

Unity of All Workers in Red Saxony Forced by Masses Over Heads of Reactionary Officials

By LUDWIG LORE

In the world of proletarian politics there is nothing more significant and more hopeful than the events that have just transpired in Saxony. For many decades Saxony has been the stronghold of the German Social-Democracy. At one time, when the socialist movement of Germany was at its height this sturdy province elected 22 out of 23 social-democratic candidates to the Reichstag.

During the war the Leipziger Volkszeitung, the leading organ of the social-democratic papers, was one of the most fearless and determined newspapers in Germany. It supported the position of the internationalist Socialists and stood, in Germany with Haase, Ledebour and Kautsky. When the war was over and the question of war and peace was overshadowed by the struggle for or against the revolutionary action, the Leipziger Volkszeitung became the

organ of the independent Social-Democracy with all its uncertainty and vastness. Last year, when the unity between the Independents and the Social-Democracy of Germany took place, the Saxon movement became a part of the new United Social-Democratic Party of Germany.

The strong socialist movement of Saxony finally formed a government. But it held its power by virtue of so small a majority that it depended upon the support of the small communist delegation in the Diet. On the one hand every attempt at even a modest fulfillment of its duty to the class that had elected it, aroused the resentment of the capitalist representatives. On the other hand the lot of the German worker went from bad to worse with such catastrophic rapidity that even the most conservative workman began to see the futility of social-democratic reform in a capitalist Germany. Moreover, the extreme consideration shown by the Government toward its most dangerous nationalist and monarchist elements, and the vigor and ruthlessness with which it persecuted

communist activities added to this resentment.

The result was the overthrow of the Saxon Government by a vote of lack of confidence moved by the Communists in the Diet. A campaign of vilification and calumny by the social-democratic press and party-leaders against the Communists followed. They claimed that this overthrow of the socialist government was a betrayal of the working-class interests.

The leadership of the United Social-Democracy immediately adjusted itself to the new conditions and made overtures to the Democratic Party as well as to the more conservative and reactionary Deutsche Volkspartei, with the intention of forming a coalition ministry. The Communists however, carried their fight to the masses. All over Saxony hundreds of meetings were held in which representatives of the Communist Party of Germany presented their position and called upon organized Social-Democrats to force their leaders into a united front for the establishment of a Labor Govern-

ment. At a convention of the U. S. D. P. of Saxony the formation of the new government was the only order of business. The National Executive Committee sent one of its strongest men, Dittmann, from Berlin to recommend a coalition with the Democrats. He spoke for more than two hours and used his oratory to prove the impossibility of working together with the Communists who could not be trusted. The Executive Committee of the Saxon USDP, submitted a strong resolution favoring the same course. All leaders of prominence in the Saxon social-democratic movement supported this convention. During the two weeks previous to the convention the Leipziger Volkszeitung had published a mass of calumnious and abusive material against the Communists in an attempt to create an atmosphere that would make a socialist-communist combination impossible.

In spite of all this vigorous propaganda, the officialdom met with a disastrous defeat at the convention. It is noteworthy that the plain and unknown workingman-delegates who

carried through this opposition, acted consciously against their leaders, who had possessed for so many years their full confidence. The convention voted by an almost two-third majority, against any coalition with any capitalist party; to continue negotiations with the Communists and finally to guard against sabotage by the Executive Committee by electing a special committee for the purpose of supervising negotiations.

The two parties have come to an agreement upon the following basis:

- 1) Full amnesty shall be granted for all acts committed under stress of need. All political prisoners with the exclusion of the counter-revolutionists will also be pardoned.
- 2) Proletarian organs and bodies shall be created which will place the fight against profiteering directly in the hands of the revolutionary working-class with the full co-operation of the Government, these bodies to be elected in united shop delegate or trade union meetings.
- 3) The Government shall be held to create a Chamber of Labor whose function shall be the supervision and

recommendation of all kinds of labor legislation as well as the control of their enforcement.

4) An offensive struggle against Fascism, i. e., the monarchistic, nationalistic propaganda and its militaristic organizations shall be inaugurated by the creation of militant working-class defense units.

These demands are in their very essence the negation of the social-democratic policies as practiced by its politicians in these years of ministerial activities. Hitherto they have ordained, the masses have followed; now these omnipotent gentlemen find themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to take their orders from and to adopt their policies to the instructions of the working masses. Over the heads of the social-democratic leaders the united front has become a fact. The united front movement, whose significance and purport is still so little understood, in Germany and elsewhere, has won a signal victory and has brought the almost hopeless German labor movement to the threshold of what may become a new era.

The Saxon situation has already left its mark upon the movement in other parts of Germany. At a recent convention of the Shop Committee of the Rhine district, representing almost five-sixths of the workingmen and women of that district, who had directly elected these delegates to their shop meetings, resolutions commending the action of the Saxon workers and their program were unanimously adopted. This congress contained a two-third communist majority and of a strong social-democratic minority which was in full accord with the above position. The social-democratic unit in this convention adopted a separate resolution in which they called upon the Social-Democrats of Saxony to bend every energy toward the successful carrying out of the revolutionary working-class program that has been adopted.

In Germany the united front has become a living factor. May it lead the German working-class out of the slough of despond into the land of promise.