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THE POLITICS OF A GERMAN TOWN DURING
THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC: COBURG 1918-1929

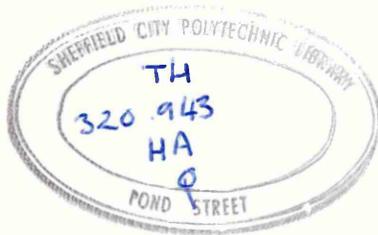
by

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List of Abbreviations

| | |
|------------|---|
| A.S.R. | Arbeiter und Soldaten Rat. (Workers' and Soldiers' Council) |
| D.N.V.P. | Deutschnationale Volkspartei. (German National People's Party) |
| D.V.P. | Deutsche Volkspartei. (German People's Party) |
| D.V.S.T. | Deutschvoelkischer Schutz-und Trutzbund. (German People's Defensive Alliance) |
| N.S.D.A.P. | Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei. (National Socialist German Workers' Party) |
| S.A. | Sturm Abteilung. (Storm Troopers) |
| S.P.D. | Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands. (German Social Democratic Party) |
| U.S.P.D. | Unabhaengige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands. (Independent German Social Democratic Party) |
| W.S.C. | Workers' and Soldiers' Council. |

ition of Coburg as it becomes enmeshed in the arguments between Berlin and Munich.

Finally, the thesis examines the significance of events in Coburg in 1929 to the National Socialist movement locally, and nationally as Coburg becomes the first National Socialist administration in Germany.

CHAPTER 1.

COBURG AND REICH BEFORE AND DURING THE GERMAN REVOLUTION.

The duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was created in 1826 when the Saxe-Gotha-Altenburg line ceased with the death of the last duke. Saxe-Gotha, which lay in Thuringia, was then divided between its immediate neighbours, with Duke Ernst I of Saxe-Coburg claiming the 'capital', the district of Gotha. In negotiations, which involved conceding a small part of his duchy to the territory of Saxe-Meiningen, Duke Ernst I successfully secured the union of Saxe-Coburg with Gotha.⁽¹⁾ From the outset it was difficult to see the union in anything but name only, for the main centres of Gotha and Coburg were around 100 kilometres apart, separated not only by the Thuringian forest but also by areas of Saxe-Meiningen territory, and even parts of Prussia. The sheer geographical distance between the two towns was certain to account for some discrepancy of interests and some differences in the ways of life. From the earliest days of the union there was a very identifiable antagonism between them.

"... in the matter of the Coburg-Gotha Union, it was all the more impossible to come to a decision as the chief councillors of both lands hindered each other in the most jealous manner..." (2)

The union was anything but natural, bringing together two 'peoples' of quite different character, whose social structures differed quite widely, and whose economic and political systems were to prove a continuous source of conflict throughout the 92 year history of the united duchies.⁽³⁾

Politically, Coburg was something of a progressive district by German standards at that time, in that since 1821 it had been governed by a constitutional monarchy with an elected district assembly. Gotha, on the other hand, was deeply rooted in the old feudalistic system, and despite reforms in 1829 which were aimed at bringing Gotha's constitution into line with that of Coburg, throughout their joint history, the two never really functioned as a single unit. Both elected their own district assemblies which would then, on occasions, hold joint sittings, and in essence there were two separate administrative structures; one for Coburg's affairs, the other for Gotha's affairs. (4)

Economically, Coburg was always the more prosperous partner, having developed from the Middle Ages as an important trading centre on the busy trading route running through the valley from Augsburg and Nuernberg to Northern Germany. (5) Gotha, in contrast, seemed somehow 'time-locked' in its restrictive feudal practices which the nineteenth century dukes seemed reluctant to change:

"Doubtful matters soon came to light; release from all feudal burdens as regarded all rights of pasture... The assurance of a supply of wood for the wants of the people... The first blast of the furious hurricane of political senselessness sometimes struck me as being rather comical." (6)

That pattern of rule prevailed upto the outbreak of the First World War, the consequences of which were to leave the twentieth century Duke, Carl Eduard, in no such position to dictate the pace of any change to the people of Coburg-Gotha. Events in Germany in 1918 threatened to sweep away the old order and radically alter the political power structure in the post-war Reich. The extent to which this did occur is the main focus of attention in the subsequent pages of

this study.

After some three and a half years at war, what was to be the final year - 1918 - started with Germany seemingly in a position of some strength. Hindenburg and Ludendorff could gear all Germany's resources to a total war effort for, despite an ever increasing call for peace moves at home, the civilian government in Berlin presented little or no constraint to the Army commanders.⁽⁷⁾

On the Reich's borders there was good cause for feelings of confidence, with the now Bolshevik Russia pulling out of the war and entering into peace negotiations at Brest-Litovsk.⁽⁸⁾ This offered Germany not only the opportunity to transfer troops across to the Western Front, but it also made available further supplies of foodstuffs and war materials from Russia. The position on the Western Front had, in fact, been improving, as throughout the winter of 1917-1918 Ludendorff's forces had remained on the defensive and had enjoyed some considerable success in repelling the huge Allied offensives.⁽⁹⁾ The Austrian victory over the Italians at Caporetto in October 1917 had also helped as British and French troops had to be sent to the aid of their Italian allies.⁽¹⁰⁾

On the debit side was the fact that the aim of starving Britain into capitulation by unrestricted submarine warfare, as demanded so vociferously by the Supreme Command of the German Reichswehr, had seriously backfired. Not only had this plan failed to achieve its main aim, but it had also drawn the United States into the war.⁽¹¹⁾ It soon became evident, too, that despite hopes of the October Revolution in Russia aiding Germany's cause, that cause was, if anything, in danger of being undermined as ideas about proletarian revolution began to spread

into the Reich. Despite the reported successes on the war front, many Germans were frustrated by the lack of any corresponding improvement to conditions at home where the overriding concern was the severe food shortage resulting from the cruel winter of 1916 - 1917 which had left millions of people hungry and with serious misgivings about the effects war was having on them. The calls for international peace triggered by the 'revolutionaries' in Russia were increasingly attractive to neighbouring Germany where the people were facing still greater hardship as the harsh winter of 1917 - 1918 threatened even worse shortages of food than the previous winter. (12)

With this background of domestic unease, Ludendorff decided that his forces would have to mount an offensive in the West in the spring of 1918. Initial successes were recorded as the Allies were pushed back to the River Marne and maximum propaganda value was extracted as reports of a 'victory offensive' spread through the Reich, with 'news' of the impending collapse of the Allied Front and imminent German victory. When the German advance soon came to a halt, however, so did precise news of exactly how the German Reichswehr was faring. What had, in fact, happened was that the German advance had been checked by General Foch and his French forces. (13) In July 1918 Foch then launched a counter-offensive and on August 8th, backed by thirteen British divisions with the support of 450 tanks, he dealt the German forces a blow which Ludendorff described as:

"... the black day of the Germany Army." (14)

The Allies overwhelmed German positions between the Somme and the Luce, taking some 16,000 prisoners in the process. (15) Even before the launching of this counter-offensive troop morale amongst the Germans

had begun to waver, and indiscipline was breaking out, particularly when the soldiers discovered for themselves that the Allied forces were not nearly as badly provisioned as they had been led to believe. Looting and drinking then became serious problems amongst the lower ranks of the Reichswehr. (16)

To add to the German High Command's difficulties there was also the problem of dissent amongst the large numbers of troops now on the Western Front who had been transferred from the Russian border where they had been 'exposed' to Bolshevik propaganda. Similarly a number of other troops had been subjected to the propaganda of the Spartacus letters and the Revolutionary Shop Stewards whilst deployed in Berlin during the January strikes. (17)

Throughout it all, though, Hindenburg and Ludendorff refused publicly to concede victory and persisted in their talk of 'wearing down' the enemy. As Richard Watt documents, however, Ludendorff appears to have chosen his words with some care when replying to questions from Government officials:

"In July the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Paul von Hintze, asked Ludendorff bluntly whether he was 'certain of finally and decisively beating the enemy'. 'I can reply to that with a decided yes', was Ludendorff's answer... A month later the furthest that Ludendorff would go was to admit that the German Army was no longer capable of a 'great offensive' although he claimed that by a skilful defensive policy he could break the Allies' morale so that they would sue for peace." (18).

August and September continued to produce major setbacks for the German Army with no sign of the slightest crack in Allied morale. On the contrary, with American troops pouring into France, the Allies were

producing a vigorous offensive along the Western Front. Perhaps more decisively, Germany's friends were failing to hold back the Allies on other fronts, and Ludendorff's nerve finally broke when Bulgaria was forced to sue for an armistice on 29th September 1918, thus exposing the Central Powers' southern flank. Ludendorff immediately advised Kaiser Wilhelm II and the Chancellor that the war could not be won, and that the Chancellor must approach the President of the United States of America, Wilson, at once to seek an armistice. (19)

Ludendorff's advice was that the Chancellor should seek a peace based on Wilson's "Fourteen Points." (20)

Ludendorff was removed from his post for fear that his retention would jeopardise any negotiations with President Wilson, in view of the President's conviction that a lasting peace could only be concluded between democratic states. Being clearly identified with the old, imperial, autocratic regime, Ludendorff's presence in high office could well be a sticking point preventing a successful outcome to negotiations with America. The Chancellor, von Hertling, also resigned and was replaced by Prince Max von Baden. Prince Max was presented with this assessment of the war situation by Field Marshal von Hindenburg::

"The German Army still stands firm and successfully wards off attacks. But the situation becomes daily more critical and may force the supreme Command to take momentous decisions.

It is desirable in the circumstances to break off the battle in order to spare the German people and its allies useless sacrifices. Every day wasted costs thousands of brave soldiers their lives." (21)

This desperate account of the military situation, coupled with growing

political agitation for peace and general social unrest in many areas of the Reich, left the new Chancellor with little choice but to seek an accommodation with the enemy. This he did immediately in a letter addressed to President Wilson:

"The German Government requests the President of the United States of America to take in hand the restoration of peace, to bring this request to the notice of all belligerent states and to invite them to send plenipotentiaries for the initiation of negotiations. They accept as a basis for the peace negotiations the programme laid down by the President of the United States of America, in his message to Congress of 8th January, 1918" (22)

In a further attempt to persuade President Wilson to negotiate seriously with Germany as a democratic state, the German Government introduced immediate proposals for the liberalisation of the political system. Following Ludendorff's dismissal, Prince Max von Baden introduced a series of constitutional changes which were passed by the Reichstag on 28th October 1918 and which therefore constituted a reply to President Wilson's earlier charge that the German Government had not made any moves since first suing for peace to alter the existing power structure.⁽²³⁾ It was hoped that these reforms were the first stage in establishing a parliamentary democracy in Germany but, though they promised much, they came too late.

Within a week or so of the passing of these reforms Germany was enveloped in domestic turmoil. The realisation that by the end of October Germany was on the verge of surrender came as a sudden shock to a German people who for months, had been led to believe that Ludendorff's offensive in the spring, following Russia's withdrawal from the war, had virtually brought the Allies to their knees. The German people had received no news of the success of the Allied counter-offensive, and

news that the Supreme Command of the Reichswehr was now requesting an armistice because the military situation was so hopeless created panic and uncertainty which spilled over into popular revolt.

Although the Independent Socialists (U.S.P.D.) had been agitating for a 'revolutionary programme' of reform in Germany, events now referred to as the 'German Revolution' were largely spontaneous outbursts of popular dissent.⁽²⁴⁾ The left-wing parties were, in fact, ill-prepared to exploit the situation when revolution came, as even amongst the Independent Socialists there seemed to be an obvious lack of conviction as to whether the working class would actually be able to overthrow the mighty German state.⁽²⁵⁾ That events in November 1918 were precipitated rather by popular pressure resulting from the devastating news of military surrender and the ever-present food shortages than by any deep-rooted political motivation for revolutionary change is reflected by reports from within the Reich's borders. A representative of the Saxon Government commented on 24th October in Berlin:

"Two moods are predominant among the masses. The first is a yearning for peace which has now grown to an extreme pitch. The second is an unmistakable bitterness over the fact that previous governments did not recognise the limits of German strength but went on nourishing the belief in Germany's invincibility..."⁽²⁶⁾

The persistent refusal of the Kaiser to abdicate also fuelled popular discontent because he was seen as a major obstacle to the start of peace negotiations on the basis of President Wilson's 'Fourteen Points'.⁽²⁷⁾ The 'last straw' was, however, to occur when, in the port of Kiel, naval chiefs ordered the fleet to sea at the end of

October to undertake what must have seemed a last-ditch operation in the English Channel with little, if any, chance of success. The sailors refused to obey the command and so the Kiel mutiny began, and with it the German Revolution as the first Workers' and Soldiers' Council was established.

It was to be only a matter of days before similar outbreaks of dissent had spread to all regions of the Reich, including many of the rural areas in the south like Coburg.

"In den Novembertagen des Jahres 1918 war auch die Buergerschaft unserer kerndeutschen Stadt Coburg auf die Versprechung von Freiheit, Schoenheit und Wuerde hereingefallen, die damals unserem Volk von den Nutzniessern des Novemberverbrechens gemacht wuerden."⁽²⁸⁾

Werner Faber, who held one of the mayoral positions in Coburg in 1932 when Coburg's council had a National Socialist majority, made it patently obvious how he and his fellow National Socialists viewed the events of November 1918 in Germany.⁽²⁹⁾ Whilst perhaps not viewing events in exactly the same light, Coburg's leading official during those early days of 'revolution' in 1918, Hermann Quarck, was alarmed at events.⁽³⁰⁾ He and the military commander in Coburg, Oberstleutnant von Erffa, were more concerned about attempts to influence events in Coburg by radical groups from other regions than they were about any action the Coburg Socialists might take. In particular their suspicions fell on Gotha where, during the earliest hours of the 'Revolution' a Workers' and Soldiers' Council had been established.⁽³¹⁾ Von Erffa had initially told Staatsrat Hermann Quarck that he had his soldiers well in hand, but then von Erffa took rather an astonishing and quite decisive step.⁽³²⁾ On 9th November 1918 he called together

his troops in the Coburg garrison and gave what amounted to a farewell address. He told his men that he was speaking to them possibly for the last time in the light of recent events throughout the Reich. On the advice of his General Command in Kassel, he suggested that the garrison elect a Soldiers' Council now, in order to avoid any violent conflict with the authorities.⁽³³⁾ Von Erffa also hoped that in setting up a Soldiers' Council, the Workers' and Soldiers' Council (W.S.C.) in Gotha would not see any need to interfere in matters in Coburg.⁽³⁴⁾

Von Erffa's action had dealt a blow to Quarck who had been feeling secure in the knowledge that should there be the merest hint of civil disorder, he would be able to call on the military.⁽³⁵⁾ Quarck's immediate reaction was to phone von Erffa's superiors in Kassel to make an official complaint about the Coburg Commander's behaviour, but he simply learnt for himself that the General Command was working with the W.S.Cs. all over the Reich. Von Erffa subsequently told Quarck that he, Quarck, was grossly underestimating the strength of the present 'revolutionary' movement and that it would be a grave mistake, and a costly one in lives, to try to resist any attempt to block the establishment of W.S.Cs. Von Erffa added that should Quarck still be determined to hold out, then his only recourse was to use his own civil authority and call on the police.⁽³⁶⁾

Despite this "Versagen", or 'betrayal', as he saw it, Quarck was determined to maintain a firm grip on the course of events.⁽³⁷⁾ He summoned a meeting between representatives of the executive of the Coburg District Socialist Party, the deputy Mayor of Coburg, Commander von Erffa, and two other representatives of the Coburg mili-

tary.⁽³⁸⁾ Quarck proposed delaying the formation of a W.S.C. until the situation throughout the Reich had become clearer.⁽³⁹⁾ Although not quite as derisive about left-wing moves to form these councils as Faber in his comment above, Quarck did question the very need for a W.S.C. in Coburg:

"... ob ein Vorgehen, wie es hier geplant, ueberhaupt fuer Coburg notwendig sei ... wenn die Coburger im Einvernehmen mit den Behoerden alles selbst ordneten."⁽⁴⁰⁾

Quarck's plea for the postponement of any action was turned down by the Socialists, and their party newspaper, the 'Coburger Volksblatt', printed an article on November 11th calling for a general strike and demonstration through the streets.⁽⁴¹⁾ The tone of the article would, however, have met with Quarck's approval for it called for calm, orderly behaviour, and warned against any acts of looting or violence. The paper also gave assurances to the Coburg people on a matter of great concern to them, as well as to people throughout the Reich: the "Magenfrage" or food factor.⁽⁴²⁾ Few people in the Reich were, in fact, in so fortunate a position as those in Coburg who could be given assurances that supplies of food were sufficient to last until the New Year at the very least.⁽⁴³⁾ In one demand, however, the Left did not remain completely 'moderate'. To Quarck's dismay, Coburg, as Gotha, took up the call for the abdication of Carl Eduard, who was the duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha at that time. The Kaiser had finally departed in the early days of 'Revolution', as had most of the German Princes, so why not the Duke?⁽⁴⁴⁾ Carl Eduard was attacked in particular for his English descent, as a grandson of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. In apparent reference to the historical notion of the 'Divine Right of Kings' in Britain, the 'Coburger Volksblatt' cutting-

ly remarked:

"Oder glaubt er vielleicht als Auslaender ein
besonderes Anrecht 'von Gottes Gnaden' auf seinen
Herrschersitz zu haben?" (45)

At two o'clock in the afternoon of 11th November, some 1,000 people answered the Socialist call to gather for a demonstration. Little, if any, support came from other towns like Gotha, so the demonstration set off to wind its way peacefully through the Coburg town centre to the Town Hall. Here, representatives of Coburg's provisional W.S.C. secured from Coburg town councillors recognition of their right to oversee all administrative acts. Apparently satisfied, the W.S.C. representatives then left the town officials to carry on as normal and made their way to the buildings of the state ministry. Here, however, they met with a blunt refusal from Staatsrat Quarck to give any such recognition to W.S.C. rights regarding the affairs of the Coburg state. Quarck based his refusal on the oath of loyalty he had taken to the Duke and the present constitution, neither of which had yet been replaced.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Quarck emphasised that he would continue in office as before, at least until the next joint meeting of the Coburg and Gotha District Councils, scheduled for 14th November 1918, where the question of the Duke's position was likely to be raised.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Quarck did agree to do whatever lay in his power to ensure food supplies over the coming months provided that the Coburg W.S.C. agreed to co-operate in the maintenance of law and order. This was agreed and the W.S.C. representatives then led the demonstration to the Ehrenburg Palace where the final act of 'revolution' took place.⁽⁴⁸⁾

From a balcony in the palace, leading Socialist figures read out the

so-called "Kriegsartikel" in which emphasis was laid on the importance of electing a W.S.C. to work for the reconstruction of the country and a better future. (49)

In general terms, events in Coburg had followed much the same pattern as events elsewhere in the Reich during these initial days of 'revolution'. When Quarck bluntly rejected all claims by the W.S.C. to any real sharing of power, the Socialists clearly did not know how to react. They were consequently outmanoeuvred by an astute Quarck who managed to harness Socialist support to a defence of the 'status quo'. An early opportunity to initiate change had thus been lost, and from this point on, established interests in Coburg began to reassert themselves as the conservatism inherent in Coburg society emerged during the following years of turmoil and uncertainty to stifle any hope of a fundamental democratisation of the political system.

W.S.Cs. throughout the Reich were quickly reduced to performing similar supervisory functions. The revolution remained 'unfinished' in the words of Karl Dietrich Bracher:

"The old power structure survived within the new framework: the social, economic, and bureaucratic balance of power was preserved with only minor changes. The bankruptcy of the old forces, though obvious, was not followed by any real orientation and restructuring. Instead, the democrats put themselves into the hands of the military and the old civil servants, who knew how to exploit this co-operation without themselves changing." (50)

By November 6th the message of 'revolution' had been carried by the Keil sailors to all the major ports and most of the larger towns and cities. (51) The W.S.Cs. which were springing up throughout the Reich

were a rapidly improvised form of self-government which expressed the popular feeling of discontent at that time, and which slipped into the political vacuum created as the old order seemingly began to collapse in the face of defeat. In fact, although 'revolutionary' in form, perhaps, by the way in which they claimed executive powers of government over their own areas, the Councils, in general, made little attempt to remove the old bureaucracy, but rather co-existed with it. In doing this, the W.S.Cs. allowed themselves to be very quickly reduced to little more than 'rubber-stamp' authority for the old imperial officers and bureaucrats who were allowed to remain and continue with the day-to-day running of the country.⁽⁵²⁾ In many respects it was ironic that the W.S.Cs. were persuaded to concentrate on maintaining law and order during these troubled times:

"... the control of the bureaucracy by the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils did not seriously interfere with the working of the well-established machine, but in practice upheld its authority."⁽⁵³⁾

The tone of the 'revolution' had, in fact, already been set by events in Berlin during those early November days. Unable to hold back the tide of events any longer, Prince Max von Baden, who until that time had been Imperial Chancellor, handed over the seals of his office to Friedrich Ebert.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Ebert was the leader of the Majority Socialists and in him, Prince Max was convinced he had chosen the right man:⁽⁵⁵⁾

"... a man determined to fight the revolution tooth and nail..."⁽⁵⁶⁾

This confidence in Ebert as the 'right man' seemed well justified when Ebert, who retained the title 'Imperial Chancellor', held his now

famous telephone conversation with General von Groener, Ludendorff's replacement as Quartermaster General, a matter of hours after accepting the seals of office from Prince Max. The significance of this conversation was in the consensus reached between the two men that the great threat facing Germany was Bolshevism following the October Revolution in Russia. An agreement was reached that the Army would co-operate with the civilian government in suppressing any such Bolshevik threat within the Reich's borders. (57)

"But by taking a position against an overrated radical Left, the Social Democrats found themselves dependent on the Army, the Free Corps, (58) and the civil service bureaucracy, which promptly put rigid limits on the further democratisation of state and society." (59)

Bracher argues that it was a fatal mistake by the Socialists to become dependent on the counter-revolutionary 'Freikorps' for the maintenance of internal 'order', because in so doing, Ebert was unable to prevent the kind of violence which culminated in the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht by the Freikorps, and later in the murders of Government ministers like Matthias Erzberger and Walter Rathenau by nationalists. (60)

"This was the setting in which the radical Right counter-movement had its beginnings. Soon it was directed not only against the revolution, but against the democratic Republic itself. The political career of Corporal Adolf Hitler, stationed in Munich, also had its beginnings in this anti-revolutionary atmosphere." (61)

In fact, as Hitler began to build up his German Workers' Party, the ranks of the party membership were swelled with former 'Freikorps' men who came to form the nucleus of the notorious S.A. (62) It was

this link with the Army that was so crucial to Hitler's rise to power:

"Without the unique position of the Army in Germany, and especially in Bavarian politics ... Hitler would never have been able to exercise with impunity his methods of incitement, violence and intimidation. At every step from 1914 to 1945 Hitler's varying relationship to the Army was of the greatest importance to him: never more so in these early days in Munich when without the Army's patronage, Hitler would have found the greatest difficulty in climbing the first steps of his political career". (63)

The stubbornness of the Kaiser in refusing to abdicate was matched in Coburg by the unwillingness of Duke Carl Eduard to give in to pressure for his removal. The eventual abdication of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was, in the end, due much more to pressure from Socialists in Gotha than anything Coburg's left-wing did or said. As early as 9th November 1918 at a public meeting called by the Gotha Socialists on the market place in Gotha, cries went up for Carl Eduard's abdication, and he was, in fact, declared 'deposed' as from that very moment by some speakers at the meeting. (64) The Duke's minister in Gotha, Staatsminister Bassewitz, received a set of demands from Wilhelm Bock, leader of the Gotha Socialists, calling for immediate reforms and, above all, the Duke's abdication. In Bassewitz's report to the Duke and his officials in Coburg it seemed clear that the Gotha Socialists were intent upon removing the Duke, forcibly if necessary, should this not be the outcome of the joint meeting of the Coburg District Assemblies called for 14th November. (65) At this joint assembly, Bassewitz delivered the following address on Carl Eduard's behalf:

"In einem am Morgen des 9. Novembers eingegangenen Schreiben hat die sozialdemokratische Fraktion des Landtages die alsbaldige Einberufung des Landtages beantragt. Diesem Antrag ist so schnell die schwierigen Verkehrsverhältnisse es erlaubten,

entsprochen worden. Unterdessen ist Deutschland eine auf sozialistischer Grundlage beruhende Republik geworden, in deren Rahmen kein Raum fuer das Fortbestehen von Einzelmonarchie ist. Damit hat der Herzog aufgehoert, in den Herzogtuemern Coburg und Gotha zu regieren. Er hat alle Beamten von dem ihm geleisteten Eid entbunden. Auch weiterhin ist er beseelt von dem aufrichtigen Wunsch fuer das Wohl seiner bisherigen Landeskinde und unseres armen, geschlagenen Vaterlandes."(66)

To all intents and purposes this declaration signalled the end of the duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha although as Juergen Erdmann points out, its clever wording meant that despite having relinquished rule of the joint duchy, the Duke had managed to leave the way clear for his family to take up its privileged position in Coburg, should the political situation in the Reich change. The declaration stated only that there was no room for a monarchistic figurehead in a socialist republic. (67)

Shortly after the dissolution of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha the old rivalry between the two states surfaced again, epitomised by the action of the Gotha W.S.C. (68) It declared that:

"Nachdem der Herzog aufgehoert hat zu regieren, tritt bis auf weiteres in allen gemeinschaftlichen und gothaischen Angelegenheiten, in denen der Herzog nach Verfassung und Gesetz bisher zustaendig gewesen war der Vollzugsausschuss des ASR Gotha an seine Stelle".(69)

This brought a sharp reply from the Coburg Staatsministerium which, with the full backing of the Coburg W.S.C. declared that any interference by Gotha in purely Coburg affairs would not be tolerated, as such decisions were exclusively the preserve of Coburg's decision-making bodies. (70) The extent to which the Coburg W.S.C. could be counted amongst the decision-making bodies was, however, characterised by a special agreement reached between the W.S.C. and the State ministry on

18th November 1918.⁽⁷¹⁾ This agreement left the old monarchistic administrative system virtually intact, pushing the W.S.C. into something of a consultative role at best, and at worst, a body which lent a cover of respectability to the continuation of the old order.⁽⁷²⁾

With the splitting up of the duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha the important question now facing Coburg was how it could best shape its political and economic future. In the early days it had looked as if a 'Freistaat Coburg' might be a distinct possibility since, despite having to contribute its full share to the Reich's war effort, at the end of 1918 Coburg was in a relatively strong economic position because of the tight control exercised over its finances.⁽⁷³⁾ The first task in establishing Coburg as a 'Freistaat' would have been to organise elections for a new District Assembly to replace the now defunct Coburg-Gotha joint assembly. The W.S.C. realised, however, that in this they faced something of a dilemma. The original aim of the W.S.Cs. had been to remove the old order and effect a new, centralised Socialist Republic, but to establish Coburg as a 'Freistaat' obviously ran contrary to this aim. The W.S.C. therefore advocated delaying any decisive move on Coburg's future until a new National Assembly had been elected which could then itself settle the question of Coburg's future.⁽⁷⁴⁾ The Left in Coburg soon fell prey, however, to the arguments of the 'old order' about the urgent need to take steps to protect Coburg's rich cultural heritage, such as the Duke's residences and property, the theatre and the art collection in the castle. To the people of Coburg this was a very serious issue of concern which was later to play a decisive role in determining Coburg's future.⁽⁷⁵⁾ But even for the present this argument was significant enough to persuade the W.S.C. to approve the calling of elections to

a new District Assembly on 9th February 1919. (76)

The result of the elections was an absolute majority for the Social Democrats who won fifty-nine percent of the vote, and at one of the first meetings of the new assembly in March 1919 a three-man government was elected: from the S.P.D., Franz Klinger and Reinhold Artmann together with the Duke's former 'prime minister', Hermann Quarck. To what extent the election of Quarck was a mark of gratitude and respect to the leading figure from the 'old days' is uncertain, but the Socialists together with the other parties in the Assembly elected Quarck unanimously, to the third government seat. (77) It is possible that this was a calculated move by the Socialists in the belief that Quarck's experience, and obvious respect in the community, might prove very useful in the months to come. This would, of course, presuppose some awareness or experience on the part of the Socialists with regard to practical politics, yet it does, however, then seem rather short-sighted of them to lay down in the standing orders for government meetings that the head of the government alone should decide how often the three-man 'cabinet' should meet, particularly when the Socialists agreed that Quarck should be the new head of government! Moreover, in emergencies, presidential-like powers would be vested in the government head, whereby he could take decisions without consulting his 'cabinet'. (78)

Within just six months, therefore, of the Duke being deposed, the 'revolutionary' movement in Coburg had replaced him with a like-minded minister who, in times of crisis, was empowered to govern alone. It is difficult to see this as anything but an example of the shallowness and hesitancy of any progressive tendencies in Coburg; and as such, a

distant echo of the failure of the previous German revolution in 1848, when the ambivalence which was felt by the liberalist movement with regard to change in Germany, helped pave the way for doubt and anxiety which then undermined their political efforts in the second half of the nineteenth century and thus allowed conservatism to re-emerge. (80) Quarck himself must have been astonished at events of the preceding six months when, on the point of resignation during the early phase of the revolution in November 1918, he had denounced the middle classes for their betrayal of the 'old order'. They had, according to Quarck, taken up the cause of democracy:

"... aus einfacher, feiger mimikry und aus Futterkrippendrang." (81)

Now, not only was he back 'at the top' with middle class support, but with the support of the Socialists as well.

