

The New Germany

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agreement had been reached with the Workmen's and Soldiers' Council with the following provisions:

1. All political power shall rest in the hands of the German Social Republic and the Workmen's and Soldiers' Council.
2. Its aim shall be the defense and development of the achievements of the Revolution, and the suppression of all counter-revolutionary activity.
3. Until the election of an Executive Council of the Soldiers' and Workmen's Council of the German Republic, the Executive Council in Berlin shall carry out the functions of this body.
4. The appointment and dismissal of members of all legislative bodies of the Republic, and of Prussia, until a final constitution has been adopted, shall be in the hands of the Central Executive Council, which shall also have the right to supervise their activity.
5. The Cabinet shall not appoint assistant ministers without previously consulting the Executive Council.
6. A convention of representatives of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils shall be called as soon as possible.

To understand the events that are taking place in Germany today and their significance for the course that the Revolution in Germany will take, one must be familiar with the various socialist divisions existing and the history of their origin. The differences that divide the Social Democratic Party, the Independent Social Democratic Party and the Spartacus group, are not new. They were not even caused directly by the war, although the war first brought these differences to a crisis that made a split in the forces of the German socialist movement inevitable. The opposition of these three groups to one another has its foundation not in their attitude to the war alone. In fact the position that the members of the different groups took when the war broke out was the direct outcome of their fundamental conception of the aims and purposes of the socialist movement. The act of the party majority in voting for the first war credit on the 4th of August, 1914, though it came as a shock to the socialist movement all over the world, was, in the last analysis, the logical consequence of the attitude into which the working class had been allowed to drift. The Social Democratic Party of Germany was an example, par excellence, of that period in the international movement that saw the growth of the socialist movement as a political party. The fall of the Paris Commune and the death of the first International marked the end of the first stormy period of stress and struggle of a poorly organized and powerless proletariat. The second International was built upon a new conception of the duty of the socialist movement and, under the leadership of the German socialist movement, laid particular emphasis upon the winning of political power on the national field. When the anti-socialist law had fallen and the Party entered once more stronger than ever upon the political field, it grew in leaps and bounds. It organized powerful labor unions which, after a comparatively short period of stormy battling against capital on the industrial field, became so powerful and so well organized that strikes and other forcible measures were the exception rather than the rule. On the political field the party progressed with stupendous rapidity. In a short time every Landtag had its Socialist delegation; large cities elected first one, then numerous Socialists to their city councils. In the national, state and municipal legislative assemblages they forced the adoption of social legislation, and the German protective factory legislation, German old-age pension laws, unemployment laws and maternity protection laws have been models for Liberals and Socialists all over the world. The Socialist movement grew in power and influence, and in growing moved

further and further from revolutionary measures. Not that the German movement had become a mere reform party. In no other country were the members, the rank and file, so thoroughly familiar with the theories and revolutionary ideals of Marx and Engels. The German Socialist still believed implicitly in the necessity of overthrowing the capitalist state of society. The revolutionary foundation was there, but the radical spirit, the readiness to act had given way to a feeling that amounted almost to conviction, that society would gradually develop into the socialist state, that it would be possible to bring about a socialist commonwealth, at least in Germany, peaceably, by a gradual evolution into a system of social ownership.

Long before the war broke out, an opposition group had come into existence in the Social-Democratic Party which, under the spiritual leadership of Karl Liebknecht, Klara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg and Franz Mehring opposed the tactics pursued by the great majority of the party. The National Congresses of the party for years had been the scene of stormy contention between the revisionist reform wing and the majority on the other. The recognized leaders spoke of Liebknecht and his radical supporters with ill-concealed contempt, and regarded their demands for more radical and more revolutionary methods as the products of unripe, foolish propagandists.

