

IX: WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE CHILDREN? (Pt.1: THE LOST GENERATION): 1918-1920

"What Will Become of the Children?" is the title of a short novel about a German family in the twilight of Weimar Berlin.¹ It chronicles the travails of a Prussian bourgeois collective from its rise in the 1890s until the summer of 1932. At its head is a conservative German everyman loyal to the Kaiser, who progresses from skilled worker to wartime millionaire. The story was published that same year to mostly positive critical reviews, largely because it reflected the experiences of so many Germans at the time. One can certainly see Friedrich Hinsch, son Fritz and even new arrival Albert Petzold in the story's main protagonist, Pitt Deutsch. However, because the novel also reflects on his children's fortunes, the work makes an interesting yardstick for this and subsequent chapters. Thomas A. Kohut's survey of over 60 who were part of the same young generation is a valuable cross-reference.

I have opted to present Chapter IX, spanning the period from 1919 until 1923 in two parts. On the one hand this is because the turmoil that engulfs Leipzig over the four years is so extensive it cannot easily be digested into a single reading. On the other, it offers ample space to afford all three Hinsch generations sufficient attention.

The first part, subtitled *'The Lost Generation,'* looks at the fortunes of Fritz Hinsch and Nannj Tjraalla and those most closely associated with them. Typically the phrase defines the generation born between 1883 and 1900² and their 'lost' livelihoods following World War I until the beginning of the Great Depression in 1930.³ However, because Nannj's brother, Fritz was born in 1879, I take the liberty of extending this period, particularly since he suffers no less misfortune than many of his peers. Also, because the first bout of civil unrest which troubled Leipzig drew to a conclusion in March 1920, it marks a convenient point to close part one.

In the second part of this chapter, subtitled; *"What Will Become of the Children?"* we will look at the period from April 1920 until the end of 1923. It more closely follows Fritz and his sister's offspring (which includes my grandmother), whose characters we left at the end of Chapter VIII bruised, dispossessed and disadvantaged when it comes to those things most crucial to their safe passage to adulthood: food, love and opportunity.⁴ Throughout the chapter, but particularly in part two, attention will be accorded to those Wandervogels we began this story with, my grandmother's grandparents; Friedrich and Marie Hinsch.

¹ Written by Claire Bergmann, it was re-published in 2010 having fallen into almost complete obscurity, following renewed interest and its translation by Richard Bodek. Camden House.

² Note authors William Strauss and Neil Howe, well known for their generational theory

³ See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_Generation

⁴ In the period covered by these two chapters, all Hinsch grandchildren, bar Hans and Margot, became teenagers. Four of the seven completed their schooling and by the close of 1923, Fritz was 17, Little Nannj, 16, Theo and Martin both 15 and Heinz, 13. Those still in secondary schooling at the end included Heinz and Margot (12 by 1923). Little Hans was rather the odd one out. Having turned 8, he just half way through elementary school come the end of 1923. Nannj and Margot were special as the only girls among the cohort, present at the 'birth' of the so-called new woman that flourished post-1918.

The Kaiser's flight to the Netherlands left something of a vacuum in Germany. Politics, society and the economy all remained volatile until late 1923. Many believed the war heralded the end of the world, given the high fatalities among a generation of men,⁵ the dissolution of governments and empires, and the collapse of capitalism and imperialism.⁶ Yet the Hohenzollerns were so discredited as a result of the war that the elites recognised they could no longer advocate monarchism.⁷

Many others, however, saw the collapse of the old imperial order as an opportunity for a new experiment in liberal democracy.⁸ Wagerworkers – male and female, skilled and unskilled, factory and craft fought for a democratic republic at the end of 1918. A power struggle ensued as Germany's cities got caught in the crossfire while its citizens spent the following years in a state of near chaos, occasionally subsumed by secessionist dictatorships. Far from bringing peace, the armistice saw the country implode. In Claire Bergmann's words; "Germans began to tear at their own flesh."⁹

In the late 'red kingdom' of Saxony, political and cultural conflict between its social democrats and bourgeois middle-class was no less pronounced. Wave upon wave of discontent embroiled its citizens. Coups, putsches, strikes, street warfare, states of siege, revolution and counter-revolt all featured and as in the past, the state was a thorn in the side of a Germany in recovery. Yet even in the aftermath of defeat, the country's unity in the form established in 1871 was not questioned by any significant section of its population.¹⁰



Security forces of the *Arbeiter und Soldatenrates* (ASR), Leipzig 1918-20. Source: Leipzig Info CD

In Leipzig, within the opening hours of the revolution on November 9th, insurgents calling themselves workers' and soldiers' councils (*Arbeiter- und Soldatenrates* or ASR)¹¹ seized control and abolished the old city council.¹² Come the 14th the city's provisional government issued a maximally radical program, declaring it a socialist republic until subsumed within a unified German socialist republic that included its historical ally, Austria. It called for the socialization of all land and industry, in anticipation of a democratized wage relationship with employers, institution of the eight hour day and

promulgated stiff punishment for black-market food dealers. It placed an independent socialist in charge of the municipal police, put *General von Schweinitz* on indefinite leave, arrested 12 of his staff and began requisitioning illegally hoarded food and coal and distributing it to the public at a controlled price.¹³

⁵ About 3.5 percent of the pre-war German population or 2.4m never returned says Guinane in O&O (pg. 56) although estimates vary: about two million says Domansky (pg.442) while Otto Friedrich refers to 1.8m (pg.15).

⁶ See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I

⁷ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 216

⁸ Lisa Pine in *Germany Since 1800: A New Social and Economic History* edited by Ogilvie and Overy. Pg. 363.

⁹ Bergmann. *What Will Become of the Children? A Novel of a German Family* (1932). Camden House. 2010. Pg.21

¹⁰ *Questions on German History*. Pg. 212

¹¹ Workers elected those who sat on the workers' councils, a practice which occurred even in smaller craft workshops, notes Dobson (Pg. 226). Representatives were then put forward to the *Leipzig Arbeiter- und Soldatenrat*.

¹² Conversely it left the senate and mayor's office intact, who in turn thought that by staying in power they could preserve the civil service and in turn thwart the radical policies of the ASR. Dobson, pg. 211

¹³ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 201, 205

Post-war Germany was provisionally governed by a Council of People's Deputies or commissars (*Rat der Volksbeauftragten* or *RdV*) whose sovereignty rested with the various *Arbeiter- und Soldatenrates* (which Berlin's ASR claimed to speak for) until a constituent National Assembly had been elected.¹⁴ Friedrich Ebert, as leader of the Social Democrat Party (SPD) and Chairman of the socialist party-dominated Council, became the republic's de facto helmsman.

One among several of Ebert's fears for the new republic was a coup from the left-wing fringe of the Independent Socialists (USPD); the *Spartacists* and their leader Karl Liebknecht whose much publicized intents were for a soviet dictatorship. Saxony in particular was a threat, since the USPD dominated its provisional government.¹⁵

One of Ebert's first political manoeuvres therefore was to promise to defend the professional officer corps from any attempts to dismantle or transform it, in exchange for protection from a Bolshevik putsch. He also shored up the country's defences by engaging right-wing paramilitary units, the underground *Freikorps* (made up of students and *Bürger* - demobilized soldiers) and forced their collaboration with the officer corps.¹⁶ Signs of political discordance between Berlin and Dresden already began to appear, however, when the government in Saxony rebuked Ebert for restoring to the professional officer corps their right to command over enlisted men. As a result, the USPD closed down Leipzig's *Freikorps* recruiting station.¹⁷

Successfully demobilising an army of millions, integrating the troops back into the workforce and converting the economy to peacetime production represented another anxiety plaguing Ebert and the Council of People's Deputies in the months after the war.¹⁸ According to Leipzig's military historian, Dieter Kürschner, the last thing its authorities wanted was the *106. Infanterie Regiment's* soldiers coming into contact with the more revolutionary members of the newly established security forces of the workers' and soldiers' councils, for fear their numbers would swell.¹⁹



Returning frontline troops welcomed upon their return to Berlin, early December 1918
Source: Wikipedia/Novemberrevolution

The Saxon Minister of Military Affairs sought to accelerate demobilization when he declared (in line with the terms of the armistice) that his government would not contribute to the pay of the once conscripted troops that remained in the barracks after April 1st, 1919.²⁰

¹⁴ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 192

¹⁵ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 196

¹⁶ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 196

¹⁷ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 201, 205

¹⁸ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 197

¹⁹ See: <http://www.leipzig-gohlis.de/historie/militaer.html>

²⁰ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 259

The great trek of the millions of footsore, beaten and sullen soldiers ultimately took care of itself. The troops peacefully, even eagerly found their way home, in no small part helped by an enthusiastic reception which was organised by the civilian authorities across Germany, with streets richly decked out in flags, triumphal arches and garlands. Railway stations were cleaned, streets were rid of old posters that stirred up memories of the war and replaced with inscriptions such as "Welcome to the Heimat."²¹



Returning Infantry Regiments, 15th Dec.,
Delitzscher Strasse, 1918
Source: C. Foerster: *Leben in Leipzig*

My grandmother recounted to her daughters the experience of welcoming home the "heroes of the trenches." They reached Leipzig in mid-December 1918, just in time for Christmas, when the soldiers of the 106. and 107. *Infanterie Regiments* together with the 18. *Ulanenregiment* from the Western Front marched right past her front door (see photo left). They then headed on to the *Markt* and the *Völkerschlachtdenkmal* to be welcomed with jubilation,²² accompanied, Little Nannÿ recalled, by Johann Strauss's "*Radetzky March*".

The march had been composed by Strauss in 1848 and was dedicated to the Austrian Field Marshal Joseph Radetzky von Radetz, following victory in the first Italian war of independence. When initially played before his officers they spontaneously began to clap and stamp their feet when they heard the chorus. It subsequently became a popular march among soldiers, not least because its tone is celebratory rather than martial.²³

Every time Little Nannÿ later heard it, her head would bob about on her shoulders while her eyes sparkled, revealing a certain pride for her father as opposed to sorrow. In a photo taken ten years later she stands before a monument to fallen first world war soldiers, wearing a smile, likely recalling his memory.

Yet she also remembered the occasion with twinges of sadness. She would say it was the time when "father never came home." Had my grandmother genuinely expected to welcome him back? Hadn't her mother visibly mourned him in 1916, sending her youngsters photos with '*Trauerjahr*' scribbled upon them?

In searching for an answer, I wondered if perhaps only my grandmother had received the '*Trauerjahr*' photo, since Margot and Theo were sent to Machern shortly after their father headed for the frontline to make way for the new lodger. Although that meant the pair likely had no idea their father was lost on the battlefield, as far as Little Nannÿ was concerned I can only surmise her mother was economical with the truth, spinning a yarn that "father's missing, *feared* dead." If so, that only delayed my grandmother's trauma but still allowed her mother to publicly show her bereavement.

²¹ Richard Bessel. *Germany after the First World War*. 1995. Pg. 84

²² Martina Güldemann in 1999 in *Das war das 20. Jahrhundert in LEIPZIG*. Pg.24

²³ See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radetzky_March

In an interesting twist, their lodger, 'Onkel' Albert, ended his own four-year marriage just six months after appearing on the Tŷrallas' doorstep – and that just ten days after Paul Tŷralla was reportedly 'missing in action!'²⁴ The announcement of Paul's loss two weeks later in the *Deutscheverlustungslisten*²⁵ cut Nannŷ some slack (at least before the neighbours) in allowing a relationship of sorts to develop with Albert.