Notes

1. As negotiated under the terms of the Treaty of Hildburghausen 1826.
2. ERNST II : "Memoirs of Ernst II, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha" Remington & Co. London. 1888. Volume I p.238.
3. *ibid*, pp.143-150.
4. QUARCK, HERMANN. "Aus den letzten Zeiten des alten Herzogtums Coburg". Rossteutscher Verlag. Coburg. 1933, p.13.
5. See WORCH, HELLMUT. "Coburg. Die Fraenkische Krone". Jan Thorbecke Verlag. Sigmaringen. 1977, pp.6-12 and p.181.
6. ERNST II : *op. cit*, p.230.
7. Field Marshal von Hindenburg had been brought out of retirement in 1914 by Count von Moltke, Chief of General Staff, and together with his aide, General von Ludendorff, had been placed in command of the German Eighth Army in East Prussia, on the Russian Front. Hindenburg was then appointed Chief of General Staff in August 1916, with Ludendorff again as his aide. Hindenburg and Ludendorff enjoyed virtually a 'free hand' in running the war at this time, for although a resolution for peace had been passed by the Reichstag in July 1917, the new Chancellor, a former Prussian administrator called Michaelis, managed to persuade the Reichstag to accept the addition of a clause to the resolution which allowed the Chancellor to interpret the resolution as he saw it. Apparently satisfied with this, the Reichstag then voted new war credits.

For more detailed accounts of events at this time see SNYDER, L.L. "Historical Documents of World War I" Van Nostrand. Princeton. 1958, pp.157ff.

See also CARR, WILLIAM. "A History of Germany 1815-1945" Edward

- Arnold. London. 1974, pp.260ff.
8. HAIGH,R.H. MORRIS,D.S. PETERS,A.R. "German - Soviet Relations in the Weimar Era. Friendship from Necessity." Gower. Aldershot. 1985, pp.26-29.
 9. See, for example, the account of the terrible losses sustained by the Allies at the Battle of Passchendaele in HART, B.H. LIDDEL. "History of the First World War." Book Club Associates. London. 1973, pp.423-434.
 10. *ibid*, pp.449-456.
 11. HAIGH,R.H. MORRIS,D.S. PETERS,A.R. : *op. cit*, p.5.
 12. Morale amongst the German troops suffered badly as they witnessed for themselves that despite statements to the opposite from their senior officers, the Allied troops were enjoying plentiful food supplies. At home, too, there were serious shortages of food throughout Germany during the so-called "Kohlsruben" winter of 1916-1917. Worse shortages during the following winter were then an important factor in the Berlin munition workers' strike in January 1918, and the mutiny in Kiel in late 1918 as sailors became incensed at the great disparity in the rations of officers and men.

The significance of this "food question" is examined in HAIGH, R.H. MORRIS,D.S. PETERS,A.R.: *op. cit*, pp.5ff.
 13. For details of the battles in this pring offensive see HART, B.H. LIDDEL. *op. cit*, Chapter VIII.
 14. CARR, WILLIAM. *op. cit*, p.268.
 15. *ibid*.
 16. HAIGH,R.H. TURNER,P.W. "Not for Glory" Robert Maxwell. Oxford.1969, p.98.

17. The Spartacus League was founded by a small group of Socialist intellectuals led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, and was active throughout 1917 and 1918 in Berlin, particularly during strikes such as in the munitions factory. Through its "letters" the League preached revolution at home and peace abroad.
- The Revolutionary Shop Stewards were working class activists trying to organise mass action in the factories and workshops of Berlin in the hope of bringing the war to an end. They were largely responsible for organising the great strike of 1918 in Berlin which resulted in the authorities declaring a state of siege and placing many factories under military control.
- See CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, pp.266-267.
18. WATT, RICHARD M. "The Kings Depart." The Literary Guild. London. 1969, pp. 143-144.
19. EPSTEIN, KLAUS. "Matthias Erzberger and the Dilemma of German Democracy" Princeton University Press. Princeton. 1959, pp. 259-260.
20. This was a programme for a lasting peace which was first developed by President Woodrow Wilson in his address to the Joint Session of the American Congress on 8th January 1918.
- See Appendix I.
21. BADEN, PRINCE MAX VON "The Memoirs of Prince Max von Baden" Constable. London. 1928. Volume II, p.19.
22. ibid, p.23.
23. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, pp.269-270.
24. The U.S.P.D. is the 'Unabhaengige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands'. Details of its position within the Socialist camp are considered below, Chapter 3.

25. NICHOLLS, A.J. "Weimar and the Rise of Hitler" Macmillan. London. 1982. Chapter 2.
26. KOLB, E. "Die Arbeiterräte in der deutschen Innenpolitik 1918-1919" in NICHOLLS, A.J. op. cit, p.5.
27. HAIGH, R.H. MORRIS, D.S. PETERS, A.R. op. cit, pp.11-12.
28. FABER, WERNER. "Coburg unterm Hakenkreuz". Verlag Frz. Eher. Nachf. Muenchen. 1932, p.7.

"During those November days in 1918 even the people of our truly German town, Coburg, fell for the promises of freedom, beauty and dignity, which had been made by the profiteers of that November crime."

29. At this time it was usual for local councils in Germany to elect two or three leading councillors to the office of mayor, distinguishing them simply by numbers: hence, 1. Buergermeister, 2. Buergermeister and 3. Buergermeister. Numbers two and three acted as deputies to the first Buergermeister.
30. Under Duke Carl Eduard who was at that time (1905-1918) the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Staatstrat Hermann Quarck was leader of the Coburg ministerial department, a kind of "prime minister". He was a qualified lawyer and also sat in the Reichstag as a National Liberal representing Coburg.

See ERDMANN, JUERGEN. "Coburg, Bayern und das Reich 1918-1923" Rossteutscher Verlag. Coburg. 1969, p.4.

31. For an account of the relations between Coburg and Gotha see above, pp.1-2.

32. QUARCK, HERMANN. op. cit, pp.22ff.
33. A Workers' and Soldiers' Council (W.S.C.) had been set up at once in Kassel where it was exercising influence on the General Command there to order all garrison commanders to offer no resistance to attempts to establish W.S.Cs. It was hoped that bloodshed would, in this way, be avoided.
- See ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, pp.5ff.
34. *ibid.*
35. QUARCK, HERMANN. op. cit, pp.22ff.
36. *ibid.*
37. *ibid.*
38. From records kept by deputy mayor, Altenstaedter, in ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.6.
39. Events elsewhere in the Reich regarding W.S.Cs. are considered below, pp.13-14.
40. QUARCK, HERMANN. op. cit, pp.22ff.

"... whether such plans were really necessary in Coburg...when the people of Coburg could sort matters out for themselves in conjunction with the authorities."

41. The 'Coburger Volksblatt' founded in 1912 as the "Sozialdemokratisches Organ fuer die werktaegige Bevoelkerung des Kreises Coburg und Amtsgerichtsbezirks Lichtenfels". Organ of the "Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands" (S.P.D.) in Coburg.
42. See above, p.4.
43. A report from the Coburg state ministry in July 1919 highlighted the relatively fortunate position of the duchy regarding food supplies. Though Coburg had few mineral deposits of any

significance, the Coburg district was virtually self-sufficient in cereals and potatoes, and traded the surplus meat it produced. The underlying uncertainty at the end of 1918 and into 1919 was, however, to what extent these food supplies would diminish as part of central government's policy to redistribute supplies throughout the Reich, and as part of Allied reparations demands under the Versailles Peace Treaty.

See ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, pp.24ff.

44. On November 8th Scheidemann and Bauer, two leading Socialist Ministers in the government formed by Prince Max von Baden, resigned. On the following day a general strike was called in Berlin as a last resort to effect the Kaiser's abdication. Prince Max knew that armed insurrection might well be the next step, so he announced the abdication of Kaiser Wilhelm II who left for exile in Holland.
45. 'Coburger Volksblatt' 11th November 1918.
"Or does he perhaps believe that he has some God-given right to rule us ".
46. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.8.
47. ibid.
48. The Ehrenburg Palace was the town residence of the Coburg dukes.
49. 'Coburger Volksblatt' 12th November 1918.
50. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. "The German Dictatorship. The Origins, Structure and Consequences of National Socialism" Peregrine Books. Harmondsworth. 1978, p.98
51. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, pp.272ff.
52. RYDER, A.J. "The German Revolution of 1918. A Study of German Socialism in War and Revolt" Cambridge University Press.

- Cambridge. 1967, pp.148ff.
53. CARSTEN, F.L. "Britain and the Weimar Republic" Batsford Academic. London. 1984, p.2.
54. Prince Max von Baden had only been in office since 2nd October 1918 when he replaced Count von Hertling as Chancellor, at a time when Germany's leaders knew they would have to approach President Wilson for a peace treaty.
See CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, pp.268ff.
55. The Majority Socialists emerged from the "revisionist" section of the Socialist Party.
See below, chapter 3.
56. BADEN, PRINCE MAX VON. "Errinerungen und Dokumente" Stuttgart. 1927, p.632 cited in CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, p.276.
57. HAIGH, R.H. MORRIS, D.S. PETERS, A.R. op. cit, p.13.
58. The Free Corps, or 'Freikorps', were the armed bands of volunteers recruited by army officers, with the full approval of Ebert and his Minister of War, Noske, specifically to deal with this so-called 'Bolshevik threat'.
59. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. op. cit, p.97.
60. The significance of political assassinations such as these is considered below, chapter 3.
61. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. op. cit, p.97.
62. "Sturm Abteilung"
See BULLOCK, ALAN. "Hitler - A Study in Tyranny" Pelican. Harmondsworth. 1983, pp.62-63 and pp.67-68.
63. ibid, p.68.
64. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.9.
65. QUARCK, HERMANN. op. cit, pp.27ff.
66. ibid, p.32.
"In a letter dated 9th November the Social Democratic faction in

the District Assembly petitioned for the Assembly to be summoned as soon as possible. This petition has been granted as quickly as was possible given the problem of communications. In the meantime, Germany has become a republic based on socialist principles, and as such she has no further place for a monarchy. The Duke is herewith no longer the ruling power in the duchies of Coburg and Gotha. He has released all his officials from their oath of loyalty to him. This he does because of a sincere wish to act for the well-being of his countrymen and of our poor defeated fatherland."

67. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.10.

68. See above, pp.1-2 and p.9.

69. 'Regierungsblatt fuer das Herzogtum Gotha. No.37' 16th November 1918. in ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.10.

The reference to the "ASR Gotha" is the "Arbeiter-und Soldatenrat" i.e. the Workers and Soldiers Council.

"Following the Duke's departure, the executive committee of the Gotha Workers' and Soldiers' Council claims, for the time being, full responsibility for all joint and solely Gotha affairs which had hitherto been the constitutional and legal domain of the Duke".

70. These were the Coburg and District Assembly, the state ministry, the town council and the W.S.C.

71. This was initially a resolution drawn up by the State Ministry three days earlier, and laid before the Coburg W.S.C. for their approval.

See ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.11.

72. *ibid.*

73. *ibid*, pp.24ff.

74. *ibid*, p.16.
75. The significance of the 'cultural issue' is examined below, pp. 34-35.
76. It is possible that the Coburg W.S.C. may also have been influenced in its decision by the obvious lack of support at the national level for the idea of a centralised Republic. At the All-German Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils which met in Berlin from 16th - 21st December 1918, over 300 of the 500 delegates supported the Majority Socialist Party of Ebert in the call for the establishment of a parliamentary democracy on a federal basis.
- This congress is considered below, pp.51-52.
77. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, p.18.
78. In the Assembly, the S.P.D. held seven seats, the Democrats three, and the German Nationals one.
79. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, pp.18-21.
80. The reasons for the failure of the 1848 'revolution' are dealt with at length in, among others:
- SHEEHAN, J.J. "German Liberalism in the Nineteenth Century".
University of Chicago Press Ltd. 1978.
- MANN, GOLO. "The History of Germany since 1789". Chatto and Windus. London. 1968.
- MARX, KARL. "Revolution and Counter-Revolution" Unwin Books.
London. 1971.
81. QUARCK, HERMANN. *op. cit*, p.34.
- "... out of plain, cowardly mimicry and an urge to share in the spoils".

COBURG'S CHOICE

On New Year's Day, 1919, the 'Coburger Zeitung', one of Coburg's daily newspapers, ran the front page headlines:

"Mit Gott hinein ins Jahr 1919"⁽¹⁾

This was a typical prayer of those who represented Germany's established interests as the Reich found itself facing what the 'Coburger Zeitung' referred to as 'anarchy' at home, and political and economic enslavement by the foreign enemy.⁽²⁾ At home, the uncertainty of the political situation was exacerbated by the return of demobbed soldiers who put extra pressure on the crumbling Germany economy and uncertain social order as they headed into the larger towns and cities in search of employment. Abroad, peace was being laid down on Germany in the form of the Versailles Treaty, which the 'Coburger Zeitung' later came to refer to as the 'Vernichtungsfriede' - the 'crushing peace' with its highly significant guilt clause.⁽³⁾

Initially there had been some hope that Coburg might survive as an independent, free state.⁽⁴⁾ The 'Magenfrage' was advanced as an argument in favour of Coburg remaining independent, particularly as feelings amongst members of Coburg's Chamber of Commerce had been running high at the unfair treatment they believe Coburg to have received as a partner in the Thuringian food-production economy.⁽⁵⁾ Coburg's most influential statesman at that time, Hermann Quarck, initially, at least, appeared to support the idea of an independent Coburg. As time

passed, however, he became increasingly aware that pressure would mount on Coburg from its much larger and stronger neighbours wishing to swallow up 'den fetten Bissen' that Coburg represented with its rich cultural inheritance and relatively good food supply.⁽⁶⁾ Immediately after the war, Coburg had a sound financial footing with income from meat products, timber trade, agricultural produce, breweries and assorted smaller industries like the porcelain works, as well as income generated by the theatre, the castle and its possessions.⁽⁷⁾ Uncertainty as to the size and nature of Allied compensation claims or reparations under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles did, however, undermine the confidence of those looking to a 'Freistaat Coburg'. A small, independent state like Coburg would be easy 'prey' for the central government as regards contributions to meeting Allied reparations' demands, and it might, therefore, be in Coburg's own long-term interests to somehow ally with a larger state.⁽⁸⁾

An obvious choice would have been to take up the old links with Gotha and join the state of Thuringia. Meetings had been arranged from a very early time to discuss the establishment of a union of Thuringian states into a 'Grossthueringen'.⁽⁹⁾ This itself proved to be something of a stumbling block, however, as regards serious negotiations between Coburg and Thuringia, for whilst negotiations went on between the Thuringian states themselves on the question of a united 'Grossthueringen', there was no easily identifiable body with which Coburg could negotiate terms of entry into such a union.⁽¹⁰⁾ A further difficulty was that whilst it seemed likely that the majority of the socialists in the Coburg Assembly would be naturally inclined to the Thuringian option, their most able member, Franz Klingler, had no such inclination. His preferences were for a union with Bavaria.⁽¹¹⁾

Union with Prussia was another of the options discussed in Coburg at that time, although, as Juergen Erdmann writes, it is still a matter of some conjecture as to how seriously advances were made to Prussia. There is a belief that negotiations were taken up with Prussia for purely tactical reasons in order to 'enhance' the attractiveness of Coburg by forcing the other two states involved, Bavaria and Thuringia, to act decisively before the Coburg 'jewel' was lost to both of them.⁽¹²⁾

The main reason for this scepticism is that union with Prussia was not a realistic proposition because of the self-evident difficulty of governing Coburg as part of a state from which it was totally detached, and with which it shared no common border. At that time, though, there did appear to be a good deal of early optimism when the 'Prussian connection' was first mentioned because it did appeal to those conservative elements hoping for the quick revival of a strong, united Fatherland under Prussian leadership.⁽¹³⁾ Knowing that the terms of the Versailles Treaty meant considerable territorial losses for Prussia, Heine, the Prussian Interior Minister, welcomed the opportunity to talk to Dr. Ernst Fritsch, a representative from Coburg, in September 1919 about a possible union.⁽¹⁴⁾ Heine's thinking was, however, more along the lines of not only Coburg joining Prussia, but rather a union of Thuringian states, as well, with Prussia. This also raises the question, however, of how serious a suggestion it was on Heine's part, for it seemed unlikely that Thuringia would ever agree to coming under the domination of Prussia.⁽¹⁵⁾ In hindsight, too, it must be noted that the Reich government was highly unlikely to have allowed the re-emergence of a strong Prussia, which might constitute a serious challenge to the establishment of a strong republic based in Berlin, and that it was equally as improbable that the Allies would accept Prussian expansion when her dominance in Germany had recently been curtailed

through the territorial adjustments enclosed in the terms of the Versailles Treaty. Prussia's interest in Coburg had, in fact, cooled noticeably when she discovered that Coburg was also negotiating with Bavaria over a possible union.⁽¹⁶⁾ Prussia thought it inadvisable at that time to be linked with anyone appearing to have friendly relations with Bavaria because of the animosity growing between Bavaria and the Reich Government in Berlin at that time.⁽¹⁷⁾

In the spring of 1916 there had been hunger riots in Munich and Bavarians could not understand why such a rich agricultural region as theirs should have to endure severe shortages of food. Blame and resentment were directed solely at the central government in Berlin.

"Waehrend das industriearme Bayern bei den grossen Kriegsauftraegen staendig leer ausging, musste man tatenlos zusehen, wie der Reichszentralismus mit jedem Monat wuchs und das Land wirtschaftlich bis aufs letzte ausgepresst wurde."⁽¹⁸⁾

Relations were further strained in November 1918 when events in Bavaria proved to be a watershed in the 'German Revolution'.⁽¹⁹⁾ Fearing invasion following the collapse of Austria-Hungary, the Bavarians were desperately anxious for peace, and the suspicion that Berlin consciously rejected their concern and was in no hurry to seek peace, deepened the anger enough to allow Kurt Eisner, leader of the Independent Socialists, to seize the opportunity and proclaim a republic in Bavaria.⁽²⁰⁾ Eisner believed that as head of the Bavarian Republic he could awaken a new spirit in Germany and that he could be a moderating influence on the victorious powers in peace negotiations.⁽²¹⁾

Despite this 'revolutionary' background, there was, in Coburg, a serious

move towards Bavaria as early as November 1918.⁽²²⁾ Following a meeting between leading Coburg officials, representatives of the Coburg district and the W.S.C., the W.S.C. chairman was persuaded to support a move to stop other W.S.C. representatives, who were at that time in Weimar discussing the possibility of Coburg joining Thuringia, from giving any binding undertaking as regards Coburg's future. A telegramme to this effect was sent to Weimar:

"Die Bevoelkerung Coburgs wird fast ausnahmslos Anschluss an die Republik Bayern wuenschen und zwar auf Grund der wirtschaftlichen Verhaeltnisse. Ich bitte bei eventueller Besprechung dieser Frage zunaechst abwartende Stellung einzunehmen, keine Zusage an Thueringer Republik."⁽²³⁾

Leading members of the Coburg District Assembly like the prominent S.P.D. figure, Franz Klingler, and Hans Schack from the centre, 'Buergerlichen' group lent their early support to the move towards Bavaria, pointing out that there had never really been a happy relationship between Coburg and her former Thuringian partner, Gotha: the two peoples were too dissimilar. As Franconians, the natural preference for the Coburg people would be a union with other Franconian districts which did, in fact, lie within the Bavarian state.⁽²⁴⁾

Oskar Arnold, a leading representative of the centre 'Buergerlichen' party in the District Assembly and local-councillor with particular responsibilities for commerce, believed that there was, realistically, only one option open to Coburg. Uppermost in the minds of the people had to be an intense desire to preserve the cultural riches of the district, and this was a concern which the Bavarian people and the Bavarian government understood, and were supportive of, argued Arnold, but not so the people of Thuringia.⁽²⁵⁾ Arnold referred to a leading

member of the Meiningen council who, on hearing of Coburg's anxiety over the future of the castle and the theatre, was reported to have said that places like the theatre should not be maintained, as it was only the upper class who attended it - and not out of any deep cultural interest, but merely so that they might be seen amongst Coburg's leading societal personalities.⁽²⁶⁾ What clearly lent a certain credence to Arnold's contention about the popular depth of concern for Coburg's 'treasures' was the fact that leading socialists, Franz Klingler and Reinhold Artmann, attended a meeting with various officials from the Bavarian government, including Dr. Hoffmann the 'prime minister', and sought assurances to guarantee the future of Coburg's 'cultural' possessions.⁽²⁷⁾ Discussion at this meeting centred around a programme of ten points on which Coburg required certain commitments if serious negotiations were to continue.⁽²⁸⁾ All ten points were accepted by the Bavarian officials.⁽²⁹⁾ Some four weeks before this meeting, the Coburg District Assembly had met, and the outcome was a clear indication of the direction most members hoped Coburg would take. The influential Klingler summed up the mood:

"Gewisse starke Stroemungen, die eine Bedeutung durch die Kriegsernaehrungs - verhaeltnisse erreichten, weisen nach Bayern. Es darf auch nicht verkannt werden, dass der fraenkische Einschlag unserer Bevoelkerung nach dem Sueden neigt, wozu noch kommt, dass betraechtliche Teile unserer Industrie eng mit Bayern verknuepft sind." (30)

The following statement was issued after the meeting:

"Die Landesversammlung des Freistaates Coburg lehnt den vorgelegten Entwurf eines Gesetzes ueber den Zusammenschluss der thueringischen Staaten nicht ab, erklaert sich vielmehr bereit ... Regierungs - vertreter zu entsenden, um gemeinsam mit den Vertretern der anderen thueringischen Staaten ueber die Voraussetzungen zu beraten... Sie ist aber die Meinung, dass diese Schicksalsfrage des Coburger Landes nicht ohne vorherige Befragung der

Bevoelkerung entschieden werden kann, und .
ersucht die Staatsregierung, mit tunlichster Beschleunigung
die Massnahmen zu treffen, die zur Vorbereitung und
Durchfuehrung der Volksbefragung erforderlich sind."(31)

The assembly had not rejected the idea of a union with Thuringia, but it had delayed any such decision which, it believed, should first go to a referendum. In asking the people of Coburg to decide for themselves what future course Coburg should take, all sides were keen to impress on the people that they, the people, should take account of Coburg's long term political and economic interests, and not allow short-term issues like the food factor to disproportionately influence their voting. (32) Despite the calls, it seemed that the people were looking eagerly to see which side could offer the best promises regarding the guarantee of food supplies, or which side, at least, looked the better partner in this respect. (33) Accepting that the 'Magenfrage' was going to play a decisive role, the Coburg state ministry abandoned its calls on the people to take a broader perspective of the issues and sent a telegramme to the Bavarian government in Bamberg asking for an assurance that if Coburg were to join Bavaria, then she would be admitted to the association dealing with the Bavarian food-production economy. An answer came on the following day from the 'prime minister' himself, Dr. Hoffmann:

"Bestaetige, dass Coburg nach Anschluss an Bayern
alsbald in bayerische Ernaehrungs - und Wirtschaft-
sorganisation aufgenommen wird." (34)

On 30th October 1919 a proposal was laid before Coburg's District Assembly calling for a referendum to be held on Sunday, 30th November 1919 in which the people of Coburg should answer 'yes' or 'no' to the question:

"ob Coburg dem Gemeinschaftsvertrag der thueringischen Staaten nebst Nachtrag beitreten soll."(35)

A 'no' to the question would automatically be a vote in favour of joining Bavaria.

An 'eleventh hour' attempt was made to win over the people of Coburg to the Thuringian option on the day before the referendum. The 'Coburger Volksblatt' published an article submitted by officials from Thuringia giving assurances on Coburg's cultural heritage.⁽³⁶⁾ The article also promised that any subsequent plan for Thuringia to then join Prussia would be preceded by a referendum in the Coburg district to discover whether, under such circumstances, Coburg would then want to leave the Thuringian union. Supporters of the Thuringian option in the Coburg district challenged the idea that food supplies would be guaranteed if Coburg were to join Bavaria. A recent incident was cited where, during a period of rationing, three pounds of potatoes a week were distributed to families in Munich, but not to people in Wuerzburg, Nuernberg, Bamberg or any other urban areas outside the Bavarian capital. Coburg would surely suffer the same fate.⁽³⁷⁾

The result of the referendum was a vote of 3,466 who said 'yes' - almost twelve percent - and 26,102 who said 'no' - around eighty-eight percent. On 11th March 1920, therefore, the 'Staatsvertrag' between Coburg and Bavaria was accepted by the Bavarian District Assembly : and on 30th April 1920 the German National Assembly passed the necessary law relating to the recognition of this treaty.⁽³⁸⁾

Notes

1. The 'Coburger Zeitung' described itself as the "Vereinsorgan der Verbandes der landwirtschaftlichen Vereine fuer das Coburger Land." It was a newspaper that reflected nationalist views and was often involved in disputes with the socialist, 'Coburger Volksblatt'.

