed in 47 CGT unions. An Italian delegate claimed that members of the PCI were working in both Fascist and Christian unions.[6] The

[1] See p. 182 above. [2] For this conference see p. 924 below.
[3] For this conference see pp. 925-928 below.
[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 41, March 27, 1925, pp. 620-623.
[5] *Der Organisatorische Aufbau der Kommunistischen Partei* (1925), pp. 22-23.
[6] *Ibid.* pp. 43, 85, 89-90, 93.

conference adopted no specific resolution on the trade union question. But in its general resolution, which was subsequently confirmed by the fifth enlarged IKKI, it noted the " extraordinary importance " of " the organization of communist fractions in trade union federations of all tendencies ".[1]

The word " unity " was the keynote of all discussions of trade union policy at the fifth enlarged IKKI. But the question fell into two separate parts: unity in the unions themselves to be achieved by the successful work of party fractions within them, and international unity to be achieved through negotiations with Amsterdam or with the trade Internationals affiliated to IFTU. The former aspect of the question was dealt with under the rubric of Bolshevization. Lozovsky made the point unambiguously in his report on the trade unions:

> The Bolshevization of the parties means above all a carefully thought out Marxist-Leninist approach to the trade unions for the purpose of conquering the masses. Through the unity slogan we shall conquer the masses; and the conquest of the masses is the first and principal commandment of Bolshevism.[2]

And the main pronouncement of the session on this issue was reserved for the monster resolution on Bolshevization. This comprised both warnings and exhortations:

> Deviations in the question of the work of communists in the trade unions are fraught with the greatest dangers for the cause of the real Bolshevization of our parties. Throughout the capitalist world the trade unions are the most important form of the mass (to the last man) organization of the proletariat. . . .
>
> One of the most important elements of the teaching of Leninism is its teaching about the work of communists even in the most reactionary trade unions. . . . The most important element of Bolshevization consists in paying a hundred times more attention than hitherto to work in existing social-democratic and other (yellow, national-socialist, Christian and Fascist) trade unions. Only thus can the monopoly of the reformist upper strata (workers' aristocracy and workers' bureaucracy) in the trade unions be really broken. Only thus can the trade unions be freed in practice from the corrupting influence of reformism.

[1] *Ibid.* p. 113.

[2] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), p. 302; the German text of this passage (*Protokoll der Erweiterten Exekutive der Kommunistischen Internationale* (1925), p. 225) is shorter and vaguer.

Refusal to apply the tactics of the united front in this manner was "inconsistent with Bolshevization".[1] But international unity occupied a more conspicuous place in the proceedings. Nothing had yet occurred to weaken the conviction of Moscow that the British Labour movement was in process of making a decisive turn to the Left, which provided the best antidote to the growing hostility of a British Conservative government, and the most promising field for the activities of Comintern. Zinoviev claimed that Comintern had "launched the most popular slogan, that of the struggle for the unity of the international trade union movement", and welcomed the prospective formation of the Anglo-Russian committee. "Historically", he declared, "our whole trade union campaign arose out of the situation existing in the British labour movement." He boasted that 600,000 British trade unionists had now adhered to the minority movement, and that, thanks to Lenin, Comintern had found the "key" to the "enigma" of the British Labour movement, which had eluded both the First and the Second Internationals.[2] Lozovsky in his report also detected a significant "shift" in the British proletariat — a "profound process of movement to the Left": "the ice is breaking up".[3] A brief resolution was adopted on "The Struggle for the Unity of Trade Union Movement", enthusiastically endorsing "the *rapprochement* between the English and Soviet trade unions", and calling on the workers of all countries to "support resolutely and energetically the formation of the Anglo-Soviet trade union *bloc*".[4]

The session of IKKI had scarcely ended when action was taken to carry out this policy. Early in April 1925, at the invitation of the general council of the British TUC, a strong Soviet trade union delegation led by Tomsky proceeded to London to give effect to the decision taken in Moscow in November 1924 to create an Anglo-Russian trade union committee for the promotion of trade union unity. The discussions brought to light

[1] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 482-483; for the resolution as a whole see pp. 297-298 above.

[2] *Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1925), pp. 59-61; "the greatest achievement of the CPGB", said the British delegate later in the session, "is the organization of the minority movement" (*ibid.* p. 263).

[3] *Ibid.* p. 300.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 545; this resolution does not appear in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933).

the carefully concealed incompatibilities between the Soviet and British points of view. The Soviet leaders regarded the approach to Amsterdam by the Soviet trade unions as being made on behalf of Profintern, with the declared aim of bringing about a fusion between the two Internationals, and with the unspoken premiss that this would end by swinging the Amsterdam unions into the orbit of Profintern. The British leaders had little interest in Profintern, which they secretly regarded, from the experience of the British movement, either as a nuisance or as a sham, and wished, by reconciling the Soviet trade unions with the existing International, to strengthen it and give it a turn to the Left. The British delegates probably shocked their Soviet colleagues by coming out openly in favour of the affiliation of the Russian unions to IFTU.[1] Tomsky, in a conciliatory speech which once more blurred the differences, rejected the proposal of unconditional surrender to Amsterdam as a repetition of the " dictated peace " of Brest-Litovsk, and pleaded for British support in continuing to press for a conference with IFTU without prior conditions.[2] The discussions, which lasted from April 6 to April 8, ended in the issue of separate British and Soviet statements, as well as of a joint declaration on international trade union unity and a resolution which provided for the setting up of " a joint advisory council representing the Russian and British trade union movements". The joint declaration called for " the international unity of the workers of all countries ", which could alone serve as " an impregnable force against capitalist oppression " and " an unbreakable pledge of peace and economic security ". It confirmed the agreement reached in Moscow in November 1924, and noted that " common steps have been taken, on the proposal of the British delegation, to induce the Amsterdam International to give its sincere assent to the convening of a conference, free of preliminary conditions, with the representatives of the trade unions of the USSR ".[3]

[1] The best account of what happened was given in a public speech by Lozovsky in Moscow on April 25, 1925 (*Pravda*, April 28, 1925); Lozovsky described the setting up of the joint advisory council as a compromise between this British proposal and the Soviet desire for an " Anglo-Russian unity committee ".