That probably worked out fine until Margot and Theo's unexpected return from Machern in summer 1917. Matters grew more complicated thereafter assuming the pair still awaited their father's return which meant Little Nannŷ had to 'keep mum' over his being missing, at least until the soldiers' return. Does that explain why my grandmother went to meet her father? Presently, I can find no other reason, but it might also lend grounds to Nannŷ and Albert's 'abandoned' marriage plans in 1917.²⁶

The impressive ceremonies laid on for the returning soldiers also became an effort to avoid all out anarchy in the face of continuing food shortages and growing poverty. The loss of political prestige was considerable too, and given that every German was forced to pick themselves up from the spectre of war and defeat, the weak economy needed to recover sooner rather than later.

Nannŷ's elder brother, Fritz Hinsch, was more fortunate than his brother-in-law and returned safely on January 15th, a few months short of his 40th birthday.²⁷ However, despite the authorities' best attempts to safeguard civil peace, Fritz came back to a city that was in the process of being brought to a standstill by sympathizers of a left-wing coup launched by the *Spartacists* in Berlin on January 4th. Emerging as the communist party (KPD), they led a bloody uprising for power.²⁸ While it was subsequently quashed by the *Freikorps*, it was immediately followed by uprisings elsewhere.

In *Leipzig Leutzsch* for instance (not far from the Tŷrallas' home), gun battles ensued less than a week before he returned²⁹ as the city's *Freikorps*, in an attempt to get to Berlin to provide assistance, were countered by a force sent out by Saxony's ruling USPD. Leipzig's workers were enraged that the *Reich RdV* had even allied itself with the *Freikorps* and while they didn't share the Spartacists' ideals, they gathered on *Augustusplatz* on January 11th, a Saturday afternoon, to protest before storming the adjacent university building, damaging property and fighting with students.³⁰

²⁴ Petzold's marriage certificate Nr. 255/1911, annotated Dec. 9, 1915 with reference to a Nov. 30 request to annul.

²⁵ *Deutscheverlustungslisten*, issue 10830, 24 Dec. 1915, pg. 239.

²⁶ According to Bessel (*Germany after the First World War*, Pg. 226) war widows who did not remarry and became dependent on state pensions generally lived in the most difficult circumstances after the war. Their pensions were modest, sufficient to meet the cost of food and little else. According to her statement within her husband's *Nachlass*Akte: 8 NReg. 1494/16 held at the *Sächsisches Staatsarchiv*, her income was **annually/monthly** worth RM 457.10, including benefits for the children and a grant from the war welfare office. With income from lodgers, aid from her parents, and Albert's support, Frau Tŷralla probably found herself quite a bit more comfortably off than if she were his spouse, even if it meant compromising her credibility.

²⁷ He was released from military service on 14th January, 1919.

²⁸ See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spartacist_uprising

²⁹ See: <http://home.arcor.de/command3rk33n/Chronik/1919/1919.htm>

³⁰ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 195, 218

Four days later on January 15th, the day Fritz returned home, the extreme right murdered the Spartacists' leader *Karl Liebknecht* and its co-founder, *Rosa Luxemburg*. When the news reached Leipzig's workers the following day it hit them "like a lightning bolt," according to Sean Dobson's city study: *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*, turning Leipzigers further against the national authorities.³¹

On January 17th, the USPD stirred the instability when it resigned from the Saxon Council of People's Deputies (RdV), diminishing the support of the so-called Majority Socialists (MSPD). The following day, a Saturday, as many as a hundred thousand gathered on *Augustusplatz*. Tram workers went on strike, as did municipal utility workers, female workers and then labourers from all trades in western Saxony a few days later. By crippling the city's transportation system and disrupting power generation, they brought the economic life of the city to a crawl.³²

Yet Fritz Hinsch's 'after party' was not only a city besieged by conflict and strikes. His sons and his wife did not even turn up to welcome this war hero home!³³ Whatsmore, a week before he arrived, his family left *Beethovenstrasse* for Hedwig's parents' home in the north of the inner city at *Kleine Fleischergasse*. Lack of coal or gas in their apartment might have been the official explanation, however, the day after they left, adding insult to injury, on January 8th, 1919, Hedwig filed for a divorce – after 13 years of marriage!

According to Lisa Pine in her contribution to *A New Economic and Social History of Germany*, there was a significant trend of 'homecoming divorces.'³⁴ Women were expected to leave their jobs and focus on facilitating traumatised men's re-entry into family life. Many relationships struggled as a result, yet Hedwig's request for a divorce was atypical in that it was immediate. That gave Fritz no chance from the get-go and his elder sons, Frits and Martin (12 years and 10 respectively), were consequently torn between him and their mother,³⁵ not in the least bit helped by the fact that the pair were already in secondary school. The younger pair, Heinz (9) and Hans (4) invariably remained with her.

What was the cause of such a seemingly sudden rift between their parents? During the war there was of course the peculiar incident when the ownership of Fritz's Machern villa reverted to his mother, presumably safeguarding it for the Hinsch's in the event of his death. Was Hedwig request for a divorce her riposte call? Or was there more to it than that?

Digging a little more deeply, it does appear that 1915 was a pivotal year in their relationship. Let's go back to the beginning when it started with Hedwig giving birth to their last son, Hans, followed six months later by Fritz being drafted and concluding with Hedwig disinheriting the villa! Unless I am very mistaken, all was not well within their bourgeois household back then.

³¹ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. Pg. 218/9

³² Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. Pg. 223

³³ Confirmed to the best of her memory by Irene - **Rudiger too?**

³⁴ Lisa Pine in *Germany Since 1800: A New Social and Economic History* edited by Ogilvie and Overly. Pg. 363

³⁵ According to both elder boys' *Einwohnermeldekartei*

To understand why 1918 brought things to a head, we must first look to the man Hedwig married less than two years later. The day twenty six year old Walther Martin returned to Leipzig from the frontline was the same day she filed for a divorce. That may have been a coincidence, but his residential record shows he moved in with Hedwig barely a year later (and a matter of days after the conclusion of Fritz's riposte lawsuit in spring 1920). That suggests the pair intentionally kept themselves apart until the case with Fritz was concluded.

Could that mean Hedwig and Walther's relationship went back more than a year? Walther was in fact drafted in December 1914 and his departure for the frontline might well have precipitated a first public outburst of devotion between the pair, were they already in a relationship.

It may begin to sound like I have an overactive imagination, however, Leipzig's *Adressbücher* proffer no defence to Mr. Martin, showing that in 1911 he became the Hinsch's close neighbour at *Salzgässchen* 3. Together with his parents he managed a shoe store two doors down from *Cigarren Haus Hinsch*. When in 1914 ownership passed to Walther,³⁶ at 21 he obviously became an eligible bachelor (as Fritz had been I suppose after winning the lottery in 1903). His path then likely crossed a good many times with Hedwig's – after all, which female does not adore shoes?!

In the hope that Fritz's family might offer some clues as to the grounds for his and Hedwig's divorce, in 2011 his eldest granddaughter expressed what any other reader might expect to hear: "I don't know. Maybe Hedwig had another man."

Tension at home in late 1914 (at a time when clearly the war would not 'be over by Christmas') would certainly justify Fritz's parents' otherwise unusual mid-winter move back to the *Landhaus* in Machern. And with little Hans due within weeks, Friedrich and Marie Hinsch's departure would afford the couple 'space.' Hedwig's parents' with their bakery a few doors up (at *Salzgässchen* 9) could also provide practical assistance as and when need be.

Against this backdrop of events, a scene emerges that could be straight out of 'Neighbours' or 'Coronation Street' (*Salzgässchen* might be loosely translated; 'Bitter Alley'.)³⁷ Before 1915 was out, Hedwig had fallen from favour and early in the following, she and her children departed their flat followed later that year by her parents. A case of sour grapes then?

The war's long continuation hindered any real form of closure (although at the same time it may have offered a more 'convenient' resolution to their respective predicaments as in Frau Tŷralla's case). However, once it was clear that Walther Martin was coming home, the only way forward it seems was for Hedwig to end one relationship and formally embark upon another.³⁸

³⁶ Walther was the named proprietor of the shoe shop from 1914-1922 (further addressbooks are not searchable online). Roughly between 1912-1913, it had been Johann Gottlob Martin's, his father's at this address.

³⁷ Australian and English soap operas respectively.

³⁸ A welcome release I imagine, recalling Ch.VIII, pg. 209; "The state felt obliged to safeguard men's sexual 'property' at home... women's own sexual activity came under close surveillance, in order to prevent them from having extramarital sexual relations" during the war."

The year 1915 was not just a critical juncture for the Hinsch's but for the Tŷrallas too (even if Little Nannŷ's father had returned I daresay he'd have divorced too). At a time when sisters were 'doing it for themselves,' I wonder whether Nannŷ and Hedwig might be seen as the dying vestiges of Prussian might? Or whether they were just two ambitious souls whose husbands bore the brunt?

In either case (or both), they were frontrunners for the emerging new Weimar woman. However, while they settled down to seemingly new futures with men who would in turn become lifelong partners, their actions and the war estranged them and their families. Previously 'conjoined' through Fritz, neither parent appears subsequently to have gone out of their way to bring their nephews and nieces together (much less perpetuate their memory) which partly explains why Fritz's sons reported so little about their cousins to their own families in later years. Heinz's daughter for instance had no idea *Opa Hinsch* had a sister, while Frits Lothar's own, Vera, spoke in a similar way. Only Martin's son Rŷdiger recalled a 'connection' with the Netherlands which suggests his father may have been closest to his cousins (bearing in mind just two months separated Martin and Theo). The year 1919 then marked a new beginning for the Tŷrallas and Hinschs, while the civil unrest that followed cemented the distance between the two cohorts.

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Demobilization not only saw many homecoming divorces, but marriages too.³⁹ A shortage of housing became a major problem, as were lower living standards and growing inflation, fueled by a mini-economic boom that followed four years of pent up consumer demand. By the new year of 1919, 40,000 Leipzigers – many of them new families – were forced to crowd in with friends and relatives. Tens of thousands more inhabited dilapidated apartments whose maintenance had been neglected.

Those newlyweds lucky enough to find apartments were obliged to keep them cold since between November 1918 and February 1919, German coal production fell by 66 percent – a result of workforce exhaustion, strikes, and equipment degradation. The *Reich* was obliged to ration coal and electricity for each city, and each municipality in turn rationed it for individuals and organizations.

As a source of power and electricity, coal heated homes and provided gas to factories which meant perpetually chilly rooms along with frequent brown and black-outs. The city government began buying up coal, "no matter how expensive." The shortage, however, became so serious in the last weeks of January that factories were shut down for lack of energy, while housewives could not cook. Without coal, factory orders could not be filled, workforces could not be paid, and the railways could not function,⁴⁰ stranding the Hinsch's in Machern.

³⁹ Richard Bessel. *Germany after the First World War*. 1995. Pg. 228

⁴⁰ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 217 (referring to the above three paragraphs)

Ebert's fears for soldiers' peaceful reintegration proved to be well-grounded when unemployment became a critical issue in Saxony that year.⁴¹ According to Bessel, most women believed the veterans had a right to their old jobs and after years of sacrifice wished to marry, start families, and with luck avoid wage work altogether.⁴²

In Saxony, however, 500 unemployed lower white collar males took to the city center on January 25th to demonstrate against the reluctance of firms to fire all female employees in order to make room for returning veterans. They went on to storm a factory and wholesaler.⁴³ Along with the veterans, many single women eventually joined the ranks of the unemployed. As a consequence, the poor relief rolls in Leipzig rose by 35 percent between November 1918 and February 1919, while unemployment rose from 18,000 to 40,000. Given the inadequacy of the benefits from new unemployment insurance, rowdy demonstrations occurred in late November, on January 17th, and again on February 5th, 1919.⁴⁴

What's more, while the Allied blockade was in principle lifted on January 17th, 1919 to allow the import of food, delays in delivery continued until mid-July. The black market therefore continued to thrive and for the German people, those were the most devastating months – nearly 700,000 people (children, old people and women) died of malnutrition⁴⁵ as “Germany's deplorable state further deteriorated.”⁴⁶

9.1: Black Market! Snapshots from the Countryside...

