

ROBERT F. WHEELER

REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALIST INTERNATIONALISM: RANK-AND-FILE REACTION IN THE USPD*

Historical accounts of the First, Second and Third Internationals, i.e., those organizations that attempted to realize some sort of supra-national working-class solidarity, have traditionally been presented in terms of congresses, programs and personalities. Invariably scholars have focused on the public and private debates at this or that international meeting and/or how Marx, Engels, Lenin or some other leading figure influenced or reacted to some specific development. In short, the history of the International has been looked at almost exclusively from the “top down”. There is not anything wrong with this approach *per se*, but it might be of some value to consider, occasionally at least, the people whom the various Internationals were supposed to be serving, in other words to examine the International not only from the “top down” but also from the “bottom up”.

“Workers of the World, unite!” – what did this slogan, the classic expression of Marxist Socialist internationalism, actually mean to the politically organized working classes? Was Socialist internationalism anything more than a kind of diplomacy carried on between different labor organizations, something which was confined to a particular party secretary, the equivalent of a bourgeois foreign minister? Was Marxist internationalism a matter that was limited to international congresses, gatherings at which the intellectual and bureaucratic elite of political labor met to haggle over high-minded statements of non-existent proletarian solidarity? More specifically, did the concept of Socialist internationalism mean anything to the workers of Europe after August 1914, if indeed it had ever meant much more than a catchy tune one sang when slightly inebriated? The helplessness of the International in the face of the European catastrophe known as the “Great War” certainly seemed to demonstrate that the skeptics had been right, that nationalism rather than internationalism had by far

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the greater hold on the working classes. On the other hand, the war and the revolutions it spawned gave rise to a rethinking and eventually a rebirth of Marxist internationalism among large segments of European labor, both leaders and the rank and file. Perhaps nowhere was this renaissance of Socialist internationalism more pronounced than in Germany. Not surprisingly, however, scholarly considerations of this phenomenon have tended to have a common methodological denominator; they approach the subject from the "top down".¹ This essay seeks to redress this imbalance. Focusing on the supporters of the internationalist anti-war movement that eventually grew into what for a time was the second-largest political organization in the early Weimar Republic, namely the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD), it examines the manifestations of revolutionary Socialist internationalism at the grass-roots level in Germany.

Why the USPD? To begin with, this particular party liked to think of itself as the true heir to the internationalist heritage of the old Social Democratic Party in the pre-war International.² In keeping with this orientation, Independent Social Democrats were involved in every major attempt to resurrect the old International or create a new one either during or after the war – a record no other labor organization could match.³ Moreover, the party's demise in 1920 was

¹ See, for example, Franz Borkeu's classic *The Communist International*, republished as *World Communism* (Ann Arbor, 1962), and the recent studies of James W. Hulse, *The Forming of the Communist International* (Stanford, 1964), Julius Braunthal, *History of the International* (New York, 1967), Branko Lazitch and Milorad M. Drachkovitch, *Lenin and the Comintern* (Stanford, 1972), and Albert S. Lindemann, *The 'Red Years': European Socialism versus Bolshevism, 1919-1921* (Berkeley, 1974).

² *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Gründungs-Parteitag der USPD vom 6. bis 8. April 1917 in Gotha*, ed. by Emil Eichhorn (Berlin, 1921), pp. 16, 47, 79; Eugen Prager, *Geschichte der USPD* (Berlin, 1921), pp. 143-51. For the pre-war or Socialist (Second) International, which was founded in 1889 thirteen years after the dissolution of the Marxist International Workingmen's Association (the First International), see Braunthal, *History of the International*, I, pp. 195ff.; Merle Fainsod, *International Socialism and the World War*, 2nd ed. (Garden City, 1969), pp. 11-31; James Joll, *The Second International 1889-1914* (New York, 1966); and Georges Haupt, *Socialism and the Great War* (New York, 1972).

³ During the war the USPD officially participated in both the attempts of the Second International to call an International Peace Conference at Stockholm in 1917 and the international conferences in 1915, 1916 and 1917 of the opposition Zimmerwald movement. Following the Armistice it sent representatives to the Berne, Amsterdam and Lucerne conferences of the Second International (1919), and in 1920 a USPD delegation travelled to Russia for the Second Congress of the Communist International. Finally, in 1921 the remnants of the party joined the International Working Union of Socialist Parties ("2½ International"), which had as its goal the fusion of the Second and Third

directly related to a matter of Marxist internationalism; specifically the USPD had the dubious distinction of being the first, but by no means the last, organization to split apart over Moscow's Twenty-one Conditions of admission to the Communist International.¹ Finally, the Independent Social Democratic Party had a mass appeal. Prior to its breakup the USPD had moved to within a few percentage points of the Social Democrats' electoral strength (the SPD was the largest party in the *Reichstag*), was rapidly nearing the one-million level in enrolled members, and appeared to be the most dynamic force in German politics.² In fact the USPD presented a radical alternative to the SPD that the German Communists, despite over a decade of trying, were never able to match.³

Internationals. For a detailed analysis of the Independent Social Democrats' role in these developments see Robert F. Wheeler, *USPD und Internationale. Sozialistischer Internationalismus in der Zeit der Revolution* (Berlin, 1975). David Morgan, *The Socialist Left and the German Revolution. A History of the German Independent Social Democratic Party, 1917-1922* (Ithaca, 1975), focuses on domestic politics but without ignoring the International question. Werner Krause's treatment in *USPD. Zur Geschichte der Unabhängigen Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands* (Frankfurt/M., 1975) is largely derivative and draws heavily on my doctoral dissertation.

¹ For a succinct English summary of these conditions see Borkenau, *World Communism*, op. cit., pp. 197-99. They were adopted by the Second Congress of the Communist International meeting in Moscow on August 6, 1920. See *Der zweite Kongress der Kommunistischen Internationale, Protokoll der Verhandlungen vom 19. Juli in Petrograd und vom 23. Juli bis 7. August 1920 in Moskau* (Hamburg, 1921), p. 658.

² According to Ossip K. Flechtheim, *Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik*, with an introduction by Hermann Weber (Frankfurt/M., 1969), p. 156, "Die USPD war damals [October 1920] eine mächtige Organisation mit 893923 Mitgliedern, 55 Tageszeitungen, 81 Reichstagsabgeordneten, einem die SPD übertreffenden Einfluss in den Landtagen von Sachsen, Thüringen und Braunschweig, entscheidendem Einfluss im Metallarbeiterverband und anderen Gewerkschaften." See also Friedrich Stampfer, *Die ersten 14 Jahre der Deutschen Republik* (Offenbach, 1947), p. 209. In the June 1920 Reichstag election the USPD polled 18.8% of the vote (a gain of 11.2% over the January 1919 elections) compared to 21.6% for the SPD (a loss of 16.3%); in many of the larger cities and industrial areas the USPD replaced the SPD as the leading German labor party. See *Die Wahlen zum Reichstag am 6. Juni 1920 [Statistik des Deutschen Reichs, 291]*.