When the war began this fundamental difference assumed gigantic importance. Where it had formerly been limited largely to theoretical discussion it now assumed a practical significance that determined the stand that was taken by the members of the Reichstag group and by the membership at large on the question of war and government support. The majority felt that the socialist movement of Germany, in view of its achievements on the national field, was interested in the defense of what they termed "German Culture" against foreign attack. Their whole past made it inevitable that they should feel themselves the protectors, above all, of the German proletariat, and that they should regard the interests of that proletariat as inseparably bound up in the existence and immunity from attack on the German nation. The Liebknecht wing, on the other hand, maintained that the workingman has no country to defend, and that the only real self-defense of the proletariat lies in the revolution against its own capitalist class. In the caucus that preceded the vote in the Reichstag on the first war loan, only 13 out of 110 members protested against a favorable vote. But they were bound by the unit rule that obtains everywhere in the socialist movement, and voted unanimously in favor of the first war loan, while Haase, himself bitterly opposed to the attitude the party had adopted, as chairman of the socialist delegation, delivered the address explaining the vote of his party. When the vote on the second war loan was taken Karl Liebknecht alone voted against it; at a later vote he was joined by Otto Ruehle. On December 15, 1915, twenty socialist deputies voted against the new war loan and at the same time severed their connection with the official group, sitting in the Reichstag under the name "Arbeiter-Gemeinschaft." Around this nucleus the Independent Social Democratic Party was soon afterward founded.

From the very beginning, however, this new party displayed no unity of purpose or standpoint. There were two distinct groups, the so-called Moderates, Haase, Kautsky, Ledebour and Bernstein, on the one hand, and the radicals, or "Spartacus Gruppe," Liebknecht, Luxemburg, Zetkin and Mehring, on the other. The latter, from the beginning, insisted upon the complete reorganization of the international movement. It recognized that the socialist movement of the whole world was headed in the wrong direction, not only in the question of militarism and war, but in its whole fundamental conception of the class struggle. They proclaimed the death of the second International, and, together with radical Socialists of other nations, at the

famous Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences, demanded the organization of the Third International on an international and anti-national basis. The Moderates as firmly believed that the party had only taken a mistep, that it would right itself after the war was over, and tenaciously adhered to the old methods of the Social Democratic Party, concentrating their efforts on the gaining of political power, whenever elections were held. They had joined with the Spartacus group, not so much because of the community of interests between them, but as a protest against the methods that were being used by the majority Socialists, and the complete submission of the latter to the dictates of the government. Nevertheless the Scheidemann, David, Ebert, Suedekum wing, who had signed away the political liberties of the working class, and Legien, the German Gompers, under whose leadership the labor movement became a faultlessly functioning part of the war machine, held the masses behind them. After a few months of sporadic growth the Independent Social Democracy languished, and finally lost their hold in some of the very strongholds of the radical movement.

The differences that divided the groups of the Social-Democracy are reflected clearly in their attitude toward the proletarian revolution in Russia. Kautsky and Bernstein were sharply critical, not to say oppositional in their position, Ledebour and Haase were sympathetic, while the Spartacus group at once enthusiastically supported and defended the measures adopted by the Soviet government. After his liberation, Liebknecht was the honorary chairman of the All-Russian Congress of Soviets held in Moscow on the 15th November, 1918. At this same congress Rosa Luxemburg and Franz Mehring were accorded an enthusiastic ovation. The whole-souled opposition which the majority Socialists evinced, at all times, to the measures and tactics of the Bolsheviks and the Soviet Government, were only natural in men who looked forward to a revolution in their own country with misgiving and fear. True to their old faith in the power of Social Democracy to "evolve" its ideal by a gradual system of development, through the various political and economic stages, they could see in the radical and aggressive measures of the Russian proletariat only ruin and destruction and regarded Lenin and Trotzky as wild-eyed fanatics who were endangering the cause of the Russian working class.

Thus it was logical that these men, when in spite of their honest efforts, the revolution broke out in Germany should strain every effort to win control of the new government in order to save it from the hands of those radical elements in the labor movement who had been chiefly responsible for its outbreak. Scheidemann, Ebert, David and Suedekum are prepared to establish order in Germany, to reorganize the demoralized industries of the country, while safeguarding the interests of the working class, to call a constitutional assembly and to conclude peace negotiations as early as possible, under the most favorable conditions that may be procured from the Allied governments under existing conditions. They are absolutely satisfied with the establishment of a political democracy under the control of the Social Democracy, and are convinced that the time has not yet come in Germany for social revolution. The Independent Social Democratic Party, under Haase and Kautsky, pursue, as usual, the middle course. While they are opposed to the extremely opportunist view of the Ebert group, and are prepared to place the power of the Government, within certain reasonable limits, into the hands of the Workmen's and Soldiers' Councils, while they seem to be opposed to the policy of the Ebert group in retaining in office the entire bureaucracy of the old imperial regime, they, too, fear that radical measures will foment counter-revolutionary activity at home, and that a radical reorganization of the economic system of Germany might influence unfavorably the settlement of peace terms with the

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