The food shortages in Germany that continued after the armistice required the state to maintain the wartime system of rationing. That meant that the black market, with all its inequities, persisted. Hoarders and black marketeers speculated amidst the uncertainties, and this plunder ate into the middle classes' last reserves of capital and dignity. Although hardly popular, most workers too recognized that a free market in food would be worse.

Conversely that situation should have favoured Marie and Friedrich Hinsch who remained camped out at their Machern estate. In many places, however, the black market only heightened the problems and anger of rural producers. In Silesian *Klein Steinisch* for instance, a village of around 1000 inhabitants in the district of *Groß Strehlitz* (some 45 kilometres from Little Nanny's Radstein-based grandmother, uncles, aunts etc.), an army command of two officers and 45 men were dispatched in motor vehicles to procure the delivery of livestock, otherwise hoarded by local farmers.

Such circumstances naturally re-fuelled antagonism toward the central government and between town and country: the rural countryside despised Berlin and everything that came from it. Animosity between urban and rural dwellers then spilled over with many workers walking off their jobs en masse to scour the countryside for food, only to be met by farmers bearing clubs and guns.

For consumers, however, the gap between food supply and demand did not end until the summer of 1923, when price-controls were finally fully lifted.



Sources: *Germany after the First World War*. Richard Bessel, 1995, Pg. 214-5; Dietrich, Alexander Walker, Pg.16
wiki.de/Strzelce_Opolskie and *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Sean Dobson, 2001. Pg. 217

⁴¹ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 216

⁴² Richard Bessel. *Germany After the First World War*. 1995. Pg. 228

⁴³ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 229

⁴⁴ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 216

⁴⁵ Otto Friedrich. *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s*. 1972. Pg. 36

⁴⁶ See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blockade_of_Germany



Leipziger Frauen wählen! 82.3 percent of Leipzig's eligible women voters joined in the Jan. 1919 elections.
Source: Güldemann

Despite the difficult conditions, the process of building a government progressed and elections to the new National Assembly were held on January 19th. As in other countries around the world (including Australia, Denmark, Canada, Finland and New Zealand), women were invited to vote. Posters went up around Germany and almost 90 percent of those eligible participated.⁴⁷ As a result, almost 10 percent of the elected delegates among parties committed to making Germany a successful parliamentary democracy were women.

Nationally, the Majority Socialists garnered 37.9 percent of the vote while the Independent Socialists won 7.6. In Leipzig, however, the results went the opposite way, with the MSPD securing only 20.7 percent while the USPD scored 38.6 percent. This reveals the "extreme bitterness among Leipzig's workers," and its frustrations that "the revolution did not deliver what they had expected," observes Dobson. That in turn goaded them into further reaction.⁴⁸

The Social Democrats (incorporating the Independent Socialists), the Centre Party (*Zentrum*) and the German Democratic Party (DDP) occupied pivotal political and governmental roles in the new state, having been political pariahs before 1914.⁴⁹ This deprived the nobility of its prestige and influence and in the longer term it continued to lose its importance.⁵⁰ Under threat from the burgeoning working class, a sense of crisis enveloped it that had been spreading since the turn of the century.

To avoid the ongoing fights in Berlin following the Spartacists' uprising, the National Assembly retreated to the city of Weimar, giving the parties the moniker, the 'Weimar Coalition' as well as the future republic its unofficial name.⁵¹ Five days later, on February 11th, 1919, Friedrich Ebert became the first *Reichspräsident*.

Prussia in turn became a part of the Weimar Republic as a free state and remained Germany's dominant state with more than half the territory and population of the *Reich*, while smaller states like Saxony retained a good deal of autonomy, including their police, courts and educational systems (but not their military). The Free State of Saxony formally entered into being with its own constitution on November 1st, 1920,⁵² although at the same time she lost her railway and financial sovereignty.⁵³

⁴⁷ Lisa Pine in *Germany Since 1800: A New Social And Economic History* edited by Ogilvie and Overy. Pg. 363

⁴⁸ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 220

⁴⁹ Peter Stachura in *Germany Since 1800: A New Social And Economic History* edited by Ogilvie and Overy. pg. 234

⁵⁰ Benninghaus et al in *Germany Since 1800: A New Social And Economic History* edited by Ogilvie and Overy. Pg. 295

⁵¹ See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Weimar_Republic

⁵² See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_of_Saxony

⁵³ See: <http://sachsen.de/en/274.htm>

According to Richard Bodek "there is no question that the republic's legitimacy was immediately an issue for many, especially those on the right."⁵⁴ The extreme right derived its political strength from it,⁵⁵ while the nationalists, who still found the defeat and the revolution impossible to accept, spread the "stab-in-the-back" legend, accusing the parties which had advocated a negotiated peace in 1917 (those now governing the country) of betraying an "undefeated" army. Many schoolchildren were even led to search for internal enemies who had allegedly foiled the country's military victory.⁵⁶ Right-wing extremist agitation followed, escalating into putsches and assassinations that in turn provoked a counter reaction from the extreme left.⁵⁷

Despite their doubters, the new democratic republic strove to place the issue of welfare and social services at the centre of the political stage. Its governing parties were all committed to substantial welfare state provision and two overarching considerations united them in the early postwar years, recalls Stachura in his contribution to *Germany Since 1800: A New Social and Economic History*: First, concern to promote the republic's reputation and acceptability in the country by pursuing a demonstrably humanitarian course in welfare for the good of the German people, in the interests of social justice and for the regeneration of the *Reich*, and second, it was believed that a substantial programme of state welfare would attract the support and loyalty of the bulk of the working class.⁵⁸

The competition for working-class support from the USPD and the Communist Party could only add vigour and urgency to the SPD's strategy, adds Stachura. However, in Richard Bodek's view the bloody action that occurred throughout the *Spartacists* coup destroyed the chances of any far-reaching social and political change and killed any chance of socialist unity in the coming years.⁵⁹

While the Assembly set about drafting a new constitution for the *Reich*, fighting continued at street level across Germany. Leipzig's citizens, both workers and their bourgeois counterparts grew exasperated with the domestic conditions and took to the streets time and time again between the end of January and the beginning of March, 1919.

At the end of February, for example, hundreds of thousands of workers across central Germany (besides those in its other two main industrial centers, the Ruhr and Berlin) attempted a general strike in order to force the national government to embark on more radical policies. It was an event that represented what one contemporary labeled "the decisive battle over the further progress of the revolution."⁶⁰ That occasion and those involved and affected, besides its consequences, occupies the next few pages.

⁵⁴ Richard Bodek's Introduction in Claire Bergmann's: *What Will Become of the Children? A Novel of a German Family* (1932). Camden House, 2010. Pg. xiii.

⁵⁵ *Questions on German History*. Pg. 213

⁵⁶ Andrew Donson. *Youth in the Fatherless Land...1914-1918*. Harvard, 2010. Pg. 177

⁵⁷ *Questions on German History*. Pg. 202

⁵⁸ Peter Stachura in *Germany Since 1800: A New Social And Economic History* edited by Ogilvie and Overy. Pg. 234

⁵⁹ Richard Bodek's Introduction in Claire Bergmann's *What Will Become of the Children? A Novel of a German Family* (1932). Camden House, 2010. Pg. xii

⁶⁰ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 221

On February 27th, Leipzig's workers, practically all in industry, walked off the job, while those on the railroads, tram and utility workers supported it, besides those in textile mills.⁶¹ According to one of Thomas A. Kohut's interviewee's description of that period "We had... the bathtub filled with water."⁶² The Leipzig workers' and soldiers' council led by Curt Geyer⁶³ began requisitioning coal from businesses and wealthy individuals, while ensuring food shipments reached the city by rail.⁶⁴



Hawkers and peddlers outside the new town hall,
March 1919. Source: *Leipzig Info CD*

The shortages of coal and electricity drove tens of thousands of Leipzig's citizens out of cold and dark apartments onto streets thronged with automobiles and horse carts charging high taxi fares in the wake of the stoppage of tram services. Amid the smiling faces of ordinary workers pleased to reclaim the public spaces they had conquered back in November and January, street hawkers peddled out-of-town newspapers⁶⁵ with reports about the strike as well as candles for the coming night.⁶⁶

Indifferent to the strike were agricultural labourers employed on estates (I daresay including the Hinsch's) surrounding the city, says Dobson.⁶⁷ Many were Polish migrant workers, who had little concern for German politics. Others declared their neutrality to it including fire and policeman, cemetery and waterworks employees, telephone workers and operators and postal service workers too. Nevertheless unperturbed by the lack of unanimous support, the workers' leadership posted placards across Leipzig which read: "Workers! The bourgeoisie must recognise that it cannot live without you, but that you can survive without it!"

In response, Leipzig's non-workers, who themselves were now organised under the banner of the so-called *BA* or *Bürger-Ausschuß*,⁶⁸ decided to test this claim by staging their own counter-strike. All businesses closed their doors, including those of Leipzig's independent master artisans, publicans and shopkeepers (although food stores reopened almost immediately for fear of plundering at the hands of striking workers).⁶⁹ By default that should have meant Fritz, Walther, Hedwig and her parents (Albert's factory could well have been closed by his own workforce too).

⁶¹ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 243

⁶² *A German Generation*, Yale University Press. 2012. T.A. Kohut. Pg. 46

⁶³ Son of the popular Reichstag SPD deputy, Friedrich Geyer and former leader of socialist youth groups and *Leipziger Volkszeitung* reporter. Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson pg. 233. See also pg. 217 within Chapter VIII.

⁶⁴ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 246

⁶⁵ The only local newspaper Geyer's council permitted to appear was the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*.

⁶⁶ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 246

⁶⁷ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 243

⁶⁸ The elites reasserted themselves quickly following the workers' revolution of November 1918 by issuing an appeal that month on the 15th in the nonsocialist press to the Leipzig citizenry (*Bürgerschaft*) to form a citizens' committee (*Bürger-Ausschuß*) in order to safeguard the interests of the those not represented by the *Arbeiter und Soldaten-rat*, to 'moderate' the revolution and preserve German *Kultur* (which went hand in hand with elite rule). Two days later, the new organisation was constituted following a gathering of one hundred non-socialist organisations at the Businessmen's Club. Ultimately it encompassed 200 hundred groups representing 7000 individuals! Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. pg. 212-214.

⁶⁹ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 244

Lower white collars also heeded the call of the *BA*, while sales help at all the department stores but one endorsed the counter-strike.⁷⁰ Office employees joined too, including clerks in insurance companies and banks. Doctors joined and even evicted 250 patients from the public ward of St. Jacob's Hospital, southeast of the city centre in *Leipzig Reudnitz* on February 28th!⁷¹

Workers' riots inevitably followed and on March 1st, five hundred plundered the mansion of a city senator, before the crowd moved on to the *Café Merkur* situated within a prominent right-wing locale in the vicinity of Hedwig's family's home, confiscating its food supply.⁷²

The *Bürger*s meanwhile drew further support from *Land* officials who were responsible for distributing food (or ration) cards as well as area farmers who decided to end formal food deliveries to the city.⁷³ Furthermore, to prevent food trains from reaching the city the vice president of the railway, Mittag, had the track between Wurzen (Machern's nearest station) and Leipzig torn up! This drew accusation from the Saxon Minister for Economic Affairs that Mittag was perpetuating the troublesome situation. The vice president, however, claimed he did this rather in order to prevent trigger happy works' council security units from commandeering trains and redirecting them to Leipzig.⁷⁴

In addition to rail management, *gymnasial* teachers counterstruck, as did most teachers in the *Real* and *Volksschulen* (where kids not bound for university went).⁷⁵ The Tjyralla and Hinsch kids will have no doubt enjoyed a good few days off school, which probably got Nannÿ thinking of new means to deal with the uncertainty the city posed at the time.

