

The Communist Party of Denmark and Comintern 1919 - 1943

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[Written in 1990 for a planned book on the history of Comintern (Jürgen Rojahn (red.): *The Communist International and its National Sections 1919-1943*, Bern 1998), that never materialized]

During the quarter of a century in which the Comintern existed, Denmark was an agricultural country with a highly developed and modern agricultural sector. However, throughout the period manufacturing industry and the industrial working class steadily increased. Politically the country was a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system. The first Social Democratic (minority) government was formed in 1924-26. From 1929 to 1943 the Social Democratic Party was in government office in an alliance with the centre party, the Radical Liberals (Det Radikale Venstre).

The Danish labour movement organised a high percentage of the working class and was characterised by strong trade unions and a centralist Social Democratic Party. Although oppositional forces had existed throughout the period in response to this strong hegemony, it was not until the time of World War I that this opposition gained sufficient strength for a Communist Party to be formed.

The DKP-History in its Various Phases

Officially, the Communist Party of Denmark (Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti, DKP) was founded on the 9th of November 1919, but in reality the foundations were laid already in March 1918¹. A survey of the various phases of the party's history does not in the early stages reflect the different changes in Comintern policy, but rather the special Danish conditions. The fact is that several heterogeneous elements played a part in the formation of a Communist movement. During the first 11 years, these elements fought for supremacy in the party which meant that it was virtually paralysed.

The most important elements were: 1. a relatively strong Syndicalist movement organised in the Trade Union Opposition Coalition (Fagoppositionens Sammenslutning, FS)², 2. a left-wing Social Democratic group with its main basis in Social Democratic Youth Association (Socialdemokratisk Ungdoms Forbund, SUF)³, and 3. a more diffusely structured group consisting of revolutionaries who had left the Social Democratic Party already in 1918.

Dividing the history of the party into phases can usefully take its point of departure in an initial phase from 1918 to 1923 with the following subdivisions:

1a: 1918-19: Marie Nielsen (1875-1952) and Thøger Thøgersen (1885-1947) founded the Socialist Labour Party (Socialistisk Arbejderparti, SAP). The party is dissolved in the autumn of 1919⁴.

1b: 1919-21: On the 9th of November 1919, the SUF resolves the establishment of Left Wing Socialist Party (Venstresocialistisk Parti, VSP). In 1920 the party joins the Comintern and changes its name to Danmarks kommunistiske Parti (DKP).

1c: 1921-22: In the spring of 1921 the DKP and the FS are joined together in the Communist Federation (Kommunistisk Føderation).

1d: 1922-23: In January 1921 the Federation is torn apart by a coup and from then on two DKPs exist of which only one, however, is recognised by the CI. In September 1923 the two parties joined forces once again.

After the initial phase we see the following phases:

2: 1923-27 the party is under the leadership of those left-wing Social Democrats who used to

constitute the leadership of the SUF.

3: 1927-30 the party is under the leadership of the left-wing radical group.

4: 1930-31 at the initiative of the CI, the party undergoes a serious crisis caused by an Open Letter. Two years of serious internal strife follow. The Aksel Larsen-faction is victorious. The new leadership consists of people trained at the Lenin School in Moscow⁵.

5: 1931-34 The ultra-left period very much inspired by the structure of the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (KPD). In the course of 1934 this gradually changes.

6: 1935-39 The Popular Front period.

7: 1939-41 The Pact policy period. When German forces occupy Denmark on the 9th of April 1940, the DKP remains a lawful political party but liaison with Moscow becomes extremely difficult.

8: 1941-43 The period of the National Front. On the 22nd of June 1941 more than 300 Communists are arrested, and the party goes under ground. It immediately organises its illegal press and in 1942 takes up the armed struggle against the Germans. After the dissolution of the CI in 1943, the DKP calls for the formation of a broad national anti-Fascist front, and in September 1943 the call is heard in that the Danish Freedom Council (Frihedsrådet) is established.

The State of the Archives

Until 1990 the DKP-archive was inaccessible to scholars. However, in this field, too, perestrojka has left its mark: In 1990 the transfer of the archive from the party headquarters to the Archive and Library of the Labour Movement (Arbejderbevægelsens Bibliotek og Arkiv, ABA) commences. At present, the archive is in the process of being filed, but the intention is to open it to scholars, and the administration of it is no longer in the hands of the party but is carried out by the ABA. This also applies to the archive of the Communist Youth of Denmark (Danmarks Kommunistiske Ungdom, DKU). The DKP-archive will probably turn out to be comparatively fragmentary for the period prior to 1945. When the party was made illegal in 1941, the police removed the archive from the party headquarters. It has since disappeared. However, as far as the '20s are concerned, the protocols of leadership meetings are preserved.