[2] *Trud*, April 24, 1925; a translation of the speech is in M. Tomsky, *Getting Together* (n.d. [1925]), pp. 91-111.

[3] *TUC : Russia and International Unity* (1925), pp. 13-21; *Izvestiya*, April 16, 1925.

The proceedings in London were reported by Tomsky on April 30, 1925, to the trade union central council in Moscow, which approved the joint declaration and appointed five of the leading Soviet trade unionists — Tomsky, Dogadov, Melnichansky, Andreev and Lepse — to serve on the joint advisory council.[1] Further letters to IFTU from the Soviet and British trade unions in May and June 1925 — the sequel of the April meeting — continued to fall on stony ground.[2] But, if the obduracy of IFTU was still a barrier to relations between the Soviet trade unions and the representative international organ of western trade unionism, a direct link had now been established with the most powerful of the national trade union organs of the west. Zinoviev, in his article of June 1925, *The Epoch of Wars and Revolutions*,[3] reiterated the verdict that " the *rapprochement* between the trade unions of the Soviet Union and of Great Britain is the greatest hope of the international proletariat ".

The late summer of 1925 was marked by significant events in the trade union movements of the principal western countries. In France, the rival congresses of the CGT and CGTU at the end of August 1925 had deepened the rift between them, and been followed by the failure of a direct attack by the CGTU on the entrenched position of the CGT.[4] In Germany, the Breslau congress of the ADGB, which overlapped the two French congresses, provided a further demonstration of declining communist influence in the trade unions.[5] But compensation for these discouraging symptoms was once more sought in the British movement. The French and German congresses coincided with a highly successful conference of the NMM, followed by the Scarborough congress of the TUC, where Tomsky once more had a rousing reception, and sympathy between British and Russian trade unions was effusively demonstrated.[6] After the end of the Scarborough congress a meeting of the Anglo-Russian joint

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 81, May 19, 1925, pp. 1151-1153 ; *International Press-Correspondence*, No. 45, May 28, 1925, pp. 593-595.

[2] *Report of Fifty-Seventh Annual Trades Union Congress* (1925), pp. 301-303 ; for the Russian letter of May 19, 1925, see *International Federation of Trade Unions : Report on Activities during the Years 1924, 1925 and 1926* (Amsterdam, 1927), pp. 49-50.

[3] See p. 490 above.

[4] See pp. 356-357 above.

[5] See p. 330 above.

[6] See pp. 343-344 above.

advisory council was held in London on September 17, 1925. Referring to itself as " the Anglo-Russian unity committee ", it diagnosed a danger of war, of which events in Morocco, Syria and China were the symptoms, condemned the Locarno pact, the object of which was " to draw Germany into the military alliance against the Soviet republics ", and deduced that " the creation of an all-embracing world trade union International " was more urgent than ever.[1] When Tomsky returned home, Hicks, a member of the general council of the TUC, and Citrine, its assistant secretary, accompanied him on a visit to the Soviet Union.[2]

Next to the blossoming of Anglo-Soviet friendship, the most encouraging feature of the summer of 1925 was the influx into Moscow of enthusiastic workers' delegations from other foreign countries — the successors of the British delegation of November 1924. The first visit was paid by eleven officials of the French and Belgian " reformist " trade unions, who toured the Soviet Union in June and July 1925. On the conclusion of their tour they praised all they had seen, and declared that " *trade union unity in the whole world* " was essential, and that they could " *no longer share the responsibility with those who commit the great crime of a splitting policy* ", though they cautiously added that there had been " mistakes on both sides ". Tomsky made a suitable reply, asking only for an unconditional meeting with the Amsterdam International on equal terms.[3] But the most spectacular welcome was reserved for a delegation of 53 German workers elected in the factories to make the trip — two-thirds of them social-democrats.[4] The delegates arrived in Leningrad by sea on July 14, 1925, went on to Moscow six days later, and thereafter spent six weeks touring different parts of the Soviet Union. On the eve of their arrival in Moscow, both *Pravda* and *Izvestiya* carried articles of greeting in German ; and *Pravda* also published letters of welcome from Krupskaya, Trotsky and Lunacharsky.[5] In Moscow the delegates

[1] *Pravda*, September 24, 1925.

[2] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 136, September 29, 1925, pp. 1997-1998.

[3] *Ibid.* No. 111, July 21, 1925, p. 1531 ; No. 116, August 4, 1925, p. 1616.

[4] These particulars are given in *Die Rote Fahne*, July 10, 1925, which reported a large demonstration in Berlin on the eve of the departure of the delegates.

[5] *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, July 19, 1925.

attended a session of the Moscow council of trade unions, at which Tomsky made a speech recounting the recent dealings of the Russian unions with the Amsterdam International and pleading the cause of trade union unity ; [1] and they later had interviews with Trotsky, who spoke of the desire of the Soviet Government to attract foreign capital by way of concessions,[2] and with Zinoviev, who, in making a plea for a united front of communist and social-democratic workers, admitted that the communists had made mistakes in the past, but thought these counted for nothing in comparison with the " monstrous error " of the social-democrats in 1914.[3] Zinoviev's speech at a farewell reception to the delegation in Leningrad on August 26, 1925, was devoted to the struggle for unity in the trade unions and " the united front of the toilers of the whole world " ; [4] and the delegation signalized its departure by publishing a lengthy address " to the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union ", expressing admiration of all that it had seen during the visit, and concluding that " the sacred duty of every conscious worker is to fight against the splitting of the workers' movement and to struggle for the fusion of the two trade union Internationals ".[5] In the period from July to October 1925 delegations of workers from Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Norway and Denmark visited the Soviet Union, as well as a parliamentary delegation of the British Labour Party. These visits of workers' delegations were hailed by Zinoviev at the session of IKKI in the following February as one of the outstanding successes of united front tactics.[6] This was the period when the Soviet leaders

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 113, July 28, 1925, pp. 1563-1564.