Because of the shortage of food, the municipal market hall, an important distribution centre, was obliged to reopen. A city-wide curfew was imposed from 2100 until 0400 to prevent crime, which became a concern owing to the lack of electricity during the night. Between the lack of power and the curfew, nights in Leipzig were pitch black, pierced only by the flashlight beams of works' councils' security patrols. I can only imagine how they were in turn cursed by *Frau Tjyralla* and *Herr Petzold*, not to mention her brother and soon-to-be former sister-in-law.

At a time of shortage, the national government had to take seriously the threat of such a massive work stoppage, on the one hand because it enjoyed fairly unified leadership from the USPD, and on the other, because a strike in central Germany could lame transportation for the whole *Reich*.⁷⁶ Furthermore, the power plants that supplied Berlin and other cities with electricity were partially out of commission.

⁷⁰ White collars participated partly because they wanted their own committees to be independent organisations rather than part of the same workers' councils, writes Dobson, pg. 244

⁷¹ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 245,247

⁷² Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 247

⁷³ Which will have hurt upper-income Leipzigers less than workers because of the former's superior purchasing power and stored provisions, says Dobson, pg. 245.

⁷⁴ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 252, 393

⁷⁵ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 245

⁷⁶ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 241

A few days later, on March 4th, Leipzig's strikers learned their central German comrades had agreed to meet the government to discuss an end to the strike. Fearing invasion by Germany's newly formed *Reichswehr*⁷⁷ (which was supported by the *Freikorps*), it upped the ante by calling for the establishment of a German Soviet Republic constituted by workers' and soldiers' councils.⁷⁸

To defend Leipzig against the expected invasion, the local workers' council organized a one-thousand man people's militia (*Volkswehr*) while severing communications with the rest of Germany, forbidding persons and vehicles from leaving the city (except those involved in the food trade) and shutting down the telephone and telegraph service.

By the second week of the strike, however, increasing numbers of Leipzig's workers lacked the money to put food on the table. In addition, welfare benefits were denied because municipal clerks remained part of a counter strike. In response, the workers' council allocated about 125,000 Marks to widows of fallen soldiers (which probably meant Frau Tŷralla was enjoying the best of both worlds). It also picked up the pace of coal and food requisitions from businesses and wealthy individuals (which probably in turn hurt Herr Petzold).⁷⁹

Leipzig remained cut off from the rest of Germany. A proletarian security force numbering 2500 patrolled the streets and surrounding countryside, while distributing food and coal from rich to poor. In Sean Dobson's view, "Leipzig became during this week a kind of miniature soviet Republic, one of the rare instances in history of a genuine dictatorship of the proletariat."⁸⁰

Fritz, Nannŷ and their parents were probably holding their breath had they heard the *Reichswehr*, under the command of General Georg Maercker, lurked within 20km of the city. The workers' and soldiers' council prepared to meet him in the suburbs, so as to spare Leipzig the kind of damage inflicted on neighbouring Halle just a few days earlier. Roughly 10,000 proletarians were armed with the weapons of the 19th Army Corps arsenal and this small army, together with the 2,500 security formation of the council seems to have successfully deterred Maercker, who withdrew from Leipzig's environs and began subduing strikes in other cities.⁸¹

The Leipzig workers' strike came to an end on March 11th when the Saxon minister of Economic Affairs mediated a solution which left the workers' and soldiers' council armed and in control of a "radical Leipzig in a position to fight another day."⁸² During the following days, however, the city senate terminated the funding for the council's security force, weakening its position while transferring formal authority over these units to the Ministry of Military Affairs in Dresden.⁸³

⁷⁷ On March 6th. See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reichswehr>

⁷⁸ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson, pg. 247

⁷⁹ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson, pg. 249

⁸⁰ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson, pg. 249-250

⁸¹ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson, pg. 250

⁸² Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson, pg. 251

⁸³ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson, pg. 254

What is particularly interesting about that course of events, writes Dobson, is that Leipzig's *Bürger-Ausschuß* orchestrated the most formidable counter-strike in central Germany. His contemporaries agree the BA was by far the most important non-socialist institution during the revolution there⁸⁴ - so much so that by April 1919, all four non-socialist parties⁸⁵ were urging their members to join. My particular line of interest is, was Albert Petzold a formal BA member? It doesn't seem very likely, but even if he wasn't, he was probably very sympathetic to the *Bürgers'* cause.⁸⁶

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Given the upheaval winter 1919 brought Leipzig's residents, I imagine the Tŷrallas and the Hinsch's enmity for the new republic only grew. From day to day their safety, security and well-being had been put in jeopardy. But in the peace that followed the March resolution and with the arrival of warmer weather, in early April Hedwig and her children moved out of her parents' apartment and into a third floor flat just outside of and to the northwest of Leipzig's medieval center and its *Promenadenring* in *Wintergartenstrasse* 4. That home would serve them for the next 18 years or so. The picture right shows the view up and across the street from Little Nannŷ's cousins' home, practically opposite Leipzig's famous *Krystallpalast* theatre.



Upstreet view from the Hinsch's new home,
northwest Leipzig

Source: Wiki.de/Krystallpalast_(Leipzig)

Despite its weakened position, the workers' and soldiers' security forces continued to patrol the city's streets and maintain public order. Strike fever also continued within pockets around Germany: in Stuttgart in the beginning of April, a week later in Magdeburg and on April 13th in Munich, when Bavaria was then declared a soviet Republic.⁸⁷ In Leipzig evidence began to mount that General Maercker was preparing to return and when the Saxon Military Affairs Minister was accosted, shot and tossed from Dresden's Augustus Bridge into the Elbe by a group of wounded veterans for terminating their benefits, Saxony as a whole was placed under a state of siege on April 12th.

⁸⁴ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson, pg. 215, 246. Whatsmore, the BA's weekly newspaper; *Tatigkeitbericht* enjoyed a circulation of 50,000 while its bimonthly journal, *Brennende Tagesfragen*, reached 150,000 readers per issue. The BA had its own publishing house and *Tatigkeitbericht* ran from 1918-1932 (as Volumes 1-9). Through these tools the BA attacked the USPD. See Dobson, pg. 212.

⁸⁵ The German Democratic Party or DPP, the German People's Party or DVP, the German National People's Party or DNVP and the Catholic Center or *Zentrum Partei*

⁸⁶ According to Sean Dobson, pg. 214, the names of the Executive Committee were listed in Vol.1 of the *Tatigkeitbericht* and so I wondered whether Albert might have been among them. Copies are not available via the *StaatsArchiv* although further publications of the Leipzig BA do sit in Leipzig's branch of the *Deutschen Nationalbibliothek* in Thonberg. Another potential source that may have told me about Albert's affiliations was the 'Union of Leipzig Employer's Organisations' or *Zentralausschuß der Leipziger Arbeitgeberverbände*. According to Dr. Thoralf Handke of the *StaatsArchiv*, although the individual firms that were members of this union are not listed in a single volume (rather branches of various employer organizations or *Arbeitgeberverbände*), a publication by Hans Rückert entitled: *Leipziger Wirtschaftshandbuch* (Leipzig Business Guide). I. Band: *Die Wirtschaftsvertretungen* (Businesses), 1927 does present the union's members within a personal name index. Albert Petzold is not listed, wrote Dr. Handke on March 4th, 2013. Notwithstanding the date, Albert was probably not a member of the BA. Could this have been because he worked solely on military contracts?

⁸⁷ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson, pg. 254

In response, Leipzig's blue-collar workers in the postal service, its municipal garbage and morgue workers, letterpress apprentices, carpenters and tram workers struck during the second half of April. When the Leipzig workers' council refused to recognise the Saxon government's demobilisation decree, the latter gained the pretext to call in federal troops to subdue the city.⁸⁸

Reich Chancellor, Philipp Scheidemann's cabinet grew concerned at the worsening situation, while the government of Saxony warned Leipzig to drop its pretensions of autonomy or otherwise face military occupation. By late April the threat of invasion filled Leipzig's newspapers and emboldened by Maercker's imminent arrival, six hundred students and right wing gymnasts held military exercises in early May.⁸⁹

Perhaps as a safety measure, on May 5th the youngest of the Tŷrallas, Margot, now seven and a half, was shipped out of Gohlis, I suspect alongside Theo.⁹⁰ Her destination though was no farther than *Leipzig Thonberg*, a southeastern district that neighboured socialist *Stotteritz*. Not only was that an odd choice for a safe house, but their host proved unusual too – a 53 year old stone grinder (*Steinschleifer*) named Richard Krause.⁹¹ Regrettably there is no residential record for him, although police files report he was Leipzig-born and a voluntary constable (*Hilfsschutzmann*) too.⁹² But on whose side, I wonder?⁹³

As uncertainty engulfed the Tŷrallas' hometown, by May 9th reports of Maercker's approach were streaming into the city. Leipzig was filled with flyers distributed by the city's small group of communists calling for a general strike. The following night, several thousand troops accompanied by *Freikorps* arrived aboard three armoured trains, together with two armoured cars and a tank company. Encountering no resistance, they occupied Leipzig, securing it within hours. Leipzig's *Bürger-Ausschuß* then placed its propaganda machine at General's Maercker's disposal, identified troublemakers for arrest, and helped troops find their way around the unfamiliar city.⁹⁴

It's workers responded by organising another general strike in which several thousand workers in dozens of firms subsequently laid down their tools two days later. Despite being joined by municipal gas workers and miners, it collapsed after only three days.⁹⁵ With the workers' and soldiers' council broken and a *Freikorps* in place, Maercker withdrew most of his troops on May 25th, leaving Leipzig 'secure' but within a Saxony formally still under a state of siege.

⁸⁸ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson, pg. 256, 260

⁸⁹ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 260

⁹⁰ Owing to the lack of a residential record for Theo, we cannot fully confirm he joined Margot. However, later evidence suggests this to have been likely.

⁹¹ He lived at *Reitzenhainerstr. 87 IV* and was still there in 1930 confirms the *Leipzig Adressbuch*.

⁹² PP-S 8706 indicates he was born March 20th, 1866. M. Wermes. 8th August, 2013.

⁹³ Dobson also notes two VIPs called Krause: on pg. 229, he refers to a Karl Krause, who owned a machine making factory (rumoured to have accumulated huge profits during the war and whose factory was stormed on 25th Jan, 1919 after which he agreed to dismiss his female employees). Another is listed on pg. 311 in Appendix 3: Max Krause was a businessman and consul to foreign governments in Leipzig. He was a member of the *Kolonial-gesellschaft* and *Kunstverein*. He was also the chairman of the prestigious social/charity club *Gesellschaft Harmonie* from 1920-22. Might this be the missing link between the Tŷrallas and Richard Krause?

⁹⁴ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson, pg. 261-2

⁹⁵ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 263

Over the coming months a new phase in Leipzig's brief but already vivid post-war history followed. Reactionary forces were formed called the *Zeitfreiwilligenregiment*. Supported by General Maercker and with the consent of the Saxon government, among the volunteers were many university students, so-called 'children of privilege.' Less than a year later, they in turn would attempt the removal of the republic.⁹⁶



Warning Bell?
A recruitment
poster for
Leipzig's new
voluntary
militia.
23rd May, 1919.
Source:
Güldemann

But let's step back for a moment. It is said that the safest place in a storm is its eye. Might this explain young Margot's destination? The reality is, however, that she remained in Thonberg not just until 'normality' returned to the city but right up until September. Had the summer holidays arrived early? Were the youngsters demanding more attention than Frau Tjyralla could offer? And why was Margot sent to live under the guardianship of a 'worker,' i.e. the bourgeois class 'enemy'?