³ Prior to the fusion of the pro-Moscow Independent Social Democrats and the Communists in December 1920, the German Communist Party was little more than a sectarian splinter group. In the 1920 Reichstag elections it had polled 1.7% of the vote, and as of July 1 it had only 66,323 members. Immediately following the influx of Independents in the winter of 1920-21 the Communists claimed a membership of c. 450,000, but within six months this had dropped to c. 160,000 paying members, and throughout the Weimar Republic the number of enrolled Communists generally fluctuated around 200,000. The

Significant as all these factors are, perhaps the most important yet possibly the least obvious reason for using this organization as a case-study was its highly decentralized structure. Up until it split in October 1920, the USPD organization placed a premium on local initiative, something that was, for example, reflected in its largely autonomous local press.¹ An analysis of some sixty extant Independent Social Democratic publications, combined with the examination of more traditional archival sources, particularly the records of the political police, not only suggests a fairly widespread concern with international questions among supporters of the USPD, but also that this local involvement came to be an important and even determining factor in shaping party policy, often against the will of the national leadership. In this context generational, regional, sex and socio-economic differences are discernable among the Independent membership and certain patterns emerge. Conceivably this information may prove useful not only to a better understanding of Marxist internationalism, but also to a more sophisticated analysis of the international working classes. Thus this essay is both a response to Georges Haupt's call for fresh methodological approaches in dealing with the International² and a tentative attempt to fill the need Peter N. Stearns has articulated for considering grass-roots sentiment as well as formal ideas and leadership attitudes in examining labor history.³

To measure grass-roots opinion in pre-Gallup-poll days is always a difficult task, to discern internationalist attitudes among the rank

best the Communists ever did at the polls nationally was 16.9% of the vote in the Reichstag election of November 1932. Generally, however, their electoral support fluctuated around the 12% mark, e.g., 1924 (I) – 12.6%; 1924 (II) – 9.0%; 1928 – 10.6%; 1930 – 13.1%; 1932 (I) – 14.3%; and 1932 (II) – 16.9%. See Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus* (Frankfurt/M., 1969), I, pp. 361ff., and Wheeler, "Die '21 Bedingungen' und die Spaltung der USPD im Herbst 1920. Zur Meinungsbildung der Basis", in: *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, XXIII (1975), p. 154.

¹ This was in part a reaction against the bureaucratization and oppressive centralization of the parent SPD, in part a result of Spartacist League influence. See Richard N. Hunt, *German Social Democracy 1918-1933* (New Haven, 1964), pp. 195-96; Carl E. Schorske, *German Social Democracy, 1905-1917* (Cambridge, 1955), pp. 317-20. Ironically, by the time of the split in 1920 both sides were arguing in favor of greater centralized control.

² Georges Haupt, *Programm und Wirklichkeit. Die internationale Sozialdemokratie vor 1914* (Neuwied and Berlin, 1970), pp. 116ff.

³ Peter N. Stearns, *Revolutionary Syndicalism and French Labor* (New Brunswick, 1971), pp. 1, 107; id. and Harvey Mitchell, *Workers & Protest. The European Labor Movement, the Working Classes and the Origins of Social Democracy 1890-1914* (Itasca, Ill., 1971), pp. 120-34, 235.

and file during wartime especially so. Not only were newspapers under military censorship and political meetings severely restricted as to what might be discussed, but anything that even vaguely resembled Socialist internationalism was considered subversive.¹ Still these very restrictions and controls occasionally provide material for examining and estimating such sentiment.

Early in the war Karl Liebknecht, the radical German Social Democrat, suggested a convenient definition for the tasks of the international Socialist; according to Liebknecht, "Each Socialist Party has its enemy, the common enemy of the International, in its own country. There it has to fight it."² The international Socialist must not be distracted by what is going on abroad, but direct his energies to confronting the forces of militarism and nationalism in his or her own country. Later this was reduced to a convenient slogan, "The main enemy is at home" ("Der Hauptfeind steht im eigenen Land").³ Yet to speak out publicly against the government, by either the spoken or written word, to say nothing of distributing anti-war manifestos whether they originated locally or at an international meeting in Switzerland, could, and often did, bring a stiff jail term. Liebknecht himself was a case in point, and various other well-known Social Democrats such as Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring, Ernst Meyer and Clara Zetkin were also arrested for their "subversive" activities.⁴

They were not unique in this regard. Besides such prominent and outspoken opponents of the war and the *Burgfrieden*, the names of numerous lesser-known activists adorn the police blotters of Germany, attesting to the severity of government repression and the difficulty of practicing Socialist internationalism.⁵ One way then to measure

¹ Under the Prussian Law of Siege, which was implemented at the outset of the war, "Germany was turned into a group of dictatorships". See Gerald D. Feldman, *Army, Industry and Labor in Germany 1914-1918* (Princeton, 1966), p. 32.

² See his letter to the Labour Leader, December 31, 1914.

³ See Karl Liebknecht, *Gesammelte Reden und Schriften*, VIII (Berlin, 1966), pp. 225-30.

⁴ Liebknecht was arrested during a demonstration on May day 1916 and eventually sentenced to in excess of four years; Luxemburg was imprisoned on February 18, 1915, Zetkin on July 29, 1915, Mehring on August 15, 1916, and Meyer on September 14, 1915.

⁵ For examples of less well known activists see *Dokumente und Materialien zur Geschichte der Deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, ed. by the Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus, Second Series, I (Berlin, 1958), pp. 201, 311, 639, 663; *Die Auswirkungen der Grossen Sozialistischen Oktoberrevolution auf Deutschland*, ed. by Leo Stern (Berlin, 1959), I, pp. 371, 464, 511-12, 514, 644-45, 679-81, and II, pp. 957, 975, 1038-40, 1117-20, 1169-72, 1278, 1311, 1349; Prager, Ge-

the strength of anti-war sentiment among the rank and file would be to count the number of political prisoners. It would, however, be both misleading and less than fair to the German working classes to limit an examination of Marxist internationalism during the war to those unfortunate practitioners who were caught. A more representative approach might be to stand Peter N. Stearns on his head and, instead of looking for economic motivation in what have generally been regarded as political strikes, to seek instead political motivation behind what were allegedly economic actions. In other words, count how many people left their jobs and/or took to the streets to fight, in Liebknecht's phrase, the *Hauptfeind* – to fight against their national government.

