

THE K. P. D. AND NAZISM

1930 - 1933

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Translated by John Archer

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F A C I N G H I T L E R ?

The Problem of the K.P.D. in 1930 - 33

Where the Question Stands Today

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The writing of the history of the K.P.D. has made considerable progress since the pioneer work of Ossip Flechtheim in 1948 and that of Siegfried Bahne in 1962, especially with the appearance of Hermann Weber's magisterial study, "Die Wandlung des Deutschen Kommunismus". The recent publication of "Die Generallinie" by the same historian presents the circulars which the Central Committee sent to the district leaderships. It includes the absorbing memoirs of Herbert Wehner, one of those rare survivors of the leading nucleus of the party and especially one of those rare publishers of memoirs which have not received the approval in advance of the German Democratic Republic. These enable fresh light to be shed on the fundamental question of the history of the 20th. century. (1)

1. The Policy of the K.P.D. between 1930 and 1933

Following the 12th. Congress of the K.P.D. in June 1929, which preceded the 10th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International in July, the K.P.D. applied the line of "class against class", as laid down by Moscow, until 1934 - 35. The Party had largely been purged of "conciliators", and was called upon to plunge into the "hand to hand struggle", which, according to Kuusinen, expressed the state of mind of the broad masses of workers. It became the model party of the Communist International, the most tenacious and the blindest. While the general line remained fundamentally un-changed, it nevertheless went through several modifications before 1933. These have been well analysed by Hermann Weber (2). Up to the beginning of 1930, the K.P.D. fought against Social-Democracy as a single "social-fascist" bloc, in which its supporters in the ranks were identified with its leadership, in one and the same condemnation.

The Communist daily, Die Rote Fahne, wrote in February 1930:

"Our barrage against the big Zorgiebels (Zorgiebel was the Social-Democratic police chief in Berlin) makes sense only when it is linked at the same time to the little embourgeoisified officials. Anyone who still belongs to the S.P.D. is rotten and and must be hounded out of the work-places and the unions. This struggle will end with hearings of the revolutionary tribunals of the Soviet Republic." (3)

This extravagant line was modified in Spring 1930, no doubt in connection with the restraint imposed on collectivisation in the U.S.S.R., (e.g. Stalin's article, "Some are made dizzy with success", which appeared on March 2), as well as by the formation of the Bruning Government, which ended the "Great Coalition" and the participation of the S.P.D. in the government.

The "ultra-left" Paul Merker was removed from the Political Bureau, and the party called for "the United Front from Below".

The third of the phases which Hermann Weber distinguishes began with the appearance, on August 24, 1930, of the well-known "Programme for the National and Social Liberation of Germany", which in fact was the first programme of the K.P.D. since its founding conference. (4)

Trotsky sharply criticised this document for its concessions to nationalism. Some historians, however, have judged it differently. Louis Dupeux considers that it was directed,

above all, against the Nazis; he even presents it as a precursor of the "Popular Fronts". The "Schlageter line" and the programme of national liberation were, to be sure, not the same as "National Bolshevism", but they were the first rudiments of such future political positions, (according to Dupeux), as the "Popular Front", the "new historic bloc", the "historic compromise", etc.,... with which orthodox or dissident Communists in Western Europe have tried to come to terms with social reality.(5)

According to Dupeux's interpretation, the period in which this programme was operated would correspond to a search by the K.P.D. for "national independence" and a deviation from the directives of the Communist International: in that case, Heinz Neumann, who was believed to have drafted the document, would be the "great ancestor" of Thorez, Togliatti and "national roads to Socialism".

Dupeux believes that Moscow took the K.P.D. in hand again in Spring 1931. The commitment of the party in the "Red Referendum" in July 1931 alongside the Nazis against the Social-Democratic Government of Prussia was, therefore, to be seen as a return to emphasis on the struggle against "Social-Fascism":

"The Red Referendum, which did not correspond to any requirement of German political life, was solely a product of the 'left' line of the Stalinised Communist International."(6)

This is a seductive presentation of the facts, but, in our opinion, it does not conform to reality. In the first place, "Popular Fronts" cannot be understood outside the efforts of Soviet diplomacy to get alliances in the West against threats from Germany and Japan. In 1930 - 33 this was not the policy of the U.S.S.R., while the attempts to arrive at a "National Union" or a "historic compromise" raise other problems.

In the second place, there is nothing to support the assertion that the programme of August 1930 was worked out independently of Moscow. Finally, the struggle against the Socialists and the denunciations which it contained of the "corrupt bonzes" of Social-Democracy, ever closer to the style of the Nazis, did not cease for a moment. Moreover, the "programme of liberation" was by no means declared obsolete in 1931: it was to give birth to numerous initiatives, right up to 1933. It was intended primarily to exploit the divisions which were appearing in the Nazi ranks at the time. Did it not appear a few weeks after Otto Strasser and his "revolutionary national-socialists" split away from the N.S.D.A.P.?(7). It was also intended to re-assure nationalist and military circles: we shall return to this.

Whatever the truth may be, this programme does not appear to have had any effect on the progress of the K.P.D. in the elections of September 1930, when they advanced from 10.6% of the votes cast to 13.1%, and won 1,300,000 votes. This success, though it was very modest compared with that of the Nazis, was due to the poverty and impoverishment which were swelling the party's ranks.

From that time onwards all the components of the policy to be followed up to the end were in place: there were simultaneous calls for the "national liberation" of the country and for the "united front from below", directed at the socialist workers. Nothing was to change but the analysis of the situation and the relative weight given to the different slogans.

Weber somewhat artificially identifies a "fourth phase" between December 1930 and Spring 1931; he gives it the name of "Fascism is already here". It linked the slogans which we have already quoted with erratic appreciations of what was happening (8). Die Rote Fahne wrote on December 2, 1930, that "we have to deal with a fascist republic": Walter Ulbricht declared, at a meeting of the leaders of the Berlin-Brandenburg district, "The Bruning Government is the first government of the fascist dictatorship".

The remonstrances of the Communist International, which declared, through Piatnitsky, that "the decisive step had not yet been taken", did not modify the general line, which persisted throughout the year 1931 to Spring 1932 and covered the "Red Referendum". According to the East German historians, it appears that in the case of the "Red Referendum" Stalin and Molotov intervened directly to compel the K.P.D. to call for a "No" vote in concert with the Nazis. However, the Party's newspaper in East Prussia wrote "Every 'No' vote supports the deceivers of the people" (9) on the same day as the leadership changed its position.

its position.

Many Communist electors refused to vote. Die Rote Fahne had to recognise, on November 24, 1931, that there was a "wall" between the Communist and the Social-Democrat rank and file. Some months later, Ernst Thaelmann, the K.P.D. candidate in the presidential elections, won 4,983,341 votes in the first round, i.e. 13.2% of the votes cast. The improvement was not great - 400,000 votes up on 1930, and it concealed serious losses in the traditional bastions of the party.