"Into 1919 at the side of Our Saviour."

See ERDMANN, JUERGEN. "Coburg, Bayern und Das Reich. 1918-1923". Rossteutscher Verlag. Coburg. 1969, p.88.

2. 'Coburger Zeitung'. 1st January 1919.
3. 'Coburger Zeitung'. 1st July 1919.

The significance of the Versailles Treaty, particularly for the extreme Right, is considered below, pp.73-74 and pp.94-97.

4. See above, pp.18ff.

5. In a report from the Coburg Chamber of Commerce dated 20th February 1919 representatives from the brewing industry stated that, "bezuglich der Nahrungsmittel (haben wir) mit Norddeutschalnd die schlechteste Erfahrung gemacht, niemals wurde auf unsere berechtigten Interessen Ruecksicht genommen ...

Grossthueringen wird niemals unsere Eigenart verstehen". in: ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.29.

"As far as the question of food supplies is concerned we have had nothing but the worst experience with Northern Germany.

Never was attention paid to our own legitimate interests. A Greater Thuringia will never fully comprehend the significance of our individuality."

See also above, p.11.

6. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.25.

The significance of Coburg's rich cultural inheritance is studied below, pp.34-35.

7. See above, p.18.
8. As a consequence of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany lost some 25,000 square miles of territory which incorporated considerable deposits of valuable raw materials like iron-ore, zinc and coal. Despite compromises over claims to total war costs against Germany by the Allies, Germany was still expected to pay considerable compensation for war damage.
See HAIGH, R.H. MORRIS, D.S. PETERS, A.R. "German-Soviet Relations in the Weimar Era. Friendship from Necessity". Gower. Aldershot. 1985, pp.35-37 and pp.87-98.
9. Reports in the 'Coburger Zeitung', 8th January 1919.
10. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, pp.28ff.
11. ibid, p.28.
12. ibid.
13. Dr. Ernst Fritsch, a leading Coburg politician responsible for early negotiations with the Prussian authorities outlines the case for Prussia in his essay : "Der Anschluss Coburgs an Bayern" in UNGELENK, LUDWIG (Ed.) "Coburg im Weltkrieg 1914-1918". Rossteutscher Verlag. Coburg. 1922, pp.433ff.
14. ibid.
15. ibid.
16. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.28.
17. This question of the relationship between Bavaria and Berlin is examined in: HUBENSTEINER, BENNO "Bayerische Geschichte - Staat und Volk. Kunst und Kultur." Sueddeutscher Verlag. Muenchen. 1980. Chapter 32.
See also : SCHWEND, KARL. "Bayern zwischen Monarchie und Diktatur" Richard Pflaum Verlag. Muenchen. 1954.
18. HUBENSTEINER, BENNO. op. cit, p.332.

"Bavaria, with relatively little industry always came off worse in helping the war effort and had to stand by whilst centralism in the Reich grew each month to squeeze Bavaria's agricultural economy virtually dry."

19. CARR, WILLIAM. "A History of Germany. 1815-1945" Edward Arnold. London. 1974, Chapter 10.

Events in Bavaria during the early days of 'revolution' are examined below, pp.58-61.

20. SCHWEND, KARL. op. cit, pp.43ff.

See also GRUNBERGER, RICHARD. "Red Rising in Bavaria". Arthur Barker. London, 1973, pp.19ff.

21. *ibid.*

For an examination of subsequent events in Munich see below, pp.58-61.

22. ARNOLD, OSKAR. "Wie wurde Coburg bayerisch?" in "Die Coburger Veste - Ein Erinnerungsblatt zu feierlichen Einweihungverbunden mit Heimat - Fest vom 6. bis.8. September 1924". Rossteutscher Verlag. Coburg. 1924, pp.24-26.

23. 'Coburger Tageblatt' 15th November 1918.

The Coburger Tageblatt was the third of Coburg's three daily newspapers, taking up the centre ground of the Liberals or "Demokraten", between the 'Coburger Volksblatt' and the 'Coburger Zeitung'.

"Virtually to a man will the population of Coburg express a wish to join the Bavarian Republic on economic grounds. Should negotiations take place with Thuringia, I ask you to make no commitments at this stage."

24. FRITSCH, ERNST. in UNGELENK, LUDWIG. (Ed.) op. cit, p.434.

25. ARNOLD, OSKAR. op. cit, pp.24-26.

26. *ibid.*

The area of Saxe-Meiningen lay in Thuringia, to the north of Coburg and was also involved in the question of creating a 'Grossthueringen!. Meiningen also had early links with Coburg. See above, Chapter 1.

27. FRITSCH, ERNST. in UNGELENK, LUDWIG. (Ed.) op. cit, pp.435ff.

28. These points related to matters such as the safeguarding of Coburg's cultural assets like the theatre and the castle, as well as matters relating to the administration of local services. For further details see UNGELENK, LUDWIG. (Ed.) op. cit, p.435ff

29. FRITSCH, ERNST. in UNGELENK, LUDWIG. (Ed.) op. cit, p.436.

30. 'Coburger Zeitung' 8th July 1919.

"There are certain strong tendencies, based on the experience of food supplies during the war, which favour Bavaria. Additionally we must not forget that the Franconian ^{Strain} strain within our population pulls us to the south, as well as the fact that considerable parts of our industry are closely linked with Bavaria."

31. FRITSCH, ERNST. in UNGELENK, LUDWIG. (Ed.) op. cit, p.434.

"The District Assembly of the Coburg Free State does not reject the proposed bill on a union with the Thuringian states, but declares a preference ... to initially send representatives for talks on this matter with the other Thuringian states ... The Assembly believes, however, that the question of Coburg's future cannot be decided without prior consultation with the people. The assembly therefore requests the state government to make all the necessary preparations to hold a referendum on this matter as soon as possible."

32. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.26.

33. *ibid*, pp.46-47.

34. *ibid*, p.39.

"Can confirm that following a union with Bavaria, Coburg will be admitted to the Bavarian food-production economy."

35. FRITSCH, ERNST. in UNGELENK, LUDWIG. (Ed.) op. cit, pp.438ff.

"Whether Coburg should accept the treaty of union, and all its clauses, with the Thuringian states."

36. 'Coburger Volksblatt' 29th November 1919.

37. ibid.

38. See Appendix II.

CHAPTER 3.

SOCIALISM IN REICH AND COBURG.

Undoubtedly one of the prime factors in explaining what is seen by many commentators as the failure of the 'German Revolution' in 1918, or, as Karl Dietrich Bracher prefers to call it - the 'unfinished revolution' was the relationship between the rival socialist groupings.⁽¹⁾ A study of their origins and political outlook is, therefore, basic to an analysis of inter-war events in Germany.

It was in 1863 that Ferdinand Lassalle, a lawyer of Silesian-Jewish extraction, founded the first German working class party : "the General German Workers' Union", and its aim was the establishment of a socialist society after the acquisition of political power by the working class. Some six years later, August Bebel, who had first been introduced to socialism by Lassalle, but who later became identified with the grouping under the influence of Wilhelm Liebknecht, founded the "Social Democratic Workers' Party". This was, in fact, a Marxist party affiliated to the Second International, and committed to the abolition of class domination, as well as the full economic and political emancipation of the working class. The earliest divisions in the Socialist camp were between the 'Lassallians' and the emerging Marxists, or 'Eisenachers'.⁽²⁾

At a meeting held in Gotha in 1875, however, the two groupings decided to merge to form the 'German Socialist Workers' Party' and drew up a programme which was a mixture of the ideas of both Lassalle and Marx, a package assessed by A.J. Ryder as unity:

"... reached at the expense of clarity, for the two conceptions of socialism could not be reconciled."(3)

The party did, nevertheless, display a good deal of harmony, united in its opposition to Bismarck's anti-socialist laws of 1878 and his ensuing programme of 'state socialism'.⁽⁴⁾ Under Bismarck all socialist activity was banned for some twelve years, apart from the appearance of a handful of socialist representatives in the Reichstag. Over a similar period, though, the party's popularity grew so that in 1890 it polled almost 1.5 million votes compared with around 300,000 votes in 1878.⁽⁵⁾ To many of the socialist leaders, the Bismarck persecution revealed the reactionary nature of the German government and so served to vindicate Marx's views that the state was an instrument of class oppression, a view not shared by Lassalle.⁽⁶⁾ Revolutionary thinking was strengthened in the aftermath of the harsh Bismarck regime, and such were the demands for a more radical approach that, at the Party Congress in Erfurt in 1891, a new, much more Marxist programme was adopted, along with a new name: "Die Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands" (S.P.D.). The 'Erfurt Programme' basically comprised two parts:

- (a) long term objectives of the socialist transformation of society that was to follow the breakdown of capitalism.
- (b) short term objectives to be striven for within the existing capitalist system; for example, votes for women, democratic government at all levels and proportional representation.

The programme appeared, initially at least, to be a clever synthesis

of Marxist revolutionary objectives and moderate short-term aims designed to appeal to all shades of socialist opinion. It was, however, as A.J. Ryder points out, based on two assumptions.⁽⁷⁾ Firstly, that the S.P.D. was capable of winning a majority in the Reichstag; but secondly, that if it did win a majority, it would be able to use its power to turn Germany into a parliamentary democracy. In fairness to the socialists, it should, however, be pointed out that when they did achieve such a majority they were let down not so much by their own indecision as by a virtual 'betrayal' due to a last-minute reversal to a more familiar negative, ever-fearful-of-change-stance by the National Liberals who, as in the 1848 'revolution', blocked any significant progress in proper democratisation.⁽⁸⁾ This occasion was in 1912 when the socialists won 110 out of 397 seats in the Reichstag and received, initially, the support of the National Liberals for the introduction of socialist reforms.⁽⁹⁾

In the early twentieth century Eduard Bernstein, a journalist and friend of Engels, emerged to head what became known as the 'revisionist' section of the socialists.⁽¹⁰⁾ Like Engels, Bernstein believed that capitalism was not, as Marx had envisaged, likely to collapse in the socio-economic climate of that day. The masses were not becoming progressively poorer, economic crises were becoming less, not more severe, and the workers' standard of living was rising not falling. Bernstein was therefore concerned with adopting socialist policies to the circumstances of that time.⁽¹¹⁾ This 'revisionist' tendency within the socialist party was greatly strengthened from several quarters : firstly, the rising influence of the trade unions who were decidedly pragmatic and reformist in outlook; secondly, the rise within the S.P.D. of party managers whose abilities lay in organisation and who,

by temperament and training, were averse to extremism - men like Ebert, Noske and Scheidemann. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the working class itself was inherently patriotic, ever prone to the rallying cries to protect the Fatherland.⁽¹²⁾ The rise in popularity of this reformist section within the socialist party predictably provoked an opposing reaction from the Left where, under the leadership of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, the call was for the German working class, reportedly the largest and best organised in Europe, to take the lead in overthrowing capitalism.

"If the challenge to the party centre from the right was based on a re-appraisal of revolutionary theory in the light of the relative stability and prosperity of capitalist society, the challenge from the left was based on belief in a new period of crises marked by the Russian Revolution of 1905 and a deterioration in the international situation." (13)

The ultimate weapon, in the eyes of the Left, was the mass strike.

Between these two 'wings' of the party was the so called 'Marxist centre' with people like Kautsky at the forefront. Kautsky believed in a policy of attrition, for capitalism was doomed but no one could predict exactly when or how it would collapse. Reforms would hasten the coming revolution, which for Kautsky:

"... need not necessarily be connected with violence and bloodshed. There have already been cases in world history in which the ruling classes were extremely sensible, or especially weak and cowardly so that they abdicated voluntarily in the face of compulsion. A social revolution need not be decided at one blow ... Revolutions are prepared in political and economic struggles lasting years." (14)

So despite its considerable standing in the early years of the twentieth century, the German Socialist Party was, as many observers have

concluded, dogged by the growing divergence between its revolutionary belief and its reformist practice. The weakness was, in fact, identified at that time by the French socialist. Jaurès, who offered this analysis of the S.P.D. during a policy debate at the Amsterdam Congress of the Second International in 1904:

"You are a great and admirable party, but you still lack two essentials: revolutionary action and parliamentary action. You were granted universal suffrage from above, and your parliament is but half a parliament ... Yours will be the only country in which the socialists would not be masters even if they were to obtain the majority in the Reichstag... You hide your weakness and importance by trying to dictate to everyone else."(15)

Jaurès urged the S.P.D. to pay less attention to Marx and more to the practical problems of winning power in a non-parliamentary state.

A.J.Ryder offers a more modern interpretation which differs little from Jaurès' early analysis:

"It was the tragedy of the German socialists that because of the exclusive nature of the German political system before the revolution, and because of their internal disunity, during and after the revolution, they were unable to gain power commensurate with their promise or potential." (16)

During the Congress of the Second International held at Stuttgart in 1907 a resolution was passed outlining the socialist attitude towards war. It was stated that in case of a threat of war, the working class had a duty to do all it could to prevent an outbreak, using whatever means seemed most effective. In the event of war breaking out, then socialists would be obliged to strive for its speedy termination and to work with all their power to use the political and economic crisis created by the war to hasten the downfall of capitalism.⁽¹⁷⁾ This

was a compromise resolution aimed at satisfying demands from the Far Left that any war, regardless of its causes, be met by a policy of military strike, and proposals from the right-wing of the party for a resolution limiting the duty of socialists confronted by the threat of war to just a moral protest. The final resolution proved vague enough to be acceptable to both sides, although events of 1914 were to prove that this was a solution in words only, rather than one which carried the weight of a specific, recommended course of action.

Following the murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at the end of June, 1914, and Austria's declaration of war on Serbia in late July, Germany was soon plunged deep into war fever, as there was little doubt that the German Government would support Austria if there were any moves against that country in its clash with Serbia. Uppermost in the thoughts of many German politicians at that time was obviously the reaction of pro-Slav elements in Russia to Austria's move. Martial law and press censorship were introduced by the Reich government in an obvious attempt to muzzle all anti-Austrian and anti-war utterances. Together with the government's own tendentious statements, this made it virtually impossible to obtain a clear, objective picture of the international situation which was changing with alarming rapidity. The S.P.D's Scheidemann himself wrote that at that time:

"We all believed that Germany had been attacked - that the French had poisoned German water supplies and that the French airmen had dropped bombs on Nuremberg and Fuerth." (18)

Against such a highly charged background the S.P.D. became disunited in its attitude to war, so much so that at a meeting of the S.P.D. Parliamentary Party, only fourteen members were in favour of opposing

the voting of war credits whereas seventy-eight members were in favour. In a vain attempt to maintain some semblance of unity it was decided that the party should vote 'en bloc' for the granting of credits, but to accompany this with a statement explaining how the S.P.D. understood that Germany was threatened with invasion by Russian despotism and that whilst the party disclaimed all responsibility for the war, it would not desert the country in its hour of need. (19)

The reported danger from Russia had very much the same influence in rallying the German Left behind its rulers as did the violation of Belgian neutrality in shaping British left-wing opinion towards the war. A war with Tsarist Russia was probably the one war which most German socialists felt to be broadly compatible with their obligations to the Second International:

"Fear of the Russian steamroller soon outweighed the scruples of German socialists about Austria's war guilt..." (20)

The other decisive factor at work in deciding whether or not the S.P.D. should support the war effort was the possible, or indeed likely reaction of the public, in particular, the supporters of the S.P.D., to any vetoing of war credits. In such an excited state of public opinion it could possibly have been suicidal for the socialists to have blocked the war credits bill. In his comprehensive study of socialism in Germany at this time, A.J. Ryder points to comments of men like Gustav Noske, an S.P.D. member of the Reichstag, who told the Assembly that, had his party not voted for the war credits, members would have been beaten to death in front of the Brandenburg Gate. (21) Friedrich Stampfer, one of the leading patriotic socialist journalists and later

chief editor of the socialist national newspaper 'Vorwaerts', declared that socialist voters in their millions would have turned on the S.P.D. if the party had blocked the finances required to feed and equip their friends and relatives in the armed forces. (22)

Despite the vote for war credits, left-wing discontent within the S.P.D. grew as the war went on. This discontent culminated in the internal conflict which broke out in the S.P.D. when eighteen members who had voted against an emergency budget, which incorporated a war credits bill, in March 1916, were formally deprived of their parliamentary rights by the executive of the S.P.D. It was Hugo Haase in fact, chairman of the party, including the parliamentary party, who had led this 'revolt' with a scathing attack on Ebert's governmental policies. As a result of the executive's action against him and his supporters, Haase formed a separate parliamentary group, the social democratic 'Arbeitsgemeinschaft'. (23) This grouping incorporated a wide range of left-wing socialists whose common trait was opposition to war, but which was itself sub-divided into pacifists, doctrinaire Marxists and Spartacists. (24) The 'Arbeitsgemeinschaft' also provided the core for the 'Unabhaengige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands' (U.S.P.D.) which was formed at a conference held in Gotha in April 1917. (25)

As the war continued and circumstances at home in Germany deteriorated - in particular the problem of food shortages - public support for the anti-war stance of 'U.S.P.D.' or Independent Socialists, grew. Its influence was especially strong in the huge metal workers' union, and subsequently with some of the W.S.Cs, yet it never quite gained enough support to eclipse the Majority Socialists. Admittedly within the Independents the revolutionary tendencies of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl

Liebknrecht and their supporters could never be truly reconciled to the aspirations of men like Kautsky or Haase, yet the subsequent murders of Luxemburg and Liebknrecht at the hands of the 'Freikorps', who came under the control of Ebert's Minister of War, Noske, did have a unifying effect on the Independents in that these murders were regarded as an outrage which:

"... prefigured the end of the German Revolution and opened up a gulf between moderate and radical wings of the German labour movement that was to prove unbridgeable throughout the years of the Weimar Republic." (26)

To the Independents, these murders were irrefutable evidence of the most evil kind that Ebert and his supporters were:

"... bolstering up a rotten regime which ought to be allowed to collapse." (27)

The All-German Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils held in Berlin in December 1918 confirmed that support from the councils for the Independent Socialist did not extend much beyond supporting calls for an end to the war. It was apparent during the Congress that there seemed little interest in prolonging the life of the W.S.Cs. beyond the time needed to conduct new parliamentary elections. (28) This conflicting view of the role of the W.S.C. reflected one of the fundamental differences between the Majority and Independent Socialists during the 'Revolution'. The Majority Socialists saw the Councils as temporary bodies to maintain law and order until a parliamentary democracy could be properly established. The Independents, however, viewed the Councils as a much more permanent feature, and as a base on which to build genuinely democratic institutions in Germany. (29) Many

Independents believed that the W.S.Cs. could and should initiate the socialisation of the German economy without waiting for approval from any newly-elected National Assembly.

It was evident, however, where the support of the W.S.Cs. lay when the Congress voted by 400 votes to 50 to hold elections for a National Assembly on 19th January 1919.⁽³⁰⁾ Despite passing a programme of rather radical reform for the army, the Congress then let the Majority Socialists 'off the hook' by deciding that all such demands for reform were to be treated as a general directive, the implementation of which was to be left to the People's Commissars under the supervision of the Executive Council. On its own, this offered some encouragement to the Independent Socialists who could expect to exercise some influence on the Executive, or Central Council, but then the final 'blow' was delivered when the Congress decided to vest any newly-elected central council with powers of 'consultation' only on the government, and not with exclusive responsibility for legislation.⁽³¹⁾ Consequently, the Left boycotted the elections for the new central council and not one representative from the U.S.P.D. was elected to it. The Congress resolutions thus signalled the end of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, and with them disappeared the final traces of 'Revolution'.

The development of socialism in Coburg followed very much the national pattern of events, with the 'Sozialdemokratische Partei fuer das Herzogtum Coburg' constituted in 1896. Initially this party was independent of the S.P.D., but affiliation soon followed in 1906 and the 'Ortsverein Coburg der S.P.D' was established.⁽³²⁾ The economic and social composition of the Coburg district, however, was not conducive to the emergence of any radical left-wing politics. Apart from farming

and forestry, employment was in a variety of small cottage industries dotted around the Coburg district, with only eight companies in the area employing more than fifty people at that time.⁽³³⁾ Combined with the traditionalist sympathies of the people as a whole, this meant that there was little likelihood of the development of any militant, industrial proletariat to support radical policies of the Left as was happening in the bigger northern cities.

The first notable success for the Coburg S.P.D. came in 1909 when their candidate, Friedrich Zietsch, won a second ballot against the well-respected National-Liberal candidate, Hermann Quarck, in the Reichstag elections.⁽³⁴⁾ Within three years of this victory, the 'Coburger Volksblatt' had been founded.⁽³⁵⁾ As had the S.P.D. in Berlin, so the Coburg S.P.D. split into the Independent and the Majority Socialists, but not until later during the days of the 'German Revolution'. The effectiveness of the Independent Socialists in Coburg was so insignificant that, as mentioned above, the fear of the authorities during those November days was not so much of the radical activities of elements in Coburg, but rather of socialists from Gotha.⁽³⁶⁾ Apparently sharing this concern about the 'extremists' from Gotha, the Coburg Majority Socialists formed an alliance with the Centre Democrats with the common aim of maintaining law and order against any outside influences during the days of uncertainty in November 1918.⁽³⁷⁾

During the early nineteen-twenties there was a good deal of activity amongst the Coburg socialists, but none as aggressive as the party's paper, the 'Coburger Volksblatt' which, paradoxically, appeared rather out of step with Majority Socialist thinking at times. In reaction to the Kapp Putsch in March 1920, when a group of disgruntled army officers

and Freikorps men led by von Luetwitz and Wolfgang Kapp tried to stage a right-wing coup in Berlin, the paper carried an article calling for the arming of socialist groups and trade unions to protect the still weak Republic. (38) This was probably the earliest call for action which led to a crisis situation in the Coburg region in 1922/23 when armed socialist groups clashed with right-wing elements in the fight to protect what the Left saw as the endangered Republic. (39) There was, in fact, a strong editorial reaction to the Kapp Putsch with headlines in the paper's edition on 13th March 1920:

"Reaktionärer Putschversuch!
Proletarier seid auf der Hut!" (40)

Two days later, the paper's front page carried a joint message from the President of the District Assembly, Erhard Kirchner, members of the Coburg 'Staatsregierung', and Ernst Fritsch of the 'Staatsministerium', calling on the people of Coburg to denounce the Putsch:

"Nur ein Wahnsinniger kann glauben, dass neue Putsche von irgend einer Seite den Wiederaufstieg und die Gesundung unseres schwer leidenden Volkes herbeifuehren koennten." (41)

In another article calling on the people to be in readiness for a general strike, the paper insisted that this was a crucial moment in the brief history of the Republic.

"In diesen Stunden soll die Frage entschieden werden :
Republik oder Monarchie." (42)

The belief reflected by the article was that Germany had passed its most difficult point on the road to recovery, and the Putschists knew

it. Production was increasing, the German Mark was strengthening all the time, foreign policy with regard to the reparations problem was bearing fruit as the Allies came to realise that the Versailles 'Gewaltfrieden' could not be enforced to the letter. The Putschists wanted to prevent all this:

"Sie wollen nicht, dass das deutsche Volk gesundet, weil sie zu genau wissen, der Gesundungsprozess des Volkes bedeutet zu gleicher Zeit das Ende ihrer monarchistischen Traeume."(43)

The other fear raised by the paper was the possible reaction of the Allies to the attempted Putsch in Berlin. No matter what line the Allies took - if any - it would be the German people who would suffer, and not the Generals and the Hohenzollerns, for the Allies would surely not be sympathetic to calls for the revision of the harsh terms of the Versailles Treaty, thus relieving the burden on the German people, if right-wing elements were still seen to be strong in the Reich. The rich generals and higher echelons of society would always be able to feed themselves and their families. (44)

Just days after the failure of Kapp came the article calling for the arming of socialists and trade unions in order to protect the young Republic. The paper called for a 'power factor' which would be loyal to the government, loyalty which was surely to be found amongst trade unionists and socialists. (45) As the political and economic situation in the Reich worsened during the early nineteen-twenties, these armed groups grew and became increasingly bolder in their actions as they were increasingly faced with the alarming resurgence of nationalist groups. Having no confidence in the 'Einwohnerwehr', which in most

regions in Bavaria actively supported these nationalist groups, the Coburg 'Arbeiterwehr', as it became known, took matters increasingly into its own hands.⁽⁴⁶⁾ The 'Arbeiterwehr' was involved in breaking up meetings of nationalist groups in the Coburg Hofbrauhaus, in organising and taking part in counter-marches during the Bismarck festival in 1920, and in providing bodyguards for members of the S.P.D. after a number of political assassinations of leading socialists like Kurt Eisner in Munich in 1919, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in Berlin in 1919, as well as the former Reich finance minister, Matthias Erzberger, who was murdered in 1921, and Walter Rathenau's murder in 1922.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Outside the purely 'political' arena the Coburg socialists were also active in organising or supporting strikes for wage increases, lower taxes, and demonstrations against food shortages.⁽⁴⁸⁾ The most radical action at that time in Coburg was in response to a call for protest action against what socialists saw as the Bavarian Government's failure to take any measures to counter the re-emergence of right-wing extremism as evident when the leader of the Bavarian Independent Socialists, Gareis, was assassinated.⁽⁴⁹⁾ A general strike was called by trade unionists and socialists throughout the region, but nowhere was the response as effective as in Coburg, where gas and electricity supplies were cut off.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Such working class agitation continued in 1922 with a number of strikes in Coburg. One of the more violent actions was in February of that year during a rail strike when police actually took over the railway depot and became involved in clashes with strikers and their supporters.⁽⁵¹⁾

The ugliest scenes in Coburg during that time were, however, to be witnessed in the aftermath of Erzberger's assassination a few months

earlier in 1921. The Reich had taken immediate action to try to assert its authority as concern started to spread because of similar challenges to its authority in other parts of the Republic. (52) A Presidential decree for the safeguarding of the Republic was declared at the end of August but this had little effect, particularly in Bavaria, where the Berlin Government once again found itself in serious conflict with that state. The authorities in Munich fiercely resisted what they saw as further encroachment on their authority by Central Government, which in turn was growing increasingly alarmed at Bavaria's unwillingness to move against the many overtly anti-republican groups which had found safe refuge in that state, "a hotbed of right-wing extremism" as Karl Dietrich Bracher describes it. (53) In an attempt to display their concern at events, the Coburg socialists, both Majority and Independents, came together to try to organise a protest meeting on 3rd September 1921. The two leaders, Klingler for the Majority Socialists and Voyer for the Independents, wrote a joint letter to the authorities informing them of their plans and seeking approval to stage the meeting on the Coburg Schlossplatz. In a reply, the Bavarian authorities warned the socialists that they were unwilling to allow any march through the town centre which might follow the meeting, and to ensure that this did not happen, the police would seal off with barricades all exits leading from the Schlossplatz to the town centre. Klingler was incensed at this, particularly after assurances had been given that the socialists would provide sufficient marshals to keep control of the crowd, and, according to a report from the state commissioner for the district, Ernst Fritsch, Klingler declared:

"Wir wehren uns dagegen, dass man uns verbietet durch die Strassen der Stadt zu gehen ... Wir lassen uns nicht verbieten, dass wir von einer Zusammenkunft nicht gehen

duerfen wie wir wollen ... Wir werden den Leuten auf dem Schlossplatz sagen, sie sollten ruhig nach Hause gehen. Wir lassen uns aber nicht sagen, dass wir auf dem und dem Weg nach Hause gehen sollten."(54)

Voye then warned the authorities that the appearance of police at the meeting was much more likely to incite the crowd than any of the speeches or actions of the socialist leaders. The meeting did take place on 3rd September, and armed police did appear in trucks to seal off exits from the Schlossplatz to the town centre.⁽⁵⁵⁾ As Voye had predicted, panic broke out in the crowd and many rushed towards the barricades. During the ensuing chaos the police discharged two hand-grenades in an attempt to keep the crowd back. At the urgent request of the Mayor, the police were eventually withdrawn in an attempt to avoid worse trouble. As it was, though, some twenty civilians had already been injured and one actually died of his wounds.⁽⁵⁶⁾ The extent to which the Socialists themselves could be blamed for this violent occurrence is debatable, for whilst they went ahead with the public gathering and refused to give assurances that an 'unlawful' march through the town would not take place, this event was something more than protest action at the murder of Matthias Erzberger. The socialists were, in fact, following the tone set by Central Government in demonstrating both their loyalty to the Republic and their opposition to what they saw as Munich's abuse of its emergency powers which, in direct contravention of the recent Presidential proclamation, were directed solely against the Left, whilst the extreme Right was left to flourish unhampered in its anti-republicanism.