At first, it must be admitted, the number of strikers was not all that much greater than those jailed for opposing the government. Not until the war was nearly two years old did a major strike action take place. On June 28, 1916, 55,000 Berlin workers along with smaller numbers of strikers in Bremen, Brunswick, Essen and Stuttgart walked out in protest over Liebknecht's sentencing by a military court.¹ Much more impressive numerically was the metal-workers' strike which broke out on April 16, 1917, and has generally been related to the reduction of the bread ration, i.e., to an economic factor.

schichte der USPD, op. cit., pp. 92-93; Leipziger Volkszeitung, May 16, 25 and 28, June 7, 8, 10, 21 and 28, October 19 and 25, November 1 and 5, 1918; Zentralparteiarchiv of the Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus, Berlin, St. 1/104 Reichsjustizministerium, pp. 88-92; Historisches Staatsarchiv, Potsdam, Pr. Br. Rep. 30, Berlin, C Tit. 94 (11361), p. 349; Tit. 95, Sekt. 7 (15803), pp. 134-35, and (15823), pp. 43, 46, 67; Historisches Staatsarchiv, Gotha, Staatsanwaltschaft beim Landgericht Gotha, No 62, pp. 20ff., and No 63, pp. 103ff.; Staatsarchiv, Hamburg, Senatskommission für die Justizverwaltung I E b 14 a 14, I, pp. 5ff., and Politische Polizei, Abt. IV, pp. 20-24, Abt. 38, Bestand 9, Nos 16, 29 and 38; Hauptstaatsarchiv, Düsseldorf, Landgericht Elberfeld, Rep. No 5/840, pp. 1ff., and Regierung Düsseldorf, No 14941, pp. 8-10, 33ff.; Bayrisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Abt. I, Allgemeines Staatsarchiv, Munich, M. Inn. 66283, pp. 1ff.; Zentrales Staatsarchiv, Abt. I, Potsdam, Reichsministerium des Innern 12473, pp. 30ff., Reichsjustizamt 3721, pp. 2ff., Auswärtiges Amt 35994-98, and Oberreichsanwalt C 48/16-49/16, 53/16-57/16, 62/16 68/16, 92/17, 143/17, 162/17, 20/18, 24/18-29/18, 37/18, 87/18-88/18, 120/18, and J 279/16, 293/16, 329/16, 371/16, 377/16, 575/16, 300/17, 52/18, 146/18, 206/18, 818/18, 829/18; Historisches Staatsarchiv, Leipzig, Polizeipräsidium, Nos 367, 1862, 1867, 1970, 2317/101, 3182, 3900/60, 4578 and 5909; Niedersächsisches Staatsarchiv, Wolfenbüttel, 133 Neu Polizei Direktion Braunschweig, Nos 2282 and 2322; Badisches Generallandesarchiv, Karlsruhe, Abt. 69 N 1, No 1203; Landesarchiv, Berlin (West), Rep. 58 (Generalstaatsanwalt), Nos 2005-23; Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Berlin (West), Rep. 84a Preussisches Justizministerium 4347, pp. 37ff.

¹ Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus, Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, Chronik (Berlin, 1965), I, pp. 319-20; Feldman, Army, Industry and Labor, op. cit., p. 128.

In reality this strike, which involved a quarter of a million munitions-workers in five major German cities, was directly related to the formation over Easter 1917 of the Independent Social Democratic Party.¹

The platform adopted by the USPD at its founding congress has been superficially described by George Lichtheim as a "return to old-style internationalism"; nothing could be more misleading. Lichtheim ignores not only the atmosphere of government repression which severely restricted platform language, but also the commitment of large segments of the party rank and file to the "International of Action" (*Internationale der Tat*) inspired by Liebknecht.² The best support for this latter contention comes from the fact that the April 16 strike was organized by lower-echelon trade unionists in the Metal Workers' Union during the USPD founding congress, and carried out a little more than a week later against the opposition of most of the trade-union hierarchy.³ The Independent activists clearly used the economic issue to get the workers out, but everywhere they sought to give the strike a political coloring.⁴ In Leipzig, where they were in the majority, they secured the adoption of a list of their political demands. These included a demand for peace without annexations and a call to free all political prisoners.⁵ (It has also been claimed that during this strike a soviet was formed, suggesting the influence of the Russian

¹ See below, note 3. For the size and development of the strike see Fritz Opel, *Der Deutsche Metallarbeiterverband während des ersten Weltkrieges und der Revolution* (Hannover, 1957), pp. 57ff.; Feldman, *Army, Industry and Labor*, pp. 333ff.; and Chronik, op. cit., I, pp. 332-333.

² For Lichtheim's comment see *A Short History of Socialism* (New York, 1970), p. 239. The founding congress was initially scheduled for Leipzig, but had to be changed to Gotha because the local police had banned a number of those taking part in this gathering from speaking in Leipzig. See letter of March 12, 1917, in Hugo Haase, *Sein Leben und Wirken*, ed. by Ernst Haase (Berlin, n.d.), p. 140. Even with the move significant sections of the congress proceedings, including the party's manifesto, were censured out of the original report by the *Stellvertretendes Generalkommando* in Cassel, who had the "responsibility" for the Gotha area. See *Protokoll Gotha*, op. cit., p. 9.

³ See the report of Hermann Liebmann, one of the organizers of the strike action, in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, November 8, 1919. For contrasting accounts see Morgan, *The Socialist Left*, op. cit., p. 83, and Susanne Miller, *Burgfrieden und Klassenkampf. Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie im Ersten Weltkrieg* (Düsseldorf, 1974), p. 291.

⁴ See *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes*, Bonn, *Europa Generalia*, No 82, No 1, XXVII, p. 99; *Historisches Staatsarchiv, Leipzig, Polizeipräsidium*, No 1862, pp. 1-2; *Die Auswirkungen*, op. cit., II, pp. 511-12; and Richard Müller, *Vom Kaiserreich zur Republik* (Vienna, 1924), I, p. 83.

⁵ See *Dokumente und Materialien*, op. cit., I, p. 612, for the text of these demands.

February Revolution, although this has been challenged.¹) What is undeniable is that the Leipzig demands served as a model for demands which militant Independents placed before strikers in other German cities. In Berlin, for example, a large minority continued the strike under these demands after the trade-union leadership had coerced the majority back to work.² One "old-style internationalist", USPD chairman Hugo Haase, astutely observed in analyzing the April action that "the question of bread disappeared more and more behind the question of peace".³

If the political aspect of the April strike is commonly ignored, it is the explicitly international dimension of the next major strike action that is generally overlooked. Nine months and one more Russian "Revolution" later another manifestation of direct action occurred. During the week of January 28, 1918, one million German workers left their jobs in a demonstration strike for peace that Haase, not one given to overstatement, described as the "greatest event in the history of the German working class".⁴ Organized throughout the country by the Independents and their allies in the metal trades, the strike had a clearly political and international orientation from the outset. The hardships of the fourth winter of the war were certainly exploited to the fullest in getting the men and women to leave the factories and demonstrate in the streets.⁵ Nevertheless the main demands of the

¹ See p. 335, note 3, and Prager, *Geschichte der USPD*, p. 161. For a conflicting interpretation see K. Schneider, "Der Streik der Leipziger Arbeiter im April 1917", in: *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig*, XVI (1967), p. 397.