In the electoral constituency of Berlin, Thaelmann won 29.4% of the votes cast, as contrasted with 33% for the K.P.D. in September 1930, 23.2% in Halle-Merseberg against 25%, 18.4% in Potsdam I as against 20% and 16.9% in Potsdam II against 19.7%. (10)

In the second round of the presidential elections on April 10, 1932, Thaelmann lost more than a million votes. Some of those who had voted for him abstained from voting, while the total of those voting fell by over a million. Another million voted for Hindenburg to bar the road to Hitler, and a third voted for Hitler "to get things settled quickly", like the militants at Magdeburg, who accepted word for word what Remmele said: "After the fascists, our turn" (11).

This relative set-back continued through the regional elections on April 24, 1931, in which the K.P.D. lost 300,000 votes in Prussia.

This succession of electoral reverses and, doubtless, also the rising frustration in the ranks (12) led to an important turn in the political line - in fact, to the only one in this period.

Hermann Weber observes that, for a brief moment, the K.P.D. "was to go right up to the edge of the strategy which excluded the united front from above."

On April 25, 1931, the Central Committee issued a call to all Social-Democratic workers and trade unionists. It assured them that:

"We are ready to fight together with every organisation in which workers are mobilised and which genuinely wishes to conduct the struggle against the reduction in wages..." (13)

On May 25, 1931, a new appeal demanded that "the road to power of Hitler-ite fascism be blocked" (14). Above all, a circular of June 4, 1931 to the district leaders laid down, for the first time:

"The differences between the two wings of the bourgeois-capitalist class front about the methods of the bourgeois dictatorship - even though there is no class-distinction or class-antagonism between these two wings - can none the less at a given moment lead to violent conflicts between these wings. Hitler-ite fascism has the greatest interest in weakening those organisations on which the influence of social-democracy rests, and in going to extremes to do so."

The circular goes on:

"Our strategic orientation that our principal blow is directed against Social-Democracy does not mean, in any case, that we place above everything else a vulgar, schematic denunciation of the S.P.D."

The task in practical activity was to construct the "Anti-Fascist Action" in the workplaces and workers' districts. This was to be a broad organisation, with individual or collective membership, the members of which would recognise each other because they wore a badge. The various committees which already existed (Red Aid, Committee of Unemployed) were not to be wound up, but were to "associate" with "Anti-Fascist Action". The circular repeated, in conclusion:

"We shall never march with the Nazis against the Reichsbanner, but on the contrary with the workers of the Reichsbanner against the S.A. This distinction must be clearly established through the party." (15)

If we ignore the long battles of words and circumlocution which were to conceal that the "turn" had occurred, the change in tone and aim is undeniable. We can understand how Alfred Rosmer came to write in July 1931:

"The party leadership has turned its back on the Third Period, while it still

sabotages the United Front."(16)

The Left Opposition hailed "the first steps to be achieved under pressure of events", and demanded that actions must now follow words.(17)

These corrections were well received, in any case, by the ranks and middle cadres of the K.P.D. Weber mentions reports from the Halle-Merzberg districts, announcing positive results. Local organisations "took advantage" of them, to address their opposite numbers in the S.P.D. and in the A.D.G.B. (trade unions), for example, at Heilbron and at Gottingen, which at Tubingen they approached even the Brandlerites, the K.P.O. Even in Berlin, the leadership, on June 17, 1931, issued to the S.P.D., the A.D.G.B. and the Reichsbanner a call for joint action.(18)

The "turn" did not last. New "directives from the Secretariat", on July 14, 1931, took the K.P.D. back to its earlier orientation. This document spoke of "unpardonable mistakes", and mentioned that in many places the party is running the risk of "letting itself be diverted" from its policy and letting itself slide "on a line of least resistance" on the question of the united front. It reminded the readers that "the genuine united front can be formed only from below" and that the appeal of April 25, 1931 ("We are ready to fight together etc.") had frequently been mis-interpreted as "an approach at top level.

Agreements between leaderships to organise joint demonstrations were "inadmissible". Equally inadmissible were "joint meetings", where the united front was discussed "abstractly". Emphasis and heavy repetitions reveal that it was difficult to convince a rank-and-file which was too quickly satisfied with a turn that, at last, enabled them to express their aspirations, too long suppressed.

The Secretariat knew this well. It called for "an energetic reaction" against the "liberal appreciation" which held sway in the S.A.P. and for the strategy and tactic of the party to be defended "with iron energy", and, if need be, "against the aspirations of the masses, who today are inclined towards unity at any price... aspirations which are revealing themselves even in our own ranks."(19)

Following the short "unity" episode, which doubtless was interrupted under pressure from the Comintern, the traditional line was applied without a break right up to the end, reserving the principal blows for the S.P.D., which a circular of January 28, 1933, was to depict as "on the ^{road} to fascisation".(20)

2. Effectives, Organisation and Structures

In a recent book about the opposition to fascism of the K.P.D., Eva Rosenhaft has well expounded the paradox which underlies every study of the K.P.D. in this period:

"Why did the K.P.D. have its largest popular audience, based on recruitments and electoral successes, when it was pursuing an apparently absurd policy?" (21)

The figures cannot be disputed: the German Communist Party, which gathered 13.1% of the votes cast in September 1930, got 14.1% in July 1932, winning 700,000 voters, and got 16.9% in November 1932, gaining another 700,000, despite the fall in the total number voting. The progress of membership followed the name curve: the Party had 143,000 members in 1927 and 320,000 to 360,000 at the end of 1932, ending up with 300,000 on January 30, according to Piatnitsky (22).

But this growth was directly in proportion to a deterioration in the health of the party, in its capacity for action and in its weight in German society. It was not a linear development in the K.P.D. of 1927 to that of 1933: it was the formation of a new party in the ruins of the first.

The party of 1927 included 68% industrial workers, the majority of them skilled; 33% of its members were under the age of thirty and 32.7% between thirty and forty. The youth of its active members did not prevent them from being rooted in the history of the German workers' movement: 30.3% of its members had earlier belonged to the S.P.D.

In 1930 the K.P.D. numbered no more than 32.2% workers, and only 11% in 1932. The K.P.D. had indeed become "the party of the unemployed": the percentage out of work in its ranks was even larger than that in the working class as a whole. These social transformations were accompanied by a relative fall in the number of work-place cells: in 1931 they rose

from 1524 to 1802 (about 15%), while local groups rose from 3769 to 5231 and street cells from 3394 to 5888 (about 75% up). At the end of 1932, there were 2210 workplace cells, 6500 local groups and 6000 street cells. Moreover most of the workplace cells consisted of militants who did not work in the workplaces and were "attached" to them from outside. Evidently, the trade union implantation was very weak. The K.P.D. controlled only 250 of the 13,129 local branches of unions affiliated to the A.D.G.B. (Allgemeiner Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, the principal trade union federation) and 10% of the members of the K.P.D. belonged to A.D.G.B. unions.