Coburg was thus becoming rapidly enmeshed in the wrangles which seemed to dominate relations between Central Government in Berlin and the Bavarian authorities in Munich from those early days of 'revolution'

(57)
when Bavaria took a significant step by proclaiming itself a Republic. The remarkable thing is the speed with which the conflict between Berlin and Munich changed from one between the near-separatist attitudes of the left-wing leader in Bavaria, Kurt Eisner, and Ebert's Majority S.P.D. government, to the constitutional battles Berlin faced with a Bavarian leadership which was drifting rapidly to the right.

The elections to the Bavarian Landtag in January 1919 were the first indication of the swing away from Eisner's Independent Socialists when they won only three seats.⁽⁵⁸⁾ The results left no party with an outright majority, but the biggest was the grouping of centre-right parties who had united to form the 'Bayerische Volkspartei' and won sixty-six seats. The Majority Socialists had sixty-one seats.⁽⁵⁹⁾

Eisner's position was obviously untenable given these results, and he knew it. Ironically he was actually on his way to the Landtag to deliver his resignation speech when he was gunned down by Count Arco Valley, a right-wing nationalist.⁽⁶⁰⁾ A new wave of revolt swept through left-wing groups in Munich and a revolutionary Central Council was established which refused to allow a new, duly elected government under the leadership of Majority Socialist's Johannes Hoffmann, to take office.⁽⁶¹⁾ The Central Council proclaimed the 'Bavarian Soviet Republic' and refused:

"any collaboration with the despicable Ebert-Scheidemann-Noske - Erzberger regime." (62)

and enforced Hoffmann's government into 'exile' in Bamberg, to return to Munich some four weeks later once the Soviet had been ruthlessly suppressed by Reichswehr units supported by the Bavarian 'Freikorps.'

Hoffmann did not realise, though, that his days in office were also numbered:

"The experience with the Republic of Soviets had swept away whatever brief revolutionary thrill Bavarians might have experienced during the first days of their revolution in November. Popular opinion about revolutions now swung completely about ... The Bavarians could no longer have their king but ... they could curse the national government as the seat of all evil and damn as 'Marxist' whatever did not suit their fancy." (63)

Despite fairly widespread revulsion at Eisner's assassination, isolated support for the killing of someone Count Arco saw as a:

"... Bolshevik. He is a Jew, he is not a German. He betrays the Fatherland..." (64)

was to be found amongst such groups as the university students. (65)

Furthermore, such was the deep-rooted support for right-wing politics that within a matter of some ten months, the Right displayed obvious confidence in their ability to attract popular support by staging a 'coup' in Bavaria. Whilst Kapp's Putsch attempt in Berlin failed, one in Munich was quite successful.

After a secret meeting between the head of the Munich police, Poehner, the leader of the 'Einwohnerwehr', Escherich, the District Commander of the Reichswehr, General von Moehl, and Gustav von Kahr, a leading right-wing politician, at which von Moehl was urged to take control in Bavaria, the General presented the S.P.Ds. Hoffmann with an ultimatum which led to the establishment of a right-wing government under von Kahr. (66) Within just seventeen months of the 'revolution', then, the first totally 'buergerlich' government in Germany had been formed

in Bavaria - a far cry from Eisner's 'Bavarian Republic'.

"Bavaria was thenceforward ruled by a state government which had strong particularist leanings and a Right-wing bias quite out of sympathy with the policies pursued by the central government in Berlin. Bavaria thus became a natural centre for all those who were eager to get rid of the republican regime in Germany, and the Bavarian government turned a blind eye to the treason and conspiracy against the legal government in the Reich which were being planned on its doorstep." (67)

Notes

1. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. "The German Dictatorship. The Origins Structure and Consequences of National.Socialism" Peregrine Books. Harmondsworth. 1978, pp.95ff.
2. Termed 'Eisenachers' because the new 'Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei' was founded at the conference held in Eisenach.
3. RYDER, A.J. "The German Revolution of 1918, A Study of German Socilaism in War and Revolt." Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. 1967, p.9.
4. The measures introduced by Bismarck, "the pioneer of state socialism" are outlined in CARR, WILLIAM. "A History of Germany 1815-1945". Edward Arnold. London. 1974, pp.156ff.
5. ibid.
6. A detailed analysis of Lassalle's view of the state is to be found in BERLAU,A.J. "The German Social Democratic Party" Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. 1949, pp.21ff.
7. RYDER,A.J. op. cit, pp.13ff.
8. ibid.
9. ibid.
10. ibid, pp.23ff.
11. ibid.
12. ibid.
13. ibid, p.26.
14. KAUTSKY, KARL. "Das Erfurter Program" Stuttgart 1892, pp. 106-107 cited in RYDER, A.J. op. cit, p.26.
15. GAY, PETER. "The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism: Eduard Bernstein's challenge to Marx". Columbia University Press.

- Columbia. 1952, p.269.
16. RYDER,A.J. op. cit, p.32.
 17. A detailed analysis of socialist attitudes towards war in Europe is to be found in : RYDER,A.J. op. cit, Chapter 3.
 18. SCHEIDEMANN, PHILIP. "Der Zusammenbruch". Berlin. 1921.
cited in RYDER, A.J. op. cit, p.41.
 19. RYDER,A.J. op. cit, pp.42-43.
As well as the misinformation distributed by the Government about French attacks on the Reich, the Government manipulated the ever-present anxieties of the Germans with regard to their Russian neighbours, with reports that the much-feared Cossacks had crossed the East Prussian border.
 20. RYDER,A.J. op. cit, p.44.
 21. Reported in BERLAU, A.J. op. cit, cited in RYDER,A.J. op. cit, p.45.
 22. RYDER,A.J. op. cit, p.45
 23. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, pp.265-266 and p.274.
 24. See above, p.5.
 25. This group became known as the Independent Socialists, as opposed to the Majority Socialists under Ebert's leadership.
 26. GRUNBERGER, RICHARD. "Red Rising in Bavaria". Arthur Barker Ltd. London. 1973, p.67.
 27. NICHOLLS,A.J. "Weimar and the Rise of Hitler". Macmillan Press. London. 1982, p.5.
 28. Details of this Berlin Congress are comprehensively covered in RYDER,A.J. op. cit, pp.177ff.
 29. NICHOLLS,A.J. op. cit, Chapter 2.
 30. RYDER,A.J. op. cit, p.181.
 31. ibid, pp.182ff.

32. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. "Coburg, Bayern und das Reich" Rossteutscher Verlag. Coburg. 1969, p.72.
33. From a report of the 'Handwerkskammer Coburg' in 1923/23 cited in ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.71.
34. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.72.
35. See above, p.11.
36. See above, pp.9-10.
37. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.72.
38. 'Coburger Volksblatt' 22nd March 1920.
Details of the Kapp Putsch are to be found in many works written on this period. See HAIGH,R.H. MORRIS,D.S. PETERS,A.R. "German Soviet Relations in the Weimar Era. Friendship from Necessity." Gower. Aldershot. 1985, pp.62-66 and 157-159.
Also CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, pp.303-305.
39. Following a call from the trade unions, an inaugural meeting of the Coburg 'Arbeiterwehr' took place on 23rd March 1923.
See ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op.cit, p.74.
40. 'Coburger Volksblatt' 13th March 1920.
"Reactionary putsch attempt! Workers, be on your guard".
41. 'Coburger Volksblatt' 15th March 1920.
"Only a madman could believe that putsch attempts from either side could bring about the reconstruction and revitalisation of this heavily burdened country and its people."
42. ibid.
"During these hours, the question must be answered: Republic or Monarchy?"
43. ibid.
"They do not want to see our people grow strong again because they know perfectly well that this would then mean an end to their dreams of a monarchy."

44. *ibid.*
45. 'Coburger Volksblatt' 20th March 1920.
46. The 'Einwohnerwehr' was a type of regional home-guard. For further details see below, Chapter 4.
47. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, p.75.
Eisner's assassination is considered below, pp.59-60.
the details of Luxemburg and Liebknecht are mentioned above p.51.
Erzberger was the man who had signed the Armistice in 1918 and Rathenau was the German Jewish Foreign Minister who had initiated the policy of fulfilling the conditions of the Versailles Peace Treaty.
48. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, p.75.
49. *ibid.*
50. 'Coburger Volksblatt' 14th June 1921.
51. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, pp.76ff.
52. BULLOCK, ALAN. "Hitler. A Study in Tyranny" Pelican. Harmondsworth. 1983, p.85.
53. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. *op. cit*, p.136.
54. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, p.82.
"We defend our right to walk along the streets in the town centre... We will not tolerate attempts to prevent us from departing from a meeting in any direction we wish to take. We will tell those gathered on the Schlossplatz that they should quietly return home. But we refuse to tell them that they have to follow certain routes only."
55. Special units of the Landespolizei were drafted into the area. See ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, pp.80ff.
56. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, pp.83-84.

57. See above, p.33.
58. SCHWEND, KARL. "Bayern Zwischen Monarchie und Diktatur".
Richard Pflaum Verlag. Muenchen. 1954, pp.45ff.
59. GRUNBERGER, RICHARD. op. cit, p.65
60. ibid, pp.78-79.
61. ibid, pp.82ff.
62. EYCK, ERICH. "A History of the Weimar Republic. Volume I. From
the Collapse of the Empire to Hindenburg's Election".
Oxford University Press. Oxford. 1962, pp.78ff.
63. ibid, p.79.
64. GRUNBERGER, RICHARD. op. cit, p.84.
65. ibid, p.81.
66. BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, p.62.
67. ibid.

THE BIRTH OF THE RIGHT-WING BACKLASH AND THE EMERGENCE OF NAZISM
IN COBURG, BAVARIA AND REICH.

Once a right-wing government had taken over in Munich, the 'battle' with Berlin took on a different complexion as the Bavarian Government, under von Kahr's leadership, sought to preserve its sovereignty against what it believed to be the encroachments of Berlin centralism. The target for Bavaria's 'attack' on the Berlin Government was Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution which gave the President of the Reich the right:

"zur Wiederherstellung der oeffentlichen Sicherheit und Ordnung die noetigen Massnahmen zu treffen, erforderlichenfalls mit Hilfe der bewaffneten Macht einzuschreiten."(1)

Von Kahr's cabinet rule generated an atmosphere of counter revolution in Bavaria which the Central Government attempted to combat by invoking its emergency powers under Article 48, but with very little success. Von Kahr was of the 'old school' of Bismarckian civil servants and a resolute supporter of the old royal families in Bavaria, who would have welcomed a return to a monarchical form of government. The climate in Bavaria in the early nineteen-twenties was perfect for the growth of the plethora of bodies describing themselves as 'volkisch' or 'vaterlandisch'.⁽²⁾ A host of well-known nationalist figures had fled to Bavaria in the aftermath of the First World War, men like General Ludendorff, Admiral Tirpitz, officers Goering and Roehm, the author Dietrich Eckart, and, of course, Hitler himself.⁽³⁾ Relations between Bavaria and Berlin deteriorated rapidly as the Bavarians

came to despise Berliners almost as much as their former enemies.

"Whoever voiced an attack on the Berliners as I did, for example, a certain Adolf Hitler, could be assured of loving protection in Munich."(4)

As mentioned above, the aftermath of Erzberger's assassination had also effected a sharp clash between Munich and Berlin.⁽⁵⁾ The Reich Chancellor at that time was Josef Wirth, a left-wing Centrist who had formed a coalition government in April 1921 after the crisis over the reparations issue had brought down the previous government.⁽⁶⁾ Wirth had presented a Presidential proclamation invoking Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution in an attempt to stem growing concern over right-wing attacks on the Republic. Von Kahr's government refused to acknowledge the decree and allowed attacks on the Republic to continue, such as during a ceremony to commemorate the victory at Sedan in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian war, when a leading figure in Bavaria and former army general bitterly attacked the Berlin Government as:

"the executors who are dispensing the profits they inherited from the world war..." (7)

and then publicly reviled the flag of the Republic with the charge that it contained:

"the yellow stripe of Jewry..."(8)

Von Kahr obviously overestimated the support he had in stubbornly refusing to acknowledge the Presidential proclamation and in urging Bavaria along its 'collision course' with Berlin because the executive committee of the Bavarian Landtag refused to support him on this issue

and urged a compromise approach. Von Kahr refused, and without the support he needed, was forced to resign in favour of the more moderate approach of Count Lerchenfeld.⁽⁹⁾ In an atmosphere of right-wing resurgence, Count Lerschenfeld's concilliatory approach was soon attacked and discredited by the Right, and by November of the following year, 1923, he too had been forced to resign in favour of the right-wing Eugen von Knilling.

With this backdrop of right-wing resurgence, events in Coburg such as the "Blutsonnabend" of 3rd September in 1921 highlighted a crucial stage in political developments in Coburg.⁽¹⁰⁾ As well as causing socialists to have second thoughts about the wisdom of supporting the move to enter into union with Bavaria in the 1919 referendum, the events of that Saturday in Coburg signalled the start of a move against the socialist - albeit mild form thereof - climate in Coburg. The fact that the Bavarian Government had been so involved in the decision to ban a march in Coburg, and in moving a substantial number of extra police into Coburg, signalled a determination to snuff out left-wing opposition where it existed within Bavaria's borders.⁽¹¹⁾ It was also the signal for the resurgence of right-wing activity in Coburg itself.

In Coburg, as throughout the Reich, overt political activity on the side of right-wing parties had been subdued in the days immediately following the end of the First World War. It was initially amongst such groups as the many war verterans' associations and other paramilitary bodies that anti-revolutionary and anti-republican sentiments were allowed to flourish unchecked. In Coburg, a 'Buergerwehr', or civil guard, had been raised to maintain public order during those days of uncertainty in November 1918, and when Coburg joined Bavaria

this body was superseded by the Coburg branch of the 'Einwohnerwehr'. This organisation was controlled centrally from Munich with regional outposts and was to be used to police political demonstrations and strikes, and to perform security functions at public buildings and businesses during periods of political agitation and unrest.⁽¹²⁾ In this way Coburg was caught up in an early dispute between Bavaria and the Reich Government in Berlin when, under pressure from the Allies, Berlin called for the disarming and disbanding of all 'Einwohnerwehr'. Although the Right argued that these bodies were essential to defend citizens against 'Bolshevik armed bands' trying to preach the message of revolution from Russia, 'Einwohnerwehr' units had themselves already been engaged in overtly political acts such as the establishment of von Kahr's right-wing government in Munich.⁽¹³⁾ When the order was issued to disband the 'Einwohnerwehr' Bavaria refused, and in an open act of defiance even allowed the 'Einwohnerwehr' to publicly organise a 'Bavarian Shooting Match' and declare it to be an annual event.⁽¹⁴⁾ By the time the Bavarian 'Einwohnerwehr' and thereby the Coburg regiment too, had been disbanded in June 1921, numerous other organisations had emerged to more than compensate for its demise. Groups like the 'Bund Wiking', 'Bund Bayern und Reich' and 'Stahlhelm' all developed considerable support in Coburg during the early nineteen-twenties.⁽¹⁵⁾ The 'Bund Wiking' had emerged from the 'Brigade des Seeoffiziers Hermann Ehrhardt' which, apart from taking the lead in the abortive Kapp Putsch, had also been involved with other 'Freikorps' units in the bloody suppression of the Bavarian Soviet.⁽¹⁶⁾ When the 'Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei' (N.S.D.A.P.) was banned later in November 1923 after the Hitler Putsch, many of the Coburg Nazis joined the 'Bund Wiking' which subsequently became the largest of the right-wing bodies.⁽¹⁷⁾

Two other organisations were also active in Coburg at this time : the 'Deutschvoelkischer Schutz - und Trutzbund' and the 'Jungdeutsche Orden '. The former group was responsible for organising amongst other events, the 'Third German Day' in Coburg in October 1922 which proved to be something of a watershed in the resurgence of right-wing politics in Coburg and Bavaria, and which will be considered in detail later. The 'Jungdeutsche Orden' displayed many traits similar to those of the Nazis, particularly in its violent anti-semitism, and was regularly involved in street brawls with socialist groups.⁽¹⁸⁾ In the tense domestic atmosphere following the assassination of Rathenau in June 1922 there was a particular incident when a group of Coburg workers broke into a meeting of the 'Jungdeutsche Orden' in a public house and tried to seize a number of anti-republican papers. In the ensuing fight knives and truncheons were produced and a considerable amount of damage done.⁽¹⁹⁾ In the aftermath of Rathenau's murder attempts were made to ban groups like the 'Jungdeutsche Orden' and the 'Deutschvoelkischer Schutz-und Trutzbund' but this simply had the effect of deepening the anti-semitism amongst right-wing extremists. Rathenau was a Jew and his assassination was seen by Franz Schwede, one of the early 'Ortsgruppenleiter' of the Coburg N.S.D.A.P, as being significant for future political developments in stirring up anti-semitism.

"Das in seiner Machtstellung durch die Ermordung Rathenaus empfindlich getoffene Judentum schaeumt vor Wut Hass und erreicht im Juli 1922 das Verbot des DVST ... " (20)

In spite of the abdication of Carl Eduard, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in 1918, the Duke was clearly not prepared to have his considerable political influence neutralised. He was at this time a leading patron

of the Coburg 'Einwohnerwehr' and became a personal friend of Captain Erhardt, occasionally participating in some of Ehrhardt's brigade's operations, and often acting as host to Ehrhardt in Coburg. The Duke was also active in groups like 'Stahhelm' and 'Bund Wiking' lending his considerable prestige and finances to the activity of such right-wing groups. (21) Carl Eduard even met Hitler in 1922 and thereafter became an active supporter and patron of the Nazis, so much so that during the Chancellor crisis of November 1932 he offered to place at Hitler's disposal:

"... jede vermittelertaetigkeit ... uneingeschraenkt." (22)

Of the right-wing political parties active in Coburg in the immediate post-war years, only the 'Deutschnationale Volkspartei' (D.N.V.P.) had any representation. In the Coburg District Assembly it had one representative. (23) Despite this, the party did have something of a mouth-piece in one of Coburg's three daily newspapers, the 'Coburger Zeitung' which throughout 1919 had carried attacks on the Allies, primarily for their inability to guarantee food supplies to the German people. (24) The paper's nationalist feelings were nowhere more obvious than when it reported on the signing on 28th June 1919 of the Versaille Treaty. The papers headline was:

"Der Vernichtungsfriede unterzeichnet." (25)

Increasingly the Versaille Treaty was to become the 'whipping boy' of the Right for the crises which were to beset Germany during the nineteen twenties. As Elisabeth Wiskemann points out:

"... to the Treaty of Versailles, the National Socialists

owe mainly gratitude for supplying them with admirable propagandistic material..." (26)

The main aims of the Versailles Treaty would appear to have been : to reduce Germany from the status of world power to that of European; to take from Germany its territorial conquests; to destroy Germany as a military power and make her pay for the devastation inflicted on other countries. (27) Although historians agree that the resurgence of nationalist extremism as embodied in Nazism cannot be blamed on any one factor alone, there is a good deal of consensus that the harsh terms of the Versailles Treaty did make it a useful 'tool' which the nationalists used to great effect to whip up fever-pitch patriotism amongst the Germans during the nineteen-twenties. (28) Psychologically Article 231 of the Treaty, the so-called 'guilt clause' was of great significance in uniting all shades of opinion in Germany. (29) The Article stated:

"The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all of the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies." (30)

Certainly Versailles had so incensed many of the right wing officers in the Reichswehr that Generals von Luettwitz and Ludendorff had not been slow to lend their backing to the Kapp Putsch in March 1920. (31) Hitler, too, made full use of the Treaty in his attacks on the Republic:

"The political situation at the present moment is similar to that of 1917/1918. Germany is led, not by Germans, but by international parasites. They

have no wish to see a strong Germany; their masters in Paris, London and New York would not allow it... Germany can only achieve political power through the German military virtues... our rearmament will begin on the day we assume power." (32)

In a reference to the terms of the Versailles Treaty which reduced the strength of the Reichswehr to 100,000 men, Hitler said:

"Sensible people realise that we cannot guarantee our security with an army of 100,000 men." (33)

As previously mentioned, Bavaria was proving an extremely fertile ground for such right-wing beliefs, and during the nineteen-twenties the Bavarians became convinced of their joint mission to both save Germany from international 'thuggery' and also from the 'Marxists' in Berlin. (34) The Reichswehr was easily drawn into the conflict between Berlin and Munich, despite the efforts of General Hans von Seeckt, Chief of the German Army Command, who, like General von Groener in those early days of 'revolution' in 1918, believed that it was in the long-term interests of the Army to uphold the authority of the Republican government and thereby preserve the unity of the Reich - at least for the present. (35) As early as the autumn of 1922, though, it had become rather difficult to keep the Army in Bavaria distanced from some of the right-wing groups. Von Seeckt was told by General von Lossow, Commander of the Bavarian Division, that contacts with the numerous 'patriotic' organisations were absolutely necessary:

"... because over 51% of all available weapons are in their hands." (36)

Von Seeckt, consistent with the approach he took throughout his command from 1920 - 1926 reminded von Lossow that a soldier dare not

become the servant of a political party, and still less of armed bands. Von Seeckt insisted that the Army was above politics, that its duty was to serve the state as a permanent institution, remaining outside party politics. He hoped that by keeping the Army politically neutral, its prestige and influence could be raised to its former level. (37) Throughout the nineteen-twenties the Army was so successful in evading the constraints of the Versailles Treaty in respect of training and the use of modern weapons that later, when Hitler came to rebuild the German 'war machine', he already had a solid basis on which to start. (38)

The young officer corps, in particular, was to become increasingly attracted to the Nazi propaganda as it became disenchanted and impatient at the apparent acceptance of the Republic by its superiors. (39) Some years later, in 1930, at the trial of two junior officers accused of spreading Nazi propaganda amongst their colleagues, Hitler seized the opportunity to speak directly to the young officer corps which was following the trial closely. (40) Hitler's promises of the creation of a great army in which there would be great opportunity for career development, were to have a profound effect on his audience, and within a very short time General Schleicher was to have relinquished all idea of the Army's political neutrality and brought the Reichswehr into the political arena. (41)

In the early nineteen twenties however, Hitler was not just concentrating on winning friends in the Army, but was enjoying more widespread success in Munich, luring crowds with his anti-semitic tirades, realising that in times of crisis nothing had a greater effect on an audience than vehement attacks on others who were shown to be escaping

the effects of that crisis. (42) Hitler somehow 'trapped' his audience by using the misconception that the Jews knew of some secret way of avoiding the economic misery that was hitting everyone else. The truth was, of course, that the Jewish middle class, like the doctors and the businessmen, who were the particular target of Hitler's ravings, were suffering just as much as, if not more than other groups in German society. The German middle class as a whole was devastated by the rampant inflation which crippled the German economy at different times in the nineteen-twenties.

"It is no exaggeration to say that the inflation of 1923 wiped out the savings of the middle class." (43)

Gustav Stresemann, who was appointed Chancellor when the Cuno government collapsed in 1923 during the crisis over the occupation of the Ruhr, declared in 1927 that:

"... the intellectual and productive middle class, which was traditionally the backbone of the country, has been paid for the utter sacrifice of itself to the state during the war by being deprived of all its property and by being proletarianised." (44)

In allowing Hitler to carry on, unchecked, with his outrageous public incitements, the Bavarian government was positively encouraging his 'rabble-rousing' tactics and lending weight to the picture of Bavaria as a safe haven for extremist, anti-republican elements. At a time when relations with Berlin were deteriorating rapidly, it would have been simple, and quite legal for the Bavarian government to have stamped out this dangerous nationalist trend at an early stage by deporting Hitler as an 'undesirable alien'. Under German law, an undesirable alien was one who constituted:

"... a danger to the internal or external peace, security and order of the state." (45)

There was ample legal precedent for such action, yet the Bavarian Government, in whose province such powers lay, did nothing. (46)

When on 1st May 1923 Hitler gathered some 5,000 followers for 'field exercises', arming them with weapons taken from the Reichswehr barracks, the Bavarian Government intervened to halt the 'exercises', but took no further action against any of the participants or the organisers. (47)

"That in the end this movement would threaten everything dear to Catholic Bavarian federalists and particularists, they were not able, or did not wish to see, even when Minister Schweyer declared to the Landtag that the National Socialists' platform was politically questionable from the Bavarian point of view... It remains the historic guilt of the Knilling regime that, blinded by its hatred of social democracy and a centralised Reich, it nourished a demagogic movement which was infinitely more dangerous than the Social Democrats and a far greater centralising force than the Weimer constitution." (48)

Events in Coburg at this time were also growing more tense each day. Within socialist circles there was a rising disenchantment with political developments in the region since Coburg had joined Bavaria - and, consequently, a reawakening of ideas for a closer link with Thuringia, or perhaps even a 'Franconian Republic' independent of Bavaria. (49) There was, of course, a corresponding reaction from the nationalist groupings in Coburg and incidents were becoming more frequent where opposing political groups clashed. (50) A critical stage was reached following the ban placed on several right-wing organisations after the assassination of the Foreign Minister, Walther Rathenau. (51) As mentioned above, the Bavarian Government, in effect ignored such decrees from Central Government and allowed nationalist:

groups like the 'Deutschvoelkische Schutz - und Trutzbund (D.V.S.T.) in Coburg to continue unhindered in its activities. (52) This non-outlawing of the D.V.S.T. was important for attracting the 'Third German Day' celebrations to Coburg in October 1922. The Coburg branch of the D.V.S.T. numbered 400, quite a sizeable number considering that nationally there were not many more than 140,000 members. (53) Considering what the 'Gauleiter' of the North Bavarian 'D.V.S.T.', Hans Dietrich, a Coburg teacher, had understood to be a lively nationalist spirit in Coburg together with the growing anti-semitism amongst some groups, Dietrich believed he had a strong case for bringing the 'Third German Day' to Coburg on 14th and 15th October 1922. (54) The programme of events for this occasion was to be broadly similar to other nationalist festivities; rallies, marches, bands, concerts, drama, lectures, discussions and the like. Invitations were sent to nationalist groups and individuals all over Germany, as well as to those in other German-speaking parts of central Europe. (55) An invitation to attend therefore naturally went to the National Socialists in Munich, but this was a deliberate political act on Dietrich's part, so Juergen Erdmann believes. (56) The National Socialists, and particularly the paramilitary S.A., had at that time already gained something of a notorious reputation for their behaviour on the streets. In the late summer of 1922, whilst marching in formation behind flags, banners and bands across the Munich 'Koenigsplatz' they became involved in ugly street fights with opposing groups. (57) Hans Dietrich was disillusioned with the methods adopted by his own organisation, the D.V.S.T., and could see little political success coming from their endless public meetings, parades and leafleting campaigns. He was much more impressed by the S.A's tactics in Munich and by the radical tone of Hitler's speeches and writings. (58) For Hitler the invitation presented a golden

opportunity to 'test' his tactics for the first time outside Munich. From an early stage Hitler had realised how effective a device mass meetings and demonstrations were for securing support for an avowedly populist movement.