² For a copy of the Berlin demands see *Zentralparteiarchiv, DFV/4, Flugblätter*. Proposed by a leading Independent Social Democrat, Adolf Hoffmann, they were word for word almost exactly the same as the demands adopted in Leipzig. The militarization of the factories eventually broke the strike.

³ Letter dated April 25, 1917, in Hugo Haase, *op. cit.*, p. 143. See also Kenneth R. Calkins, Hugo Haase. *Demokrat und Revolutionär* (Berlin, 1976).

⁴ Letter dated February 10, 1918, in Hugo Haase, p. 157. See also Haase's comments in the Reichstag on February 27. For the size of the strike see *Dokumente und Materialien, II* (Berlin, 1957), pp. 105-06.

⁵ For the organization and preparation of the strike see Kurt Eisner's testimony to the police in *Zentralparteiarchiv, St. 1/104*, pp. 98-99; Müller, *Vom Kaiserreich zu Republik*, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 101-02; Georg Ledebour, "Die deutsche Novemberrevolution", in: *Sozialistische Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 1931, *Archiv der sozialen Demokratie*, Bonn, Restnachlass Georg Ledebour; and the memoir of Paul Blumenthal in Berlin 1917-1918. *Parteiveteranenberichte über die Auswirkungen der Grossen Sozialistischen Oktoberrevolution auf die Berliner Arbeiterbewegung* (Berlin, 1957), pp. 68-72. All of these accounts are from participants. See also Walter Bartel, *Die Linken in der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie im Kampf gegen Militarismus und Krieg* (Berlin, 1958), pp. 592ff., and Helmuth Stoecker, *Walter Stoecker. Die Frühzeit eines deutschen Arbeiterführers 1891-1920* (Berlin, 1970), p. 144.

strikers involved peace without annexations in the East (this was the time of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations) and the prevention of the spring offensive in the West.¹ Besides these overtly internationalist goals, there appears to have been a connection between the mass strikes of January and the decision of the Third Zimmerwald meeting held four months earlier in Stockholm to endorse an international general strike for peace.² Not only did the German action follow immediately upon the heels of widespread strikes in Austria-Hungary, but during the mass action the leading USPD newspapers emphasized protest strikes and demonstrations in other countries.³ In addition, Independent Social Democrats in a variety of locations struck in the belief that they were part of a larger international action, involving international Socialists in the West as well.⁴

Like the work stoppages of the previous April, the January strike was not outwardly successful. But what it did help to develop was a consciousness of the need for direct action among USPD supporters, something which was repaid in full in November. While the Independent Social Democrats did not formally prepare the German Revolution as they had the mass strikes of April 1917 and January 1918,

¹ *Dokumente und Materialien*, II, pp. 59-61, 78-79, 87-88, 102-03.

² See the remarks of a participant in the Third Zimmerwald Conference, Georg Ledebour, in Independent Labour Party, Report of the Annual Conference held at Southport, March 1921 (London, 1921), p. 135. In addition the "peace proclamation from Stockholm" turned up in various parts of Germany during the strike, e.g., in Berlin, Berlin-Lichtenberg, Leipzig and Munich. See Zentrales Staatsarchiv, Abt. 1, Reichskanzlei, No 548, p. 168, and Stadtarchiv Augsburg, Magistrat der Stadt Augsburg, 32, No 44 BJ. See also the comments of Hermann Fleissner, a member of the USPD's national advisory council, in *Die Auswirkungen*, II, pp. 917-19; III, pp. 238-40.

³ For example, the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, the USPD's major organ, headlined the following stories during the strike: "Streiks und Unruhen in Frankreich", January 28, 1918; "Streiks auch in England", February 1; and "Revolutionäre Gärung in England", February 2. A courier was sent to Berlin by the strikers in Vienna (Hans Hautmann, *Die Anfänge der Linksradikalen Bewegung und der Kommunistischen Partei Deutschösterreichs 1916/1919* (Vienna, 1970), p. 22), and during the strike a number of USPD leaders made pointed reference to the Austrian action. See the remarks of Eisner (*Revolution und Räterepublik in München 1918/19*, ed. by Gerhard Schmolze (Munich, 1969), p. 45), Adolf Hoffmann (*Stenographische Berichte über die öffentlichen Sitzungen der Stadtverordnetenversammlung der Stadt Berlin - 1918* (Berlin, 1919), p. 48), and August Banko, leader of the USPD organization for Recklinghausen Borken-Buer (Zentrales Staatsarchiv, Abt. I, Oberreichsanwalt C 20/18, I, p. 8).

⁴ See Zentralparteiarchiv, St. 1/104, p. 83; Zentrales Staatsarchiv, Abt. I, Oberreichsanwalt C 37/18, pp. 10-11, 13; Werner Boldt, "Der Januarstreik 1918 in Bayern mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Nürnbergs", in: *Jahrbuch für Fränkische Landesforschung*, XXV (1965), p. 31; *Dokumente und Materialien*, II, pp. 105-06.

they did predict it at a party conference in the early fall.¹ More important, following the parliamentarization of the government in October the USPD agitated openly for a German Socialist Republic as its “international duty”.² If it would be incorrect to suggest that the November Revolution was planned as an international action, the largely spontaneous or grass-roots nature of the Revolution was clearly influenced by internationalist anti-war agitation. Significantly one of the first actions of the revolutionary general assembly of the Berlin Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils was to demand, at the suggestion of the USPD, the restoration of diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia.³ That this was sabotaged at a higher level was not the fault of the rank and file.⁴ The November Revolution was also followed by fraternization with British, French and Russian prisoners of war in Germany and the attempt *via* radio broadcasts to the armies on the Western front to spread world revolution to France and Britain.⁵ These are

¹ See Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Europa Generalia, No 82, No 1, XXVII, p. 230. Certain sections of the party, however, were actively preparing for armed revolution, namely the “Revolutionäre Obleute”. See Müller, *Vom Kaiserreich zur Republik*, I, pp. 127-28; Emil Barth, *Aus der Werkstatt der deutschen Revolution* (Berlin, n.d.), pp. 24ff. See also Morgan, *The Socialist Left*, pp. 103ff.

² *Dokumente und Materialien*, II, pp. 207-10. See also party secretary Wilhelm Dittmann’s call for the “Socialist Republic in Germany with Liebknecht as president” in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, October 24, 1918.

³ *Dokumente und Materialien*, II, pp. 348-49. The author of this proclamation was Hugo Haase. See *Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des ausserordentlichen Parteitages vom 2. bis 6. März 1919 in Berlin* (Berlin, n.d.), pp. 82-83.