The trade union opposition which the Communist Party controlled, the "Revolutionaire Gewerkschaft Opposition" (R.G.O.) had only 160,000 members.

The Party membership fluctuated widely. It had 133,000 recruits in January 1930 and 143,000 recruits during the year 1930, but had only 180,000 members in the December; the figure is to be explained by the fact that in the same period the Party lost 95,000 of its registered membership. (23)

All the historians agree on these statistics, which present a picture of an organisation built literally on sand and open to every wind. Certain observers at the time had all recognised this. Boris Goldenberg, a young Berlin student and a member of the S.A.P. who exchanged correspondence with Trotsky, analysed the growth of the K.P.D. as "independent of the tactic which it advanced" and based simply on "protest because of the sharpening of the crisis because of the total bankruptcy of reformism". In his opinion, the social vanguard was no longer to be found in the K.P.D. and the old cadres, who had been formed in the Spartacus period, had partly gone out of the Party, were partly inactive inside the Party and were partly corrupted by the apparatus. He added that the new recruits were "a herd of sheep", and that the bureaucratisation, which he compared to a hardening of the arteries from top to bottom, was such that any change of course had become impossible. (24)

This opinion is corroborated by a report on the actual life of a Party cell. This appeared in the press of the Opposition, and was signed K. Mar, the pseudonym of Werner Scholem (25), a German ex-Zinovievist, who had been the organiser of the Opposition in the Party in 1925, had been excluded in 1926, and had then resumed his law studies and established personal connections with Leon Sedov.

According to this account, the recruitment brought into the Party a mass of "intellectuals, bankrupt petty bourgeois, unemployed clerks and technicians and, briefly, people belonging to these ruined middle layers which, having earlier been indifferent, now were in revolt against the poverty which had suddenly overtaken them and thought "something had got to happen". Many of these people became fascists, but many others also joined the K.P.D."

Scholem went on:

"But where are the industrial workers? Is it not symptomatic that they are fed up with all the parties, but especially with the K.P.D., which does not show them how they have to fight?"

The Berlin cell which he described in this way had 70 - 80 members on the books, but only 20 or 30 came to the weekly meetings:

"The old militants do not come, first because they are internally broken and no longer believe in anything, and, secondly, because they sympathise with the Opposition but do not want to do so openly."

The 20 or 30 participants can be broken down into two groups:

"There are the people who, in the broadest sense, are employed by the Party: they are full-timers, or employees of the Red Aid, of the R.G.O. or of Soviet enterprises, and their spouses. These are the elements which terrorise the cell. They approve every line with enthusiasm if it guarantees their salaries. At the moment, they preach to order that fascism has already arrived. In reality these lads are terrified by the advance of fascism, because they know that at that moment Teddy (Thaelmann) and Remmele will make track to Moscow, while they will be abandoned to the fascist knives.

There are also some active comrades, without their efforts producing any results".

These comrades are essentially young militants who fling themselves ardently into activity and quickly become disillusioned, and either disappear or cease to be active.

"Then new ones come along".

We can check this picture against what Arthur Koestler reports about his cell (26), of which Manos Sperber and Gustav Regler were members. It enables us to take up a question which has often been raised: what were the social roots of the division between the S.P.D. and the K.P.D.?

It is suggested that the division between "the elder workers' party" and "the party of the youth and of the unemployed" was so deep that no durable unity would have been possible, even if the Communist Party had modified its policy.

We believe that this perspective has to be reversed. It was the political line which the Comintern imposed which prevented the K.P.D. from finding a stable social basis and which destroyed what had existed earlier. Conversely, this same line attracted the social basis appropriate to it: an apparatus of house-broken functionaries and a fluctuating mass of desperate young unemployed. The unemployed Communists in 1932, in their majority, were not the same people as had been Communist workers in 1927, victims of economic sackings or repression in the workplaces. The unemployed were new recruits. The "old" militants were gone, or were keeping up a purely passive membership, or again might be working in the "sister organisations" of the K.P.D., like the "Internationale Rote Hilfe" ("International Red Aid" which at the beginning of 1932 had 338,000 members of which 131,000 were Communists) or especially the anti-fascist defence organisations like the prestigious Roter Frontkämpferbund (R.B.F., the League of the Red Front of the Fighters).

Let us add, finally, that certain leaders of the Comintern and of the K.P.D. went so far as to "theorise" the construction of the Communist Parties as "parties of the unemployed", in this way making a virtue of necessity. Lozovsky, the general secretary of the Red Trade Union International, declared that the unemployed would go down into the streets before others would, that they did not fear the idea of being arrested by the police and ... more easily found their way to the "higher forms of the struggle".(27)

3. Communists and Nazis

The spectacular rise of the N.S.D.A.P., which the voting revealed in 1930, compelled the Communist leaders to develop a special tactic in relation to the Nazis. The question was posed with particular sharpness in Berlin, the "red fortress", where the Communist Party got its best electoral results and where its most powerful units were in action.

The Nazi Party was a newcomer to Berlin. Its local section was founded in 1925, and it experienced rapid progress under the leadership of the new Gauleiter, Joseph Goebbels. He quickly grasped that Nazism could prosper in the capital only if it adopted a "left face", differing from the face which it presented in its bases in Munich; briefly, the N.S.D.A.P. had to be presented as "being also a workers' party".(28)

Presenting themselves in this light, the S.A. tried to implant themselves in the workers' districts like Wedding - where the K.P.D. had a majority of the votes from 1924 to 1933 - and Neukölln and Friedrichshain. They made their way in by developing their Sturmlokale, the S.A. taverns, which Eve Rosenhaft defines as "a cross between a club-house and a bar", often fitting out with sleeping accommodation and strictly controlled by the S.A. The Sturmlokal was an operational base, a fortress in enemy territory. Between 1928 and 1933, and especially after 1930, the Sturmlokale not only became more numerous, but they came closer to the Red districts, and even displaced the Communists in places which they had traditionally frequently."(29)

In fact, it was relatively easy to implant a Sturmlokal. The tenants of drink shops in the workers' quarters found their takings threatened by the pauperisation of their customers. They were susceptible to the approaches of the Nazis, who offered to guarantee so much beer sold every day and at least so many meals.(30)

The principle way in which the K.P.D. could react was, first of all, to prevent the Nazis physically from establishing themselves in the Party's "reserved" territories. For this purpose, the Party had its defence organisations. But they also sought for political means by which to split the Nazis and to win back to the workers' movement the "S.A. comrades" who gone astray... all while remaining within the constraints of the "general line".