Little Nannj too was packed off, in her case to boot camp at a popular Baltic seaside spa resort called *Bad Swinemunde an der Ostsee*.⁹⁷ Situated on the Isle of Usedom north of the *Stettiner Haff* (the Szczecin Lagoon), its lovely coast without a single pebble and miles of snow white sand rendered it especially popular among Berliners (like Pitt Deutsch's son, Max).⁹⁸ Photos reveal she was one among a mixed crowd that most certainly did not include her Theo, nor her mother and Herr Petzold.



Little
Nannj
turns 12,
shorn of
her long
locks

Sadly the kids' departures marked the start of another long period of absences that occurred barely two years after Theo and Margot had returned from Machern (and hardly a year after his spell in *Bad Sachsa*). But if the civil unrest had provided a pretext for Frau Tjyralla to put her children in the care of others, she got used to that comfort, making plans to keep it that way. One reason she proffered in 1922 was her need to sub-let rooms in order to make ends meet.

⁹⁶ *Der Kapp-Putsch 1920 in Leipzig*: <http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~agintern/uni600/ug222d.pdf>

⁹⁷ Then part of Pomerania and *Landkreis Usedom-Wollin*, today it lies in the extreme north-west of Poland, just a stone's throw from the German border and its neighbouring resort of *Seebad Ahlbeck*. See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swinoujście and de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Landkreis_Usedom-Wollin

⁹⁸ Otto Friedrich. *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s* from 1972. Pg. 92.

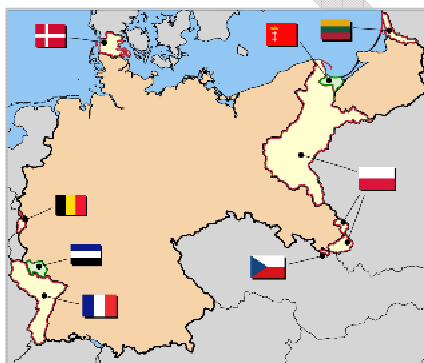
While the young Tŷrallas unwound at opposite ends of the *Reich*, the pride of most socially and politically aware Germans was taking some pretty hefty punches. Following the war, the majority had expected their treatment by the Allies to be relatively benign under United States' President Woodrow Wilson's famous *Fourteen Points*, especially since his chief demand that Germany rid itself of crowned rule had been satisfied. His attitude toward the country had been introduced in a speech of January 8th, 1918 containing the following lines:

*"We do not wish to fight her either with arms or with hostile arrangements of trade, if she is willing to associate herself with us and the other peace-loving nations of the world in covenants of justice and law and fair-dealing."*⁹⁹

Germans were thus horrified with the peace treaty presented to their government that spring,¹⁰⁰ especially Article 231, the so-called 'war-guilt' clause, which claimed:

*"The Allied and Associated Governments affirm and Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all 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."*¹⁰¹

This became the main reason why the Treaty of Versailles (as it came to be known) was rejected by the German people. However, in addition (and whilst barred from negotiations), Germany was not only stripped of what it had taken from Russia in the east, but was forced to concede a significant amount of territory to a resurrected Poland (losing Posen and Upper Silesia whilst a corridor was pushed through to the sea cutting East Prussia off from its hinterland, rendering ineffective the transportation system that had been developed there).



Alsace-Lorraine was restored to France (following Germany's gain in 1871), besides part of its bank along the Rhine. The Saar coal and steel-producing region (see the map left, in green) was placed under the control of the newly formed League of Nations while Danzig in the northeast was made a free city (also in green). Lithuania and Denmark made gains too and thus Weimar Germany is shown left in beige.

The German Empire, 1871 and subsequent losses under the Treaty of Versailles or later via plebiscite. Source: Wiki/Weimar_Republic

Many of Alsace, Lorraine and Upper Silesia's industries were separated from their sources of raw materials as well as from their most important markets in Germany.¹⁰² Planned plebiscites in *Schleswig*, Upper Silesia (see text box overleaf), *Allenstein-Marienwerder* and a referendum in *Eupen-Malmedy* further contributed to the crisis of helplessness that engulfed Germany in the first half of 1919, when its colonies in Africa and the Far East were also seized.

⁹⁹ Richard Bodek's Introduction in Claire Bergmann's *What Will Become of the Children?* 2010. pg. xii.

¹⁰⁰ Otto Friedrich. *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s* from 1972, pg. 36.

¹⁰¹ The same clause with the name 'Germany' replaced by 'Austria' and 'Hungary', respectively, was part of the [Treaty of Saint-Germain](#) (Article 177) and the [Treaty of Trianon](#) (Article 161) respectively.

¹⁰² Frank B. Tipton in *Germany Since 1800: A New Social And Economic History* edited by Ogilvie and Overy. Pg. 15

9.2: Germany's "Bleeding Frontiers:" Upper Silesia

The Treaty of Versailles ruled that the entire territory of Upper Silesia (see postcard right) was to be handed over to Poland immediately, on the grounds that the majority of its inhabitants were Polish-speaking.¹ Indeed, in 1910 the population of Upper Silesia had consisted of 1,245,000 Poles and 672,000 Germans.² However, the case against was argued, and as a result, Upper Silesians were invited to decide in March 1921.

That vote incorporated the region around Paul Tȳralla's homeland, Radstein, which meant his mother, brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces could expect to become part of Poland. Yet that was far from Germany's strategic interest and during the next two years' it increased its population in the region, benefitting from the arrival of some 700,000 who left areas ceded to Poland and France to settle in lands that remained German.³

The March 1921 vote brought a final result of 707,605 for Germany and 479,359 for Poland,² while careful examination revealed the majority of Poles, peasants and industrial workers lay in the eastern part, while the industrialists, landowners, and officials were almost all German.⁴ For this reason, the eastern flank (illustrated in the postcard's righthand side) alone was ceded.

Disastrously, however, 'the land surrounding St. Annaberg' included 76 percent of Upper Silesia's coalmines, 90 percent of its coal reserves, 97 percent of its iron-ore, as well as ironworks, zinc factories, steelworks and more,¹ meaning Germany in turn lost a significant amount of its natural resources, critical to the reconstruction of the economy as well as its prestige and power.

The Tȳrallas remained a part of Germany – for now. Of 633 votes cast, 507 in Radstein were to stay in Germany, while 103 were for Poland. Similar results were returned for neighbouring Ellguth.⁵ Although perhaps as many as half were voters drafted in for the occasion, that suggests many in the Tȳrallas' community appreciated their ties to Germany and helps explain why Little Nannȳ's father left Silesia for Saxony in 1900.

On the postcard one can just about depict the district capital *Oppeln*, 40 km northeast of Radstein. One thing for sure, however, was that after the vote the border to Poland some 50 km away now ran a lot closer and about half as far off, as it used to!



BDO propaganda postcard (1931) showing territorial losses in Upper Silesia with the aid of a thumbtack on the right side.

Sources:

1. R.L. Bell, *Poland: Key to Europe*, 1939; 2. See: <http://archive.catholicherald.co.uk/article/23rd-july-1937/9/upper-silesia-a-new-era>; 3. Benninghaus, Haupt and Requate, *Ogilvie & Overy*, pg. 285; 4. *Politics in Independent Poland, 1921-1939*. A. Polonsky, 1972. Oxford, Clarendon Press; 5. See: <http://home.arcor.de/oberschlesien-bw/abstimmung/neustadt.htm>; Also of interest: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upper_Silesia_plebiscite and en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Upper_Silesia

"The German people were reeling deliriously between blank despair, frenzied rivalry, and revolution," wrote the Anglo-German diplomat, Harry Kessler. Moreover, the Allies threatened occupation if Versailles' terms were not agreed to.

Germany had no alternative but to resign itself since peace also meant the end of the Allied blockade, which in turn permitted its industry to obtain vitally needed raw materials and to resume exports.¹⁰³ At the same time the armed forces were neutralized and reduced to a maximum of 100,000 men while its High Seas Fleet¹⁰⁴ was dismantled and all military aircraft, tanks and vehicles banned.

In addition, there was a bill for the war in the form of reparations to be paid in gold marks that ran into billions and the promise of war crimes' trials to come. On June 28th, 1919, Germany was retired from the ranks of the global powers. The majority, whatever their political inclination, were aggrieved by these harsh terms and wanted some measure of pride restored.

¹⁰³ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson, Pg. 266

¹⁰⁴ The battle fleet of the German Imperial Navy See: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_Seas_Fleet

"The sense of loss was underscored especially effectively in the schools, which often sought to preserve national conservative, antirepublican values by harping on the injustices of the Versailles Treaty and Germany's losses and humiliation at the hands of the Western democracies and, indeed, of the leaders of the Republic itself," notes Thomas A. Kohut in *A German Generation*. One of Kohut's interviewees recalled that as a 13 year old the specific clauses of the treaty had to be learned, as punishment.¹⁰⁵

Despite those consequences, the country forged ahead with a new constitution that was duly adopted on August 11th. While it incorporated social democratic ideas on the welfare state, the disparity between it and a reality that lagged far behind its aims placed a heavy burden on the young republic.¹⁰⁶ While it gave women the vote for instance, it did little to quieten down the rabid political and domestic scene.

The young Tŷrallas' homelife hardly quietened down either. No sooner were the youngsters back in autumn 1919 and Nannŷ and Margot were shipped off to *Querfurt* for the new school year, while Theo was returned to his Hinsch grandparents in Machern (despite a court order having forbidden their guardianship two years earlier). The sisters were posted perhaps to Frau Tŷralla's cousin; Oskar Lieberoth, assuming he'd returned home and taken over his father's trade. He'd now be 52 years old, while any offspring he had would have been Nannŷ and Margot's second cousins.¹⁰⁷

Not surprisingly, those times were not among Little Nannŷ's fondest memories, her youngest daughter would later recall (since she obviously preferred staying with her mother). However, kinship lines and informal networks among neighbours and relatives continued to exist beyond the war, ultimately dissolving the nineteenth century bourgeois family, writes historian, Elisabeth Domansky, in her contribution to *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870-1930*.¹⁰⁸

I imagine one of Little Nannŷ's mother's reasons for sending her and her siblings to *Querfurt* and *Machern* (besides renting out their bedrooms!) was the countryside's relative safety in comparison with a city in which uncertainty over workers' ambitions and a national government ready to throw its weight around prevailed. Secondary school could be attended without interruption, while food security was less an issue when surrounded by farm fields.

While that interpretation is more sympathetic towards Frau Tŷralla, the truth is her life (and in turn her children's) increasingly revolved around the man with the toothbrush moustache – *Onkel Albert*. Throughout those early post-war years he continued to deal with *Lebensmittelfabrik* (the production of foodstuffs) including *Kunstpfeffer* (a recently developed synthetic pepper substitute),¹⁰⁹ alongside the condiments mentioned in Chapter VIII. In the spring and autumn of 1919, he exhibited at the *Leipziger Messe*.

¹⁰⁵ *A German Generation*, Yale University Press. 2012. T.A. Kohut. Pg.55-56, 63

¹⁰⁶ *Questions on German History*. Pg. 212.

¹⁰⁷ An enquiry to confirm their whereabouts sent to *Stadtarchiv Querfurt* on 25th July, 2013 remains unanswered.