⁴ Foreign Secretary Solf and the Army command on the Eastern front (both holdovers from the old regime) were opposed to any resumption of diplomatic ties with Soviet Russia, as were the three Social Democratic members of the Provisional Revolutionary Government. That the majority of Independents in the government did not push harder for recognition and even on occasion went along with their Social Democratic colleagues was probably related to three factors: 1) the victorious Allies would not have tolerated the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two major “revolutionary” nations in Europe; 2) the influence of Karl Kautsky, who was openly skeptical of the Bolsheviks’ potential for survival; 3) the ill-advised actions of the Soviet government itself such as allowing the German diplomatic missions to be occupied by German prisoners of war. (I am preparing an in-depth treatment of this question for the *Mannheimer Schriften zur Politik und Zeitgeschichte* tentatively entitled *Sozialistischer Internationalismus in der Praxis: Räte-Deutschland und Sowjet-Russland November/Dezember 1918*.) See also Arno J. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking* (New York, 1967), pp. 229ff.

⁵ See *Freiheit* (Berlin), Nos 11 and 18, November 21 and 25, 1918; *Zentralparteiarchiv*, St. 11/16, *Informat. Stelle der Reichsregierung, Zweigstelle I*, pp. 15, 76-77 and 88; and *Zentrales Staatsarchiv, Abt. I, Reichskanzlei 2486/4*, p. 61.

but further indications of the "International of Action" that had developed at the grass-roots level during the war, eventually culminating in the German Revolution.

After the war the question became how to give organizational form to such revolutionary Socialist internationalism. Where was the militant activist international body that would prevent future wars, safeguard the changes that had been won, and work for the victory of world revolution? It certainly does not seem that the majority of Independent Social Democrats envisaged the Second International, either in its old or in some reconstructed form, as embodying this "International of Action".¹ Yet certain "old-style internationalists", i.e., those who maintained the general adequacy of the pre-war International in the party leadership felt otherwise and continued to urge participation in the Second International. For more than nine months they sought, unsuccessfully, to convince the USPD membership of the wisdom of their ways. Under increasing pressure from the local party organizations, which continually objected to the "social-patriotic" character of the old International, particularly the SPD's role in it, the leadership took an increasingly radical stance at international conferences, but to no avail. They succeeded neither in changing the old International nor in satisfying the rank and file.

Nothing probably did more to deepen grass-roots antipathy towards the Second International than the fiasco that took place on July 21, 1919. On that day, as Arno Mayer has demonstrated, the old International attempted to realize a concerted international action to protest the Versailles treaty and the intervention in Soviet Russia.² Its aim was to restore its own credibility and by so doing persuade those parties that had left the Second International to return to the fold. Its efforts were crowned with failure. The pillars of the resurrected International, the French and British labor movements, failed to participate, while the SPD publicly opposed any action in Germany. The USPD leadership, by contrast, at the apparent insistence of the membership endorsed the action, but left the particular form the demonstrations were to take to the discretion of the local organizations.

¹ As far as Independents commented on the Second International at all during its refounding in early 1919, they were generally critical and/or skeptical. See *Volkstribüne* (Elberfeld-Barmen), January 30 and 31; *Volksrecht* (Frankfurt/M.), February 1, 7 and 14; *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, January 24; *Volksblatt* (Halle), February 3; *Sozialistische Republik* (Karlsruhe), February 15; *Freiheit* (Berlin), No 103, February 26; USPD, *Protokoll Berlin*, op. cit., pp. 20, 93, 135-36, 147-49, 158, 174, 178, 189, 215-16.

² See Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy*, op. cit., pp. 853ff., for a good account of the strike attempt.

Although overlooked by Mayer, the response of the Independent rank and file was quite impressive. On July 21 the Independents succeeded in organizing some form of demonstration strike in a majority of German cities with a population of more than 100,000 as well as in many of the smaller industrial cities of central Germany. In other areas rallies were held after work to demonstrate international solidarity.¹ Only in Italy, Norway and Austria was the response as good or better.² That the Italians and Norwegians had left the Second International and were in the process of joining the new Third or Communist International, while the Austrians, like the Independents, were an isolated minority within the old body, was not lost upon the USPD rank and file.

If July 21 demonstrated, as one local paper put it, that the Second International was "incapable of action",³ the decision of this organization at its next conference to reject various USPD proposals for the radicalization of the International proved beyond a doubt to the vast majority of Independent Social Democrats that the old International was also against the "dictatorship of the proletariat", i.e., against revolutionary Socialism.⁴ The murmurings against participating in the Second International which had been observable locally for some time now became a roar. While a few foolhardy souls still advocated the party's continued presence in the old International for one tactical reason or the other, they could generally count on little rank-and-file support. The membership had already forced the leadership to call a special congress for November to decide the International question.⁵ The problem that the rank and file was now considering in some detail was what should be done once the party had left the Second International.

¹ I have relied on the wire-service reports appearing in the *Vorwärts* (Berlin) and the *Freiheit* (Berlin), and on the local USPD press to piece together an account of the July 21 action in Germany.

² For Norway see *Freiheit* (Berlin), No 347, July 24, 1919; for Austria the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Vienna), July 22 and 23; and for Italy Helmut König, *Lenin und der italienische Sozialismus* (Tübingen, 1967), p. 40.

³ *Volksrecht* (Frankfurt/M.), July 25, 1919.

⁴ See the commentary in the USPD press: *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, August 5, 1919; *Volksbote* (Zeitz), August 7; *Volksblatt* (Halle), August 6; *Volksrecht* (Frankfurt/M.), August 6; *Hamburger Volks-Zeitung*, August 9; *Gothaer Volksblatt*, August 8; *Volktribüne* (Elberfeld-Barmen), August 12; *Sozialistische Republik* (Karlsruhe), August 16; *Volksstimme* (Schmalkalden), August 12; *Volksstimme* (Hagen), August 8; *Freiheit* (Königsberg), August 15.

⁵ See, for example, the resolutions adopted in Leipzig (*Volkszeitung*, July 22, 1919) in Halle (*Volksblatt*, August 15), in Karlsruhe (*Sozialistische Republik*, August 20), at the Saxon party congress (*Leipziger Volkszeitung*, August 12), and at the Silesian party congress (*Freiheit* (Berlin), No 397, August 20).

Parallel with the grass-roots movement for a total break with the old International, a demand had grown up for some sort of co-operation with the recently established Communist International. Within a few months of its formation in March there had been indications of rank-and-file interest in this body;¹ by the fall of 1919 this had turned into a veritable groundswell for Moscow. During September and October, for example, all of the subdistricts in the strong Halle organization voted overwhelmingly for affiliation to the Third International.² Two of the three Greater Berlin districts also called for union with Moscow, and the Lower Rhineland and Western Westphalia organizations, the party's two most important western districts, along with a host of other districts throughout the country, did likewise.³ As one opponent of the Third International was forced to concede: "nearly everywhere where the comrades have taken a position on the International they have opted for Moscow."⁴

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that everyone had hopped aboard the Third International bandwagon. One pro-Comintern journal noted the existence of an "imposing minority" that opposed affiliation.⁵ In Greater Leipzig, after Halle the party's strongest organization, a referendum overturned an earlier endorsement of the Third International by a general assembly of the district members.⁶ The large Berlin City organization also opposed unconditional uni-

¹ See *Freiheit* (Königsberg), May 14, 1919; *Sozialistische Republik* (Karlsruhe), June 3.