Since the K.P.D. was formed, it had set on foot a number of para-military formations. The most important - and the oldest - was the Roter Frontkämpferbund, formed in 1924 to re-

cruit the best cadres and fighters of the "Proletarian Centuries", the active workers' militias at the time of the aborted revolution in 1923. The R.F.B. was dissolved in 1929 when it had, without doubt, more than 100,000 supporters, and it pursued its activities in clandestinity. Its "military" functions were ensured in principle by the Proletarischer Selbstschutz, which in fact was the defence force of the Party, and on a wider scale by the Kampfbund gegen der Fascismus (League for Struggle against Fascism). The only function remaining to the R.F.B. was to agitate to be restored to legality and, more seriously, to train cadres for the Red Army of the future.(31)

But the R.F.B. did not easily accept this subordinate role. Its leader in 1931 - 32 was Erich Wollenberg, a reserve lieutenant and a former teacher in the international Lenin School in Moscow and commandant of a regiment in the Red Army. He remained the spearhead of the anti-fascist struggle in the workers' districts and his people - though not numerous - commanded an immense ascendancy.(32)

The Kampfbund was officially brought into existence at a meeting on September 28, 1930. It was a legal organisation, the task of which was to organise struggle against the Nazis in factories, Labour Exchanges and workers' districts. The struggle was understood in the broadest sense: ideological, political and physical.

In principle the Kampfbund was open to all. Organisational directives of October 10, 1930 specified that the line "welcomed all organisations and persons ready to carry on a political and ideological struggle against fascism and, in particular, against National-Socialism".(33)

But this opening was not directed solely towards the S.P.D. or the Reichsbanner, the defence organisation of the Socialists; it extended to the right without limit.

"Alarm", the liaison bulletin of the R.F.B. for November 1931 declared:

"One can belong to the Reichsbanner, to the S.P.D., to the Zentrum and even to the N.S.D.A.P. and at the same time be a member of the Kampfbund. In Hitler's party there are many honest revolutionary elements, who fight against Hitler's fascist course and have anti-capitalist ideas. The same thing applies to the S.P.D., the Reichsbanner and the Zentrum, etc." (34)

Thus the N.S.D.A.P. and the Social-Democracy were treated on the same footing as possible sources of recruitment. Few Nazis joined the Kampfbund; on the other hand, the program of the organisation, which was completely within the orientation of the Communist Party, repelled members of the Reichsbanner: it was only in this direction that the struggle against Nazism could find an echo, a more stable social base and a chance of success.

The supporters of the R.F.B., of the Kampfbund and of the Communist Youth, with which were associated numerous young people sometimes belonging to the "gangs", bands of adolescents on the margin of delinquency and bound together by rites of initiation, were mobilised to attack the Sturmlokale, the S.A. taverns. The campaign began in April 1931, and the attacks culminated in September and October with the attack on the Bowe tavern, in the Richardstrasse in Neukoln.(35)

However, on November 10, the Central Committee of the K.P.D. sharply halted this campaign with a resolution denouncing "the left-ist state of mind", "terrorist tendencies and the use of individual terror against fascists".(36)

It is possible, as Eve Rosenhaft thinks, that the Communist leadership feared that the R.F.B. would be made illegal. It is possible that putting the defence organisations to sleep was a sign of goodwill intended to facilitate a rapprochement with the Social-Democracy. But there is also another explanation, which cannot be rejected a priori: it is the explanation with Erich Wollenberg, the leader of the R.F.B., advanced in an open letter which appeared in August 1934 in Unser Wort, the journal of the German Trotskyists, after he had been excluded from the K.P.D. in April 1933. His evidence throws a lurid light on the restrictions which the leadership of the K.P.D. placed on the development of the R.F.B. - which it would have liked to abandon after it was dissolved in 1929 - and, by extension, on the development of all of the organisations of this kind.

Erich Wollenberg thinks that the condemnations of "individual terror" tended to paralyse all the defence organisations: their independent existence was a nuisance to a leadership which was really interested only in struggle against the "social-fascists" (37).

In any case, this explanation enables the resistances to the application of the resolution

of November 10, voiced from the ranks. The Communist Youth in particular remained a centre of resistance to the new line.

Eve Rosenhaft quotes a letter sent on November 13 by a group of Communist Youth in North Berlin: this says that the resolution of the Central Committee means "freedom granted to the fascist terror groups against the workers".

"We, young revolutionaries, have always the best defence against fascist attacks to be retaliation. Not only mass struggle, but individual terror also!... We have reached the conclusion that fear of illegality has played an important part in the formulation of the resolution. We draw attention to the fact that the Communist Youth has done a great deal of the illegal work of the Party at the time of the state of emergency, and that without complaining or concern for the consequences. But if illegality seems to terrify the Central Committee so much, then we shall necessarily give up all illegal work, so that no one will be able to hold us responsible for the party some day being made illegal. It is very clear that this would cost us a great deal in terms of revolutionary energy and dynamism and that we would lose our identity as a revolutionary youth organisation. Thanks to this resolution, the purest flame of the revolution will be reduced to a flicker and we shall have nothing to do but wait for the Soviet Germany which we desire with great passion to fall from heaven as a present." (38)

Many of these militants, as well as others from the R.F.B., were to join the Neumann-Remmele" opposition, or at any rate sympathise with it. The last disturbances did not calm down until autumn 1932.

The second side of the Communist approach to the Nazis was the search for "honest national socialists"; the programme of "national and social liberation" of 1930 was, at least in part, drafted in this sense. Moreover, it was well received by certain supporters of Strasser, those "revolutionary national-socialists" who reproached Hitler and his general staff in Munich for having abandoned the "25 points", the first programme of the N.S.D.A.P.

One of them, Eugen Mossadowsky, spoke in this connection about the "historic document", the adoption of which placed the K.P.D. "in the front of German resistance" (39).

Some others took the decisive step and joined the K.P.D. on October 4, 1930; one of them was Wilhelm Korn, a former head of the cadre schools in the Brandenburg Gau of the N.S.D.A.P.; another was Rudolf Rehm, a former deputy-Gauleiter in Brandenburg and then national leader of the Strasser-ian Kampfgesellschaft; there was also Lorf, another cadre in Brandenburg.

Korn and Rehm defined themselves as "the proletarian component of national-socialism", but the latter added later that he had joined the K.P.D. in order to "de-Marxify" it. (40)

The Communist policy won its greatest success when it attracted Lieutenant Scheringer in March 1931. He had been jailed at Leipzig for Nazi propaganda in the army, and had then been greatly disappointed by a visit to Hitler while on parole. He had been heart-broken by the "pacifism", as he saw it, of this "Caesar dressed up in Tyrolean costume", and had been won over by Communist fellow-prisoners. (41)

Shortly afterwards the Communist Party launched a review entitled, "Aufbruch, Kampfblatt im Sinne des Leutnants Scheringer", the task of which was to undermine nationalist circles.