[2] *Ibid.* No 115, July 31, 1925, p. 1600; the meeting took place in Trotsky's office at the chief commissions committee, of which he was president.

[3] *Ibid.* No. 124, August 25, 1925, p. 1793.

[4] *Ibid.* No. 129, September 8, 1925, pp. 1875-1878 ; *Izvestiya*, September 2, 1925.

[5] *Pravda* and *Izvestiya*, August 28, 1925.

[6] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 44. Tomsky, according to a Czechoslovak delegate at the same session, complained that the Czechoslovak workers' delegation had been carelessly selected, bore a " party stamp ", and could not therefore be " utilized in the appropriate manner " (*ibid.* p. 347). A comment on the results expected from these delegations was contained in a subsequent Comintern report on the Swedish delegation, which comprised 300 workers, two-thirds of them non-communist : after their return to Sweden, " a considerable number of the delegates were utilized (ausgenützt) for lectures throughout the country, whereby the link between the party and the working masses and between the

seemed most concerned to make their appeal for friendship and unity direct to the workers of other countries and to relegate local communist parties to a subordinate place in their calculations. It was also the period of the maximum conciliation of the peasant and muffling of the class issue in domestic policy.

(*d*) *Fading Hopes*

The Scarborough trade union congress of September 1925, and the meeting of the Anglo-Russian joint council which followed it, represented the high-water mark in Anglo-Soviet trade union cooperation and in faith in the successful penetration of the trade union movement by a Left wing sympathetic to Soviet policies. The snub administered to the CPGB by the Liverpool congress of the Labour Party in the following month,[1] though only a repetition of the proceedings of previous years, stood in marked contrast to the sympathetic attitude of the Scarborough congress of the TUC, and seemed to reflect a weakening of the pro-Soviet Left. Within the TUC itself the balance shifted. An automatic, though in one sense anomalous, decision of the Scarborough congress had been to re-elect to the general council two influential Right-wing leaders, Clynes and Thomas, who had resigned their trade union posts in 1924 to become ministers in the Labour government. Bevin, formerly regarded as a Leftist but now rapidly making a transition to the Right,[2] was elected to the general council for the first time. Shortly after the congress, Bramley, the general secretary, who had been throughout a champion of Anglo-Soviet cooperation and a protagonist in the

Swedish working class and the Russian revolution was more closely knit" (*Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 215; the Russian text of this passage in *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional pered Shestym Kongressom* (1928), p. 159 is slightly toned down). Bukharin at the fifteenth party conference in October 1926 quoted the visits of "dozens" of workers' delegations as proof of a "turn to the Left" in the working class (*XV Konferentsiya Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (*B*) (1927), p. 36).

[1] See pp. 344-345 above.

[2] Bevin, who had been a stalwart champion of non-intervention against Soviet Russia in 1920 (see *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923*, Vol. 3, p. 212, note 4), incurred communist enmity on the occasion of "Black Friday" in 1921 (A. Bullock, *The Life and Times of Ernest Bevin*, i (1960), 182), and was again singled out for communist attack in July 1923 at the time of the dockers' strike (*ibid.* i, 217); he remained aloof from the Left pro-Soviet wing of the trade unions in 1924 and 1925.

battle with IFTU, died, and was succeeded by his more cautious and conservative deputy, Citrine. Attempts to discredit the pro-Soviet enthusiasm of the Left began to tell. Even in the trade unions the unqualified enthusiasm for Anglo-Soviet friendship evaporated in the winter of 1925–1926. The campaign against the Dawes plan and the Locarno treaties had fallen flat; outside the CPGB, they were accepted by the greater part of the British Left, almost without reservation and without regard to their real or supposed implications for the Soviet Union, as a serious contribution to the pacification of Europe.[1] For nearly two years hopes in Moscow had been built on the growing influence of a powerful Left wing in the British trade union leadership. Before the end of 1925 foundations on which these hopes rested were beginning to crumble.

Two events, which attracted much notice at this time, seemed to herald a counter-offensive from the Right throughout the workers' movement. The first was a congress of the revived Second International held at Marseilles in August 1925. The congress, which included large Russian Menshevik and SR delegations, as well as delegates purporting to speak for Armenia, Georgia and the Ukraine, was sympathetic to the proposed western security pact, supported the League of Nations, and desired to further Germany's admission to it. In a resolution inspired by keen hostility to the Bolsheviks, it denounced Comintern for fostering "the illusion that the emancipation of the workers can be won at the point of the bayonet by the victorious Red armies, and that a new world war may be necessary to bring about world revolution", and for encouraging "revolutionary movements in Asia and Africa"; it demanded the right of self-determination for "nations of the Soviet Union . . . such as Armenia, Georgia, the Ukraine and others".[2] The second event was the convention of the A.F. of L. held in Atlantic City in

[1] The significance of this attitude, which was shared by the non-communist Left throughout Europe, was only gradually realized in Moscow; Rakovsky in a speech of January 13, 1926, complained of the failure of "a certain part of the workers" to recognize that Locarno was "a threat to peace and directly to us" (*Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 1, 1926, p. 46; for this speech see p. 422, note 5 above).