² *Volksblatt* (Halle), November 29, 1919. The Halle electoral district was the only one in all of Germany in which the USPD had won a majority of the *seats* to the Constituent Assembly. There were approximately 60,000 Independents in the district as of July 1, 1919.

³ In Greater Berlin, the Teltow-Beeskow and Potsdam IV organizations, with roughly 30,000 members each, both adopted resolutions calling for affiliation with the Third International. See *Freiheit* (Berlin), Nos 506 and 510, October 20 and 22, 1919; for the 36,907-member Western Westphalia and 63,317-member Lower Rhineland organizations see *Volkszeitung* (Düsseldorf), October 16 and November 5. The other district organizations included Bavaria (c. 57,000 members), Hamburg (c. 30,000), Pomerania (c. 13,000) and Württemberg (c. 14,500). See *Der Kampf* (Munich), October 31; *Hamburger Volkszeitung*, November 4; *Der Kämpfer* (Stettin), November 1; *Der Sozialdemokrat* (Stuttgart), October 25, 27 and 28. A variety of smaller local groups not included in the above districts also supported affiliation, e.g., Breslau, Cologne, Cuxhaven, Gotha, Hannover-West and Schmalkalden-Suhl.

⁴ See the comments of Stephan Heise, editor of *Der Kämpfer* (Stettin), in the December 3, 1919, issue of this paper.

⁵ See *Volksblatt* (Halle), November 29, 1919.

⁶ The vote was 5,811 to 4,790. See the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, November 11, 1919. The Greater-Leipzig USPD had 43,774 members as of October 1. In the National Assembly elections of January, 38.6% of the district electorate had voted USPD, second only to the Halle district's 44.1%.

lateral affiliation with Moscow, as did a variety of smaller party groups.¹ Still the critics of the Communist International tended to differ markedly on what the USPD should do. A close look at this segment of rank-and-file sentiment indicates a remarkable diversity of opinion as to how a truly revolutionary Socialist International should be realized.²

The supporters of Moscow were not plagued by such doubts. When the Independents' special congress finally convened in late November at Leipzig a clear majority of the participants, many of them relatively young, supported immediate union with the Communist International.³ But youth was not to be served, at least not this time. Under the thinly veiled threat of splitting the party, the older more established leadership forced through a compromise which in retrospect seems only to

¹ See *Freiheit* (Berlin), No 532, November 3, 1919. The Berlin City district had c. 45,000 members, and in the National Assembly election the Independents obtained 27.6% of the vote, their third best showing in the country. The smaller groups included local organizations in Allenstein, Bremen, Elbing, Frankfurt/M., Jena, Karlsruhe, Kiel, Königsberg, Nordhausen, Offenbach, Osterode and Wilhelmshaven.

² For example the Greater Leipzig, Kiel, Nordhausen, Osterode and Wilhelmshaven organizations advocated attendance at the upcoming congress of the Second International in Geneva. See *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, November 4, 1919; *Republik* (Kiel), November 4; *Nordhäuser Volkszeitung*, November 3; *Freiheit* (Berlin), No 547; November 11; USPD, *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des ausserordentlichen Parteitages vom 30. November bis 6. Dezember 1919 in Leipzig* (Berlin, n.d.), pp. 17-18. By contrast the Berlin City, Bremen, Frankfurt/M., Jena, Karlsruhe, Königsberg and Offenbach organizations all rejected Geneva, and called for the establishment of contacts and/or a conference between the parties of the Third International and the left-wing elements of the Second in order to bring about an all-inclusive, revolutionary International. See *Freiheit* (Berlin), No 532, November 3; *Bremer Arbeiter-Zeitung*, November 8; *Volksrecht* (Frankfurt/M.), November 5 and 14; *Neue Zeitung* (Jena), November 6; *Sozialistische Republik* (Karlsruhe), November 25; *Freiheit* (Königsberg), November 12. Finally there were some rather unique positions as the two Silesian districts' call for union with the Third International but only after going to Geneva. See *Schlesische Arbeiterzeitung* (Breslau), November 29, and *Freiheit* (Berlin), No 551, November 13.

³ For the size of this majority see USPD, *Protokoll Leipzig*, op. cit., pp. 326, 382, 397, 431; *Freiheit* (Brunswick), December 27, 1919; *Folkets Dagblad*, *Politiken* (Stockholm), December 6; *Der Kampf* (Munich), December 17; *Republik* (Kiel), December 10; *Die Rote Fahne* (Berlin), December 14; and *Zimmerwald* (Stockholm), 1920, No 1. The average age of those who eventually voted for immediate affiliation to the Third International was 37 compared to 41.9 for those who opposed it (based on a fortuitous sample of 62.4% of those voting). See Wheeler, "German Labor and the Comintern: A Problem of Generations?", in: *Journal of Social History*, VII (1974), pp. 304-21, for a full consideration of this question.

have delayed the inevitable.¹ While endorsing the basic principles of the Third International, it called for negotiations towards the merger of all “social-revolutionary” parties and the Third International. The congress majority, however, not only succeeded in amending this to require union with Moscow should negotiations fail, it also succeeded in electing a pro-Comintern majority to the party leadership.² Under these circumstances, it was only a matter of time before the leadership, urged on by a restive rank and file, sent a delegation to Moscow to secure an understanding with the Comintern.³ Yet the four Independent Social Democratic leaders who departed for Russia in early July of 1920 seeking the “International of Action” returned in late August with a list of Twenty-one Conditions for admission to the Communist International, in brief a program for the Bolshevization of the radical European Left.⁴ “Lenin’s *Diktat*”, as the conditions were commonly referred to in the USPD press, served only to destroy the consensus growing among most Independent Social Democrats since the Leipzig congress that the Third International was potentially the answer to the search for a revolutionary Marxist International.⁵ By shattering this consensus the Comintern

¹ A number of leading figures in the party including Georg Ledebour had indicated that they would not accept any party offices should the congress vote for union with Moscow. See *Freiheit* (Berlin), No 614, December 18, 1919. See also *Die revolutionäre Illusion. Zur Geschichte des linken Flügels der USPD. Erinnerungen von Curt Geyer*, ed. by Wolfgang Benz and Hermann Graml, with a foreword by Robert F. Wheeler (Stuttgart, 1976), pp. 157-58.

² For the resolution in its final form see USPD, *Protokoll Leipzig*, pp. 41-42. A majority of those elected to the central committee, the advisory council and the control commission favored affiliation to the Third International. See *ibid.*, pp. 416, 456.