Study groups, entitled "Aufbruch Arbeitskreise", were started up in the big cities around this publication. (42)

The enterprise doubtless attracted some honest people, like Count Stenbock-Fermor, a former member of the Freikorps in the Baltic who tried to correspond with Trotsky, in order to convince the latter that his convictions had an authentically Communist character (43). But it also attracted dubious elements like the Captain Giesecke, who was elevated to be the editor of the review, went over to the Nazis in 1932 and then denounced a number of militants to the police.

The bases of this work were extremely unstable. Those who were sincere saw in the K.P.D. an instrument of "national liberation" as much as or even more than the workers' party which it could not cease to be. Others, not to speak of agents provocateurs, hoped to inoculate the K.P.D. with the virus of nationalism and to destroy it from inside.

Otto Strasser commented on the adhesion to the K.P.D. of Scheringer and Stenbock-Fermor, when he wrote:

"We are delighted that, through these adhesions of national-socialists to the K.P.D., the progress of de-Marxifying this party will be able to go ahead. We know that German blood is thicker and stronger than the spirit of Marxism." (44)

The first successes were fragile, and very quickly reached their limits. Nationalist milieux often remained suspicious of a turn in the sincerity of which they did not believe. Ernst Niekisch (45), a figure-head of "National Bolshevism", estimated that, despite its Stalinist declarations, remained a "Trotskyist" party, that is, an internationalist, "class" party.

The efforts to win groups of S.A. and to form "Scheringer detachments" within them gave still less results, despite the abundance of the material which was distributed: the "Open Letter" of Scheringer and numerous bulletins with names like "Comrade S.A.", "The Brown Storm", "The Red Storm", etc.

It is true that the ground was not very favourable. The police sources show that the Berlin S.A., which at one moment was in rebellion against the national leadership of the N.S.D.A.P., was already hesitating to join the Strasser-ians suspected of "Communism" (46).

More fundamentally, the militants of the K.P.D. were often unable to stand up in discussion with their contacts in the S.A. or with workers influenced by Nazism, with whom, as Simone Weil has stressed, "they could not identify the point of disagreement".

As a whole, we can only agree with Louis Dupeux when he says, drawing the balance of these activities, that "A great deal of money and energy were spent with a very modest result." (47)

4. An Invisible Opposition?

It remains to clear up one considerable problem, a problem which is really essential to the spirit of this study: why did such a policy not lead to the formation, before 1932, of a more defined opposition in the Party?

Hermann Weber tells us that, after Paul Merker was eliminated from the Political Bureau in 1930, there were no more references to discussions of orientation which brought "different groups and factions" into opposition with one another, but simple "quarrels at the top, about which the rank and file got to know only after they were settled". (48)

None the less, the Neumann-Remmele opposition seems to have gone outside this restrictive framework and to have attempted what Margarete Buber-Neumann called "a palace revolution at the head of the party".

After Ernst Thaelmann, Heinz Neumann was the principal leader of the K.P.D. His importance went beyond his official functions. He was an intellectual from a comfortable background, had joined the party in 1920 at the age of eighteen, and had been one of the first German Communists to enter into relations with Stalin in 1922 and to tie his political career to that of the latter. Stalin sent him to China, and in 1927 he organised the uprising in Canton which was intended to suppress the memory of the compromises with the Kuo Min Tang which had preceded it. The crushing of the Chinese Communists in this insurrection, which he ordered from above, earned for him the title of "the butcher of Canton".

He went back to Germany and, at the age of 26, became one of the "triumvirate" at the head of the Communist Party, with Thaelmann and Hermann Remmele. The last of these was an older man, who had belonged to the S.P.D. before World War I, and came to Communism by way of the U.S.P.D. He was one of those German "Zinovievists" who joined Stalin and thereafter exercised very important functions.

We are almost entirely ignorant of the real content of their opposition, if we exclude the handful of information which Margarete Buber-Neumann provides in her book of memoirs, "La Revolution Mondiale". According to her, Neumann, who was greatly disturbed by the progress of the Nazis, voiced severe criticisms of the party line at the end of 1931.

Minutes of the leadership of the Left Opposition provide the information that "it seems likely that Neumann has sought for a rapprochement with the S.P.D. under the slogan of the

struggle against fascism"(50).

These criticisms brought some of the leaders together: Leo Flieg, a member of Thaelmann's personal secretariat, Willy Munzenberg, the leader of the International Workers' Aid, and leaders of the Communist Youth. But they did not reach down into the ranks of the party, which none of them wanted really to involve: the "palace revolution" remained an affair of the seraglio people, and that doomed the enterprise, without doubt, to defeat (51).

Neumann probably counted on his relations with people in the U.S.S.R. to modify the German line of the Comintern. He was, in particular, closely associated with Vissarion V. Lominadze, a former leader of the Communist Youth and once a favourite of Stalin - like Neumann himself - and in charge in 1930 of the Transcaucasian Party Committee. At that time, this unit of the party had adopted a very strong resolution opposing Stalin's economic policy.

Lominadze had formed a secret oppositional group within the party. It was supported principally by the Communist Youth: the philosopher Jan Sten, a former member of the Control Commission and once Stalin's instructor in "Dialectics", was a member of it, as was Sergei I. Syrtsov, President of the Council of People's Commissars in Russia (52).

The discoveries which Broue and his team were able to make in Trotsky's Archives at Harvard in 1980 show that this group made contact with the Trotskyist group in the U.S.S.R., the former Left Oppositionists round Ivan N. Smirnov, which had capitulated in 1929, and Zinoviev and Kamenev, who were horrified by Stalin's German policy and seemed to be revising their earlier positions and returning to the road of the Opposition.

These groups, in contact with other Communist fractions, had formed a "bloc of the oppositions", the unity of which was based on hostility to the policies of Stalin on both the national and international levels, and the will to drive him out of the position of general secretary (53).

It is hard to believe that Neumann, a personal friend of Lominadze, knew nothing of this. Be that as it may, Stalinist repression broke up this grouping in November 1932 before it was fully developed: Smirnov was arrested and sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, Sten was sent into exile and Zinoviev and Kamenev were excluded from the Party.

Neumann was removed from the Politburo in August and was severely criticised at the national conference in October for "weakening the struggle against Social-Democracy" and trying "to mobilise the Party comrades against the leadership, to discredit it and to set the Young Communists against the Party" (54).

Hermann Remmele remained in the leadership, but went down to the second level. Leo Flieg gave up his position as a party leader, and Willy Munzenberg alone had an exception made in his favour and was merely censured.