"The essential purpose of such meetings was to create a sense of power, of belonging to a movement whose success was irresistible." (59)

Hitler had, in the tactics which often accompanied these mass meetings and rallies, hit upon a psychological factor which was to prove immensely important in the rise of Nazism:

"... that violence and terror have their own propaganda value and that the display of physical force attracts as many as it repels." (60)

No less important to Hitler was the press coverage he could win by using such 'terror tactics', for he fully appreciated what influence newspapers had over the German public:

"Das war die Keimzelle der S.A : eine Bande von Raufbolden und Schlagetots, die ... durch ihre Radau - und Pruegelszenen das Versammlungspublikum beeindruckten und den Blaetterwald zum Rauschen bringen sollten." (61)

Hitler recognised that his 'Beherrschung der Strassen' tactics were certain to attract the press publicity which he sought in order to 'preach' his message to a much wider audience.

According to Juergen Erdmann's figures, around 3,000 people had gathered in Coburg up to Saturday, 14th October, rising to 4,000 on the Sunday. (62) They had, indeed, arrived not only from all over Germany

but also from Austria, Hungary and the Sudetenland to join Nazi delegations from Berlin, Hannover and Stuttgart. (63) Hitler's arrival was expected around mid-afternoon on the Saturday by special train from Munich, and estimates of the size of the party accompanying him vary : Juergen Erdmann quotes an estimated 650 supporters, whereas Hitler himself put the figure at 800, with more joining the group from Saxony and Thuringia. (64) In keeping with its young traditions, the entire party was wearing swastika armbands and many were carrying an assortment of weapons such as sticks, clubs and rubber coshes. (65) The first incidents occurred even before the special train reached Coburg with its Nazi passengers. It stopped at the station in Nuernberg at the same time as an express train from Munich to Berlin, and amongst various passengers alighting were a number of Jews. In Hitler's own words:

"Our train which was beflagged was not to the taste of some Jews ... Schreck leapt into the midst of them and started laying about him." (66)

Juergen Erdmann, who derived his sources from Nuernberg police information, and in particular from a report to the Bavarian Interior Minister, makes no mention of physical violence, but rather of vicious anti-semitic verbal abuse and the daubing of swastikas over the other train. (67) On arrival at the Coburg station Hitler was welcomed by Hans Dietrich who informed Hitler of an agreement reached between the organisers of the occasion, the town authorities and other Coburg representatives, under the terms of which the Nazis were not to march through the town in closed ranks with flags and banners, behind a musical band, so as to eliminate any possible provocation of other groups. (68)

Hitler could not accept such conditions and promptly ordered the flags and the band to the front of the group. He held it to be a provocation in that:

"... ihre Einhaltung haette ihn (Hitler) seiner entscheidenden Wirkungsmittel beraubt. Aber sie erwiesen sich insoern als Vorteilhaft als sie den Anlass zur Uebertretung und damit zu einer Massenpruegelei boten, in der die Hitlerischen Raufbolde Erfahrungen sammeln, sich bewaehren und in uebrigen auch ausserhalb Muenchens demonstrieren konnten, dass sie kein 'Debattierklub' waren."(69)

A counter demonstration had gathered outside the station but it was not until sometime later, when the Nazis were parading to where they were to be billeted for the evening that the worst incidents of violence occurred. Hitler's description was that:

"... we gave them such a thrashing that in ten minutes' time the street was cleared. All our weapons came in useful: our musicians trumpets came out of the affray twisted and dented. The Reds were scattered, and fled in all directions." (70)

During the welcoming ceremony held in the Coburg Hofbraeuhaus, which was attended by Carl Eduard and his wife, Hitler was able to introduce his passionate, fanatical, anti-semitic style of oratory to a public outside Munich. He insisted that it was not the economic plight of Germans that was lamentable, but rather their political and moral disarray. According to Hitler, the economic crisis was more a gift which would be used to lift up the German peoples and bring them together again on the soil of the Fatherland.⁽⁷¹⁾ Both during the meeting and afterwards there were violent scenes around the town centre, which continued right through the night, spreading to some of the outskirts of Coburg.⁽⁷²⁾ On the Sunday, the main event was to have been a pro-

cession up to the Coburg castle, but an hour before the official procession was to start, Hitler led his own followers on a march up to the castle, attracting so many others that the official procession had to be cancelled. (73) Once at the castle, Hitler presided over a march-past by S.A. units, then gave a short speech before leading the singing of the 'Deutschlandlied' and the return procession. (74) Sunday witnessed far fewer violent scenes, although a group of Nazis did gather outside the home of one of Coburg's leading Jewish businessmen, Abraham Friedmann, and shouted insults and threats against his life. (75) Although Friedmann was known to give financial support to the centrist Democratic Party, the Nazi mob accused him of paying left-wing extremists and Communists to disrupt the German Day events in the town. (76) The closing ceremony of this 'Third German Day' was held also at the Coburg Hofbraeuhaus and at that meeting resolutions were adopted which were to be passed on to the Bavarian Government, and the governments of the other German states. They called for active resistance to the 'war guilt lies' and for the rejection of the Versailles Treaty, at the same time casting a vote of no confidence in those state governments which, by accepting the post-war settlement, were guilty of a breach of the constitution. (77) As Hitler's supporters made their way back to the railway station to take the train back to Munich, outbreaks of applause from groups of Coburg citizens, who lined parts of the Nazis route to the station, were reported:

"Zweifellos hatte das Auftreten und Wirken Hitlers nicht nur in ohnehin schon national eingestellten Kreisen Coburgs einen gewaltigen Eindruck hinterlassen." (78)

Hitler's own comment was that:

"The bourgeoisie had realised their courage".(79)

The final incident occurred at the railway station when the railmen refused to drive the special train back to Munich. Hitler immediately threatened them that his supporters would take hostages and then drive the train back to Munich themselves, upon which the railmen lifted their refusal and supplied the necessary personnel. Hitler's assessment of such tactics was:

"At that date it was indispensable to act without hesitations. It was the beginning of a new era." (80)

The two centre/right newspapers in Coburg, the 'Coburger Zeitung' and the 'Coburger Tageblatt' reported more the cultural aspects of the 'German Day' and it was left to the socialist 'Coburger Volksblatt' to pass judgement on the disorders of those two days:

"Coburg unter der Herrschaft Hitlers. Die Kapitulation der Staatsgewalt vor den Hitler - Gardisten." (81)

The general tone of the 'Coburger Volksblatt' and other socialist newspapers in and around Bavaria was one of condemnation of the authorities for allowing Hitler and his para-military S.A. to roam the streets of Coburg unchecked, and a condemnation of the Bavarian Government for allowing such an extremist right-wing, anti-republican group like the N.S.D.A.P. to blossom freely in that state.⁽⁸²⁾ The events in Coburg were also debated in the Bavarian 'Landtag' on 21st and 22nd November 1922 and it came to light during that debate that the Interior Ministry had, in fact, been expecting a serious incident sooner or later involving Hitlers N.S.D.A.P. because the Nazis had been allowed

too free a hand in their activities. (83) The Bavarian S.P.D. accused the state government in Munich of gross negligence, inconsistent application of laws and preferential treatment before the law for certain groups. (84) Coburg S.P.D. representatives like Franz Klingler talked of bitter disappointment at the way things were developing in Coburg after the hopes raised and promises made with regard to Coburg's future just two years ago when Coburg negotiated a union with Bavaria. (85) He reported on the resurgence of the 'Losloesung von Bayern' call - the call to 'quit' Bavaria. (86) In attempting to answer S.P.D. charges against the Bavarian Government, Dr. Schweyer of the Interior Ministry ultimately defended the N.S.D.A.P.'s 'democratic' right to hold meetings and its rights under the freedom of expression. The Government, he stated, would only intervene when the N.S.D.A.P. overstepped legal limits. (87) The incidents in Coburg were also reported to the 'Reichskommissar' with special responsibilities for public order and this served merely to worsen even further relations between Berlin and Munich. (88) Juergen Erdmann cites an example of an internal memo circulated within the Bavarian Interior Ministry asking for no more detail of events in Coburg to be supplied to the Reichskommissar than had been given in the Landtag debate. (89) Although in the long run more details were eventually supplied, the wrangle between Central Government and Munich over steps to protect the Republic continued unabated. From the writing of local N.S.D.A.P. supporters and from Hitler himself, it is quite clear how much importance was attached to participating in the German Day in Coburg as far as the future growth of the Nazi movement was concerned. Hitler went so far as to describe the occasion as the start of a new era. (90) Werner Faber, who was to become one of the Nazi leaders in Coburg and, in fact, was to hold office as mayor in Coburg, attached the greatest importance for the

"Den rechten Aufschwung nahm aber auch in Coburg die voelkische Bewegung erst dann, als unser Fuehrer Adolf Hitler gelegentlich der Coburger Tagung der Gemeinschaft Deutschvoelkischer Buende im Oktober 1922 mit seiner Muenchener S.A zum erstenmal die bayerische Landeshauptstadt verliess ... und dort mit dem in der Stadt noch herrschenden roter Strassenterror derart gruendlich aufraeumte, dass die Coburger Marxisten noch heute davon traeumen wenn sie Albdreuecken haben.

Die Stelling, die unser Fuehrer Adolf Hitler in Coburg erobert hatte, wurde dann bis zum November 1923 von den alten Wehrverbaenden noch weiter ausgebaut ... , Dabei wuchs unter der tatkraeftigen Fuehrung unseres Parteigenossen Schwede ... der politische Einfluss der N.S.D.A.P. in unserer Stadt." (91)

Maximum propaganda value was extracted from those events in Coburg as they became known as one of the landmarks in the 'struggle' during the early years of the Nazi movement. The tenth anniversary of the German Day in Coburg was celebrated in style, and special certificates were printed and presented to those who had been with Hitler in Coburg. (92)

As Erdmann points out, it was essential for Hitler to manufacture as quickly as possible the idea of some kind of long National Socialist tradition to fit alongside the mythology of the much-valued, old Teutonic way of life which was central to Nazi philosophy. (93) The specially printed certificates, or attestations, were all part of this tradition as, within the Nazi movement, they soon became known as one of the highest honours the Party could bestow on its supporters. On the occasion of that tenth anniversary of the German Day in Coburg, Hitler was made an honorary citizen of Coburg. (94)

Within months of Hitler's visit to Coburg, the Coburg branch of the N.S.D.A.P. had been founded. (95) Franz Schwede became 'Ortsgruppenleiter' in April of that year, and, totally committed to Hitler's cause

he had, by September 1923, increased the membership of the local branch to six hundred. (96)

Notes

1. As in HUBENSTEINER, BENNO. "Bayerische Geschichte. Staat und Volk. Kunst und Kultur." Sueddeutscher Verlag. Munchen. 1980. p.339.
2. See PETER MERKL'S introduction to BROSZAT, MARTIN. "German National Socialism 1919-1945" Clio Press. Santa Barbara. 1966. pp.2-3.
3. Eckart is acknowledged to have been Hitler's mentor and intimate friend who produced various works such as "Bolscheivismus von Moses bis Lenin - Zwiegespraech zwischen Adolf Hitler und mir," and an anti-semitic periodical: "Auf gut Deutsch. Wochenschrift fuer Ordnung und Recht."
For an account of his influence on Hitler, see MASSER, WERNER. "Hitler's Mein Kampf : An Analysis". Faber and Faber. London. 1970.
4. EYCK, ERICH. "A History of the Weimar Republic. Volume I. From the Collapse of the Empire to Hindenburg's Election". Oxford University Press. 1962. p.153.
5. See above, pp.56-57.
6. CARR, WILLIAM. "A History of Germany. 1815-1945". Edward Arnold. London. 1974, pp.311-312.
7. THUERAUF, ULRICH. (Ed.) "Schulthesiss' Europaeischer Geschichtskalendar, 1921" Munich. 1926. Volume I, p.273, cited in EYCK, ERICH. op. cit, p.158.
8. ibid.
9. BULLOCK, ALAN. "Hitler - A Study in Tyranny." Pelican. Harmondsworth. 1983.p.85.
10. "Bloody Saturday" as referred to in ERDMANN, JUERGEN. "Coburg, Bayern und das Reich". Rossteutscher Verlag. Coburg. 1969,

pp.80ff.

11. *ibid*, pp.85ff.
12. *ibid*, p.87.
13. See above pp.60-61.
14. EYCK, ERICH. *op. cit*, p.176.
15. Although not having the militia status of the 'Einwohnerwehr', many of these groups were para-military in their organisation and dress.

For a more detailed background to such groups, see ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, pp.87-90.

16. For a consideration of the Kapp Putsch see above, pp.53-55. The suppression of the Bavarian Soviet is considered above, pp.59-60.

17. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, p.89.

The Hitler Putsch and its aftermath is considered in detail below, pp.101-105.

18. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, pp.89-90.

19. *ibid*.

20. SCHWEDE, FRANZ. "Kampf um Coburg." Verlag Frz. Eher. Nachf. Muenchen. 1939. Chapter 1.

"Jewry, so deeply touched by the murder of Rathenau, boils with rage and hate in its predominant position, and succeeds in having the D.V.S.T. banned in July, 1922."

21. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, pp.90ff.

22. BRACHER, K.D. SAUER, W. SCHULZ, G. "Die Nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung". Koeln. 1960, p.409.

"... himself to act as a mediator in any way he can."

23. See above, p.19.

24. The significance of the question of food supplies is considered above, p.4.

25. 'Coburger Zeitung'. 1st July 1919.
"The crushing peace treaty signed."
26. WISKEMANN, ELIZABETH. "Undeclared War". Constable. London.
1939, p.310.
27. CHILDS, DAVID. "Germany since 1918". Batsford Academic. London.
1980, pp.19ff.
28. See MATTHIAS, ERICH. "The Influence of the Versailles Treaty
on the internal development of the Weimar Republic" in NICHOLLS,
A.J. and MATTHIAS, ERICH. (Ed.) "German Democracy and the
Triumph of Hitler". Allen and Unwin. London. 1977, pp.15ff.
See also HAIGH, R.H. MORRIS, D.S. PETERS, A.R. "German -
Soviet Relations in the Weimar Era. Friendship from Necessity".
Gower. Aldershot. 1985, pp.37ff. and pp.89ff.
Also CHILDS, DAVID. op. cit, p.19.
29. MATTHIAS, ERICH in NICHOLLS, A.J. and MATTHIAS, ERICH (Ed.)
op. cit, p.16.
30. HAIGH, R.H. MORRIS, D.S. PETERS, A.R. op. cit, p.27.
31. See above, pp.53-55.
32. CALLIC, EDOUARD. "Unmasked. Two confidential interviews with
Hitler in 1931" Chatto and Windus. London. 1971, pp.83-84.
33. ibid, p.63.
34. EYCK, ERICH. op. cit, p.247.
35. See above p.15.
Also BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, p.102.
36. RABENAU, FRIEDRICH VON (Ed.) "Seeckt. Aus seinem Leben
1918-1936" in EYCK, ERICH. op. cit, p.247.
37. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, pp.305-308.
38. ibid.
See also HAIGH, R.H. MORRIS, D.S. PETERS, A.R. op. cit, p.79
and pp.160ff.

39. BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, pp.179ff.
40. ibid, pp.164-167.
41. ibid, pp.181ff.
42. EYCK, ERICH. op. cit, p.247.
43. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, p.315.
44. Cited ibid.
45. From the "Handbuch des deutschen Staatsrechts I, 280" in
EYCK, ERICH. op. cit, p.248.
46. EYCK, ERICH. op. cit, p.248.
47. ibid.
48. ibid, p.249.

Schweyer was a minister in the Bavarian Government from 1921-1924 and Eugen von Knilling was the Bavarian 'prime minister' from 1922-1924.

49. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, pp.92-93.
50. See above, pp.55-56.
51. See above, pp.56-57.
52. See above, pp.67ff.

The position of the 'Deutschvoelkischer Schutz - und Trutzbund' is considered above, p.71.

53. "Bericht der Stadtpolizei Coburg. Dezember 1922"
in ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.89.
54. ibid, p.93.
55. For a more detailed account of the organisation and running of this 'Third German Day', see ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, pp.93-106.
56. ibid, p.94.
57. BRACHER, K.D. SAUER, W. SCHULZ, G. op. cit, p.833.
See also BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, pp.72-73.

58. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.94.
59. BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, pp.71-72.
60. ibid, p.72.
61. BRACHER,K.D. SAUER,W. SCHULZ,G. op. cit, pp.831-832.
"That was the germ-cell of the S.A. : a band of brawlers
and killers who, through their rowdy scenes and punch-ups,
should impress public gatherings and start the press roaring."
62. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.99.
63. ibid.
64. ibid, p.100.
Hitler's estimate as in HITLER, ADOLF : "Hitler's Table Talk
1941-1944. His Private Conservations". Weidenfeld and
Nicolson. London. 1973, p.136.
65. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.100.
66. HITLER, ADOLF : op. cit, p.136.
67. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.100.
68. ibid.
See also BRACHER,K.D. SAUER,W. SCHULZ,G. op. cit, p.834.
69. BRACHER,K.D. SAUER,W. SCHULZ,G. op. cit, p.834.
"... adhering to these rules would have robbed him (Hitler)
of his truly effective tactics. The order proved however, to
be beneficial in that it offered the opportunity of violation
and so, too, of mass brawls in which Hitler's rowdies could
gain experience and prove themselves. It also gave them the
chance to demonstrate outside Munich that they were no debating
society."
70. HITLER, ADOLF : op. cit, p.136.
71. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, pp.102-103.
72. ibid, pp.103-104.

73. *ibid*, p.105.

74. *ibid*.

75. *ibid*.

Abraham Friedmann was the manager of Coburg's leading meat products' firms and was one of the central figures in events surrounding the collapse of the Coburg town council and subsequent Nazi seizure of power in 1929.

See below, Chapter 7.

76. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, p.105.

77. The 'war guilt lies' is a reference to Article 231 of the Treaty of Versailles. See above, p.73.

The resolutions passed at this final meeting are considered in ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, p.106.

78. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, p.106.

"There is no doubt that the effect of Hitler's appearance left behind a deep impression, and not only on the nationalists amongst the Coburg people."

79. HITLER, ADOLF. *op. cit*, p.137.

80. *ibid*.

81. 'Coburger Volksblatt.' in ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, p.108.

"Coburg under Hitler's grip. Surrender of authority to Hitler's guardsmen."

82. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, p.108.

83. *ibid*, pp.110-111.

84. *ibid*.

85. See above, Chapter 2.

96. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. *op. cit*, p.111.

87. *ibid*.

88. *ibid*, pp.112-113.

90. *ibid*, p.113.

90. See above, p.83.

91. FABER, WERNER. "Coburg unterm Hakenkreuz." Verlag.Frz. Eher. Nauhf. Muenchen. 1939, pp.8-9.

"The 'volkisch' movement made real advances only after our leader, Adolf Hitler, left the Bavarian capital with his Munich S.A to come to Coburg for the celebrations of the union of German 'volkisch' organisations in October 1922... He drove the red terror off the streets of Coburg in such a way that the Coburg Marxists still have nightmares about that event.

The position 'conquered' by our leader, Adolf Hitler, in Coburg had, by November 1923, been strengthened even further... From here grew the political influence of the N.S.D.A.P. in our town under the tireless leadership of our comrade Schwede."

92.. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.116.

93. ibid, pp.116ff.

94. ibid, p.116.

95. The local branch was founded on 14th January 1923 comprising about forty members.

96. ERDMANN, JUERGEN. op. cit, p.119.

CRISES FACING THE REICH AND THE RIGHT'S OPPORTUNITY IN BAVARIA.

Inflation in Germany was already a considerable problem before the war ended. In 1914 one U.S. dollar was worth 4.20 German Marks, and by early 1920 it was worth 100 German Marks.⁽¹⁾ Additionally, at the end of the war the young Republic was left with war debts of around 150,000 million Marks, the cost of financing Germany's war effort, whereupon the crippling blow of the Versailles Treaty and Allied claims for reparations to help repay the war debts incurred by the Allies which were estimated at over 30,000,000,000 pounds.⁽²⁾ The Treaty left undecided the amount to be paid by Germany in damages, and this was the task laid before the Inter-Allied Reparations Commission which met for the first time in January 1920. By April 1921 this Commission had set Germany's total reparations debt at 132 billion Marks.⁽³⁾ An ultimatum was sent to the German Government, giving her six days in which to agree to this claim. Initial reaction saw the resignation of the Fehrenbach government in protest, but realising there was no alternative, the new administration under Josef Wirth, former Finance Minister, accepted the Allied demands with the backing of the Reichstag.⁽⁴⁾ Within a very short time, however, under the added burden of continued rapid inflation, it was clear that Germany would default on the scheduled reparations repayments. Germany was granted a moratorium on repayments for January and February 1922 whilst her creditors met in Cannes to discuss the situation.⁽⁵⁾ Britain and France had never seen eye to eye on the question of the treatment of Germany after the war :Clemenceau, the French prime minister, had wanted the Rhineland to become an independent state, the Saarland to have been annexed to France, and Danzig given to Poland, but he was restrained in his demands by Britain and

America.⁽⁶⁾ Britain now favoured a more lenient approach to the reparations question not least because, in the depths of a post war depression, she wanted her best pre-war customer, Germany, strong enough to become a valuable trading partner again.⁽⁷⁾ Poincaré, who came to power in France in January 1922, wanted to press French claims to the utmost. He was acutely suspicious of Germany and insisted that she could pay, but did not want to.⁽⁸⁾ William Carr highlights the reasoning behind such suspicions by pointing out that successive Reich governments were reluctant to take the drastic yet necessary steps towards currency stabilisation for a number of selfish reasons. Firstly, Germany benefited from the crisis in the economy because inflation had reduced the national debt to somewhere in the region of 2,000 million Marks by 1924, and secondly, were Germany to bring order to her stricken economy:

"... it could be argued that the stronger Germany became, the more she would be called upon to pay; conversely, the weaker she was, the more leniently she would be treated." (9)

Sections of the German community undoubtedly profited also from the rampant inflation:

"Landowners paid off their mortgages in inflated currency. Industrialists, enjoying cheap facilities from the 'Reichsbank' easily repaid loans and turned their inflated profits into permanent assets by expanding their plant."(10)

Yet despite any such avoidance tactics on the part of Germany, the Allies themselves were largely to blame for this situation in so far as they had failed to resolve the question of Inter-Allied war debts at a much earlier stage. Edward Carr, in fact, notes that by not

agreeing on a figure for reparations at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, the subsequent Treaty of Versailles proved unique in that, unlike all previous peace treaties in which the victorious side was claiming compensation, it failed to specify the exact extent of that compensation. (11)

The Cannes Conference of January 1922 also failed to settle the question of reparations, as did another conference in Genoa in April of that same year. Then, with the added pressure of an economic depression throughout Europe, combined with American demands for repayment of large sums loaned to the Allies, Poincaré acted, against British protests, and sent French troops with Belgian support into the Ruhr on 11th January 1923. (12) It was an act calculated to force Germany into facing its obligations as regards bringing her economy under control, but should it not achieve this aim, then France would extract its own reparations by exploiting the Ruhr's economic resources. (13) The German Government under the chancellorship of Wilhelm Cuno, and supported by Ebert, the President, immediately protested against this. (14) The Germans claimed that this was a violation of the Versailles Treaty which required all Allied decisions to be unanimous, but as she did not have the military means to defend herself, Germany declared a campaign of passive resistance and a suspension of any further reparations repayments while the occupation lasted. (15) Germany was thus once again united against a common enemy, and the policy of passive resistance spilled over into an almost undeclared war, with German workers refusing to co-operate with the Franco-Belgian forces and acts of sabotage directed against key installations by German saboteurs. (16)

Although the occupation proved to be of little economic benefit to the French, it was the 'last straw' for a German economy verging on bank-

ruptcy. Having lost large areas of Upper Silesia in the post-war settlement, the Ruhr accounted for eighty percent of Germany's steel and iron production, and over eighty percent of her coal production. (17)

To cut off these resources, as the French did, and for the German Government to even attempt to continue paying the wages of the workers and officials on strike in the Ruhr, was a burden the economy could not bear. The German currency collapsed as the exchange rate with the dollar went from 160,000 Marks at the beginning of July 1923 to one million Marks by August 1923. (18) Bankrupt businesses, food shortages and unemployment were all consequences of the economic catastrophe as it ravaged the middle and working classes, reducing the purchasing power of wages to virtually nothing. (19) The crisis of 1923 and the world-wide depression some six years later were to undermine the foundations of German society as never before, and right-wing agitators were to reap the profits of this catastrophe:

"The violence of Hitler's denunciations of the corrupt, Jew-ridden system which had allowed all this to happen, the bitterness of his attacks on the Versailles settlement and on the Republican government which had accepted it, found an echo in the misery and despair of large classes of the German nation." (20)