[2] *Second Congress of the Labour and Socialist International* (n.d. [1925]), pp. 287-288; at the Menshevik trial in Moscow in 1931 Sukhanov alleged that the Marseilles congress had been the starting-point of an international campaign

October 1925. When Purcell, who attended the convention as a fraternal delegate of the British trade unions, invited the A.F. of L. to join IFTU, to enter into relations with the Soviet trade unions and to work with them for the cause of trade union unity, he had an openly hostile reception, and was ridiculed in the American press. A resolution advocating recognition of the Soviet Union was defeated; only two votes are said to have been cast for it. The convention adopted a resolution which reaffirmed the Monroe doctrine and described the A.F. of L. as "the recognized international labour movement of the Americas"; warned "the Red International of autocratic Moscow" against any attempt to "invade the hallowed soil of this hemisphere" under "pretence of world labour unity"; denounced "the whole communist philosophy which is superimposed on the Russian Soviet Government, both as a philosophy and as a structure of so-called government", proclaiming its hostility "not merely in defensive terms, but in a vital and aggressive manner"; and declared that it would "continue its opposition to all forms of communist agitation in the United States and in the western hemisphere".[1] The convention was regarded in Moscow as a significant stage in the growing interest of the A.F. of L., first noted a year earlier,[2] in European trade union affairs; this was the counterpart of the intervention of the American Government and of American capital in Europe following the Dawes plan. Lozovsky at the fourteenth Russian party congress in December 1925 referred to "the attempt of Amsterdam to find support in America against England".[3] Trotsky about the

of intervention against the Soviet Union (*Protsess Kontrrevolyutsionnoi Organizatsii Men'shevikov* (1931), p. 131). Preobrazhensky, in an article in *Pravda*, September 24, 1925, distinguished between the extreme anti-Soviet wing of the Second International represented by Kautsky and a "more moderate" wing consisting of Bauer and the British section.

[1] *New York Times*, October 16, 1925, p. 5. For Soviet accounts of the convention see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 157, November 24, 1925, pp. 2361-2362; *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 12 (59), December 1925, pp. 323-337 (articles by Lozovsky and Foster); *Mirovoe Khozyaistvo i Mirovaya Politika*, No. 5-6, 1926, pp. 57-58. Purcell after the convention toured the United States, and spoke in "a dozen important industrial centres" (*Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 262).

[2] See p. 572 above.

[3] *XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), p. 777; at the enlarged IKKI in February 1926 Lozovsky dwelt at some length on the

same time reproached the A.F. of L. with having organized only 2,800,000 of the 25 million industrial workers in the United States, and spoke of " a complete parallelism in the work of Coolidge and of the successors of Gompers " ; [1] and Zinoviev, quoting the Atlantic City resolution at a party meeting some months later, noted that " this Fascist reformism is already being exported to Europe ".[2]

Meanwhile the stubbornness of IFTU placed the British trade union leaders who had espoused the cause of unity in an increasingly unenviable position. No weapon remained in their hands except a threat to secede from IFTU ; and this would have defeated their own ends, and was not desired even by the communists themselves. At a meeting on December 5–6, 1925, the general council of IFTU by a majority of 14 to 7 re-affirmed its previous position.[3] A few days later the Anglo-Russian council met in Berlin. By this time, the Russians had exhausted their patience, and wished to revert to open polemics against IFTU, but were persuaded by the British contingent to wait a little longer.[4] In fact the council was helpless. It could do no more than protest against the intransigence of the majority of IFTU, against " the continued and unprovoked attacks upon the Russian trade union movement ", and against " the gross misrepresentation of the work of the Anglo-Russian joint advisory council ".[5] An unexpected feature of the meeting was the arrival in Berlin of delegates of the Norwegian and Finnish trade unions with an enquiry as to the possibility of their adhesion to the Anglo-Russian council. The enquiry met with a negative response,

growing influence of the A.F. of L. in unions affiliated to Amsterdam (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 289-290).

[1] L. Trotsky, *Europa und Amerika* (1926), p. 52.

[2] *Pravda*, April 28, 1926.

[3] *International Federation of Trade Unions : Report on Activities during the Years 1924, 1925 and 1926* (Amsterdam, 1927), p. 51. Lozovsky gave an account of the session in *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 164, December 15, 1925, pp. 2456-2457 ; even " a conciliatory, all too conciliatory, resolution " proposed by Hicks, the British delegate, was rejected.

[4] This account was given by Tomsky to the sixth enlarged IKKI in February 1926 by way of excuse for the weak attitude adopted (*Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 310-312).

[5] *TUC : Russia and International Unity* (1926), pp. 51-52.

since its acceptance would have been " treated politically as an attempt to create a third trade union International ", and thus presumably to make Profintern superfluous. But this tentative approach enabled Tomsky, at the fourteenth Russian party congress later in the same month, to claim a potential " four-fold alliance " in support of the programme of the Anglo-Russian council.[1]

The latter stages of the proceedings of the Anglo-Russian joint council provoked a recrudescence of the dispute in Russian party circles between a majority which firmly believed in close relations with the Left wing of the British trade union movement as the key to the ultimate conquest of the movement as a whole, and a minority which was rendered increasingly uneasy by the fruitless concessions of principle involved in this policy. The difference finally came to a head round the proposal of the British delegates to the Anglo-Russian council that the Russian trade unions should accede to the Amsterdam invitation and join IFTU. Circumstantial evidence shows that some support for this proposal was forthcoming in Soviet trade union circles, which had always been jealous of the rôle of Profintern. Such a step would indeed have been tantamount to a liquidation of Profintern, which could hardly have continued to exist once its Russian backbone had been removed. Trotsky recorded that in the latter part of 1925 and at the beginning of 1926 no less than 23 Soviet trade unions represented in the Soviet trade union general council " changed their statutes in the sense of omitting the reference to their membership of the Red Profintern and substituting a reference to membership of an International Federation of Trade Unions ".[2] The entry of the Russian trade unions into IFTU is said by Trotsky to have been advocated in 1925, " conditionally by Tomsky, unconditionally and categorically by Kaganovich ".[3]

[1] *XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (*B*) (1926), pp. 745-746; it may be surmised that Tomsky and other leaders of the Russian trade unions would have welcomed the proposal, and that this was one of the bases of the charge of desiring to liquidate Profintern (see below).