The "Neumann Opposition" was decisively defeated, at least in the minds of the party leaders. It re-appeared, for all that, in February 1933 in Berlin, and its influence on the middle ranks of the Party seems to have been under-estimated. To be sure, the personality of Neumann was treated with reserve amounting to repugnance by some people and his conduct in China remained in the memories of many as a model of bragging and of servility to Stalin.

None the less, as Eve Rosenhaft has established, Neumann personified also "the most sensational aspects of Communist propaganda", particularly in his notorious appeals "to smash the fascists everywhere that they exist", which numerous militants took to mean incitement to direct physical confrontation with the Nazis. When Neumann was put on one side many people remembered how the defence organisations of the Party had been put to sleep in the preceding year: the militants in Berlin distinguished a "Neumann tendency" and a "Thaelmann tendency" and identified the former with activism.(55)

It is no doubt not by chance that the attacks of the leadership on the R.F.B. as being "totally outside the party line" re-doubled in autumn 1932 and that certain of the fighting units were known as "Neumann formations" (56).

Nor is it by accident that it was Erich Wollenberg, the leader of the R.F.B., who formed a small oppositional circle and went off to Moscow in December 1932 "in agreement with his political friends", in order "to convince the Soviet Politburo to change its course in view of the danger".(57)

As a whole, the internal opposition in the party seems to have been under-estimated: It did exist and it did try to modify the orientation which was followed. None the less, it failed and was never able - or, perhaps, never really wanted - to address the mass of the party members.

Two comments seem to need to be made. In the first place, it is to be noticed that the oppositions - Neumann and, on a smaller scale, Wollenberg - had their eyes fixed on Moscow, and relied for their own success on a general change of views in the U.S.S.R.

This can be interpreted in two ways, perhaps. In the first place, it is an indication of the grave crisis which shook the Soviet leadership in 1932 - 33 and of the fact, unknown until the present time, that leading members of the Communist Parties - at least of the K.P.D. - tried to take advantage of it in order to change the national line. The crisis at the "centre" overlapped those in the periphery. But it also indicates that Neumann and Wollenberg had an implicitly negative judgement of the state of their party, as being incapable of mobilising the necessary forces for a correction. They were forced to rely on the outcome of the fractional struggles in Moscow because they believed that an "appeal to the ranks", if it were made, was doomed to fail. Is this a reflex of "bureaucrats" who have acquired the habit of thinking that "cadres decide everything", according to Stalin's notorious expression?

To be sure, it is difficult to judge what would have been the echo in the K.P.D. to an opposition which fought with its face un-covered.

But the party of 1932 - 33 was no longer the party of the 1920's. It had been "Bolshevised", that is to say, "Stalinised" and normalised (as Neumann knew better than anyone, because he had contributed largely to it), and the large-scale departures of the old militants had emptied the party of its most lucid and critical elements. Those who remained were tired and disillusioned; they remained silent and waited for the moment of the "great collision" with the Nazis, in which they would finally be able to swing things over to their point of view, in the context of a physical struggle in the streets on a mass scale.

That was not entirely a pipe-dream, as these weeks of February 1933 were to show, when the combined pressure for unity of the militants and the cadres of the K.P.D. and the S.P.D. ran through those organisations from top to bottom, and led the Nazis to strike sooner than they had initially planned.

In any case, it was very late. And that was too late...

FOOTNOTES

- (1) The principal works on the K.P.D. are, in the date-order of their appearance: Ossip Flechtheim, *Die K.P.D. in der Weimarer Republik*, Offenbach 1948 (French translation, *Le Parti Communiste Allemand sous la Republique de Weimar*, Paris, Francois Maspero, 1972): Siegfried Bahne, *Die Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*, in *Das Ende der Parteien*, under the direction of Erich Matthias and Rudolf Morsey, Dusseldorf, Droste Verlag, 1960. This text has been re-edited in a new version and augmented by an important bibliography, under the title "*Die K.P.D. und das Ende von Weimar, Das Scheitern einer Politik 1932 - 1935*", Frankfurt, Campus Verlag, 1976. Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus. Die Stalinisierung der K.P.D. in der Weimarer Republik*, 2 vols. Frankfurt, Europäische Verlagantalt, 1969. Hermann Weber, *Die Generallinie, Rundschreiben des Zentralkomitees des K.P.D. an die Bezirke 1929 - 1933*, Dusseldorf, Droste Verlag, 1981. We should add the report of Herbert Wehner, *Zeugnis, Personliche Notizen 1929 - 1942*, Cologne, Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1984.
- (2) See his Introduction to *Die Generallinie*, op. cit. p. CXL.
- (3) *Die Rote Fahne*, 22.2.1930, quoted in Hermann Weber, op. cit., p. XX.

- (4) The "Programme of National and Social Liberation of the People of Germany" appeared in the Rote Fahne on August 24, 1930. It denounced the "demagogy and radical phrases of the fascists" and their claim to oppose the Versailles Treaty and the Young Plan. The programme aimed at demonstrating this duplicity and proving that the K.P.D. had the monopoly of genuinely defending the German people. It declared, for example, that the Nazi leaders accepted "the brutal annexation of the South Tyrol to fascist Italy" and "unconditionally handed over the German regions of the South Tyrol to foreign conquerors". It declared for the cancellation of all debts and reparations and the right of self-determination for the German populations outside the Reich, and attacked no less vigorously "the leaders of Social-Democracy... auxiliary hangmen of the German bourgeoisie... voluntary agents of the French and Polish imperialists."
- Moreover we find in the same text more classical formulations, which remind the reader that the crisis is not solely the consequence of the Treaty of Versailles and reparations, but that it is also necessary "to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie in one's own country", because the crisis raged everywhere except in the U.S.S.R.
- The text is reproduced in full in *Der deutsche Kommunismus: Dokumente*, Cologne - Berlin - Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1963, pp. 58 - 65.
- (5) Louis Dupeux, *National-Bolschewismus in Deutschland*, Munich, C.H.Beck, 1985, p.467.
- (6) *Ibid.* p. 464. Let us recall that the "red referendum" of August 9, 1931 was a referendum called for and obtained by the Nazis for the dissolution of the Landtag (the Regional Assembly) in Prussia and, consequently, for the overthrow of the S.P.D. government in Prussia.
- (7) Otto Strasser (1897 - 1974) was one of the first leaders of Nazism in North Germany and stood within the N.S.D.A.P. for a socialist-tending, anti-capitalist rhetoric. He left the party on July 4, 1930, with 24 other leaders of the movement. In a statement entitled "The Socialists Leave the N.S.D.A.P.", he denounced Hitler's abandonment of the initial programme of the movement in 1920, the notorious "25 points", and aimed at constructing the Kampfgemeinschaft Revolutionärer Nationalsozialisten (K.G.N.R.S., Community of Struggle of Revolutionary National Socialists). The new programme, in seven points, demanded, among other things, refusal to fight an aggressive war against the U.S.S.R., support for the struggle of the people of India against colonial domination and struggle against the "bonzification" (bureaucratisation) of the Nazi party. (Cf. Otto-Ernst Schuddekopf, *National-Bolschewismus in Deutschland 1918 - 1933*, Frankfurt, Ullstein, 1973, pp. 321 - 338)
- (8) Cf. Hermann Weber, *op. cit.*, pp. XXIX - XXXIV.
- (9) *Ibid.*, p. XXXVII.
- (10) Cf. Alfred Milatz, *Das Ende der Parteien im Spiegel der Wähler 1930 bis 1933*, in *Das Ende der Parteien*, *op. cit.*, pp 761, 762 and 778. On the contrary, Thaelman improved the results in the legislative elections in 1930 in the districts where the Communist Party was weakly implanted: in Upper Bavaria and Swabia (Oberbayern Schwaben), 7.8% against 6.1%, as against 4.7% in Lower Bavaria (Nieder Bayern) 5.8% and 4.8% in Franconia (Franken).
- (11) *Permanente Revolution* (Organ of the Left Opposition), No. 8, mid-April 1932, pp. 2 and 11, accounts of meetings of the K.P.D. in Magdebourg.
- (12) *Ibid.* The journal mentions a meeting of four cells in Charlottenburg which are understood to have accepted by 85 votes against 15 a resolution opposing the line of social-fascism and calling for liberty of discussion within the party.
- (13) *Die Rote Fahne*, No. 83, April 26, 1932.
- (14) *Die Rote Fahne*, No. 113, May 26, 1932.