Clearly the situation could not continue like this. The Cuno Government fell and was replaced by a coalition headed by Gustav Stresemann, leader of the 'Deutsche Volkspartei' (D.V.P.). (21) Stresemann was quick to realise the disastrous effect that the policy of passive resistance was having on Germany, particularly after warnings from industrialists that economic resources were strained to breaking point, and he therefore took the bold step of calling an end to passive resistance unconditionally and declaring Germany's willingness to start

reparations repayments again.⁽²²⁾ Although this decision was supported by all parties in Stresemann's coalition government, (S.P.D., Centre parties, Democrats and D.V.P) it did spark off renewed agitation amongst nationalist extremists and a resurgence of the now ever-present conflict between the anti-republican state government in Munich and Central Government. Crucially, the attitude of the Army in Bavaria was, unlike military units in the rest of the Reich, and contrary to von Seeckt's wishes, very much supportive of the Munich Government.⁽²³⁾ Captain Roehm of the Army District Command in Munich had openly stated in a memorandum dated 13th August 1922 that:

"If everything accomplished thus far in Bavaria, Germany's last bastion, is not to be destroyed, an open break with Berlin must be made." (24)

Roehm believed that the Army had to intervene in the political arena if it wanted to create the sort of state which would restore Germany's prestige and, under his influence, Major General Ritter von Epp came to lend open Army support to Hitler's growing National Socialist movement:

"The military leadership of Bavaria saw in the N.S.D.A.P programme welcome support for its own plans insofar as the programme called for opposition to Versailles and for the creation of a large national army." (25)

In protest at the ending of passive resistance, the Bavarian government under Eugen von Knilling declared a state of emergency and appointed former 'prime minister', von Kahr, state commissioner.⁽²⁶⁾ The situation deteriorated for Stresemann, who was anxious to avoid a major conflict with Bavaria at all costs, when General von Lossow,

Army Commander in Bavaria, was relieved of his duties by Otto Gessler, Reich Minister of War, for refusing to act against the N.S.D.A.P.'s newspaper "Voelkischer Beobachter". The paper had printed an article attacking the Berlin Government and carried insulting remarks about Gessler himself and General von Seeckt. (27) In a further act of open defiance, however, von Lossow was promptly reinstated by von Kahr who then ordered all soldiers in Bavaria to take their orders from the Bavarian Government. (28)

Throughout these months Hitler had been encouraging the growing disorder by adopting a popular form of agitation, that of attacking the Berlin Government for betraying the national resistance to the French, and for allowing the domestic economic situation to deteriorate so far as to bring hunger and poverty on many sections of the German community. (29) When the state governments of Saxony and Thuringia (both of which bordered on Bavaria) had been broadened to bring the Communists into power as partners of the Socialists, Hitler saw this as the perfect opportunity for the Bavarian Government to take action to suppress this 'threat' of a left-wing revolution by marching into these areas. (30) Hitler firmly believed that such action would command widespread support and, more privately, that the road to Berlin would then be open. (31)

Hitler was pre-empted, however, by Stresemann - albeit for different motives. Even before he came to power, Stresemann believed that for Germany to re-negotiate its position internationally, the Government would need to display tight control over the domestic situation in order to prove to the Allies that it was in a position to make decisions and implement them. (32) The fear was that the worsening re-

lations between Bavaria and Berlin in the autumn of 1923 might well be regarded as a serious threat of civil disorder which would merely lead to the French tightening their grip on the Rhineland and the Ruhr, as well as making the Allies generally less willing to grant any concessions to such an unstable regime.⁽³³⁾ It was for this reason that Stresemann was anxious not to let the situation in Bavaria deteriorate further.⁽³⁴⁾ He had decided that in order to reassure the Right that he had the 'national interest' very much at heart, he would have to strike a blow at the Left, and this he did in the autumn of 1923.⁽³⁵⁾

Alarmed by events in Bavaria, and the mounting evidence of collusion between the Reichswehr and the extreme right-wing groups in that state, Socialist-Communist governments were formed in Saxony and Thuringia, and 'Red militias' were established to 'protect the Republic'. Increasingly harsh criticism was directed by the governments of these two states at the growing influence of reactionary tendencies in the Berlin Government which was standing idly by in the face of overt right-wing challenges to its authority.⁽³⁶⁾ In an act of rather doubtful legality, Stresemann ordered the Reichswehr into Saxony and Thuringia at the end of October 1923 to have both governments deposed.⁽³⁷⁾ The commander of the Army, von Seeckt, noticeably reacted much more swiftly to this situation, and with more rigour, than to the instances of right-wing disorder, as the Army acted with unmistakable firmness and effectiveness in removing the Saxon and Thuringian Governments from power.⁽³⁸⁾ Whilst Stresemann lost the support of the S.P.D. in his coalition who resigned in protest at his action, he was still able to form a new government. More importantly for his personal aims, though, his action had found distinct favour with the more moderate nationalist elements in Bavaria, as von Kahr and von Lossow now noticeably wavered

in their opposition to Berlin, especially on receipt of a report from their colleague, Colonel Seisser, on the atmosphere in Berlin at the beginning of November 1923.⁽³⁹⁾ On November 6th von Kahr called a meeting with his two colleagues, von Lossow and Seisser, and representatives of patriotic organisations to assess the situation and the chances of taking effective action against Berlin in the light of the unhelpful report from Seisser.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Fearing that a delay on any action would be called by von Kahr, Hitler, who had been excluded from the meeting, decided that immediate action had to be taken. After committing himself so openly to a march on Berlin, and after whipping up such a pitch of expectation amongst his supporters, Hitler feared that to delay might well lead to the collapse of the Nazi Party and discredit him totally.⁽⁴¹⁾ Hitler therefore decided that the only way to have von Kahr, Seisser and von Lossow do as he wished was to present them with a 'fait accompli'. This he attempted on 8th November 1923.⁽⁴²⁾

A 'golden' opportunity presented itself on that evening as a 'patriotic' demonstration of support for the von Kahr regime was held in the crowded main room of the 'Buergerbraeukeller', attended by most of the leading figures in Munich politics and society. Supported by Goering with a group of armed 'brownshirts' or S.A, Hitler dramatically disrupted the meeting firing a gunshot into the ceiling and leaping on to the speakers' platform to declare the beginning of the 'National Revolution'.⁽⁴³⁾ What followed was a series of ill-organised and unco-ordinated attempts by Hitler's followers to establish some sort of control in Munich. Despite all the talk of putsch, overthrow and the like, it was fairly evident that none of the 'rebel' leaders had thought through to the end the practical problems of staging such a coup.⁽⁴⁴⁾ There was no attempt to occupy such obviously key positions

as the police headquarters, the telephone exchange, or the railway station, and von Kahr, von Lossow and other leading cabinet ministers were allowed to make themselves scarce, some escaping to Regensburg to temporarily establish a Bavarian government.⁽⁴⁵⁾ By the morning of November 9th it seemed clear that the putsch attempt had failed : von Kahr issued a declaration denouncing the promises extorted from him at gunpoint on the previous evening and declared the Nazi Party and the 'Kampfbund' illegal; von Seeckt telegraphed from Berlin that if the Army in Bavaria did not suppress the putsch, then he would do it himself with other Reichswehr units, and he ordered reinforcements to be sent into Munich from outlying areas; and, finally, Crown Prince Rupprecht, whom it was intended to reinstate as monarch, recommended that the putsch be crushed at all costs.⁽⁴⁶⁾ The putsch did, in fact, finally collapse at the 'Feldherrnhalle' in the centre of Munich on the afternoon of November 9th. Some two or three thousand National Socialists and 'Kampfbund' supporters led by Hitler, Goering and Lude-ndorff marched through Munich only to find their way forward blocked just before the 'Feldherrnhalle' by a cordon of armed police.⁽⁴⁷⁾ It was never clear who fired the first shot but shooting did break out, and reports varied from between fifteen and twenty people killed. It was an ignominious end to the coup as the marchers scattered wildly, Hitler himself being bundled into a nearby car and driven off into hiding, only to be arrested two days later at a friend's house.

Considering the serious tactical blunders and the more personal loss of face, with Hitler being one of the first to dive for cover when the firing started, (dislocating his shoulder in the process) and leaving the dead, the wounded and the rest of his supporters to fend for themselves, Hitler's political recovery was all the more remarkable:

"Never was Hitler's political ability more clearly shown than in the way he recovered from this setback. For the man who, on 9th November 1923, appeared broken and finished as a political leader - and had himself believed this - succeeded by April 1924 in making himself one of the most-talked-of figures in Germany, and turned his trial for treason into a political triumph." (48)

The significance of the trial for Hitler's future cannot really be ^{over} underestimated, for not only were the reporters from most of the bigger German newspapers there, but there was also a large group of foreign correspondents present. (49) From the very start of the trial Hitler's objective was to turn the tables and put the chief witnesses for the prosecution - von Kahr, von Lossow and Seisser - on trial before the whole German nation. (50) Unlike the activists in the Kapp putsch, Hitler made no apology for his attempted coup, but instead attacked von Kahr and his colleagues for refusing to support it, accusing them of therefore being responsible for its failure. Hitler spelt out at some length his programme and the political intentions which had motivated his putsch attempt. His non-apologetic defence speeches and his tirades against the system of the "November criminals", and the "slaves of the dictate of Versailles" proved a highly effective way of appealing to nationalist opinion throughout Germany. (51) At the same time, Hitler also attempted to take up strong ties with the Army leadership by exonerating the Reichswehr and apportioning blame for Germany's problems amongst von Lossow, von Kahr and the 'system' of the democratic Republic generally. (52) It was one of the features of the trial that Hitler was allowed, with little rebuke from the judges, to engage in these long political speeches, and that, in the end, having actually been found guilty of high treason, was given the minimum sentence possible of five years which, the President of the Court then

pointed out, was likely to be reduced for good conduct. The President then added that Hitler would probably receive a full pardon:

"Such were the penalties of high treason in a state where disloyalty to the regime was the surest recommendation to mercy." (53)

Similarly, by so skillfully implicating von Kahr, von Lossow and Seisser in the treasonable plotting, Hitler caused great embarrassment to the court by highlighting the deep involvement, prior to the events at the 'Feldherrnhalle', of high public officials and political leaders, and he thereby ensured more lenient treatment of himself by the judges, who were themselves by no means too averse to Hitler's ideas.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Even the state prosecutor, when summing up, prefaced his plea with a tribute to the 'nobility' of Hitler's cause.⁽⁵⁵⁾ Some years after the trial Hitler's own assessment of the putsch was:

"I have never said that our march to the Feldherrnhalle was a 'faux pas'. At the time it was the only form of protest we could make." (56)

Hitler claimed, however, that he did not:

"... for a moment conceive of coming to power with the help of the Generals or by means of a putsch." (57)

Karl Dietrich Bracher believes that the lasting significance of the abortive putsch was that it had made it patently clear to Hitler that a direct attack on the existing order would never succeed.

"Even in a critical year like 1923, the dominant forces in the state, and even in the army, had not allowed them-

selves to be taken by surprise... resistance stretching from the democratic parties to the trade unions had proved too strong to be overcome by a 'Putsch'; finally, the very attachment to authority displayed by the middle class and the civil service which gave the Weimar democracy itself so much trouble was a serious obstacle to any attempt at a 'coup d'etat'. " (58)

Support for law and order have always been, so Bracher argues, part of the traditional German authoritarian state, and in just such an atmosphere not only did Hitler's putsch flounder, but also the Kapp Putsch in the same manner, and before that, the revolution of 1918. (59)

1. HIDDEN, J.W. "The Weimar Republic". Longman. London. 1974.
Chapter 5 is devoted to the economic issues and reparations problems during the Weimar period.
2. HAIGH, R.H. MORRIS, D.S. PETERS, A.R. "German - Soviet Relations in the Weimar Era. Friendship from Necessity". Gower. Aldershot 1985, p.35.
3. HIDDEN, J.W. op. cit, Chapter 5.
4. CARR, WILLIAM. "A History of Germany 1815-1945" Edward Arnold. London. 1974, p.312.
5. HAIGH, R.H. MORRIS, D.S. PETERS, A.R. op. cit, pp.94ff.
6. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, p.301.
7. COLLIER, BASIL. "Barren Victories : Versailles to Suez" Doubleday. New York. 1964, p.62.
8. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, p.313.
9. ibid, p.311.
10. ibid, pp.314-315.
11. CARR, EDWARD H. "International Relations between the Two World Wars 1919 - 1939". Macmillan. London. 1959, p.53.
12. Accounts of the occupation of the Ruhr are to be found in most books dealing with this period. See HAIGH, R.H. MORRIS, D.S. PETERS, A.R. op. cit, pp.96-97.
Also BULLOCK, ALAN. "Hitler. A Study in Tyranny". Pelican. Harmondsworth. 1983, pp.89ff.
13. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, p.313.
14. The Cuno government, formed in November 1922, had replaced Josef Wirth's administration which had lasted little more than six months.

15. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, pp.313-314.
16. ibid.
17. The agreement whereby parts of Upper Silesia became Polish territory is detailed in HAIGH, R.H. MORRIS, D.S. PETERS, A.R. op. cit, pp.68-69.
See also BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, p.90.
18. BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, p.90.
19. ibid, pp.90-91.
20. ibid, p.91.
21. Stresemann had earned his reputation in business circles before 1914 and in 1907 had become a Reichstag representative of the National Liberals. After the war he founded the small D.V.P and became its chairman.
22. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, p.316.
23. Von Seeckt's position on the role of the Army and his differences with Army leaders in Bavaria are considered above, pp.74-75.
24. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. "The German Dictatorship. The Origins, Structure and Consequences of National Socialism" Peregrine. Harmondsworth. 1978, p.141.
25. ibid, p.142.
26. BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, pp.100-101.
27. ibid, p.104.
28. ibid.
29. ibid, pp.99ff.
30. ibid, p.104.
Power in Bavaria was, at this time, concentrated in the hands of three N.S.D.A.P. sympathisers: von Kahr, von Lossow and Seisser, head of the state police.

31. BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, p.104.
32. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, p.316.
33. ibid, pp.317-318.
34. The background to the growing crisis in the relationship between Bavaria and the Reich Government in Berlin is considered above, pp.67ff.
35. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, p.318.
36. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. op. cit, p.147.
37. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, p.318.
38. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. op. cit, p.147.
39. BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, p.105.

Colonel Seisser was sent to Berlin after the army intervention in Saxony and Thuringia to report on the political atmosphere to his colleagues in Munich, von Kahr and von Lossow. He reported a good deal of satisfaction amongst groups on the Right with Stresemann's intervention and that, therefore, a Bavarian-led uprising, as Hitler wished, might not find much support in Northern Germany.
40. The meeting was with right-wing groups like the 'Vereinigte Vaterlaendische Verbaende' (V.V.V) which was influenced greatly by von Kahr and comprised a variety of students, monarchists, Army officers and veterans. Also involved was the more politically radical and openly anti-semitic 'Kampfbund' which came increasingly under the dominance of the Nazis.
41. BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, p.105.
42. ibid, p.106.
43. For a detailed account of what happened at this meeting and during the course of the following day, see BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, pp.106-113.

- Also BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. op. cit, pp.151-154.
44. BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, pp.114-115.
 45. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. op. cit, p.153.
 46. BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, p.110.
 47. ibid, pp.111-112.
 48. ibid, p.114.
 49. ibid, p.115.
 50. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. op. cit, p.156.
 51. ibid, pp.156-157.
 52. BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, p.120.
 53. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. op. cit, pp.157-158.
 54. ibid, p.157.
 55. ibid.
 56. CALLIC, EDOUARD. "Unmasked. Two confidential interviews with Hitler in 1931". Chatto and Windus. London. 1971, p.24.
 57. ibid.
 58. Essay by BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. "The Technique of the National Socialist Seizure of Power" in "The Road to Dictatorship. Germany 1918-1933". A Symposium by German Historians. Oswald Wolff. London. 1964, p.115.
 59. ibid.

COBURG AND REICH POST PUTSCH.

Whilst these years immediately following Hitler's putsch were relatively lean ones for the N.S.D.A.P in terms of electoral success, it was the many other 'voelkisch' organisations which played an important role in promoting extreme nationalist ideals which the National Socialists shared.⁽¹⁾ Amongst a variety of such groups active in the Coburg area, of particular importance in arranging meetings, talks and festivals and rallies all deeply infected with...

"... that exalted nationalist extremism which permeated Germany ever since 1918/19". (2)

were groups like the 'Deutschvoelkische Schutz- und Trutzbund'(D.V. S.T.) and the 'Jungueutsche Orden' who, between them, organised many celebrations which evoked that deep patriotic, nationalist spirit:⁽³⁾

"... born out of the disappointments of the First World War and the Treaty of Versailles..." (4)

- a spirit which ...

"... helped to magnify the appeal of a warped ideology: the passionate anti-Liberalism ... the avoidance of political realism by creating a dream world of folk idylls... the transformation of the experience of the First World War into a rebirth of the German people." (5)

Anti-semitism, too, was a feeling kindled during some of these celebrations, as during the inaugural speech at Coburg's Midsummer festival

in 1923

"Im Innern des Volkes aber wuetet der Verrat ... und zwischen all dem Wust und Stunk schleicht hohngrinsend der Hebraeer, der schmutziger Ostgalizer als geheime treibende Kraft." (6)

The 'Fuehrerprinzip', too, was commended to the Coburg people by none other than Goebbels on the occasion of the 1927 Midsummer festival:

"Was einzig Deutschland noch retten kann ist die Diktatur des nationalen Willens und der Entschlossenheit. Unsere Aufgabe ist, dem Diktator, wenn er kommt, ein Volk zu geben, das reif fuer ihn ist." (7)

This was an idea which had already some notable support in Coburg, such as 'Staatsrat' Quarck who, at a Bismarck commemorative celebration remarked:

"Vielleicht weilt der erwartete Fuehrer schon unter uns..." (8)

The 'Coburger Zeitung' reported such events enthusiastically and gave fully-detailed accounts of gatherings like the "Deutsche Tag des Jungdeutschen Ordens", trying to capture in print the evocative nationalistic atmosphere highlighted by a 'tableau vivant' depicting Germany's fall and rise:

"Im Hintergrund erhoeht Germania, eine Jungfrau mit herabwallendem blonden Haar; von links und rechts draengt sich Jungdeutschland hinzu, die Haende hoffnungsvoll erhebend; ein junger Mann blickt trauernd auf sein zerbrochenes Schwert; im Vordergrund erhebt sich eine Rheintochter aus den Fluten des Rheins, eine Krone mit beiden Haenden erhebend." (9)

Another group instrumental in upholding and, indeed, propagating these extreme nationalistic opinions was the student organisation known as "Landsmannschaften". Elizabeth Wiskemann traces the development of German student corporations back to the early days when the earliest universities had been founded.⁽¹⁰⁾ With a somewhat ill-defined status some students started to organise themselves into societies which became known as "Landsmannschaften". Despite original aims of a united liberal Germany, Wiskemann claims that during the Bismarck era particularly:

"Now that Liberalism had gone to the wall... their nationalism became increasingly extravagant. They were all "Gross-deutsch" that is, they desired to incorporate in Germany not only the Germans of Austria and Switzerland, but also such "Nordic races" as the Dutch and the Flemings and perhaps the Scandinavians."⁽¹¹⁾

With renewed vigour these organisations reappeared in the Weimar Republic.

"... the traditionalist, socially exclusive structure of higher education, which kept large segments of the population from institutions of higher learning, helped conserve reactionary organisations or favoured radical anti-democratic tendencies among students. Professors and students felt themselves the victims of the social upheavals of the time, and their status and prestige threatened by democratic ideas of government and society!"⁽¹²⁾

Coburg itself was, and still is, of particular significance to the 'Deutsche Landsmannschafter' because for over one hundred years it has hosted the annual congress of the 'Landsmannschaften'.⁽¹³⁾ Passages from some of the main speeches during the 1929 congress clearly indicate why National Socialism attracted so much support from this group.

"Das Bewusstsein muss allgemein werden, dass deutsches Wesen herrschen muss in deutschem Volke.

Das Deutschtum ist ein Kulturbringer. Wir verneinen fuer das deutsche Volk eine Weltanschauung, die nicht aus deutschem Blut erwachst." (14)

Anti-semitism was, as will be seen later, to be a crucial factor in the critical year of 1929 in Coburg, but one of the earliest occasions on which it was dragged blatantly into the Coburg political arena was in the Landtag elections on 6th April 1924. As part of its manifesto, the 'Voelkische Block', which was an alliance of various right-wing nationalist groupings, boldly announced part of its political programme in the 'Coburger Zeitung'.

"Angesichts der Rassenersetzung und -vermischung treten wir ein fuer Volks- und Rassenschutz, Ausschliessung der Juden von allen Staatsbuengerrechten." (15)

The outcome of the elections in Coburg was highly significant especially in the eyes of National Socialist commentators, whereby the "Voelkische Block" won approximately fifty-three percent of the vote.

"Der Ausgaing der Landtagswahl vom 6.4.1924 zeigte aber, dass die Kraft des volkischen Gedankens durch den Verrat vom 9.11.1923 hier in Coburg wenigstens noch keineswegs gebrochen war (16)... Coburg ist also die deutsche Stadt gewesen, in der zum erstenmal der voelkische Gedanke die ueberwiegende Mehrheit der Buergerschaft durchdrungen hatte." (17)

Despite this breakthrough, only a month later at the Reichstag elections the "Voelkische Block" vote fell back to forty-three percent and suffered a further reduction to twenty percent in the December elections. In elections held simultaneously for the Coburg "Stadtrat" on 7th

December, the "Voelkische Block" polled barely twelve percent of the vote.⁽¹⁸⁾ The reason was, according to Faber, one of the leading Coburg Nazis, quite simple,

"Der Mangel einer einheitlichen, zielbewussten und klaren politischen Fuehrung der voelkischen Bewegung durch eine ueberragende Fuehrer - persoenlichkeit machte sich aber waehrend der Festungshaft Adolf Hitlers schliesslich doch bemerkbar." (19)

Clearly there could have been some truth in this, certainly as regards the National Socialist party, yet it would appear more like a piece of National Socialist opportunism in furthering certain of the party's aims, and in this case, the "Fuehreprinzip". For it must be remembered that this was the start of a period of relative prosperity for many Germans as stability returned to the economy and to Germany's international relations.⁽²⁰⁾ Therefore any attempts to undermine the stability of the period - such as the Hitler putsch - could not command much popularity with the German people.

The issue of the leadership of the National Socialists was clearly a key point in Hitler's attempt to rebuild the party after his release from Landsberg, and his efforts to establish absolute control over the party ran parallel to the attempts to subordinate other "voelkische" groups to the Nazis. This might better explain Faber's point about the leadership of the 'voelkische' groups and also his rather taunting, sarcastic description of the performance of the "Deutschnationalen" in the Landtag elections in 1924 when they polled just twelve percent of the vote. They suddenly became "auch voelkisch" and attached the moving description of "heimattreue Coburger" to their name, says Faber dismissively.⁽²¹⁾

Faber's attack on other right-wing groups is perhaps better understood in the context of Hitler's view that it was the National Socialist movement alone which could draw together the "hodge-podge of ideas" contained in the proliferation of "voelkisch" groups and change mere ideas into political power." (22)

"As Hitler's grip on the party tightened he began to reject the idea of co-operation with other voelkisch groups insisting that the only way was for such groups to be incorporated into the N.S.D.A.P. ..." (23)

This was in spite of the fact that the N.S.D.A.P. owed almost everything to such groups in the earliest days, particularly its electoral successes, as "voelkisch" groups joined with the Nazis to produce a common list of candidates. (24) This is what happened in Coburg in the Landtag elections of 1924, the so-called "Voelkische Block."