[2] Memorandum of July 11, 1926, in Trotsky archives, T 2993, p. 2; Trotsky repeated the statement, without mentioning the number of unions involved, at the fifteenth party conference four months later (*XV Konferentsiya Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (*B*), (1927), p. 508).

[3] Memorandum prepared by Trotsky for the fifteenth party conference of November 1926 in the Trotsky archives, T 3006, p. 14.

Lozovsky was evidently successful in parrying the attack and upholding the cause of Profintern. The controversy did not come into the open. Tomsky occupied a key position in the struggle between the party leaders which was now in its most acute phase; and neither side could afford to antagonize him. On the other hand, the trade unions still retained, in virtue of their membership, vestiges of a non-party status. To do anything which appeared to recognize and encourage their right to pursue an independent policy would be invidious. In the event, neither Stalin on the one side nor Zinoviev and Kamenev on the other were willing to inject this issue into the party dispute.

In the debate on Comintern at the fourteenth party congress in December 1925 both Zinoviev and Shmidt, the People's Commissar for Labour, hailed the virtues of the Anglo-Russian *rapprochement*, though Shmidt was frankly pessimistic about the prospects of unity elsewhere: not only the KPD, but other western communist parties, took up "a very sceptical attitude to unity through the trade unions".[1] But the debate on the trade unions which followed [2] revealed something of the latent friction between the groups headed by Tomsky and Lozovsky. Tomsky, who opened the debate, claimed that the whole policy of the Russian trade unions in their negotiations with Amsterdam had been agreed with Comintern and Profintern, and was the logical corollary of the campaign for the united front; it had achieved "a certain success" in promoting "the turn to the Left" of the trade union movement in Great Britain and in "other countries". He defended the Anglo-Russian joint council from charges of undue moderation. No doubt, he remarked ironically, the documents of the council left something to be desired "from the point of view of orthodox communism": some people would have liked to have them full of diatribes against "traitors, reformists, yellow leaders of the Amsterdam International". But it was useless to abuse those with whom you sought to negotiate. He named the three purposes of the joint council — the struggle against war, the struggle against the economic offensive of capital, and the unity of the international workers' movement; the priority given

[1] *XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), pp. 702-706.

[2] For the part of the debate relating to the domestic policy of the Russian trade unions see Vol. 1, pp. 399-402.

to the political objective was significant. In speaking of the forms which a united trade union International might take, Tomsky asked the question: "Can we define how far we shall go and how far we shall not go?" And he replied that it would be a mistake to do so in advance, and that what was important was not to conduct a mere "propaganda manœuvre".[1]

Lozovsky's speech, unlike Tomsky's, put great emphasis on the east: at one point he described the inclusion in Profintern of "a fairly large number" of eastern workers as "a fundamental difference between Profintern and the Amsterdam International". Lozovsky rounded on Tomsky's references to the unity campaign, retorting sententiously that "we ought to know how far we shall not go". The Soviet trade unions must in no circumstances "enter the Amsterdam International"; this would not only split Profintern, but would weaken the communist parties in a number of countries and "disorganize Comintern". In conclusion, Lozovsky once more straddled two complementary — or perhaps incompatible — policies when he exhorted his audience both "gradually to broaden the Anglo-Russian council by drawing into it more and more new organizations" and "systematically to strengthen Profintern"; and, when he spoke of "broadening" the Anglo-Russian council, Melnichansky, a supporter of Tomsky, ironically interjected "A new International?"[2] Ryazanov mischievously expressed his agreement with "the opportunist policy" of Tomsky, and warned Lozovsky that he often "repeated in Profintern the mistakes of Comintern".[3] Tomsky, winding up the debate, accused Lozovsky of "a certain dualism": at a time when Soviet policy had come out publicly for international trade union unity, Lozovsky began to preach the motto "Away from Amsterdam", arguing that "never and under no conditions" must the Russian unions enter the Amsterdam International. He spoke ironically of "an attempt under the guise of unity, and while speaking of unity, to work for a split and imagine that nobody will notice". In a bitter sally he identified Lozovsky with Glebov-Avilov, the trade union spokesman of the Leningrad opposition. "Lozovsky and Glebov say 'Unity,

[1] *XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii* (*B*) (1926), pp. 743-745, 747.
[2] *Ibid.* pp. 768-778.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 784.

unity', and themselves want splits"; and he called this "a false and two-faced policy". Later, in a milder tone, he admitted that "this or that" disagreement between himself and Lozovsky on international trade union questions had been natural, since Lozovsky had to defend Profintern; and he added consolingly that "so far we have come to an agreement on this line, and it has not prevented us from working together".[1] The trade union resolution of the congress, which, as Tomsky revealed, had been agreed in advance between himself, Zinoviev and Bukharin,[2] was non-committal and was unanimously adopted. It greeted the "fraternal fighting alliance" between Soviet and British unions, and the sympathies evoked by it elsewhere, as "the first practical steps towards the establishment of international unity and the pledge of its success", but did not further dilate on the question.[3]

The fourteenth party congress had, in fact, changed nothing and left both facets of international trade union policy intact. The economic theses issued by IKKI in the following month on the second anniversary of Lenin's death ended with a section on the need for unity in the working class and for a united front in the trade unions.[4] On the other hand, the letter of January 13, 1926, from the central committee of the Russian party to foreign communist parties on the results of the fourteenth congress emphatically denied "*counter-revolutionary slanders* about a proposed entry of the Soviet trade unions into the Amsterdam International".[5] The issue had, however, by now become academic. The protests made by the Anglo-Russian council at its Berlin session in December 1925[6] were duly embodied in letters despatched from London and Moscow on January 6, 1926, to Amsterdam, and were answered by IFTU on February 17, 1926, with a final weary recapitulation of the reasons for its refusal to consider them.[7] This was the end. Defeat had been admitted in the long struggle for unity with Amsterdam. A blank wall of