³ Although the decision was initially taken on February 27 the delegation, consisting of party chairmen Arthur Crispian and Ernst Däumig and party secretaries Wilhelm Dittmann and Walter Stoecker, did not leave until four and a half months later. The official purpose of the trip was “to negotiate with Moscow concerning the merger of the USPD with the Third International while safeguarding the party’s internal and tactical autonomy”. See *Freiheit* (Berlin), No 248, June 27, 1920.

⁴ For example the second of these conditions required that all “reformists” and “centrists” holding leadership or functionary positions be replaced by “Communists”; condition 13 called for the periodic “purging” of member parties; condition 15 the adoption of a “Communist” program; condition 16 the acceptance of all resolutions adopted not only by the Comintern but also by the Bolshevik-dominated Executive Committee.

⁵ While some differences remained within the USPD on the International question, all indications are that in general support for Moscow had increased since the Leipzig congress. One possible exception was the national leadership, where the Comintern’s sharp reaction to the Leipzig decisions may have weakened support for affiliation. See the letter of Zinoviev, chairman of the Comintern

helped destroy the USPD, which may have been its shortsighted goal.

Although there had been a good deal of public discussion about the International within the party ever since the Revolution, the promulgation of the Twenty-one Conditions sparked a debate without parallel in the brief history of the USPD, and possibly in the history of the German labor movement. This "great debate" took place at three levels: in the press, at the national conference of party functionaries in September, and at hundreds of local membership meetings. Interestingly enough there were few Independents at any level who seemed terribly happy about the conditions. While there were some on the left who praised them, and not a few on the right who secretly welcomed them while publicly denouncing them, the majority of Independents seem to have fallen into one of three categories: the *apologists*, i.e., those who swallowed their pride and to a greater or lesser extent rationalized the need for acceptance; the *revisionists*, who wanted to try to modify the conditions; the *disillusioned*, who rejected the conditions and in effect the Third International. This last group and those to their right dominated the first wave of response; by the beginning of September, nineteen USPD papers had already editorialized against the conditions, compared to the mere seven that endorsed them;¹ and a reported two-thirds of those attending the national conference also rejected them.² In contrast to the reaction of the functionaries, the response of the local activists, as measured by the hundreds of resolutions adopted at membership meetings,

Executive, dated February 5, in *The Communist International 1919-1943: Documents*, ed. by Jane Degras, I (New York, 1956), pp. 75-80. Still it was the national leadership that decided to send a delegation to Russia to discuss "merger" terms.

¹ The *Volksblatt* (Halle), *Der Sozialdemokrat* (Stuttgart), *Schlesische Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Breslau), *Volkswille* (Augsburg), *Tribüne* (Erfurt), *Ruhr-Echo* (Essen) and *Hamburger Volkszeitung* urged acceptance of the conditions, while the following found them unacceptable: *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, *Volkszeitung für das Vogtland* (Plauen), *Unabhängige Volkszeitung* (Dresden), *Oberfränkische Volkszeitung* (Hof), *Republik* (Kiel), *Freiheit* (Berlin), *Freiheit* (Brunswick), *Magdeburger Volkszeitung*, *Der Kampf* (Munich), *Der Kämpfer* (Stettin), *Nordhäuser Volkszeitung*, *Volkszeitung* (Düsseldorf), *Volkstribüne* (Elberfeld-Barmen), *Hessische Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Cassel), *Sozialistische Republik* (Karlsruhe), *Elbinger Volksstimme*, *Ostthüringische Tribüne* (Gera), *Tribüne* (Mannheim) and *Wahrheit* (Zittau).

² See *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, September 4, 1920. The *Volksrecht* (Frankfurt/M.) reported in its September 7 edition that a "large majority" at the conference rejected the conditions. According to *Freiheit* (Berlin), No 361, September 1, about 200 party functionaries attended this gathering.

was generally positive although there were sometimes marked regional variations.¹

The issue, however, was not to be resolved by the functionaries or the activists, but rather by the USPD membership voting in a referendum. Only about one of every four Independent Social Democrats (236,333) – apparently a relatively high figure by German trade-union and labor-movement standards² – participated in this election, and by a margin of roughly three to two the rank and file endorsed affiliation under the conditions.³ While this was on the average a somewhat lower ratio of support for Moscow than the result of the various membership meetings would have led one to expect, there were still very few areas where a majority actually rejected the conditions and, as the eventual division of the USPD would demonstrate, the referendum results did provide a fairly accurate reflection of rank-and-file sentiment.⁴

Why, under the circumstances, this considerable grass-roots support for the Third International? If there is no simple answer to this question, an analysis of the material does suggest a number of possibilities. One thing that even the most cursory reading of the local debates makes apparent is the tremendous sympathy for the Soviet Union prevalent among rank-and-file Independents. This is evident not only in the rhetoric of pro-conditions speakers at such meetings, but even more so in the anti-conditions resolutions, which bent over backwards expressing loyalty and support for the heroic Russian brothers.⁵ The Twenty-one Conditions appear to have been of only secondary importance to many, perhaps most, of those who formally voted for them in the local referendum. Much more important in

¹ Exceptions to this rule were Saxony, the Brunswick, Magdeburg-Anhalt and Oldenburg-Ostfriesland districts, as well as the Bremen, Gera, Jena, Nordhausen, Upper Franconia and Zeitz subdistricts.

² See Bremer Arbeiter-Zeitung, October 8, 1920.

³ The only quasi-official primary tally was that given by the supporters of the conditions, namely 144,900 for and 91,000 against acceptance. See Anna Geyer's mimeographed publication Für Referenten, No 1, October 21, 1920. My own incomplete calculations based on the results published in the USPD press has the vote at 136,685 for and 99,668 against.

⁴ Out of the twenty-five USPD districts in which a primary was definitely held, the conditions were rejected in only eight.

⁵ Whereas the resolution submitted to the national congress at Halle calling for *acceptance* of the conditions contained *no* mention of the Soviet Union, the resolution *opposing* acceptance contained a passage expressing "solidarity with Soviet Russia". See USPD, Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des ausserordentlichen Parteitages in Halle vom 12. bis 17. Oktober 1920 (Berlin, n.d.), pp. 70-71.

determining grass-roots behavior on this issue was the appeal of the Soviet Republic, the Russian Revolution and the Third International, and the *hope* they provided for those individuals who, believing that their own "revolution" had been betrayed, were becoming more and more alienated from German society.

Significantly, in only a few of the areas where the USPD was an important political force did a sizeable majority of the rank and file support the Twenty-one Conditions; weaker organizations, on the other hand, tended to accept the conditions.¹ This suggests a certain connection between political ineffectiveness and the desire for apocalyptic revolutionary change, since in areas where the Independents were more involved in the established political order the membership tended to be less willing to break with the past in order to qualify for the Comintern panacea.