Interestingly, a further indication of this general right-wing trend in Coburg was evident in the Presidential elections of 1925 where von Hindenburg, who was standing as the choice of the Right against the Left-Centre Wilhelm Marx, defeated his opponent nationally by a slim margin of 14.6 million votes to 13.7 million, yet in Coburg von Hindenburg polled almost seventy percent of the vote. (25) Such evident nationalist sympathies were fuelled by events in the following years with the founding of the National Socialist newspaper "Der Weckruf" in 1926 and further visits to Coburg by leading party members including Hitler himself and Goebbels. Coburg's centrist newspaper, the 'Coburger Tageblatt' reported the ominously non-committal answer Goebbels gave to a question from his audience about Nazi policies, should they come to power:

"Das weiss ich natuerlich heute noch nicht, wir muessten uns jedenfalls auch nach den Umstaenden richten ; die Hauptsache ist, dass wir erst Mal zur Herrschaft kommen." (26)

On the occasion of Hitler's visit, though, there had apparently been no such ambiguity in the Fuehrer's words, as the 'Coburger Tageblatt' reported his argument that:

"Die 450,000 qkm deutschen Bodens seien fuer die 60. Millionen Deutschen unzureichend... Aus dem Mangel an deutscher Bødenflaeche resultiere auch die riesige Arbeitslosigkeit." (27)

Nationally, both the German Government and the Allies were striving to reach a settlement which would bring a period of stability to economic and political life in Germany, thereby removing the attraction of simplistic solutions put forward by extremists of the Right, or the Left. Five years after the signing of the 'armistice', however, there were still two major issues to be resolved by the Allies. These were the problem of reparations and the problem of French security, the one having at least some bearing on the other. (28)

By November 1923, with German passive resistance against the French occupation of the Ruhr well over, France was beginning to discover that the operation had proved to be of little advantage. Contrary to hopes, French industries trading with the Ruhr had found that their businesses had deteriorated, the value of the French franc had taken a steep fall, and a feeling of German hatred against the French had been rekindled. (29) It was becoming much clearer to the Allies, including Poincaré, that a re-think on the question of reparations was necessary. (30)

Of the two committees set up by the Reparations Commission to deal with these problems, the more important was the one with the task of discovering a way of bringing stability to Germany's stricken finances and then devising a more realistic plan of reparations repayments, and it was chaired by General Charles Dawes.⁽³¹⁾ The committee presented its proposals in April 1924 and the Allied governments gave their approval in the following July. What became known as the 'Dawes Plan' basically laid down that Germany's annual repayments should be reduced and extended over a longer period of time, but this did not, in effect, reduce the total amount owed by Germany.⁽³²⁾

The other important question at this time was that of French security. With the size of the German nation approximately twice that of France, and Germany being a nation which the French considered to be especially aggressive and militaristic, France's great fear was that she might once more become the victim of German aggression.⁽³³⁾ Consequently,

"... France could feel secure only if two conditions were fulfilled. She and the countries on whose assistance she could rely would have to be made capable of holding Germany permanently in a state of 'artificial inferiority'. In addition, France would have to possess sufficient military superiority of her own to ward off German invasion until her allies could come to her support." (34)

Fearing not only direct German aggression against her own borders, but also the more indirect threat of German aggression against her neighbours, France sought to settle this issue in two ways during the early nineteen-twenties. Firstly, she signed a series of treaties and mutual assistance pacts with Belgium, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia in an attempt to encircle Germany with friendly powers.⁽³⁵⁾

Secondly, through the League of Nations, France sought reassurance from this world body that the security provisions contained within the Covenant of the League of Nations, would be a sufficient deterrent should Germany ever contemplate future acts of aggression against France.⁽³⁶⁾ However, from as early as the First Assembly of the League in 1920 there was prolonged debate on some of the articles within the Covenant which resulted in a position whereby

"... the security which it was intended should be provided by the League of Nations came increasingly to be regarded as illusory..."⁽³⁷⁾

An Anglo-French initiative to resolve the problem of French security was launched with the so-called 'Geneva Protocol' in 1924 which aimed at strengthening the Covenant of the League of Nations against aggression but was thwarted by the replacement of MacDonalld's Labour government in Britain by the Conservatives in 1925 who withdrew British support from the Geneva Protocol.⁽³⁸⁾

The issue was, quite remarkably, to be finally settled by a German proposal that the powers directly interested in the Rhineland - France, Germany and Belgium - should enter into mutual pledges to abstain from war for a generation, with Britain and Italy as guarantors.⁽³⁹⁾ Similar proposals had been made on earlier occasions by the Stresemann government but they never succeeded in allaying Poincaré's suspicions of German motivation behind such moves.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Since the fall of Poincaré, however, increasing evidence of a more conciliatory French stance over security had become apparent.⁽⁴¹⁾

Months of long negotiations culminated in October 1925 with the init-

ialing of the documents constituting the 'Locarno Pact', the central feature of which was a treaty of mutual guarantee of the Franco-German and Belgo-German frontiers between France, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Great Britain.⁽⁴²⁾

The successful settlement of these long-standing issues - reparation payments and French security demands - paved the way for German entry into the League of Nations in 1926, and coincided with a hitherto unknown period of internal calm and even prosperity for the Weimar Republic.⁽⁴³⁾ Domestic crises and threats of overthrow by extremists appeared to have been mastered, and the atmosphere was one of seemingly gradual acceptance by the German people of a republican system of government.⁽⁴⁴⁾ This was reflected in the outcome of the general elections in December 1924 where the Communists lost one third of their seats, and the National Socialist groups more than one half.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Yet, as Karl Dietrich Bracher points out:

"The great losses' of the radical Right and Left were not paralleled by the sort of meaningful gains of the moderate parties which would have facilitated the formation of a democratic government." (46)

Alan Bullock comments similarly, in that despite what he describes in simple terms as a situation where, in the period between 1924-29, there was:

"... more food, more money, more jobs and more security ... the foundations of this sudden prosperity were exceedingly shaky.." (47)

The precarious nature of the domestic situation was highlighted in the

Presidential elections following Ebert's death in February 1925 when narrow factional interests somehow succeeded in combining to allow the old soldier-hero of the First World War, von Hindenburg to become the figurehead of a republic whose character and principles were entirely at odds with his own beliefs. (48)

The assumption from the outside was, then, that the Weimar Republic was beginning to lay down roots which, in the course of time, would provide for a strong, healthy republic. This view was, however, based on the premise of continuing good fortune in matters of the economy and relations with foreign powers. It did not take account of the desperate internal struggles in which Stresemann was engaged with the parties on the far left and right of the political spectrum as regards pushing through major policy decisions. Additionally, Stresemann often received only tacit support from the Social Democrats who, in spite of sharing the centre ground, throughout the 1924-28 Reichstag were in opposition, although they were the strongest single party:

"Consequently, the Social Democrats with their vast potential power, were deprived of the opportunity to exert political influence in their own Republic, and moreover at a time when a pre-republican Field Marshal rather than a Social Democrat presided over the Republic." (49)

Stresemann's last success was achieved in 1929 when a final settlement to the reparations question was made in return for the withdrawal of Allied troops from the Rhineland. This was the outcome of a meeting in Paris in February 1929 of a Committee of experts examining the question of reparations in the light of changing circumstances in the world's economy. (50) Under the 'Young Plan', the name taken from

Owen Young, who chaired the committee in Paris, a final sum which Germany would have to pay in reparations was established, a sum greatly reduced from that indicated under the 'Dawes Plan' five years earlier, and international control over German institutions such as the Reichsbank and the railways, originally implemented to ensure reparations payments were made, was terminated. In addition to this, of course, foreign troops were withdrawn from Germany five years ahead of the timetable laid down in the Treaty of Versailles. (51)

During the initial period of this German recovery Adolf Hitler had, of course, been whiling away his time in quite some comfort under imprisonment in Landsberg, a small town some fifty miles west of Munich. (52)

He used the time to write "Mein Kampf" and to reflect that as his frontal assault on the Republic had failed completely, the National Socialists would have to take up the cover of legality. (53) It was during this time, too, that the National Socialist party fell apart as wranglings amongst the leading members left after the arrest or flight of the original leadership had resulted in the party's demise. (54)

However, Hitler had been released from prison before the end of 1924 and had re-founded the National Socialist party in February 1925. (55)

Hitler's new emphasis on legality was merely a question of tactics, for the aim of overthrowing the Republic and all its institutions remained unaltered. Hitler's task over the following years was to establish absolute control over the Party by ridding it of any not prepared to lend him unquestioning obedience as supreme leader, and then to build up the party into a major force in national German politics. (56)

Given the general mood of confidence and the sense of recovery between

1924 and 1929, Hitler and his party made seemingly little headway as regards any kind of breakthrough.

The nationalist parties of the Right had, in fact, been 'chipping away' at the Republic since its birth, starting with violent denunciations of the regime which signed the Treaty of Versailles. The aggressive nationalist campaign - and it was one which Hitler's National Socialist party was never to drop - was sustained not against Germany's 'external foes' i.e. the Western Allies who, in their position of strength, were able to impose this treaty on Germany, but rather against the republican parties at home. (57)

Hitler and the National Socialists were particularly unrelenting in their attacks on Stresemann's foreign policy:

"The very idea of reconciliation, of settlement by agreement, roused his (Hitler's) anger. An appeal to nationalist resentment was an essential part of Hitler's stock-in-trade; at all costs that resentment must be kept alive and inflamed. France must be represented as the external enemy, and Stresemann's policy of "fulfilment" as blind illusion, or better still, deliberate treachery." (58)

Both the Dawes' Plan and its successor, the Young Plan, were the butt of vicious nationalist accusations of servility and betrayal directed against Stresemann, who, shortly before his death in October 1929, had to endure a fierce onslaught from the nationalist parties. (59)

On 9th July 1929 a national committee, incorporating such right-wing groupings as the Pan-German League, 'Stahlhelm' and the National Socialists, was formed to promote a law "against the enslavement of the German people" as National Socialist Reichstag Deputy Frick called it - which would oblige the government to reject the whole idea of

Germany's war guilt and with it the new reparations settlement. (60)

Furthermore, the committee stated that every German minister and public servant who had signed agreements such as the Young Plan should be prosecuted for treason. (61)

"This radical and unrealistic move failed completely, but the wild campaign it unleashed... presented the National Socialists with a second great opportunity for the mobilisation of their propaganda and organisational apparatus. But above all it took the N.S.D.A.P out of the isolation of a radical splinter group and brought it, as the most militant fighting organisation, within the frame of a socially influential, well-financed coalition of the anti-Republican Right..." (62)

It was during this campaign that Hitler made his debut on the national political stage in Germany and thanks to the funds and contacts available to Alfred Hugenberg, the initiator of the committee, Hitler's propaganda reached its widest audience yet. (63) The plebiscite which stemmed from the campaign had resulted in a resounding defeat for the nationalists, with fewer than fourteen percent of the electorate supporting the move against the Republic. (64) However, as well as the doors which were opened to the Nazis as a result of the campaign, Bracher identifies a further significant feature in that the outcome of the plebiscite:

"once more gave the democrats that sense of false security which was responsible for the underestimation of the N.S.D.A.P and the weak defences in the year to come." (65)

Notes

1. See above, pp.70-71.
2. BROSZAT, MARTIN. "German National Socialism. 1919-1945".
Clio Press. Santa Barbara. 1966, p.35.
3. See above, p.70-71.
4. BROSZAT, MARTIN. op. cit, p.39.
5. ibid.
6. 'Coburger Zeitung'. 21st June 1923.
"Deep down the people rage in betrayal ... and amongst the stinking waste slink the scoffing Hebrews, the filthy East-Galilleans, working away furtively."
7. As reported in 'Der Weckruf' No.14. 1927.
This was a Coburg newspaper founded by the National Socialists in June, 1926 initially as an occasional paper until it appeared daily from October, 1930 under the name 'Coburger Nationalzeitung'.
"The only thing that can save Germany is the dictatorship of the national will and resoluteness. Our task is to give to the dictator, when he comes, a people ready for him."
8. 'Coburger Zeitung'. 10th February 1922.
"Perhaps the leader we hope for is already amongst us.."
9. 'Coburger Zeitung'. 9th/10th July 1923.
"In the background rises Germania, a maiden with flowing locks of wavy, blonde hair; from left and right young Germany presses towards her, hands raised in hope; a young man gazes sadly at his broken sword; in the foreground a daughter of the Rhine rises out of the river, raising up a crown in both hands."
10. WISKEMANN, ELIZABETH. "The German Student Corporations".
One essay from a collection edited by HOPWOOD, ROBERT F.

"History To-day". Oliver and Boyd. Edinburgh and London.

1968, pp.57-74.

11. *ibid*, p.70.

12. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. "The German Dictatorship. The Origins, Structures and Consequences of National Socialism". Peregrine. Harmondsworth. 1978, p.210.

13. The 'Landmannschafter' hold their Congress each Whitsun in Coburg, known nowadays as the 'Coburger Convents der akademischen Landmannschaftern und Turnerschaften'. The right-wing image of the gathering still persists with some factions reportedly including in their meetings the singing of the original German national hymn complete with the references, now omitted from the official hymn, which map out the borders of the territory which the Reich sought to claim. The lines of the hymn in question are "Von der Maas bis an der Memel, Von der Etsch bis an der Belt."

See FALLERSLEBEN, AUGUST HEINRICH HOFFMANN VON. "Das Lied der Deutschen" in SCHULZ, G. (Ed.) German Verse. An Anthology of German Poetry from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century. Macmillan. London. 1969, p.156.

14. 'Coburger Zeitung'. 21st May 1929.

"There must be a common consciousness that, in the German people, the German character must prevail. Germanity brings with it a great culture. On behalf of the German people we say no to any philosophy which is not truly German in origin."

15. 'Coburger Zeitung'. 1st April, 1924.

"Because of racial mixing we stand for the protection of people and race, and the removal of all civil rights from Jews"

16. The reference here is to the Hitler Putsch in Munich.
17. FABER, WERNER. "Coburg unterm Hakenkruez". Verlag Frz. Eher. Nachf. Muenchen. 1932, p.9.
- "The result of the Landtag elections on 6th April 1924 demonstrated that the strength of the voelkisch spirit had not at all been broken, certainly not here in Coburg... by the betrayal of 9th November, 1923 ... Coburg is thus the first town in Germany where the 'volkische' movement has won the backing of the overwhelming majority of the people."
18. ibid.
19. ibid.
- "The absence of a united, conscious, clear leadership of the 'volkisch' movement by an outstanding leader-figure did, in fact, make itself obvious during the imprisonment of Adolf Hitler."
20. See below, pp.116ff.
21. FABER, WERNER. op. cit, p.9.
22. BROSZAT, MARTIN. op. cit, p.32.
23. ibid, p.46.
24. ibid, pp.32ff.
25. ASMALSKY, L. "Der Nationalsozialismus und die N.S.D.A.P. in Coburg. 1922-1933" Unpublished thesis. University of Wuerzburg 1969.
26. 'Coburger Tageblatt' 11th November 1927.
- "Of course I do not yet know, we will have to take into consideration the circumstances as we find them. The main thing is that we first of all come to power".
27. ibid, 16th March 1927.

"The 450,000 square kilometres of German territory is not enough for 60 million Germans ... The present massive number of unemployed is a direct result of this shortage of German territory."

28. WOLFERS, ARNOLD. "Britain and France between Two Wars."
W.W. Norton. New York. 1966, pp.12-13.
29. COLLIER, BASIL. "Barren Victories. Versailles to Suez".
Doubleday. New York. 1964, p.75.
30. HAIGH,R.H. MORRIS,D.S. PETERS,A.R. "German-Soviet Relations in the Weimar Era. Friendship from Necessity". Gower. Aldershot.
1985, pp.97-98.
31. *ibid*, p.98.
32. *ibid*.
33. WOLFERS, ARNOLD. *op. cit*, pp.12-13.
34. *ibid*.
35. HAIGH,R.H. MORRIS,D.S. PETERS,A.R. *op. cit*, p.102.
36. *ibid*, pp.102-105.
37. *ibid*, p.103.
38. *ibid*, p.105.
39. CARR, WILLIAM. "A History of Germany 1815-1945" Edward Arnold.
London. 1974, p.328.
40. *ibid*.
41. *ibid*.
42. Details of the Locarno agreements to be found in HAIGH,R.H.
MORRIS,D.S. PETERS,A.R. *op. cit*, p.107.
43. Dr. Hjalmar Schacht had been appointed special commissioner to restore the German currency in 1923 and he had, within a year, brought an end to the spiralling inflation that was crippling the German economy.

44. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, pp.334-335.
45. ibid.
46. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. op. cit, p.161.
47. BULLOCK, ALAN. "Hitler. A Study in Tyranny". Pelican. Harmondsworth. 1983, p.143.
48. ibid, p.132.
49. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. op. cit, p.164.
50. HAIGH,R.H. MORRIS,D.S. PETERS,A.R. op. cit, pp.144-145.
51. CARR, WILLIAM. op. cit, p.332.
52. BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, pp.121ff.
53. ibid, p.132.
54. ibid, pp.122ff.
55. ibid, pp.128ff.
56. ibid, p.130.
57. MATTHIAS, ERICH. "The Influence of the Versailles Treaty on the Development of the Weimar Republic" in NICHOLLS,A. and MATTHIAS E. (Ed.) "German Democracy and the Triumph of Hitler". Allen and Unwin. London. 1971. pp.15ff.
58. BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, pp.145-146.
59. ibid, p.145.
60. ibid, pp.146ff.

The Pan-German League was an ultra nationalist group formed in 1893 which preached hatred of Britain, France and Russia and advocated a great European union incorporating Germany, Austria Switzerland and the Benelux Countries. "Stahlhelm" was one of the many German ex-servicemen's organisations.
61. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. op. cit, p.205.
62. ibid, p.206.
63. Hugenberg had been a director of the huge Krupp's manufacturing

firm. Together with the fortune he made out of the post-war inflation, he was able to buy up a vast press network of newspapers and news agencies, and had the controlling interest in Germany's largest film company.

64. BULLOCK, ALAN. op. cit, p.148.
65. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. op. cit, pp.207-208.

CHAPTER 7.

COBURG, THE NAZIS FIRST TOWN.

"Prior to Hitler's emergence, outbreaks of anti-semitic violence were rare in Germany, unlike Eastern Europe. Of course, anti-semitism was ever present, waiting for fresh opportunities..." (1)

Just one of these "fresh opportunities" arose in Coburg in 1929. Franz Schwede, leader of the National Socialists in Coburg and an employee of the municipal public works which supplied Coburg's energy needs was dismissed from his post. The municipal works was run, ultimately, by the town council and it was becoming increasingly embarrassed by Schwede's political extremism which culminated in abusive attacks on the general manager of an important meat-products firm in Coburg. (2)

The manager, a man called Friedmann, was Jewish and he became the victim of a virulent anti-semitic campaign lead largely by Schwede through the Nazi paper "Der Weckruf". (3) Friedmann finally reacted by telling the municipal works that he had plans to take his firm's business away from them by purchasing his own diesel generator to supply his firm's energy requirements. (4) Faced with the loss of a valued customer the matter was reported to the town council - the 'Stadtrat' - by the managers at the municipal works, and the Stadtrat voted by thirteen votes to ten in favour of Schwede's dismissal, having borne in mind that Schwede had, on a previous occasion, already received an official warning because of his abusive, unsubstantiated allegations against not only businessmen like Friedmann, but also political opponents. (5) The nationalist Right was immediately spurred into action, calling protest meetings and demonstrations, and at once broadening its attack,

aiming a blow at the Coburg Stadtrat.

"Jede Stunde des jetzigen Stadtrats sei ein Schaden fuer Coburg, denn ein solcher Stadtrat stehe auf dem Boden des Marxismus." (6)

A petition calling for a referendum on the behaviour of the Stadtrat was successfully collected. (7) Whilst the Nazi propoganda machine swung into action with emotional calls on the entire population of Coburg to turn out and vote in the referendum to be held on 5th May 1929, it was as though in a state of shock the Socialists and their supporters could do little to counter the frenzied activity of the National Socialists, apart from warnings in the party's newspaper, the Coburger Volksblatt:

"Die Einwohnerschaft Coburgs allein hatte die Zeche zu bezahlen ... Nur im Chaos liegt das Heil dieser zerstoerenden Kraefte, die im Nationalsozialismus zusammengeschlossen sind ... Aber auch das Buerkertum wird es sich reiflich ueberlegen muessen ob es sich unter das Joch einer Hakenkreuz - Rathausdiktatur beugen will." (8)

Such appeals were to have little effect on the majority of the Coburg people in the face of ever growing Nazi attacks. (9) They appealed to the 'sense of duty' and 'patriotic loyalty' of the Coburg people, urging them to vote against the Stadtrat and against Friedmann:

"... weil Euer vaterlaendisches Empfinden es nicht erlauben darf, dass man einen deutschen Frontsoldaten, der seine Pflicht tat, einem juedischen Kriegsgewinnler opfert ... Weil Euer Ehrgefuehl sich dagegen verwahren muss, dass 25,000 alteingesessene Coburger einem zugewandertem Juden gehorchen sollen.

Darum : Deutschland den Deutschen!
Coburg den Coburgern!
Und Palaestina denen, die
dort hingehoeren! " (10)

The outcome was that over two-thirds of the Coburg voters supported what was in effect this Nazi-sponsored vote of no confidence in the Stadtrat, with all its anti-semitic and anti-republican trimmings. (11)

Hitler himself sent a congratulatory telegramme:

"Ihnen und unseren Kaempfern in Coburg Glueckwuensche und Anerkennung zum grossen Erfolg." (12)

For Werner Faber, too, it was a truly great victory. The people of Coburg had, with this vote:

"... dem alten Stadtrat schon ein halbes Jahr vor Ablauf seiner Regierungszeit das Lebenslicht ausblies und damit ihrem Willen dass mit schwarz-rot-gelben system auch in den Rathaeusern endlich einmal aufgeraeumt werden musse, unmissverstaendlich Ausdruck verlieh." (13)

The National Socialists were jubilant and confident of success in the forthcoming elections which this referendum had forced, while the socialists seemed at a loss to know how to respond. (14) One year later at the national level:

"... die verhaengnisvolle Flucht aus der Regierung im Fruehjahr 1930, die die Schlusskrise der parlamentarischen Demokratie in Deutschland eingeleitet und ... auch die Weimarer Republik selbst in eine auswegslose Situation manoevriert hat, ist nicht zuletzt aus diesem Verhalten (der S.P.D) ... daran zu erklaren..." (15)

The Nazi propaganda machine which had already wound itself up to its

hitherto most effective peak, rolled on. On the eve of the new elections for the Stadtrat on 23rd June 1929, the Nazis 'played their ace'. Whilst the other contesting parties seemed content to let the local politicians battle it out, the Nazis threw their most able figure into the campaign - the Fuehrer himself.

"Immer ist der Fuehrer da, wo ihn die Bewegung am notigsten braucht - immer ist er da, wo es gilt, eine letzte, grosse und fuer die Bewegung wichtige Entscheidung zu treffen." (16)

The Nazis had waged a fierce campaign and with Hitler's help they succeeded in winning over the majority of the Coburg people. For the first time anywhere in Germany a majority National Socialist town council was elected with the N.S.D.A.P taking thirteen of the twenty-five council seats.

"Beachten Sie die Ergebnisse der letzten Wahlen, schauen Sie nach Coburg, wo unsere Partei schon die absolute Mehrheit erreicht hat. Sind wir einmal so weit im Reiche, wir brauchen kein Republik-schutzgesetz, wir werden sie so aufhaengen." (17)

So Goebbels gleefully taunted the Left in the Reichstag when the news broke. Yet again to their eternal discredit, the Left seemed unmoved by it all.

The Coburg electorate had an early opportunity to reverse the result of the election of June 1929 when the regular local elections were held in the following December. The December election campaign was characterised however, once more by the failure, particularly on the part of the socialists, to fully comprehend the extent of the Nazi threat, thereby lending weight to Bracher's argument that: (18)

"The history of National Socialism, in effect, is the history of its fatal underestimation." (19)

The S.P.D. campaign seemed inexplicably complacent in the face of the Nazi onslaught which broadened its attack from abusive anti-semitism to malicious personal attacks on the Coburg Left, levelling charges of a negligent mismanagement of Coburg's affairs against the S.P.D.'s local government representatives. (20) Again, it was only the Nazis who were to fully understand the significance of the Coburg local elections by calling on their most able speaker, Hitler, to give a final boost to their campaign. Hitler appealed to the Coburg electorate to pioneer a new direction in German politics and to create a show-piece for National Socialism which the rest of the Reich could see and admire.

"Es ist Wahnsinn, wenn jemand glaubt die Kommunen nach anderen Gesichtspunkten zu leiten als das Reich." (21)

This appeal found favour with the Coburg people, for they returned a Nazi majority to the town hall, ensuring that the Nazis could now demonstrate in Coburg:

"... was unser deutsches Volk zu erwarten hat, wenn es sein Geschick der Freiheitsbewegung unseres Fuehrers Adolf Hitler anvertraut..." (22)

The nature of the two campaigns conducted by the Nazis for the June and December elections in Coburg demonstrated the pseudo-legality of the tactics Hitler had determined to pursue after the failure of the Kapp Putsch in 1920 and his own attempted coup in 1923. (23) Although Hitler had given up hope of a successful frontal assault on the

Republic, the public disorder tactics employed by his S.A. units during the events like the Coburg 'German Day' in 1922, combined with sustained, slanderous personal attacks on various people or groups of people in German society, had proved an effective way of securing 'legitimate' electoral success, as in Coburg in 1929. It was, therefore, with a feeling of some optimism that the Nazis launched their national election campaign for the Reichstag elections in September 1930. The results, however, surpassed even their own greatest expectations as their campaign, characterised by a marked increase in public disorder in the larger towns as extremist feelings were whipped up by violent, abusive attacks on favourite targets such as Jews, Socialists, Communists and the Allies, resulted in a massively increased vote. (24)

A Nazi vote of some 800,000 in 1928 was increased to 6.5 million, thereby raising their representation in the Reichstag from 12 to 107 seats, thus making the N.S.D.A.P the second largest party in the country. (25)

The rest of the story of Hitler's rise to power is well documented, as are the tragic consequences of his successes.

1. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. "The German Dictatorship. The Origins, Structure and Consequences of National Socialism" Peregrine. Harmondsworth. 1978, p.66.
2. ASMALSKY, L. "Der Nationalsozialismus und die N.S.D.A.P in Coburg 1922-1933" Unpublished thesis. University of Wuerzburg. 1969, pp.46ff.
3. See above p.111.
Also ASMALSKY, L. op. cit, pp.46ff.
4. ASMALSKY, L. op. cit, p.47.
5. ibid.
6. 'Coburger Zeitung' 9th March 1929.
7. This kind of 'direct democracy' under the system of 'volksbegehren' (popular petition) and 'volksentscheid' (referendum) still exists in some federal states in West Germany. If a certain percentage of the electorate signs a petition, the state government can then be 'petitioned' to order a referendum.
8. 'Coburger Volksblatt' 13th March 1929.
"The population of Coburg alone will have to pay the price... The salvation of this destructive force which is inherent in National Socialism is to be found in times of chaos. The people will have to consider carefully whether they want to be harnessed under the yoke of the swastika and town hall dictatorship." X
9. ASMALSKY, L. op. cit, pp.49ff.
10. 'Der Weckruf' in ASMALSKY, L. op. cit, p.50.
"... your loyalty to the fatherland will not allow you to see a German war veteran, who did his duty, sacrificed for the sake

of a Jewish war profiteer ... your sense of duty will not allow 25,000 old-established Coburgers to give in to an immigrant Jew. And so:

Germany for Germans!
Coburg for Coburgers!
And Palestine for those who belong there!"

11. ASMALSKY, L. op. cit, p.50.
12. SCHWEDE, FRANZ. "Kampf un Coburg" Verlag. Frz. Eher. Nauhf. Muenchen 1939, p.145.
"Congratulations to you and your supporters in Coburg in recognition of a great victory."
13. FABER, WERNER. "Coburg unterm Hakenkreuz." Verlag. Frz. Nachf. Muenchen. 1932, p.10.
"... switched the light out on the old town council six months before the end of its term of office, and given clear expression to their will that the (republican) black, red, and yellow system must be cleared out once and for all from local town halls."
14. ASMALSKY, L. op. cit, p.51.
15. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. SAUER, W. SCHULZ, G. "Die Nationalsozialistische Machtergreifung" Holn. 1960, p.33
"... the fateful flight from government in Spring, 1930 which heralded the final crisis for German parliamentary democracy ... and placed the Weimar Republic in a hopeless position, is to be explained not least by this behaviour (of the S.P.D.)."
16. SCHWEDE, FRANZ. op. cit, p.152.
"The Fuehrer is always there when he is most needed. He is always there where it matters to make a huge, final - and for the movement - important decision."
17. "Coburger Volksblatt" 13th July 1929.
"Look carefully at the results of the last elections, look at

Coburg where our party has already won an absolute majority.

Once we are that far on in the Reich, we will have no need of laws to protect the Republic, we will be rid."

18. See ASMALSKY, L. op. cit, Chapter 2. .

19. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. op. cit, p.69.

20. FABER, WERNER. op. cit, pp.12ff.

21. 'Coburger Zeitung' 5th December 1929.

"It is madness to believe that the localities should be governed in a different manner to the Reich."

22. FABER, WENER. op.cit, p.12.

"... what our German people should expect if it places its destiny in the hands of our leader, Adolf Hitler, and his freedom movement."

23. See above, pp.53-55 and pp.101ff.

24. BULLOCK, ALAN. "Hitler. A Study in Tyranny" Pelican. Harmondsworth. 1983, p.159.

25. *ibid.*

CONCLUSION

In his study of National Socialism, Karl Dietrich Bracher concludes his first chapter with a look ahead to 1933 and identifies the atmosphere in which National Socialism was allowed to flourish and attain the position which enabled it to challenge the 'status quo' of Europe through military aggression.

"... the fragility of the democratic tradition and the powerful remnants of authoritarian governmental and social institutions... susceptibility to nationalistic, imperialistic ideas ... widespread disgruntlement over the Versailles peace ... fear of proletarianization and communism." (1)

Nowhere were these pre-conditions more evident than in Coburg during the eleven years between the end of the First World War and that ominous first electoral success in 1929.