[1] *XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), pp. 801-803.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 801. [3] *VKP(B) v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1941), ii, 71.
[4] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 10, January 14, 1926, pp. 265-266.
[5] For this letter see p. 493 above. [6] See p. 584 above.
[7] *International Federation of Trade Unions: Report on Activities during the years 1924, 1925 and 1926* (Amsterdam, 1927), pp. 51-52.

negation had at last brought the Anglo-Soviet initiative to a standstill. Lozovsky may well have breathed a sigh of relief. At the sixth enlarged IKKI later in the month, he referred ironically to " the opinion of some near-sighted politicians of the Amsterdam International " that the fourteenth Russian party congress had meant " the beginning of the liberation of the Soviet trade unions from the influence of the communist party ". On the contrary, he was now able to assert, the congress had " once again strengthened the ideological and political leadership of the All-Union Communist Party over the Soviet trade union movement ".[1]

During the winter of 1925–1926, while tension in the British labour movement gradually increased, few encouraging symptoms could be discerned elsewhere. Only in Scandinavia had some new ground been broken during 1925. In January 1925 the transport workers' IPC had organized a conference of Scandinavian communist transport workers in Gothenburg.[2] Later in the same year a minor success was scored in Norway. Since 1922, when they seceded from IFTU, the Norwegian unions had been affiliated neither to Amsterdam nor to Moscow. But they had recently sent a delegate to the International Labour Organization (ILO) at Geneva, and had been under pressure from the other Scandinavian trade union organizations to return to IFTU. At their congress in August 1925, in response to an appeal from the executive bureau of Profintern, they agreed unanimously to enter into relations with the Anglo-Russian joint council, and rejected by a large majority a proposal to adhere to the ILO, the question of IFTU not apparently having been raised at all.[3] In Finland, where the trade unions were also affiliated neither to IFTU nor to Profintern, a campaign was started by social-democratic leaders

[1] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 293. The reference was probably to a report in *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik* (Berlin), No. 1 (119), January 16, 1926, pp. 9-10, that Tomsky wished to abolish Profintern in order to facilitate the negotiations of the Soviet trade unions with IFTU.

[2] *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 2-3 (49-50), February–March 1925, pp. 169-170.

[3] For the Profintern appeal see *ibid.* No. 9 (56), September 1925, pp. 182-183; for the proceedings of the congress *ibid.* No. 10 (57), October 1925, pp. 226-230.

to expel communists from the unions with the eventual goal of affiliation to Amsterdam.[1] In Sweden where the trade union leaders were orthodox social-democrats and affiliation to Amsterdam was the rule, the Swedish metal workers organized an independent conference at Gothenburg in January 1926; it was officially boycotted by the social-democratic leadership, but claimed, somewhat doubtfully, to represent one-third of all Swedish organized workers. It evidently aspired to lay the foundations of a minority movement on the British model, loudly proclaimed the need for international trade union unity, and sent a telegram of greeting to the Anglo-Russian joint council.[2] NAS, the small Dutch revolutionary trade union federation, at length decided, unconditionally and without a split, to join Profintern.[3]

But these successes did not compensate for the failure to make any perceptible advance in the German, French and Czechoslovak trade unions, or for the still unrecognized decline in the influence of the Left at the top levels of the British TUC. Nor were they matched by corresponding successes elsewhere. In the Balkan countries all trade unions were suspect, and any overt relations with Profintern were out of the question.[4] In Rumania, the propaganda of the independent unions for unity was met by

[1] *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 19, January 26, 1926, pp. 265-260.

[2] *Ibid.* No. 21, February 2, 1926, pp. 285-286; for the programme of the conference see *Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), pp. 211-212. The Swedish Communist Party afterwards claimed credit for this move (*Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 214).

[3] *IV Sessiya Tsentral'nogo Soveta Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoyuzov* (1926), p. 13; for the previous position of NAS see p. 583 above. When the leadership of the Dutch Communist Party moved to the Left with the backing of IKKI in May 1925, it adopted a policy of " one-sided " reliance on NAS and neglected the Left wing in the reformist trade unions (*Ein Jahr Arbeit und Kampf* (1926), p. 12); Shmidt at the fourteenth Russian party congress in December 1925 pointed out that NAS only included one-tenth of the organized Dutch workers, and reproached the Dutch party for its failure to work in the far more powerful social-democratic and Catholic unions (*XIV S"ezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B)* (1926), p. 703). In 1928 the total membership of NAS was only 14,465 (*Die Komintern vor dem 6. Weltkongress* (1928), p. 205).

[4] For a cursory general picture see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 9, January 2, 1926, pp. 119-121. For the situation in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia see pp. 399-400, 405-406 above; attempts to hold trade union congresses in Greece and Rumania were banned in August and November 1925 respectively (*IV Sessiya Tsentral'nogo Soveta Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoyuzov* (1926), p. 133).

a proposal from the reformists that the unified trade unions should affiliate to Amsterdam and that anyone engaging in communist propaganda should be expelled. To the anger of Lozovsky one of the Rumanian communist trade-unionists advocated acceptance of the proposal, comparing his attitude with that of Lenin in recommending acceptance of the "shameful" Brest-Litovsk peace.[1] But in none of these countries was the trade union movement substantial enough to raise the contested issues of principle involved in the united front.