Another factor which seems to have been related to the variations in the referendum results and may also help to explain why certain centers of USPD strength supported the conditions while others opposed them, was the general industrial structure of the different districts. For example, in all the USPD organizations that served the central German textile region of Northern Bavaria, Western Saxony and Eastern Thuringia, the conditions were roundly defeated.² Similarly, the only subsection of the Lower Rhineland organization where the conditions lost was in the West German textile center of Elber-

¹ The only districts where the USPD was the dominant labor party and the conditions received a large majority were Halle and the Lower Rhineland. In the latter incomplete returns gave the conditions a 14,999 to 5,621 majority; in the former the vote was 25,064 to 8,384. While the advocates of the conditions were victorious in all three districts of the important Greater Berlin area, in each case their margin was very small. This was also the situation in Western Westphalia. By contrast their biggest margins came in areas where the party was relatively weak, such as Hamburg, where the conditions were approved by better than five to one. Württemberg, where the ratio was better than four to one, and Hesse-Waldeck, where the margin was nearly ten to one! There were no comparable victories for the opponents of the conditions. The few times the conditions were soundly defeated it was generally in a solid USPD area such as Leipzig, Bremen or Brunswick. This pattern was even discernible regionally. In Bavaria, for example, the only subdistrict in which the USPD was the dominant labor organization, namely Upper Franconia, was also the only area where the conditions were rejected. For a detailed examination of these differences see "Die '21 Bedingungen' und die Spaltung der USPD", loc. cit., pp. 139ff.

² See Statistik des Deutschen Reichs, Volks-, Berufs- und Betriebszählung vom Juni 1925. Berufszählung (Berlin, 1927-29), No 10, pp. 106-07; No 11, pp. 73, 78; No 30, p. 81, for the region's economic structure, and Reichsamt für Arbeitsvermittlung, Jahrbuch der Berufsverbände im Deutschen Reich (Berlin, 1922), p. 95, 103, for the unionized textile-workers in this area in 1920.

feld-Barmen.¹ What the textile industry proved to be for the conditions' opponents, the mining industry was for the advocates. In both the Ruhr and Halle districts, which contained the largest concentrations of mine-workers in Germany, the local rank and file voted overwhelmingly in support of the Comintern decisions.² In the case of the metal trades the situation is more complex. While USPD strength was often to be found in metallurgical centers, the type of metal industry in which the workers were engaged appears to have been related to the outcome of the referendum. Thus in the *Bergisches Land*, i.e., Remscheid and Solingen, where the production of metal-wares predominated, the membership endorsed the Twenty-one Conditions overwhelmingly, whereas in neighboring Düsseldorf to the west and Hagen to the east, where the Independent rank and file divided nearly evenly in the referendum, a higher percentage of the working classes were engaged in the refining of metal-producing ores and the production of heavy machinery.³

Sex differences also appear to have played a role. The strong grassroots resistance to the conditions in textile centers – a majority of textile-workers were female – and the heavy support for acceptance in mining areas – miners were predominantly male – suggests a correlation with this variable. Further, most women who spoke out on the matter were critical of the conditions, and invariably a relatively higher percentage of women voting at USPD conferences and congresses opposed acceptance of the Twenty-one Conditions than did the men attending such gatherings. Finally, based on their behavior following the breakup of the USPD, female members in general were clearly less susceptible to Moscow's appeal and/or more disturbed by the conditions and the acrimonious debate they precipitated than their male counterparts.⁴

If Independent Social Democratic women were, relatively, among the strongest opponents of acceptance, the more youthful elements of both sexes provided Moscow with its greatest support among the rank and file. This generational difference was brought out vividly in some USPD families where during the "great debate" fathers could be found criticizing the same conditions their sons and daughters

¹ See Jahrbuch der Berufsverbände, op. cit., p. 103, for unionized workers, and Berufszählung, No 15, pp. 88, 94, for workers employed in this industry.

² See Jahrbuch der Berufsverbände, pp. 94, 102; also Berufszählung, No 9, p. 86; No 15, pp. 72, 90; No 16, pp. 92-93.

³ Berufszählung, No 15, pp. 97ff.; No 16 pp. 89, 105ff.

⁴ Wheeler, "German Women and the Communist International. The Case of the Independent Social Democrats", in: Central European History, VIII (1975), pp. 113-39, provides an in-depth treatment of this aspect of the problem.

were supporting.¹ Already discernable among the party functionaries, the age division came sharply into focus among the delegates elected by the rank and file to attend the national congress that would formally decide the issue.² While the mean age of all delegates was 38.4 years, the supporters of affiliation under the Twenty-one Conditions averaged 35.9, compared with a 41.9 mean for the opponents, i.e., a difference between the supporters and the opponents of six years on the average.³ Conceivably age may well have been *the* crucial factor in securing a majority for Moscow.

One thing is clear, the split that was formalized at the USPD's Halle congress in October 1920 owed nothing to the four days of rhetorical jousting that took place during this wake, Comintern chairman Zinoviev's claims to the contrary notwithstanding.⁴ During these four days three delegates modified their positions, adding up to a net gain of one-half a vote for Moscow. In each case the switches came from individuals who represented the minority position in their district; in each case it would appear that fear of rank-and-file retaliation back home caused the switch.⁵

Never again, however, was grass-roots sentiment to exert so strong an influence as it had during the heroic years that marked the flowering of the USPD. In neither the United Communist Party (the result of the fusion of the German Communists and the Independents who supported Moscow) nor in the Rest USPD was rank-and-file opinion to count for very much. Ironically, both parties became characterized by overcentralization and in the process lost much of their support

¹ Local party secretary for Zeitz Joseph Windau, senior, spoke against the conditions, while Joseph Windau, junior, supported them. See *Volksbote* (Zeitz), September 11, 1920. Although he eventually accepted the conditions, Reichstag deputy Friedrich Geyer was initially critical of them, while his son Curt, also a Reichstag deputy, and daughter-in-law Anna were publicly among their strongest supporters. See *Protokoll der Verhandlungen der ordentlichen Landesversammlung der USPD Sachsens. Abgehalten am 12. und 13. September 1920 im Volkshaus zu Leipzig* (Leipzig, 1920), pp. 54-55, and USPD, *Protokoll der Reichskonferenz vom 1. bis 3. September 1920 zu Berlin* (Berlin, n.d.), pp. 77-78.

² At the functionaries' national conference in early September the average age of those speaking for acceptance was 39, of those opposing 47.5. See "German Labor and the Comintern", loc. cit., pp. 312, 320.

³ These figures are based on a fortuitous sample of 60.5% of the 392 delegates voting at this congress.

⁴ See G. Zinoviev, *Twelve Days in Germany* (Moscow, 1921), p. 11.

⁵ The lone delegate from Essen who opposed the conditions switched to support them; one of the few delegates from Leipzig who supported the conditions switched to oppose them; and a delegate from Jena who called for the conditions' revision eventually voted to accept them.

among the working classes. After Halle grass-roots internationalism, on any large scale, was no more. The result of its demise was the end of the short-lived renaissance of Marxist internationalism in Germany. The revolutionary Socialist International – the “International of Action”, which had seemed so close to realization – was but a bitter memory of what might have been.