A circular from the Central Committee dated the same day contains the statement that "the fascist threat to the German workers' movement has today reached such a point that any loss of time could have disastrous consequences.... Only the immediate development of fighting activities by large masses can prevent the participation of Hitlerian fascism in the government, which would be a very dangerous step on the road to a fascist dictatorship in Germany". The text continued to denounce the leaders of the S.P.D. as "servants of fascism" and to call for the formation in workplaces of "Anti-Fascist Action" committees as a mass movement "by the collective adhesion of people employed in the work-place, of the local trade union organisations, of mass organisations of all sorts and of oppositional groups in the Reichsbanner, the S.P.D. or the S.A.P." (In Hermann Weber, op. cit., document no. 64, pp. 489ff.)

- (15) "Directives of the Secretariat", *ibid.*, document No. 65, pp. 492 - 510.
- (16) Letter to Auguste Mougeot, July 6, 1932, Musée Social, Paris.
- (17) *Permanente Revolution*, No. 9, beginning of May 1932, pp. 7 and 8.
- (18) Hermann Weber, op. cit., p. XLVII.
- (19) "Directives of the Secretariat for the Policy of United Front", *ibid.*, document No. 68, pp. 526 - 533. Certain organisations of the party had involved themselves relatively well in steps towards the united front. The local group at Weissenfels, near Halle, demanded that "the fratricidal strife must cease" between workers' parties and that every force must be concerted against the "sole enemy, the N.S.D.A.P.". In the Prussian Landtag, Wilhelm Pieck, one of the principal party leaders, had proposed that the Communist deputies should support the Zentrum and the S.P.D. in order to prevent a Nazi becoming president of the Assembly.
- (20) "Circular of the Secretariat", document No. 87, pp. 647 - 662.
- (21) Eve Rosenhaft, "Beating the Fascists? The German Communists and Political Violence 1929 - 1933". Cambridge University Press, 1983, p.X.
- (22) Siegfried Bahne, op. cit., (new edition), p. 15 and 16.
- (23) Most of the preceding statistics are taken from the very detailed studies by Ossip Flechtheim, op. cit., pp. 243 - 253 and of Siegfried Bahne, pp. 15ff.
- (24) Letters of January 19 and April 6, 1932, Harvard Archives 1519 and 1520.

Boris Goldenberg (1905 - 1980) came from a good Berlin family and had behind him already a long and eventful political career. He had joined the S.P.D. in 1924 and had been excluded in 1926 after making contact with the K.P.D. He was a member of the leadership of the Communist students from 1927 to 1929 and later joined the K.P.O. and the S.A.P. (in 1933). He was personally linked with Leon Sedov.

It is interesting to note that the figures which he gives in his letter of January 19 about the composition of the party are almost totally corroborated by present-day studies. According to him, 66% of the cadres in Berlin had been in the organisation for less than three years and, nationally, the Communist Party membership was only 20% working class, amounting to 50,000 or 60,000 workers in all, that is, 0.7% or 0.8% of the industrial workers in the whole of Germany.

- (25) *Permanente Revolution* (hereafter PR), No. 4. mid-February 1932, p. 7, "Wie es in den Strassenzellen aussieht".
- Werner Scholem (1894 - 1940), a pacifist in 1914, joined the U.S.P.D. in 1917 and then the K.P.D. In 1926 he had been one of the principal organisers of the "Zinovievist" opposition in the K.P.D., with Ruth Fischer and Arkadi Maslov. His contributions to PR are full of information and particularly precious to

the historian.

- (26) Arthur Koestler, Hieroglyphes, Vol. 1, Paris Livre de Poche, 1978. Manos Sperber, Porteurs d'eau and Le Pont inacheve, Paris, Calmann Levy, 1976 and 1977; Gustav Regler, Le Glaive et le Fourreau, Paris, Plon, 1960.
- (27) Inprekorr, No. 76, August 4, 1931 and No. 94. September 30, 1931, quoted by Eve Rosenhaft, op. cit., p. 48. The same author likewise quotes a curious article by Neumann on the anniversary of the Paris Commune in which the Parisian National Guard is compared to the defence formations of the unemployed. (Rote Fahne, March 18, 1931)
- (28) Henning Kohler, "Berlin in der Weimarer Republik", in "Geschichte Berlins", C. H. Beck, Munich, 1987, p. 913f.
- (29) Eve Rosenhaft, op. cit., pp. 19 - 20.
- (30) Eve Rosenhaft develops at length the instance of the tavern at 35 Richardstrasse, in Neukoln. It was bought in 1929 by a business man in Magdeburg, named Heinrich Bowe. It became a centre of left-wing political activity in the district, but with the economic crisis the majority of its customers became unemployed and could not pay for regular drinks, while they continued to spend their days and evenings in the place. Bowe was threatened with early ruin, and accepted the proposal of the S.A. which guaranteed that he would sell at least a barrel of beer a day. The tavern was changed into a Sturmlokal, where 100 people met regularly in the back room and 30 hot means were served every day. Op. Cit., p. 119.
- (31) Ibid., pp. 88 - 110.
- (32) Erich Wollenberg (1892 - 1973), a volunteer in 1914, joined the U.S.P.D. in 1918 and then the K.P.D. In 1919 he was commander in Munich of the Red Army of the ephemeral Soviet Republic, and became the military "specialist" of the K.P.D. In 1924 he completed his education in Moscow and became a battalion commander at Saratov in the 31st territorial division. Until he was excluded from the Communist Party in 1933, he made frequent journeys between the U.S.S.R. and Germany.
- (33) Police report, Bayrisches Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Munich M.A. 1943, A.V. 1238, quoted by Otto Ernst Schuddekopf, op. cit., pp. 287 - 288.
- (34) Quoted in PR, No. 4, mid-February 1932, p. 6.
- (35) Eve Rosenhaft, op. cit., pp. 131 - 138 and 118 - 127.
Rote Fahne published on April 23 the list of the strong-points of the S.A. with their addresses and telephone numbers. The attack on the Bowe tavern took place on October 15 and was essentially managed by the groups of the R.F.B. and the Kampferbund, as well as by the P.S.S. and the local military apparatus of the party.
- (36) Ibid., p. 77
- (37) "To the members of the K.P.D.! To the Red Front Fighters! To non-Party members, to Oppositional Communist workers!" ("An die Mitglieder du K.P.D.! An die Frontkämpfer! An die parteilosen, an die oppositionellen Kommunistischen Arbeiter!") From "Unser Wort", 4th week of August 1934, pp. 2 and 3.
- (38) Eve Rosenhaft, op. cit., p. 84.
- (39) Der nationale Sozialist No. 155, August 26, 1930, quoted by Otto Ernst Schuddekopf, op. cit., p. 289. Der nationale Sozialist was the title of the "Strasserian journal from July 1930 to January 1931.