Consciousness of a stalemate in the unity campaign at the higher levels merely served to drive home the importance of more intense activity in the unions themselves. The conference on organization which met in February 1926 on the eve of the session of the sixth enlarged IKKI [2] had a lively discussion on the thorny issue of party fractions in the trade unions. A draft model statute for party fractions in the trade unions prepared by the organization department of IKKI had an unfriendly reception, being supported only by the British and Norwegian delegations, which were whole-heartedly in favour of conducting united front operations in reformist trade unions, and attacked with varying degrees of asperity by the German, French, Czechoslovak and Italian delegations. The *clou* of the proceedings appears to have been a report by the party fraction in the Moscow textile workers' union, which led to a "lively exchange of opinions". The model statute was referred to the trade union commission of the enlarged IKKI, which adopted it with some amendments. The final text, while admitting the necessity of adaptation to the special conditions of different countries, laid down the principles that fractions in trade unions were concerned not with party policy in general, but only with trade union questions; that they were not party organs and were subordinate to the leaders of party cells; and that their primary function was "to maintain contact with opposition elements in trade unions not belonging to the communist party". The vexed question of membership of trade

[1] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), p. 301.

[2] For this conference see pp. 932-934 below.

unions of all political complexions was dealt with more categorically than ever before :

> If in one industry unions of different affiliations (Red, Amsterdam, syndicalist) exist, a fraction should be formed in each appropriate to its structure. It is also necessary to organize fractions in Christian, Hirsch-Duncker, Fascist, employers' and other trade unions. To this end party organizations must seek to recruit members of these unions as party members.[1]

When the sixth enlarged IKKI met in February 1926, Lozovsky introduced the trade union question in an immensely long report. He detected grounds for optimism in the declining standard of living of the workers in western Europe, in the development of Left-wing movements in the trade unions and of the campaign for unity, and in the flow of enthusiastic delegations of western European workers to the Soviet Union. He once more vigorously denied the " legend " that " the Soviet trade unions wish to leave Profintern ". The Soviet unions were " an organic part of Profintern ", and " do not and cannot pursue any policy other than the policy of Profintern and Comintern " ; if Profintern had stepped aside and left the negotiations with Amsterdam to the Russian trade unions, " this is because none of us is willing, for the sake of formal considerations, for the sake of prestige, to impede the *rapprochement* between the workers of different countries ". Lozovsky did not comment on the collapse of the negotiations, or draw any conclusions from it for future policy. He was on firmer ground when, devoting a long passage in his speech to the development of trade unions in the Far East, he contrasted the attention paid to them by Profintern with their neglect by Amsterdam, and rhetorically boasted that, if Comintern had two million members, Profintern had six times as many. The moral was not drawn, but was obvious enough : if Profintern

[1] For Pyatnitsky's account of the proceedings see *Zweite Organisations-Konferenz des EKKI* (1926), pp. 8, 22-23 ; the text of the model statute is printed as an annex, *ibid.* pp. i-xii. For a more guarded report of the discussion in the plenary session of the conference see *Internationale Presse-Korrespondenz*, No. 65, April 29, 1926, pp. 954-964. The note attached to the statute that it was " confirmed by the sixth enlarged IKKI " may be formally incorrect, like the similar statement about the resolution of the organization conference of March 1925 (see p. 927, note 2 below) ; but the general resolution of the conference on its work was duly confirmed.

was no asset in Europe, it paid rich dividends in Asia. Lozovsky, in submitting a set of theses " On the Current Tasks of Communists in the Trade Union Movement ", explained rather apologetically that the " programme of action " for a common front with which they concluded contained no mention of the campaigns against the Dawes plan and Locarno, or for fraternization of the troops with the insurgents in current colonial wars, since these questions " can form no basis for common action ".[1] This was plain appeasement of the reformists, and sounded, though the implication was disclaimed by Lozovsky in a second speech,[2] like a policy of " a united front at all costs ". Tomsky followed Lozovsky with a slight change of emphasis, speaking in the name of the Russian trade unions rather than of Profintern. He made a desperate attempt to maintain that the campaign for unity was still alive:

> The situation of this struggle, the whole history of the development of this movement, turns not on the fact that we want unity and the other side does not want unity, but on the fact that, in spite of their not wanting unity, we are obliging them, and must oblige them, to accept it.

But he foresaw that this situation might last for a long period. At the same time Tomsky agreed that it was out of the question to " leave to its fate the International which we created and the unions which we brought into it ", and declared that " the act of the entry of the trade unions of the USSR into Amsterdam without the unions of other countries which are with us in Profintern would be an act of betrayal in regard to them ".[3]

In the debate Bordiga, true to his rôle as a one-man opposition, accepted the principle of the united front within the national organizations, but attacked the policy of unity on the international level. Once the national organizations had been won over, the international organizations would follow ; till then, any approach to Amsterdam was futile, and there was no point in abandoning the slogan " Moscow against Amsterdam " or ceasing to denounce IFTU as an organization tied to the League of Nations and the

[1] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 271-309.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 415-416.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 312.

ILO.[1] Nobody else challenged the policy propounded by Lozovsky, or raised awkward questions about the rôle of Profintern. Zinoviev stoutly denied that the slogan "Moscow *or* Amsterdam" had been given up: "if a congress of the two trade union Internationals were convened tomorrow, the fight under the slogan 'Moscow or Amsterdam' would begin in earnest".[2] Lozovsky's theses were then duly adopted. They cited "the slogan put out by the fifth congress of Comintern and the third congress of Profintern of the *fusion* of Profintern and Amsterdam by way of an international unity congress", and described the formation of the Anglo-Russian joint council as "the expression of the new moods of the broad masses and of the majority of the organized working class of England". The trade union movement was declared to be "the centre of gravity in carrying out united front tactics at the present time", and Maslow and Ruth Fischer were denounced for a "formal and mechanical" approach to the united front which spelt "the bankruptcy of all trade union activity". The concluding "programme of action" of which Lozovsky had spoken comprised, in addition to the usual aims of the trade union movement, "the struggle against the League of Nations and International Labour Office" and "the struggle for the creation of a single class International embracing the trade unions of all countries, all races and all continents".[3] After the session of the enlarged IKKI had ended, a "standing trade union commission" of IKKI was set up, consisting of Zinoviev, Bukharin, Pyatnitsky, Togliatti, Treint, Ferguson, Šmeral, Geschke, Tomsky, Lozovsky and Nin.[4] Its membership suggests that it was intended to be important; but no record exists of its activities.