¹⁰⁸ E. Domansky. *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870-1930*. G. Eley (Ed). Pg. 446

¹⁰⁹ *Hermann Staudinger und der Kunstpfeffer. Ersatzgewürze*. E. Vaupel. *Chemie in unserer Zeit*. Dec. 2010. Pp. 396–412.

9.3: The 'Toothbrush' Moustache



This unmistakable moustache was seen to be cropped at the edges, leaving three to five centimeters above the centre of the lip. It first became popular in America in the late 19th century and was considered a neat, uniform, low-maintenance style that echoed the standardization brought on by industrialization. This was in contrast to the more flamboyant 'Kaiser' moustaches typical of the 19th century, perfumed and turned up at the ends, as worn by the royalty in the German Empire.

The style was introduced in Germany by visiting Americans and by 1907, enough Germans were wearing it to elicit column-space in the New York Times under the headline "TOOTHBRUSH" MUSTACHE; German Women Resent Its Usurpation of the "Kaiserbart." By the end of the war even some of the German royals were seen to be sporting the toothbrush; William Hohenzollern (son of the Kaiser) for instance in a 1918 photograph shortly before going into exile.

After the second world war, however, the style fell from favor in the West due to its strong association with Hitler, earning it the nickname: "Hitler moustache." However, it was also famously used by Charlie Chaplin and Oliver Hardy.

Sources: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toothbrush_moustache

Albert's enterprise, however, probably experienced a fair amount of its own turbulence during those first six months of 1919. Unless it somehow stood aloof of most other workers' factories because it worked exclusively for the military (see footnote 86), not only was it in danger of being seized by his workforce (which was likely dominated by females who were ubiquitous in food processing factories), but it was through such enterprises alone that women could be elected to the *Arbeiter- und Soldatenrates*.¹¹⁰

It was not only the workers who believed that some sort of socialisation of the economy was unavoidable during the first months of the revolution. In December 1918, the Leipzig Chapter of the Federation of Saxon Industrialists informed its members that they expected enterprises from the largest to the smallest to be declared national property and to be subjected to the supervision of its own... workers, while CEOs would be retained on a salary basis alone. One third of the enterprise would become the property of the *Reich*, while the rest would fall into the hands of the workers.¹¹¹

Even if Albert's *Fabrik* was already national property, April's deadline for demobilisation and the armed forces reduction by June meant that his business would be forced to adapt. It's hardly surprisingly then his *Leipzig Adressbuch* entry grew more modest after the war, resuming that of a small(er)-time *Fabrikant*. That suggests a demotion in status and a downscaling of his activities indeed occurred. Yet on the face of it he looks to have retained management control over his firm. What future lay ahead during those months of uncertainty that followed the war?

¹¹⁰ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 227

¹¹¹ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 195

Incredible
numbers throng
the streets
during the 1921
Leipziger Messe
Source:
Güldemann



A chronicle published in 1978 by VEB *Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften* reflected on the rising popularity of the city's trade fairs,' going as far as to say it became "a battleground of the *GrossBourgeoisie* for profits and new markets."¹¹² Exhibitors travelled from all over the world to peddle and promote new ideas, products, services and inventions with as many as 120,000 visitors attending the spring 1919 fair, alongside 9,500 exhibitors.¹¹³ That in turn spelled opportunity for any businessman, including a would-be inventor like *Herr Petzold*.

According to Wolfhard Weber in his contribution to *Germany: A New Social and Economic History Vol. III. Since 1800*: "a large number of craftsmen and mechanics in Germany were keen to experiment"¹¹⁴ in the period following the war. He elaborates: "While most got to grips with fast running motors, electric ignition, vehicle suspension and superstructure, there evolved an enormous German pride in outstanding scientific discoveries and extraordinary technical innovations, a pride increasingly enunciated in published form after about 1920."¹¹⁵



Entrepreneur's dead give-away?
The 'Nitty Systers' metal plaque –
made for Margot and Nannö?

Little Nannö's youngest daughter recalled Albert developed a cigarette holder of sorts, a stand, rest or rack, called the 'Nitty.' I therefore attempted to follow up his creative side with the German Patent and Trademark Office in Berlin.¹¹⁶ Although he never filed any, Albert did indeed register many so-called 'utility models,' beginning in spring 1919.¹¹⁷

His first was a cigarette holder no less,¹¹⁸ while the second was a piece of jewellery, "a pearl-tinted brooch with transparent glass splinter deposits."¹¹⁹ Those were both registered in Berlin in March and April 1919 respectively.¹²⁰

¹¹² Leipzig: *Geschichte der Stadt in Wort und Bild*. VEB, *Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften*, Berlin, 1978 pg. 68,71

¹¹³ Leipzig: Trade Fair City with a Tradition. Online at: www.tw-media.com/uploads/media/ICCA_TAWI_03_e.pdf

¹¹⁴ Wolfhard Weber: Science, Technology, and Society in Germany from 1800 to the Present, in *Germany: A New Social and Economic History Vol. III. Since 1800*. Edited by S.Ogilvie and R.Overy, 2003. Pg. 335, 341.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁶ Search by the German Patent and Trademark Office (DPMA), Technical Information Center (TIC) Berlin, Gitschiner Straße 97, 10969 Berlin (Unit 2.1.3) on 29 Feb 2012 of the Utility Models of the *Deutsche Reichsgebrauchsmuster Trade*, registered by the former Imperial Patent Office.

¹¹⁷ Very similar to the patent, the utility model typically has a shorter term (often 6 to 15 years) and less stringent patentability requirements. Utility models were not considered state of the art technology until 1936, which means only very limited details regarding their nature are available today. Nevertheless, they were considered important enough as intellectual property and as inventions were protected via a number of national statutes. See:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utility_model

¹¹⁸ It sounds an almost comical piece of apparatus, however, Max Deutsch in Claire Bergmann's 'What will Become of the Children?' refers to their material discovery's potential for use in cigarette holders. See pg. 78.

¹¹⁹ *Zigarettenhalter* followed by *Brosche mit farbig unter-malten und Perlmuttsplittter verzierten durchsichtigen Glaseinlagen*. Is it any coincidence that Nannö's brother, Fritz Hinsch found himself in the jewellery business by the 1930s?

¹²⁰ According to Carmen Wilfert, Administrative Clerk at the Enquiry Unit of the German Patent and Trade Mark Office on 10th April, 2013, there was no local representative registered in Leipzig for him to file ideas locally.

According to Carmen Wilfert of the Office's Technical Information Center, 'Nitty' was indeed a name used for one of his products.¹²¹ Even more astonishingly, I stumbled across its advertisement at the 1919 spring fair too!

Thomas A. Kohut describes this period as an age where "Hard work and thrift were replaced by "a get-rich-quick mentality" which in the words of the Richard Bessel rewarded "the unscrupulous rather than the industrious."¹²² Albert's switch to creative industry may not have entirely been down to an urge to make a fast buck, but it does show he quickly diversified his business activities, which in turn implies he channeled at least some of his wartime profits into what were probably nothing more than hobby interests. Over the coming decades (not years) he went on to file as many as 20 utility models.¹²³



Hast Du den Nitty im Gebrauch,
wollt bei ihm die Andern alle auch.
(Do you use the Nitty?
If so, others will want it too)

Thus, while the period's instability may have partially accounted for my grandmother and her siblings' absence during those post-war months, Albert's disinterest in youngsters combined with a need for peace and quiet (a likely prerequisite for an inventor) lent grounds to Frau Tjyralla's actions. Sadly she herself later admitted that to care for her children would 'cause trouble,' not least because she travelled (presumably together with Albert). In fact for them, business was clearly mixed with pleasure since 'Nitty' stood Nanny Tippy TYralla (Tippy was Frau Tjyralla's dog, with the TI obviously being reversed)!

That romance may not have resulted in a marriage. However, the pair very much remained a couple over the coming years. What a pity this love didn't extend to my grandmother and her siblings (as for instance was the case with their cousins under Walther Martin). But apart from the financial benefits she retained in the name of her orphaned kids, by not marrying Nannj, Albert too was less obliged to fulfill bourgeois notions of intimate and comradely parent-child relationships. Those conventions were dying out anyway, Richard Bessel remarking: traditional standards "dissolved in an anarchy in which sound moral values appeared to count for nothing."¹²⁴

¹²¹ Personal correspondence with Carmen.Wilfert@dpma.de (Administrative Clerk) of early 2012.

¹²² T.A. Kohut. *A German Generation*, Yale University Press. 2012. Pg. 73

¹²³ In all fairness, it might not only have been wartime profits. Oskar Petzold's entry in the Bernburg *Adressbücher* between 1887 and 1909 reveal Albert's father had been the owner of a brickyard and quarry in Gröna (southwest Bernburg) which operated under the name, "Hermann Korn." In his ownership since 1885 (a construction boom time the reader will recall), in 1902 it even supplied the materials for the Dessauer Rathaus completed in 1910. Following his father's death, Oskar's company was readied for sale by its inheritors, i.e. his family, between late 1909 and Oct. 1910. Considering the amount paid for the company in 1885 was in the region of RM 95,000 (just compare that with the sum Claus Hinsch received for the sale of his land in 1883: 350RM!) the value of the company was clearly not insignificant. Not all that inheritance went Albert's way, however. The related documents filed within the relevant trade register and held by the *Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt* reveals Albert was one of nine children, while his mother survived Oskar. Still, even split nine ways, the likely proceedings amounts to a significant scoop each!

¹²⁴ Richard Bessel. *Germany After the First World War*. 1995. Pg. 222

If Uncle Albert emerged from the post-war chaos relatively unscathed for Uncle Fritz it was another matter altogether. Although bourgeois occupations other than the civil service and university lecturers were able to consolidate their material positions up to the end of the 1920s,¹²⁵ getting to that point was going to be a long slog for Fritz Hinsch. Thanks to the war alone (and I daresay Hedwig), the business he built was no more, in no small part due to the demise of the Egyptian cigarette industry and the rise in popularity of the US's Virginia tobacco and its now big famous companies such as Camel.¹²⁶ In addition, his new home in the *Musikviertel* among the wealthiest villa owners in Leipzig was no real place for a shopfront.

Although the manufacture of handcrafted cigarettes prevailed in Germany's small and medium-sized enterprises until the mid-twentieth century¹²⁷ and smoking became popular among the emerging new woman,¹²⁸ had Fritz tried to breathe life back into *Cigarren Haus Hinsch*, in 1922, Walther Rathenau, the then Foreign Minister slapped heavy taxes on luxury consumption, including tobacco.¹²⁹ If Fritz returned to selling tobacco, there is no evidence to suggest he succeeded. His entry in the *Adreßbücher* throughout the forthcoming years remains a most modest, 'Kaufmann,' while he was neither to be seen exhibiting at the Leipzig trade fairs.

To begin with, he was probably struggling to find the necessary cash to breathe life into any kind of enterprise while he paid a lawyer to defend his interests following his 'acrimonious' divorce (which wasn't finalized until later that year). At the same time the government, through various taxes, was passing on the cost of the lost war to those whose loans had helped finance it.¹³⁰ As a result, broad sections of the middle-class saw the basis of their existence threatened by rising inflation, which in turn depreciated their savings¹³¹ (as well as their elitism).

The Weimar state put pressure on the professions to reform which the corporative associations regarded as a threat to all the achievements of their policies of professionalization (take for instance the cigarette industry). At the same time, the bourgeoisie – especially the educated bourgeoisie – had the feeling it might be losing the role it claimed as a motor and measure of social progress. The state no longer appeared to be able to protect their interests nor desirous of doing so, which added to its disappointment.¹³² What would happen if we substitute Herr Hinsch for Herr Deutsch in the following paragraph from Bergmann's novel?