- (40) Louis Dupeux, op. cit. p. 408, and Jean-Pierre Faye, *Langages Totalitaires*, Paris, Hermann, 1974, p. 421.
- (41) Otto Ernst Schuddekopf, op. cit., pp. 294f and 505. Jean-Pierre Faye, op. cit. Richard Scheringer was tried at Leipzig between September 23 and October 4 1930, with two other young officers, Ludin and Hans Wendt. After sentence, he was confined in the fortress at Gollnow where, already annoyed, no doubt, by the evidence which Hitler had given at his trial, renouncing any "revolutionary" perspective, he was in contact with the Communist militants, Heinz Kurella and Rudi Schwartz. In his declaration when he joined the K.P.D., which was read in the Reichstag by Hans Kippenberger, Scheringer explained: "it is only in alliance with the U.S.S.R. and after the destruction of capitalism in Germany that we can be free. Lenin showed the way, when he declared ... the tasks of the revolutionary war for the defence of the fatherland of the workers against the states of the imperialist brigands." Here again, there was no question of "national Bolshevism", but the K.P.D. really going over to its positions.
- (42) The historian and sociologist Karl Wittfogel (born in 1896) was at that time a member of the K.P.D. and took part in the meetings held under the aegis of the Aufbruch.
- (43) Count Stenbock-Fermor (born in 1892), the great-nephew of Prince Kropotkin the Russian anarchist (1842 - 1921), had worked in the coal mines of the Ruhr in 1922 and 1923, and had evolved progressively towards Communism. In his letter of December 7 to Trotsky, he declared his admiration for the latter and tried to convince him of the importance of the "Scheringer case", "a symbol of the introduction of Communist ideas into circles which have hitherto been immunised against them": he told Trotsky that he had spoken in "120 meetings" in 1932 on the theme "The Road of a Reichswehr Officer towards the Revolutionary Proletariat", and spoke of the "great impression" which had been shown by uncommitted people and by Nazis.
- (44) *Die deutsche Revolution*, July 12, 1931, quoted by Louis Dupeux, op. cit, p. 399. This journal was the successor to *der nationale Sozialist*.
- (45) Ernst Nickisch, *Der politische Raum aus deutschen Widerstandes*", quoted by Otto Ernst Schuddekopf, p. 289. Ernst Nickisch (1889 - 1967) had belonged to the S.P.D. and to the U.S.P.D. and then re-joined the S.P.D. from 1917 to 1926. He was excluded following his contacts with the nationalists, and founded the journal *Widerstand* and the circle of the same name. He became the principal theoretician of National Bolshevism.
- (46) Louis Dupeux, op. cit., p. 453.
- (47) *Ibid.*, p. 456. Louis Dupeux estimates that the K.P.D. gained some hundreds of members from the national socialists or the Strasserians, and not the thousands which Aufbruch claimed in its last issue, in January 1933.
- (48) Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung...* op. cit., p. 247.
- (49) Margaret Buber-Neumann, *La Revolution Mondiale*, Paris, Casterman, 1971, p. 290f. Born in 1901, she was the companion of Heinz Neumann (1902 - 1937), after having been the wife of Rafael Buber, the son of the philosopher Martin Buber (1878 - 1965). She is best known in France for her superb work about Milena Jesenska, *Milena*, Paris, Le Seuil, 1986.
- (50) Harvard Archives, October 4, 1932.
- (51) Leo Flieg (1893 - 1939) belonged to the generation of the founders of the K.P.D. He was a member of the Central Committee and of the Politburo, and a deputy in the Prussian Landtag. He was in charge of the O.M.S. (organisation responsible for the international connections of the Communist International) for Germany.

Willy Munzenberg (1889 - 1940), who had been in charge of the propaganda apparatus of the K.P.D., was not re-appointed.

Hermann Remmele (1886 - 1939) remained close to Neumann to the end, including in his Moscow exile from 1933 to 1937.

- (52) Vissarion (known as Besso) V. Lominadze (1898 - 1934) had, like Neumann himself, participated in the organisation of the Canton uprising in 1927. According to Roy Medvedyev (*Let History Judge!*, London, 1971, p. 142) the text of the Party Committee in Transcaucasia denounced the "behaviour like feudalists and overlords" of the party bureaucrats, and denounced the leadership for "neglecting the needs of the workers and peasants".

Jan Sten (? - 1937), a brilliant teacher of philosophy, had been associated, like Sergei I. Syrtsov (1893 - 1938) with that resolution of the Opposition (see *Bulletin of the Opposition*, No. 17 - 18, November 1930, quoted by Pierre Broue, "Trotsky and the Bloc of the Oppositions in 1932" in *Cahiers Leon Trotsky*, No. 5, January-March 1980, pp. 11 - 12. The reader should refer to this article, which explains the whole business).

In 1932, Lominadze was excluded from the Central Committee and became party secretary at Magnitogorsk. Syrtsov was likewise eliminated and sent to the provinces to run a phonograph factory.

- (53) Broue, loc. cit., pp 5 - 37.
- (54) Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung...*
- (55) Eve Rosenhaft, op. cit., p. 83.
- (56) *Ibid.*, p. 85.
- (57) Letter from Erich Wollenberg to Trotsky, August 18, 1935, Harvard Archives 6022.