The fourth session of the central council of Profintern, which immediately followed the sixth enlarged IKKI, and sat from March 9 to 15, 1926, was dominated by Lozovsky, and Tomsky was not present. Lozovsky in his opening address singled out "England and the East" as the main sectors of advance in

[1] *Shestoi Rasshirennyi Plenum Ispolkoma Kommunisticheskogo Internatsionala* (1927), pp. 368-371. [2] *Ibid.* p. 450.
[3] *Kommunisticheskii Internatsional v Dokumentakh* (1933), pp. 556-569.
[4] *Pravda*, April 4, 1926.

the work of Profintern.[1] But no British delegate spoke, and the Anglo-Russian joint council was not discussed; indeed, the hearers of Lozovsky's subsequent speech might have wondered whether it was not included in a passing reference to " unfortunate examples of the united front ".[2] Pessimism prevailed on the prospects of trade union unity, which for the first time for two years was left in the background. A brief reference to the IPCs in Nin's report was pitched in a minor key. The committee of the transport workers was the most effective, followed by that of the leather workers; but, in general, the work left much to be desired.[3] Lozovsky complained that the only trade International which admitted the Soviet trade union was the Food Workers' International, and that even this attempted to muzzle the Soviet delegates.[4] The one victory that could be recorded was " the union of all teachers' organizations into a single trade International " — the Paris International of Educational Workers; and the only conclusion was that the IPCs should continue their " struggle for the formation of a single effective International in every branch of production ".[5] The injunction to work in Christian or Fascist unions evidently continued to be a stumbling-block even for those who accepted the argument for working in social-democratic unions; Lozovsky admitted the prevalence among communists of " a sub-conscious idea that all these PPS or social-democratic unions are better than nationalist, Christian or all the other kinds of unions ", but argued that " politically it is all one and the same ".[6] Lozovsky cautiously remarked that the aim must be " the creation of a single International which would not be confined only to the workers of Europe ". Negotiations between the Soviet trade unions and Amsterdam were only " one of the phases, one of the stages, in the struggle for unity ": " for the workers' movements outside Europe, for the workers of Japan and China, for the workers of Australia, the Philippines,

[1] *IV Sessiya Tsentral'nogo Soveta Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoyuzov* (1926), p. 3.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 24.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 10.

[4] *Ibid.* pp. 30-31; for the Food Workers' International see pp. 543-544 above.

[5] *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), pp. 154-155.

[6] *IV Sessiya Tsentral'nogo Soveta Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoyuzov* (1926), p. 27.

Cuba or America, this is not a central question ".[1] Hais, the refractory Czechoslovak trade union leader, taunted Lozovsky with the failure to create effective revolutionary minorities in other unions.[2] But the most substantial criticism came from a delegate named Liss, a member of the Profintern secretariat. He took issue with Lozovsky's attempt to depreciate IFTU by calling it " ' only ' a European International " : after all, " Europe, in which the Amsterdam International is predominant, has fairly great importance ". He accused Lozovsky of passing over in silence the unity campaign of the last 18 months, including the work of the Anglo-Russian joint council : Lozovsky's theses contained no call to " continue and strengthen the struggle for unity ". Finally, Liss challenged the argument that no distinction could be drawn between working in social-democratic unions on the one hand and in Christian and Fascist unions on the other : the case for working in social-democratic unions was that they had once been " organs of class struggle " and had bred among their members illusions which could and should be dissipated.[3] No attempt was made to reply to these arguments ; and Lozovsky's theses, which concluded with the " programme of action " already approved by IKKI, were adopted, apparently without amendment.[4]

But, if on the continent of Europe the prospect of further advances through the trade unions had been dimmed, and if the movement in the Far East, though full of revolutionary potential, seemed remote and embryonic, in Great Britain the beacon was still alight, and promised at any moment to break out into a blaze. While the session of the Profintern central council of March 1926 had not debated British affairs, it had noted the impending " conference of action convened by the National

[1] *IV Sessiya Tsentral'nogo Soveta Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoyuzov* (1926), p. 31.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 33-34.

[3] *Ibid.* pp. 48-49 ; in a recent article in the Comintern journal Liss had drawn attention to the difficulties arising from the dual rôle of the trade unions, which " occupy first place in the economic struggle of the working class ", and were therefore potentially revolutionary, and at the same time served as " the chief instrument of a policy of compromise " (*Kommunisticheskii Internatsional*, No. 12 (49), December 1925, p. 124).

[4] *Desyat' Let Profinterna v Rezolyutsiyakh* (1930), pp. 153-155 ; for the " programme of action " see p. 594 above.

Minority Movement in London " to consider the threat to the miners from " the attack of the financial and industrial oligarchy ", and had sent a message of greeting to assure it that " the workers of all countries follow with profound attention, alarm and hope the class struggle which is developing in England ".[1] As the situation grew more tense in the ensuing weeks, the executive bureau of Profintern on April 17, 1926, addressed a letter to IFTU to propose " common action to help the British miners " in the approaching conflict.[2] The proposal stood no chance of being accepted; but some capital could be made out of the refusal. Nothing had yet occurred to destroy the cherished belief that the influence of the Left was growing among the British workers, and that a powerful wedge had been driven into the international trade union movement through the alliance with the British trade unions. The general strike of May 1926 was to raise this belief to a pinnacle of expectancy, and then finally dash it to the ground.

[1] *IV Sessiya Tsentral'nogo Soveta Krasnogo Internatsionala Profsoyuzov* (1926), pp. 80, 148.

[2] Similar letters were sent a few days later to the International Co-operative Alliance, to the general council of the British trade unions and to other bodies; for the text of all these letters see *Die Rote Gewerkschaftsinternationale*, No. 5 (64), May 1926, pp. 377-380.