*"It shouldn't be particularly surprising that our man Deutsch, to whom the glory of the imperial era gave the strength for such tireless work, who gladly subsumed all of his own celebrations to birthdays and burials of Kaiser's past, and who then saw all of it disappear under the present circumstances, for which he holds the Republic completely responsible, that this man, who believes that German and the Kaiser should be one and the same thing, hates the Germany of his children."*¹³³

¹²⁵ Benninghaus et al in *Germany Since 1800: A New Social and Economic History* edited by Ogilvie and Overy. pg. 296

¹²⁶ See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_cigarette_industry

¹²⁷ See: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zigarette>

¹²⁸ Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 232

¹²⁹ Otto Friedrich. *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s* from 1972. Pg. 101

¹³⁰ C. Bergmann. *What Will Become of the Children? A Novel of a German Family*. Camden House, 2010. p. 28.

¹³¹ Questions on German History, pg. 203

¹³² Benninghaus et al in *Germany Since 1800: A New Social And Economic History* edited by Ogilvie and Overy. pg. 296

¹³³ C. Bergmann. *What Will Become of the Children? A Novel of a German Family*. Camden House, 2010. pg. 32-3

Herr Deutsch continues:

"We don't have anything decent to eat. We have to sell anything that isn't bolted down. We've lost so much more than anybody else has. We had to climb down again, bitterly, and I'm no better off than I was thirty-five years ago..I even did a great service to the Fatherland, in my way.

At least Fritz still had his villa and the profit he made from sub-letting rooms and land there. But with respect to his family, Fritz was not much better off in terms of company. Two weeks after his frontline return, on January 30th, 1919, perhaps in a bid to re-bond with his eldest, he accompanied Fritz Lothar to the St. Jakob Hospital. The reason for the 12 year old's stay there is unknown, however, the ex-military man stayed with junior until February 13th (a fortnight or so before its doctors began turfing out patients during their earlier winter strike). Although his eldest in principle lived with him in *Beethovenstrasse*, Fritz's residential record reveals he went straight 'home' to his mother, implying all was far from well on this 'home front.'

According to Fritz's second eldest (Martin's) son, neither he nor his elder brother happily stayed with him. He told me they even ran away, although that year his residential record reveals he stayed with his father until May 7th, essentially the same date Margot and Theo were shipped out of Gohlis. According to Martin's *Einwohnermeldekarte*, he too was then on the move – north, as far as his mother's.

Fatherly authority most definitely changed after the war, writes Elisabeth Domansky. Many men felt weakened and suffered neuroses,¹³⁴ while according to Lisa Pine in her essay '*Women and the Family*,' many men returned home psychologically disturbed.¹³⁵ Post 1918, literature only compounded their problems by growing more pronounced in its regard as to how they had lost the war and left their sons a sick nation, despite their youngsters' best efforts on the home front.¹³⁶ Self-esteem and self-confidence naturally vanished, against the backdrop of increasing economic hardship, not to mention a certain Walther Martin. Under these circumstances it's difficult not to empathise with Fritz, who undoubtedly faced enormous challenges upon his return.

Living alone, did the former soldier find solace in the company of his younger sister? Apparently yes, since two years later she went on record saying she relied on his occasional support (although she hardly needed it). Did he business plan together with his de facto brother-in-law; Albert? Was Fritz able to get to convalesce with his elderly parents 'stranded' in the Leipzig countryside during Saxony's state of siege?

The young Tŷrallas' absences will have certainly made it harder for him to get the Hinsch grandchildren together in Machern, notwithstanding the blockades and the missing railtracks, although at least Theo's posting there in autumn 1919 may have afforded his boys' limited opportunity to fraternise. But as far as I can tell, those occasions were rare.

¹³⁴ Elisabeth Domansky: *Militarisation and Reproduction in World War I Germany*, in *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870-1930*. Edited by Geoff Eley. pg. 459

¹³⁵ Lisa Pine in *Germany Since 1800: A New Social And Economic History* edited by Ogilvie and Overly. Pg. 363

¹³⁶ *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Dobson. Pg. 224

As with *Herr Deutsch*, he probably began to wonder, is this what he fought, was rewarded for and returned to? Is this what his late brother-in-law, Paul Tjyralla had come to avoid? Was this life after the death of *Kaiserreich*? Many men, whether married or not, preferred the comfort of the numerous 'comrade leagues' (*Kameradschaftsbünde*) to that of their families or used this institution in addition to the family. Many even defined themselves not through their role in their families, but through their role in the military.¹³⁷

Among the professional officers who had been demobilized, bitterness was particularly widespread.¹³⁸ Writes James Wyllie: "Defeat had unleashed a flood of highly charged emotions. Primary among them was anger."¹³⁹ At a military rally in Berlin six months earlier during December 1918, a 25 year old air force captain named Hermann Goering had already boldly declared:

*"We officers did our duty for four long years...and we risked our bodies for the Fatherland. Now we come home – and how do they treat us? They spit on us...And therefore I implore you to cherish hatred – a profound, abiding hatred of those animals who have outraged the German people...But the day will come when we will drive them out of Germany."*¹⁴⁰

Another man who had already dedicated himself to that hatred had only been a corporal. Adolf Hitler, then 29, half-blinded during a gas attack, was confined to a hospital eighty miles north of Berlin, when a pastor told him of "the greatest villainy of the century," the revolution and armistice. "Everything went black before my eyes," Hitler later wrote in *Mein Kampf*.

*"So it had all been in vain. In vain all the sacrifices...in vain the death of two millions...There followed terrible days and even worse nights...In these nights hatred grew in me, hatred for those responsible for this deed. In the days that followed, my own fate became known to me...I, for my part, decided to go into politics."*¹⁴¹



We know from a mid-1930s photograph of Fritz and the smallest of the badges he wears he joined the monarchist *Stahlhelm*. The *Stahlhelm* was a veterans' organization founded as early as November 13th, 1918 that became the paramilitary arm of the conservative opposition to the Weimar Republic. Having built up a strong organization in Saxony, it was active from the summer of 1919.¹⁴²

Saxony's veterans would come into contact with one another at *Deutsche Tage*, where nationalist celebrations and commemorations took place. These included the consecration and cultivation of war memorials, reunion celebrations, celebrations of the founding of the German Empire in January, 1871, and gymnastic displays.

¹³⁷ Elisabeth Domansky: Militarisation and Reproduction in World War I Germany, in *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany, 1870-1930*. Edited by Geoff Eley. pg. 459

¹³⁸ Otto Friedrich. *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s* from 1972, pg. 30

¹³⁹ James Wyllie in Goering and Goering, *The History Press*. 2006.

¹⁴⁰ Otto Friedrich. *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s* from 1972, pg. 30-31.

¹⁴¹ Otto Friedrich. *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s* from 1972, pg. 31.

¹⁴² Larry Eugene Jones: *Saxony, 1924-1930: in Saxony in German History: Culture, Society, and Politics, 1830-1933*. Edited by J. N. Retallack. Pg. 341

These nationalist circles – which included a broad array of bourgeois and upper-class society – also meant their paths crossed with the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* or National Socialist German Workers Party (i.e. Nazi) members and followers. They were among those who propagated the “stab in the back” legend and were united in opposition to republican symbols and celebrations, i.e. the black, red and gold flag.¹⁴³ Yet it was this in turn that helped perpetuate what Moritz Pfeiffer defines in his book: *My Grandfather in the War* as a “moral insanity” that afflicted many Germans during and after World War I.¹⁴⁴

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From June onwards, the domestic political power constellation could be characterized as “disorganization on the left and a growing confidence on the right.”¹⁴⁵ Nationally, the most serious threat to the status quo was the growth of the anti-democratic right, rather than from the Independent Socialists, and it wasn’t long before tensions spilled over onto the street.

Workers in Leipzig remained fiercely attached to the workers’ council concept even after the general strike had been quashed, notes Sean Dobson in his analysis. Throughout May, July and August brewery workers, metalworkers, book industry and woodworkers respectively struck time and again.¹⁴⁶ Civil unrest occasionally accompanied these strikes (including the storming of factories) although the economic boomlet of 1919, which was more pronounced in Leipzig than in Germany as a whole helped to tighten the labour market. Inflation grew only slowly, 15 percent according to official city prices which eased profit margins for employers like Albert.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, by the end of the year city unemployment had risen to 51,700,¹⁴⁸ while union membership had increased 120 percent.¹⁴⁹

Inflation exploded, however, in early 1920, reaching 61 percent in Saxony’s second city during the first three months alone. It was not helped by the government printing ever more money whilst offering short-term notes at high interest rates. Compounding this was a recession in the American economy in 1919-1920, after which the US Congress passed protectionist legislation. This drying up and closure of the US market had especially doleful repercussions on Germany, an exporting nation.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴³ C.C.W.Szejnmann: The Development of Nazism in the Landscape of Socialism and Nationalism: The Case of Saxony, 1918-1933. in *Saxony in German History: Culture, Society, and Politics, 1830-1933*. Edited by J. N. Retallack. Pg. 360.

¹⁴⁴ *My Grandfather in the War 1939 - 1945: Reminiscences and Facts Compared*, Moritz Pfeiffer. Donat Verlag, Bremen, 2012. See also: www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,826633-2,00.html

¹⁴⁵ *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Dobson. Pg. 265-6

¹⁴⁶ *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Dobson. Pg. 272

¹⁴⁷ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 272

¹⁴⁸ Martina Güldemann in 1999 in *Das war das 20. Jahrhundert in LEIPZIG*. Pg. 25

¹⁴⁹ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 273

¹⁵⁰ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 279

Combined with the disruption caused by demobilization, shortages stemming from the blockade, workforce exhaustion and strikes, grain output fell by 16 percent and industrial production by 26 percent. Fewer goods were chased by more money, while the dismantling of food, clothing, and fuel subsidies that had been offered by many of Leipzig's firms in the hopes of reducing workforce turnover exacerbated the inflation. The authorities once again saw shortages of bread, potatoes and coal, all of which they feared would lead to public unrest.¹⁵¹

Pressure from the Allies for payment of its war debt and recognition that Germany would never be able to honor this saw the public lose all confidence in the *Reich's* finances. The widespread expectation was that the government would continue encouraging inflation so as to pay back its domestic creditors with debased currency. The German public began "dumping *Reichsmarks* and discounting increasingly worthless government bonds," the latter action further adding to the monetary supply, writes Dobson.¹⁵²

The winter of 1919-1920 was a particularly bitter one, ravaging Germany's population. "Hunger is what I remember most from those years" says Salka Viertel, an actress who later starred alongside Greta Garbo. "I was always cold and hungry."¹⁵³ The decline in the standard of living sparked a renewed round of wage strikes. During that winter, tailors, woodworkers, tram operators, bookbinders and locomotive repair workers all struck for higher wages in Leipzig while other groups threatened, including those who worked in movie theatres, the post office and insurance societies.¹⁵⁴

Saxony's continuing state of siege meanwhile meant *Freikorps* still patrolled Leipzig's streets, which led to daily viperative exchanges with strikers. There was a constant state of tension, writes Dobson, while events in the city mirrored those in the rest of Germany.¹⁵⁵ The possibility that wage strikes could escalate into political confrontations constantly existed.

Barely had the new year been seen in then on January 12th, 1920, several thousands of Leipzig's workers demonstrated against the government's Workers' Council bill which left them formally with no real power, while voicing their anger at the state of siege and rising cost of living. In response the *Freikorps* were mobilized with whom the demonstrators traded insults. The military commander of western Saxony, Bodo Senfft von Pilsach threatened to repress any popular uprisings.