Despite the union with the more politically radical region of Gotha, Coburg had developed into a somewhat liberalised yet staunchly monarchistic state by the early twentieth century. It was liberalised in the sense that an influential middle class of small businessmen and professionals had emerged during a period of economic prosperity in the nineteenth century, yet because of the size, diversity and nature of Coburg's economy, there was no corresponding development of any kind of an industrial proletariat. Coburg's economy relied to a certain extent on its productive agricultural base, and accordingly the frustration felt by many Germans at their plight as they faced severe food shortages during the last year of the First World War, was not so great a factor in the Coburg region in mobilising popular agitation behind the demands for a negotiated peace. In

fact, events now referred to as the "German Revolution" could scarcely be described as a spontaneous revolt in Coburg, for the first move was initiated by the commander of the Coburg garrison. The overriding anxiety of the authorities in Coburg was the possible influence of the much-feared radicals in neighbouring Gotha, and so with masterly skill in negotiation in the shape of, above all, the Duke's 'prime minister', Hermann Quarck, the pace of events in Coburg was largely dictated by the ruling powers. Aided by the hesitancy and inexperience, as well as unpreparedness, of the socialists in Coburg, Quarck had, within six months of that 'revolution' steered Coburg away from any form of republicanisation to a situation where there was little change in the political machinery. Admittedly Quarck had had to accept the abdication of the Duke, but then as if to compensate he had managed to have himself elected to a position where, in times of emergency, he was vested with presidential-like powers to govern Coburg alone.

The campaign which led to Coburg's decision to join in a treaty of union with Bavaria highlighted the deep-rooted nature of conservatism amongst Coburg's middle class and the extent to which the leadership of the local S.P.D., itself predominantly middle class, lacked any particularly progressive tendencies. Leading socialists Klingler and Artmann were part of the delegation which sought assurances from Bavaria that the future of Coburg's cultural possessions such as the theatre, the castle and its contents, and other of the Duke's residences would be guaranteed. On the whole, socialism in Coburg was very much that of the Majority Socialist blend which had not particularly wanted a republic and would quite willingly have accepted a

constitutional monarchy. The Majority Socialists saw their role to a large extent as that of supporting the maintenance of law and order in the months of uncertainty immediately after the war, and working with the old imperial bureaucracy to bring stability back to German life. The absence of any strong Independent Socialist force in Coburg resulted in little, if any, opposition from the Left to this stance. Accordingly Coburg, as indeed most areas throughout the Reich, witnessed the survival of the spirit of imperial Germany in the unreformed civil service, judiciary and army.

Nowhere was this spirit stronger than in Bavaria where Kurt Eisner's attempt to establish a Bavarian Republic and subsequent attempts to create a Bavarian Soviet based in Munich were ruthlessly swept aside by a right-wing backlash in 1919 and 1920. Then, whilst the rest of the Reich expressed horror at the Kapp Putsch in March 1920, the Right in Munich was staging its own quiet, bloodless and successful coup as pressure from the Army and the Police, backed by right-wing groups, forced the socialists to resign from office.

In this way, Bavaria rapidly became a safe haven from which the various right-wing anti-republican parties and groups could launch their attacks on what they claimed to be the Bolshevik, Jew-ridden system of central government in Berlin. In the atmosphere of counter-revolution generated by the Bavarian Government, a host of nationalist, imperialist organisations flourished with the support of many of the leading military figures like General Ludendorff and Admiral Tirpitz who had fled to Bavaria to seek refuge in the aftermath of Germany's collapse in 1918.

Right-wing elements in Coburg, too, seemed heartened by the measure of protection they could enjoy now they were part of Bavaria. There was, in the early nineteen twenties, a noticeable increase in the activity of a variety of veterans' associations and other nationalist groups like 'Bund Wiking', 'Stahlhelm', the 'Deutschvoelkischer Schutz - und Trutzbund' and the 'Jungdeutsche Orden'. The much-respected Duke, Carl Eduard, was still present, despite his abdication, to lend his considerable prestige and political influence to the activities of such groups.

Apart from a few bloody faces in public house brawls there was little effective action taken by the Coburg socialists against the Right, and, like their counterparts in many places throughout the Reich, the Coburg socialists seemed powerless to counter growing anti-republican feelings which were being fuelled by the Right's successful exploitation of events like the signing of the Versailles Treaty and the French occupation of the Ruhr. Coburg was becoming rapidly caught up in the conflict between Munich and Berlin, and came under the particular scrutiny of Reich officials after providing Hitler with an opportunity to test his rabble-rousing tactics for the first time on an audience outside his Munich power-base. In October 1922 Hitler had visited Coburg with his S.A. to join in the celebrations of the 'Third German Day' and had come away having provided his Nazi movement with the kind of tradition so important to a party which placed so much emphasis on the glories of the past, the mythological stories of heroic struggles. In the future, the Nazis could look back to those events in Coburg as a landmark in their early struggle to save the Reich from the evils of Bolshevism. For

the local Nazi party it provided the impetus needed to bring the party properly into the political arena.

For all the talk of the German Army's neutrality during this period, its stance did, in fact, support the resurgence of the old imperialistic nationalism. Whilst neutrality meant not openly attacking the Republic, it also meant a reluctance to offer the Republic necessary support either in checking dissent within its own ranks, or in acting with the same aggression against right-wing threats as it did against perceived threats from the Left. Ultimately it was, indeed, the supportive attitude of the Bavarian Army towards the Munich government's overt challenges to Berlin's authority that proved crucial. Following the failure of his own Putsch attempt in 1923, Hitler had gone to great pains to exonerate the Army from any involvement in the plot. He realised that the support of the Army was essential in order to fulfil his political ambitions, and by clearing the Army he had laid the path open for a future working relationship. Hitler enjoyed particular success in winning the support of the young officer corps which was growing increasingly disenchanted and impatient with the Army Command's apparent acceptance of the Republic. By vehemently denouncing the Versailles Treaty and calling for the creation of a large National Army, Hitler soon won the support, too, of the Bavaria Army Command under Major General Ritter von Epp.

Although Germany came to enjoy a period of relative calm around 1925 and 1926 with the settlement of long-standing problems like the reparations question and French security demands, and an economy which appeared to be mastering the problems of runaway inflation, the

political situation within the Reich was still very precarious. This was perhaps best highlighted during the 1925 Presidential elections when disarray amongst the Centre and Left parties over which candidate to support, effectively allowed the election as Head of State in a Republic, one of the staunchest supporters of the old imperialist, autocratic regime, von Hindenburg.

Whilst the Nazis could make little political headway during those years of apparent calm in the mid nineteen-twenties, they had already discovered a most potent propaganda ploy. The trick was to convince people that whilst they suffered particular hardships during times of economic and social disorder, certain groups could be identified as somehow escaping any such misery. Abroad, the Allies could be picked out, and at home it was the Jews. Anti-semitism had already been a feature of the Coburg Landtag elections in 1924 when the alliance of right-wing parties, the so-called 'Voelkischer Block', was elected to power on a programme which included stripping Jews of all their rights as German citizens. As the situation deteriorated once more at home and abroad in 1928 and 1929 anti-semitism again reared its head in Coburg with spectacular consequences. Combined with a ruthless attack on the Coburg town-hall 'Marxists', a violent campaign against a leading Coburg Jewish businessman, Friedmann, clearly had some appeal to the Coburg electorate as they elected a Nazi majority to the town council twice in one year.

The crucial role of the 'Fuehrer' in laying the foundations of that success was a clear indication of what Karl Dietrich Bracher describes as the 'special factor' in the early days of National Socialism.

"... the tremendously important part played by the spectacular rise and near religious veneration of a Fuehrer." (2)

The writings of the two leading Coburg Nazis at that time, Franz Schwede and Werner Faber, both clearly document the extent of their commitment to Hitler.⁽³⁾ Schwede, who was at the centre of the Friedmann incident which led directly to the Nazi take-over in Coburg, concludes his book on the 'struggle for Coburg' with an indication of his total belief in Hitler.

"Es ging nicht um mich und mein Schicksal. Es ging um den Sieg der grossen Idee Adolf Hitlers." (4)

It seems today, however, as though a rather perverse sense of justice has been effected in that town which was first attracted to Hitler. His vision of an expansion of the German 'Lebensraum' to accommodate all Germanic peoples, which he explained to the Coburg people as early as 1927, has achieved, in effect, the opposite of its intended outcome. Coburg is today isolated from its former partner in the Duchy of Coburg-Gotha and bordered on three sides by the consequences of Hitler's excesses in Europe : the fenced divide which separates the German nation, and East from West.

Notes

1. BRACHER, KARL DIETRICH. "The German Dictatorship. The Origins, Structure and Consequences of National Socialism." Peregrine. Harmondsworth. 1978, p.67.
2. ibid, p.68.
3. SCHWEDE, FRANZ. "Kampf um Coburg". Verlag Frz. Eher. Nachf. Muenchen, 1939.
FABER, WERNER. "Coburg unterm Hakenkreuz." Verlag. Frz. Eher. Nachf. Muenchen, 1932.
4. See the 'Nachwort' in SCHWEDE, FRANZ. op. cit.
"(These events) were not about me and my fate. They were about the victory of Adolf Hitler's great vision."

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APPENDIX 1.

PRESIDENT WILSON'S FOURTEEN POINTS

Derived from HAIGH, R.H. MORRIS, D.S. PETERS, A.R.
German - Soviet Relations in the Weimar Era. Friendship from Necessity. Gower. Aldershot, 1985.

- I Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understanding of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.
- II Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except national action for the enforcement of international covenants.
- III The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all of the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.
- IV Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.
- V A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.
- VI The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligence and unselfish sympathy.
- VII Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have

themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure and validity of international law is forever impaired.

- VII All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.
- IX A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.
- X The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.
- XI Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro, should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.
- XII The Turkish portions of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured of a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.
- XIII An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.
- XIV A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

The Treaty of Union between Coburg and Bavaria
Derived from UNGELENK, L. Coburg im Weltkrieg 1914-1918
Rossteutscher Verlag. Coburg, 1922.

Staatsvertrag

zwischen den Freistaaten Bayern und Coburg
über die Vereinigung Coburgs mit Bayern.

Die Regierungen der Freistaaten Bayern und Coburg sind in dem Bestreben, die zwischen beiden Ländern und ihrer Bevölkerung bestehenden Beziehungen inniger Zusammengehörigkeit noch enger zu gestalten und die beiderseitigen gemeinsamen wirtschaftlichen und kulturellen Interessen zu pflegen und zu fördern, übereingekommen, einen Staatsvertrag wegen der Vereinigung der beiden Länder abzuschließen.

Die zu diesem Zweck ernannten Bevollmächtigten, nämlich
für Bayern Ministerpräsident Hoffmann,
Justizminister Dr. Müller,
für Coburg Staatsrat Klingler,
Ministerialdirektor Dr. Fritsch,

haben sich, vorbehaltlich der Genehmigung der Landtage von Bayern und Coburg und vorbehaltlich des nach Art. 18 der Verfassung des Deutschen Reiches vom 11. August 1919 erforderlichen Reichsgesetzes, über folgende Punkte geeinigt:

§ 1.

Das Gebiet des Freistaates Coburg wird mit dem Gebiet des Freistaates Bayern zu einem einheitlichen Gebiet vereinigt. Die Staatshoheitsrechte über das Gebiet von Coburg gehen mit der Vereinigung auf Bayern über.

§ 2.

Das Gebiet des Freistaates Coburg mit Ausnahme des Amtes Königsberg (d. i. der Stadt Königsberg in Franken und der Landgemeinden Altershausen, Dörfles, Ertsdorf, Hellingen, Köslau, Rottenbrunn und Nassach) wird dem Kreis Oberfranken, das Amt Königsberg dem Kreis Unterfranken und Altschaffenburg und zwar dem Bezirk Hofheim angegliedert. Die Städte Coburg, Neustadt und Rodach bleiben unmittelbar.

§ 3.

Mit der Vereinigung werden die Angehörigen des Freistaates Coburg, soweit sie in Bayern oder im Gebiete des Freistaates Coburg wohnen, bayerische Staatsangehörige; alle übrigen werden auf Antrag auch ohne vorherige Niederlassung in den bayerischen Staatsverband aufgenommen.

§ 4.

An der auf die Vereinigung Coburgs mit Bayern folgenden Landtagswahl in Bayern nehmen die bisherigen coburgischen Landesteile nach Maßgabe der in Bayern geltenden Bestimmungen teil. Bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt ordnet die coburgische Landesversammlung drei Mitglieder in den bayerischen Landtag ab, die in diesem Sitz und Stimme haben und die gleichen Rechte wie die bayerischen Landtagsabgeordneten genießen. Schon in der Zeit zwischen der Bestätigung des gegenwärtigen Staatsvertrags und der Vereinigung werden die drei coburgischen Abgeordneten zu den Verhandlungen des bayerischen Landtags mit beratender Stimme zugelassen.

§ 5.

Die bayerische Verfassung tritt mit dem Tage der Vereinigung im Gebiete des Freistaates Coburg von selbst in Kraft.

§ 6.

Im übrigen bleiben die im Zeitpunkt der Vereinigung im Gebiete des Freistaates Coburg geltenden Gesetze und Verordnungen in Kraft, bis sie aufgehoben oder geändert werden.

Bei ihrer Aufhebung oder Änderung wird während einer Übergangszeit von zwei Jahren von der Vereinigung an der von Coburg für Übergangstragen bestellte Ausschuss gehört werden. Diese Bestimmung findet keine Anwendung bei Änderungen, die im Hinblick auf die Reichsgesetzgebung oder bei Erlassung neuer bayerischer Landesgesetze und Verordnungen notwendig werden.

§ 7.

Die zum Domänenvermögen (§ 1 des Vertrags mit dem Herzog Carl Eduard von Sachsen Coburg und Gotha vom 7. Juni 1919) gehörenden Wäldungen, Güter und sonstigen Liegenschaften des Freistaates Coburg sind mit Rücksicht auf die vertraglich festgelegten Rechte der „Coburger Landesstiftung“ als eine in sich geschlossene Vermögensmasse (genannt Domänengut) von einer in Coburg zu errichtenden staatlichen Behörde (Forst- und Domänenamt) und daneben von den weiter erforderlichen Forstämtern zu verwalten.

Veräußerungen dürfen nur mit Zustimmung des in § 6 Absatz II des Staatsvertrags bezeichneten Ausschusses stattfinden. An die Stelle dieses Ausschusses tritt nach Ablauf der Übergangszeit von 2 Jahren der Vorstand der Coburger Landesstiftung. Die Zustimmung ist nicht erforderlich, soweit Flächen von weniger als 1 ha in Frage kommen oder der Veräußerungspreis, bei Tauschverträgen der Gegenstandswert, den Beitrag von fünftausend Mark nicht übersteigt. Der Erlös aus den Veräußerungen ist zur Erhaltung, Verbesserung oder Vermehrung des Domänenguts zu verwenden. Bei Verpachtungen ist auf die wirtschaftlichen Bedürfnisse der Bevölkerung des Freistaates Coburg weitgehend Rücksicht zu nehmen.

§ 8.

Sollte sich die Fortführung der Landrentenbank in Coburg durch den bayerischen Staat oder die bayerische Staatsbank als unzweckmäßig erweisen, so ist der bayerische Staat bereit, ihre Umwandlung in eine Bezirksanstalt bei dem Bezirkstage des künftigen Bezirks Coburg in die Wege zu leiten und, falls dieser der Errichtung einer solchen Anstalt zustimmt, die Umwandlung zu fördern.

§ 9.

Die Staatsbeamten (Staatsdiener im Sinne des Gesetzes über den Staatsdienst vom 3. Mai 1852 nebst Nachträgen) des Freistaates Coburg werden unter Wahrung aller ihnen aus ihrer Anstellung zustehenden Rechte vom bayerischen Staat übernommen. Das Gleiche gilt für die mit anderen Staaten gemeinschaftlichen Beamten, soweit sie nach der Auseinandersetzung zwischen den Freistaaten Coburg und Gotha auf den Staat Coburg entfallen. Den zur Zeit an gothaischen Gerichten angestellten, aus dem Freistaat Coburg stammenden Justizbeamten wird der Anspruch auf Übernahme in den bayerischen Justizdienst auf die Dauer von drei Jahren vom Abschlusse des Staatsvertrages an vorbehalten.

Ferner übernimmt der bayerische Staat die sämtlichen derzeitigen Bezüge für Beamte im Ruhestande, dann für die Hinterbliebenen von Beamten, soweit zur Zahlung die coburgische Staatskasse verpflichtet ist. Dazu gehören auch solche Pensionslasten, die Coburg zufolge der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Freistaat Gotha oder anderen Staaten zu tragen hat. Künftige Erhöhungen der bayerischen Ruhegehälter und Hinterbliebenenbezüge haben auch den coburgischen Beamten und ihren Hinterbliebenen zugute zu kommen.

Bei der Einführung des bayerischen Volksschullehrergesetzes in Coburg finden die vorstehenden Grundsätze auf die Volksschullehrer entsprechende Anwendung.

§ 10.

Die in Coburg bestehenden staatlichen Bildungsanstalten werden auch weiterhin erhalten vorbehaltlich solcher Änderungen, die durch eine allgemeine Neuordnung im Unterrichtswesen notwendig werden sollten.

§ 11.

Die bisherigen Leistungen des Staates an die Kirchen in Coburg werden vom bayerischen Staat bis zur Auseinandersetzung zwischen Staat und Kirche übernommen.

§ 12.

Die Amtsgerichte Coburg, Neustadt, Rodach und Sonnefeld bleiben bestehen, vorbehaltlich von Änderungen, die sich bei der in Aussicht stehenden allgemeinen Neuorganisation der bayerischen Gerichte als notwendig erweisen. Bei dieser Neuorganisation werden hinsichtlich der coburgischen Amtsgerichte die gleichen Grundsätze wie im Landgerichtsbezirke Bamberg maßgebend sein.

Das Amtsgericht Königsberg wird nicht vor der in Aussicht stehenden allgemeinen Neuorganisation der bayerischen Gerichte aufgehoben werden.

§ 13.

Die Aufhebung der Landgerichts- und Oberlandesgerichtsgemeinschaft mit Preußen und den thüringischen Staaten ist herbeizuführen. Die in Coburg bestehende Kammer für Handelsachen und die dortige Strafkammer werden zu einem vollständigen Landgerichte ausgebaut. Dabei werden dem neu zu errichtenden Landgerichte Coburg bayerische Amtsgerichtsbezirke zugeteilt.

§ 14.

Im Gebiet des bisherigen Freistaates Coburg werden Landkrankenkassen im Sinne des § 225 der Reichsversicherungsordnung nicht errichtet.

§ 15.

Für den Fall der Zuteilung des Gebietes des Freistaates Coburg zum Verwaltungsbezirk einer bayerischen Landesversicherungsanstalt bleibt die Ausstellung und der Umtausch der Quittungskarten sowie die Einziehung, Verwendung und Verrechnung der Beiträge zur Invaliden- und Hinterbliebenenversicherung gemäß § 1455 und §§ 1447 ff der Reichsversicherungsordnung den Krankenkassen übertragen.

§ 16.

Die coburgische land- und forstwirtschaftliche Berufsgenossenschaft mit dem Sitz in Coburg bleibt bestehen.

§ 17.

In Coburg wird ein dem Gewerberat bei der Regierung von Oberfranken, Kammer des Innern, nachzuordnender Gewerbeaufsichtsbeamter aufgestellt. Ihm werden die erforderlichen Hilfskräfte beigegeben.

§ 18.

Die Handelskammer Coburg bleibt bestehen. Für den Fall einer allgemeinen Neuregelung in Bayern wird ihre Überführung in eine Bezirksvertretung (Handels-gremium) vorbehalten.

Die Handwerkskammerabteilung Coburg wird zu einer selbständigen Handwerkskammer für das Gebiet des bisherigen Freistaates Coburg mit Ausnahme des Amtes Königsberg in Franken ausgebaut.

§ 19.

In dem Bestreben, die Verkehrsbeziehungen zwischen den Gebieten Bayern und Coburg den künftigen Bedürfnissen der vereinigten Freistaaten möglichst anzupassen, wird die bayerische Regierung, soweit sie vor der Übernahme der bayerischen Staatseisenbahnen auf das Reich dazu noch in der Lage ist, die Erbauung einer

Lokalbahn von Kaltenbrunn-Untermersbach nach Kossach nach dem in Bayern zur Zeit noch gültigen Lokalbahngesetz vom 28. April 1882 möglichst fördern und sich beim Reiche auch dafür einsetzen, daß eine Lokalbahn von Königshofen i. Grabfeld nach Rodach innerhalb der nächsten 10 Jahre nach Abschluß des Staatsvertrages erbaut werde.

§ 20.

Die bayerische Regierung wird die Weser - Werra - Mainverbindung nach Kräften fördern.

§ 21.

Die Vertragsschließenden behalten sich vor, weitere Bestimmungen durch Zusatzprotokolle zu treffen, die in ihrer Wirkung diesem Vertrag gleichgestellt werden.

§ 22.

Die Reichsregierung soll ersucht werden, in das Reichsgesetz über die Vereinigung Coburgs mit Bayern eine Bestimmung des Inhalts aufzunehmen, daß der Zeitpunkt des Inkrafttretens des Reichsgesetzes durch Verordnung der bayerischen Regierung festgesetzt wird.

München, den 14. Februar 1920.

Hoffmann.

Dr. Ernst Müller.

Franz Klingler.

Dr. Ernst Tritsch.

Schlußprotokoll

zum Staatsvertrag vom 14. Februar 1920
über die Vereinigung Coburgs mit Bayern.

Die unterzeichneten Bevollmächtigten waren heute zusammengetreten, um zum Abschlusse und zur Vollziehung des zur Vereinigung Coburgs mit Bayern vereinbarten Staatsvertrags zu schreiten. Hierbei sind in das gegenwärtige Schlußprotokoll nachstehende, mit den Vereinbarungen des Vertrags selbst gleich verbindliche Erklärungen aufgenommen worden:

I.

Der bayerische Staat wird dafür Sorge tragen, daß die im bisherigen Freistaat Coburg bestehenden Wohlfahrtseinrichtungen, insbesondere für die Säuglingsfürsorge und die Bekämpfung der Tuberkulose und der Geschlechtskrankheiten im bisherigen Umfang erhalten bleiben.

II.

Bis spätestens 31. Dezember 1921 wird die bayerische Gemeindegesetzgebung in Coburg eingeführt werden. Bis zur Einführung bleiben die auf Grund der coburgischen Bestimmungen gewählten Vertretungen (Gemeindevorstand, Magistrat, Stadtrat, Gemeindeausschuß, Stadtverordnetenversammlung) im Amt.

III.

Es bleibt vorbehalten, der Stadt Rodach die Kreisunmittelbarkeit zu entziehen, falls sie nicht binnen 15 Jahren von der Vereinigung an die in Bayern geltenden Voraussetzungen für die Verleihung der Kreisunmittelbarkeit erfüllt.

Die Städte Neustadt und Rodach werden auf die Amtsdauer der gegenwärtigen Bürgermeister — auch im Falle ihrer Wiederwahl — von der Bestimmung des Art. 6 Abs. VII des Selbstverwaltungsgesetzes entbunden.

IV.

Das bisherige staatliche Landkrankenhaus in Coburg geht mit sämtlichen Vermögensrechten und Verpflichtungen auf einen Krankenhausverband über und wird von diesem für die Zwecke der Coburger Bevölkerung verwaltet. Der Verband wird aus den Gemeinden des bisherigen Freistaates Coburg mit Ausnahme derer des bisherigen Amtes Königsberg in Franken gebildet. Zur Verstärkung seiner Mittel werden ihm die zum Domänenvermögen gehörenden Wertpapiere und Forderungen zu Eigentum überwiesen. Reichen die Einnahmen des Landkrankenhauses zur Deckung der Ausgaben nicht aus, so wird vom bayerischen Staat ein Zuschuß in der Höhe von drei Viertel des Fehlbetrages zugesichert. Dem bayerischen Staat bleibt es unbenommen, die Zuschußleistung durch eine einmalige Löfindungssumme abzulösen. Ihre Höhe ist mit dem Verbande zu vereinbaren. Kommt eine Einigung nicht zustande, so entscheidet auf Antrag des einen oder anderen Teiles der Verwaltungsgerichtshof in München im schiedsgerichtlichen Verfahren. Ohne Zustimmung der Gegenseite kann dieser Antrag nicht vor Ablauf von fünf Jahren, von der Vereinigung an gerechnet, gestellt werden.

V.

Die Sparkassen des Freistaates Coburg werden in der bisherigen Art ihres Geschäftsbetriebes nicht beschränkt. Ohne ihre Zustimmung können auf sie die bayerischen Grundbestimmungen über Sparkassen nicht erstreckt werden.

VI.

Die Vorschriften der Stadt Coburg über das Feuerbestattungswesen bleiben unberührt.

VII.

Zu § 9 Abs. 1 des Staatsvertrages besteht Übereinstimmung, daß die Beamten in solche bayerische Stellen zu übernehmen sind, die ihrem Gehalt, ihrem Dienst-

alter und ihrer Vorbildung entsprechen. Auf ihre bisherige dienstliche Stellung wird Rücksicht genommen. Die für den coburgischen Staatsdienst abgelegten Prüfungen werden den betreffenden bayerischen Prüfungen gleichgeachtet.

VIII.

Die Verlegung eines bayerischen Forstamts nach Königsberg in Franken wird zugesichert.

IX.

Die coburgische Regierung wird dafür sorgen, daß der bayerischen Regierung im Vorstande der Coburger Landesstiftung eine noch näher zu vereinbarende Vertretung eingeräumt wird. Die Staatsaufsicht über die Stiftung wird vom bayerischen Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus unmittelbar ausgeübt werden. Es besteht Übereinstimmung dahin, daß die Anstellung der Stiftungsbeamten durch dieses Ministerium auf den gutachtlichen Vorschlag des Stiftungsvorstandes hin erfolgt.

X.

Der bayerische Staat tritt hinsichtlich des Landestheaters in Coburg in den zwischen dem Staate Coburg und der Stadtgemeinde Coburg unterm 9. August 1919 geschlossenen Vertrag ein.

XI.

Würde die Neuordnung des Lehrerbildungswesens dazu führen, daß besondere, der Lehrerbildung dienende Schulen noch beibehalten werden, so wird die bayerische Regierung das Lehrerseminar in Coburg der Neuordnung gemäß einrichten.

XII.

Bei der Einführung des bayerischen Notariats sind die coburgischen Notare zu entschädigen, soweit sie nicht in den bayerischen Notariatsdienst übernommen werden.

XIII.

Die coburgische Regierung wird dahin wirken, daß die Auseinanderlegung mit dem Freistaat Gotha und die Lösung der sonstigen Gemeinschaftsverträge, soweit bezüglich einzelner Verträge mit der bayerischen Regierung nichts anderes vereinbart ist oder vereinbart wird, noch vor der Vereinigung Coburgs mit Bayern durchgeführt wird. Soweit hieraus Lasten für die bayerische Staatskasse erwachsen, ist die Zustimmung der bayerischen Regierung erforderlich.

Die mit dem vereinbarten Entwurf übereinstimmend befundenen zwei Ausfertigungen des Vertrages sind hierauf von den Bevollmächtigten unterzeichnet und unterschrieben worden, und es haben die Bevollmächtigten der bayerischen und der coburgischen Regierung je eine Ausfertigung des Vertrages und des Schlußprotokolls entgegengenommen.

München, den 14. Februar 1920.

Hoffmann.
Dr. Ernst Müller.

Franz Klingler.
Dr. Ernst Tritsch.