¹⁵¹ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 279

¹⁵² Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 279. See also footnote 16 in Chapter VIII.

¹⁵³ Otto Friedrich. *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s* from 1972. Pg. 122

¹⁵⁴ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 279 and 401

¹⁵⁵ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 279

Following a similar demonstration the next day in Berlin (which saw 42 dead and 105 wounded), the *Reichswehr*, supported once again by the *Freikorps*, moved to restore order throughout Germany and stamp out the last resistance to the government by dissolving workers' councils.¹⁵⁶ Within two months the stage was set for an attempt by the right wing to topple the new republic, with their aim being to win back many of their old privileges by force.¹⁵⁷

The so-called '*Kapp Putsch*' began in Berlin on Saturday March 13th when a right wing military circle (including some *Freikorps* elements) occupied the government quarter.¹⁵⁸ The *Reichswehr* made no attempt to stand in their way, now refusing to protect the government by assuming instead a position of neutrality. *Reichspräsident* Ebert fled Berlin while Wolfgang Kapp declared himself head of the new regime. Officials of the Majority Socialists reacted by calling for another national general strike to oppose the military dictatorship. Factories shut down, stores closed and the trams and buses stopped in Berlin. There was no water, electricity or gas. Schools closed and civil servants stayed home.¹⁵⁹

The news of the putsch spread like wildfire to Leipzig. The left-wing retaliated with the MSPD, USPD and unions forming a common front that same day, echoing the call for a strike as well as a public demonstration against the Kapp regime on Sunday.¹⁶⁰ Yet to their surprise, the *Freikorps* had already been fully mobilized. Under the orders of General Maercker it had taken up positions across the city, proclaiming the need for *Ruhe und Ordnung* while promising to suppress any signs of a general strike. The *Bürger-Ausschuß* at its own meeting declared its opposition to the putsch while also condemning the strike.¹⁶¹

The following morning, tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of demonstrators gathered at 18 points across Leipzig to demand an end to the military dictatorship. In orderly columns, they converged on the *Augustusplatz*. Because the square was not considered part of the inner city, none anticipated the *Freikorps* would interfere with the rally. Even so, 3,400 of its armed members sealed off the *Promenadenring* (on which the square lay), blocking off access to it from the southwest.¹⁶² Whatsmore it also occupied positions at *Rosßplatz* (in front of the Hinsch's former home), to the east at *Johannisplatz*, before the *Hauptbahnhof* und at *Fleischerplatz*, where they effectively guarded Hedwig's parents inside the inner city.

¹⁵⁶ See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Ebert#President_of_Germany

¹⁵⁷ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 278, 280

¹⁵⁸ *Der Kapp-Putsch 1920 in Leipzig*: <http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~agintern/uni600/ug222d.pdf>

¹⁵⁹ Otto Friedrich. *Before the Deluge: A Portrait of Berlin in the 1920s* from 1972. Pg. 69

¹⁶⁰ Without the communist KPD who still called for a soviet republic. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Dobson. Pg. 281

¹⁶¹ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 282

¹⁶² Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 283 although Kurschner says it was 4000-strong.

When the demonstrators arrived, the *Freikorps* indiscriminately opened fire. Some 40 workers alone were killed in the environs of *Augustusplatz*, while over 100 were injured.¹⁶³ The day was dubbed *Blutsonntag* or “Bloody Sunday.”

Yet before it was over, as many as 3,000 insurgents had armed themselves from *Reichswehr* arsenals across the city and over the coming days seized weapons from university dormitories and the surrounding countryside. Electing their own commanders, the demonstrators erected barricades along the *Promenadenring* and exchanged fire with the *Freikorps* and a handful of *Reichswehr* soldiers. Civil war engulfed Leipzig.



Freikorps guarding the entrance to the city centre at *Schützenstrasse*, just a block away from the Hinsch home, with a sign that reads: “Halt! Whoever proceeds beyond this point will be shot” Source: *Stadtgeschichtlichesmuseum, Leipzig*

The next day, a Monday all manual workers adhered to the general strike while the situation became so dangerous on the street that schools were closed to children too.¹⁶⁴

Particularly violent clashes occurred in the vicinity of the *Thomasschule* (west of the centre), at *Königsplatz* (south of the centre), at *Johannisplatz* (east) and at the *Krystallpalast* before the Hinsch’s home in *Wintergartenstraße*,¹⁶⁵ as bullets flew and shards of glass threatened to claim lives.¹⁶⁶

Yet as the national strike began to paralyse the German economy, by Tuesday it was clear Kapp’s days were numbered. President Ebert dismissed General Maercker and lifted the 11-month long state of siege in Saxony. However, street battles continued around *Augustusplatz* with grenades and trench mortars in use, even if the *Reichswehr* and *Freikorps* had now formally declared their support for the constitutional government.¹⁶⁷

Atrocities were committed on both sides, with many innocent bystanders randomly shot, which then compelled even the *BA* to condemn the *Freikorps*’ sniper fire. Many civilians spent hours crouching in doorways and lying on the ground waiting for a break in shooting. The ten thousand visitors to the *Leipziger Messe* scheduled in that week (which again included Albert promoting his *Nitty u.a. Artikel* cowered in their hotel rooms. When two Swiss businessmen ventured out, they were shot dead.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Proletarian workers made up 80 percent of the barricadists, while students of the university and gymnasias made up the *Freikorps*. Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920. Dobson. Pg. 283. According to: *Der Kapp-Putsch 1920 in Leipzig*: <http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~agintern/uni600/ug222d.pdf>, the main building of the university transformed into a military camp with students sympathetic to the putsch

¹⁶⁴ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 283

¹⁶⁵ *Der Kapp-Putsch 1920 in Leipzig*: <http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~agintern/uni600/ug222d.pdf>

¹⁶⁶ Does Rudiger or even Veronika recall any anecdotes passed on about this siege?

¹⁶⁷ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 283-284

¹⁶⁸ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 286.

The (old guard) city senate, horrified by the ferocity of the street battles, gave into the demands of the MSPD-USPD-union strike leadership and later that evening a ceasefire was agreed. It was negotiated in bad faith, however, with *Reichswehr* reinforcements secretly called in and heading straight for the labour unions' headquarters, *das Volkshaus* (shown right), destroying it and killing or injuring 11 workers in the process.



Beginning of the End: The Reichswehr-torched *Volkshaus*.
March 19th, 1920. Source: [wiki/Kapp_Putsch](#)

Both sides continued to fight on Wednesday, and with the poorly armed workers besting the *Freikorps* in battle, the insurgents then took control of the *Freikorps* and *Reichswehr* barracks in the outlying neighbourhoods (namely Möckern, neighbouring Gohlis). From here on they were in position to draw the noose ever tighter around the inner city, writes Dobson. That night, apparently in retaliation, two mansions in the wealthy neighbourhood of town as well as the headquarters of the *bürgerliche* youth group *Sturmvoegel*, went up in flames.¹⁶⁹

As during the general strike of the year before, Leipzig was cut off from the outside world with workers only allowing food trains into the city having checked the identification of people entering or leaving via the major roads.¹⁷⁰ Even though Kapp had resigned that Wednesday, the national strike leadership opted to hold out until measures were put in place that would prevent a recurrence of the putsch, above all, forming a more left-wing government and replacing the *Freikorps*.¹⁷¹ But it wasn't until Friday that the street warfare really came to an end. Shortly thereafter, the *Freikorps* was dissolved.¹⁷²

Among the victims were hundreds, including 70 barricadists, 57 pedestrians, up to 28 *Reichswehr* soldiers and seven *Freikorps*. According to military historian, Dieter Kürschner, the *Freikorps* had overstepped its mark,¹⁷³ while growing numbers of Majority Socialists realized that in relying so heavily on the *Freikorps* and *Reichswehr*, their party had strayed too far to the right.¹⁷⁴

The putsch in the end was not so much suppressed by the government's own army, the *Reichswehr* but rather petered out (as in many cities and towns of central Germany, e.g. Halle, Merseburg, Zeitz) thanks to armed strikers and the *Freikorps*' unwillingness to continue fighting them. Farther afield, in the *Ruhr*, strikers even organized a 50,000 man 'Red Army' that drove the *Freikorps* and the *Reichswehr* completely out of that region.¹⁷⁵

¹⁶⁹ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 285-287

¹⁷⁰ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 286

¹⁷¹ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 284

¹⁷² Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 287

¹⁷³ See: <http://www.leipzig-gohlis.de/historie/militaer.html>

¹⁷⁴ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 288

¹⁷⁵ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 288

Professor of Modern European History, Peter Stachura concurs: "it was surely no coincidence that the workers' trade's union movement (despite the now powerless workers' councils) played the crucial role in defeating the right-wing *Kapp Putsch* in 1920." The working class felt they had a German state with a genuine sympathy for workers' situations, despite the hardships of the period (poverty, crime, low standards of health, rising inflation, food shortages, unemployment etc.).¹⁷⁶ The democratic republic; the only real gain of the revolution, was thus preserved.

After the discredited right's failure of March 1920 and with the workers' councils' proponents laying militarily crushed, both left and right were too exhausted to attempt any further assault on the status quo for the time being, concludes Sean Dobson.¹⁷⁷ Stability returned to Leipzig which merits, he adds, "the conclusion that the revolution was over." However, the tense atmosphere that existed between the end of the war and the spring of 1920 didn't in fact die down until the end of 1923, not just in Leipzig but across Saxony and the country.

Barely 18 months had passed since revolution witnessed the war's end. Yet from the Hensch family's point of view, just how far had the Weimar Republic progressed? They were likely among those most sorry Kapp didn't succeed, one of Thomas A. Kohut's middle-class interviewee's later reminiscing; "I still remember a picture of Ebert in swimming trunks hanging over the toilet at home, a newspaper picture, a caricature or something. You know he was a saddler's apprentice and that was for my parents not the right thing." Another adds: "We always told jokes at home because he wasn't considered respectable."¹⁷⁸

On the home front, the 'civil unrest' within the Hensch household drew to a close when on March 6th, just before the *Kapp Putsch*, Hedwig was ruled the guilty party in her divorce of Fritz. Yet according to one of his grandsons, he continued to long for his ex thereafter, staying close by to ensure she remained well cared for. I guess his solace following his return was to be found in his fellow veterans and the *Stahlhelm*, besides perhaps his former *Gewandhaus* fraternity.

For Little Nannö and her siblings, they (for better or for worse) missed most of Leipzig's 'siege' months. My grandmother briefly returned to her home city after the *Reichstag* elections that followed the conclusion of the national state of emergency¹⁷⁹ in June 1920,¹⁸⁰ while Margot and Theo remained camped out in the countryside to which they'd been farmed until autumn. Yet it wouldn't be long before the socialist state caught up with their mother and questioned her attitude to parenting.

The election results went on to reflect the strength of anti-republican feeling, leading only to many more years of political instability, with minority socialist cabinets replacing each other in rapid succession.¹⁸¹ This therefore sets the scene for Part Two of Chapter IX, in which we'll look more closely at how the upcoming adolescents fared, as well as their Hensch grandparents who began to enter their twilight years.

¹⁷⁶ Peter Stachura in *Germany Since 1800: A New Social And Economic History* edited by Ogilvie and Overly. Pg. 236

¹⁷⁷ Sean Dobson. *Authority and Upheaval in Leipzig, 1910-1920*. Pg. 278, 289

¹⁷⁸ *A German Generation*, Yale University Press. 2012. T.A. Kohut. Pg. 56

¹⁷⁹ In force since Jan. 3 following railway workers' strikes: www.dhm.de/lemo/html/1920/index.html

¹⁸⁰ Based on the new constitution. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_federal_election,_1920

¹⁸¹ *Questions on German History*. Pg. 214