On some few occasions, Communist historians have been granted access to the Comintern archives in Moscow and have brought back micro-films of documents from the archives concerning the Danish section in the central party archive where the archives of Comintern are lodged. These micro-films, available at the ABA, seem to indicate that the CI archives are very abundant. Not only do they contain copious amounts of material concerning the DKP, but also concerning other movements. By way of an example, it appears that the protocols of the Fagoppositionens Sammenslutning, the Danish Syndicalists (1910-21) are lodged in Moscow.

The DKP leadership intends to bring home the documents in Moscow (either the originals or, more likely, copies of them) and have them integrated in the DKP-archive at the ABA. The first shipment of approx. 3,000 pages has arrived. It remains unclear how subsequent transfers are to be affected subsequent to the failed coup of August 1991.

In connection with an examination of the disappearance of a Danish Communist, Arne Munch-Petersen, (1904-40), Mansur Mukhamedjanov, a Soviet historian, has shown in an article⁶ that only access to all the Comintern-archives, i.e. also the Secretariats and ECCI will yield a clear picture. But without access to the NKVD/KGB archives it will be impossible to follow individual cases through the Soviet bureaucracy. Especially for the period after 1935 this is of crucial importance.

Party History Sources

By tradition, which is to say, prior to the crisis in Eastern Europe, the DKP has considered the party history its private property. For internal educational purposes, the usual party histories have been produced whose purpose is to justify the policies pursued⁷. However, the party has looked askance at the possibility of having outsiders deal with its history. Critical studies were subject to stringent weed control.

In addition to the internal party histories a number of documentations have been published. For instance, in 1953 the party publishing house issued a selection of speeches and articles by Aksel Larsen, the party chairman⁸. Furthermore, when the party was to introduce a new programme in the '70s, a programme collection was issued, and a documentation exists concerning the party's international relations⁹. During the '80s, the party internally produced large-scale documentations concerning the resistance at the time of the German occupation. These documentations are available from the ABA.

Special interest attaches to Børge Houmann's research concerning Martin Andersen Nexø (1869-1954). The famous proletarian author was extensively researched in a three-volume biography¹⁰. Furthermore, he has published Andersen Nexø's letters¹¹. The role played by Nexø in the early history of the DKP is elucidated in a recently published documentation¹².

It was a considerable time before the DKP veterans began writing their memoirs. The first to do so was a myth personified within Danish Communism. He was Richard Jensen (1894-1974) who for many years had been one of the leaders of the National Union of Stokers and its international organisation, the International of Seamen and Harbour Workers (ISH). At the same time, he was an important person in the secret apparatus of the Comintern and a man enjoying the full trust of the Republican government of Spain during the Civil War. Throughout the '30s he opposed Aksel Larsen, and in 1940 he was expelled from the party¹³. Richard Jensen is an important character in Jan Valtin's by now classic book, *Out of the Dark*. When the book was published in Danish in 1946¹⁴, Richard Jensen responded to it and propounded the theory that Richard Krebs, the real name of Jan Valtin, had in fact been a Gestapo agent¹⁵. An exhaustive study has been published concerning Richard Jensen's connections with Comintern and the secret apparatus of the Red Army and, not least, Ernst Wollweber, the German Communist; it also touches upon the sabotage actions carried out by the group in other countries¹⁶.

Following Richard Jensen's memoirs, those of the first party chairman, Ernst Christiansen (1891-1974)¹⁷ were published in 1960. In 1970 the memoirs of Aksel Larsen (1897-1972) were published¹⁸, and in the course of the '70s and '80s several volumes of memoirs were published. A large number of leading Communists have written their memoirs¹⁹. Another major group consisted of former activists in the resistance movement, of which Communists made up a large group²⁰. Similarly, the memoirs of a number of intellectual Communists have been important²¹. However, people from the rank and file have also written their memoirs²². Since access to the DKP-archives was barred, these memoirs have been of importance to research. They will remain important as they are the main source for the description of the Communist culture. In addition to the published memoirs, a number of written and audio-taped memoirs are available in various archives and private collections.

During the short-lived renaissance enjoyed by the DKP during the 1970s and the early 1980s, various bibliographical tools were evolved. A number of the leaders were bibliographed as well as a number of the party's well-known authors²³. However, a number of bibliographies prepared by John Hansen covering the publications issued by the party²⁴ is

probably more important as were the bibliographies prepared by Erik Voss over documents from the party press and over cadres²⁵.

A Brief Outline of the DKP-History

The formation of Communist parties in Denmark, Norway and Sweden reflects three very distinct courses of events caused by the composition and strength of the opposition and by the policy and strength of the Social Democratic Parties. In Denmark, the Social Democratic Party was characterised by its reformism and took its position on the right wing of the IInd International. On the other hand, the party enjoyed strong support in the working class, and for this reason the opposition never became strong. Like the other Scandinavian countries Denmark was not involved in WW I, and the discussions in the labour movement concerning the war reached Denmark from without. However, precisely the stance taken on the Zimmerwald movement was an effective element in the establishment of an opposition. Another important element was the perception of the Socialist Principles, i.e. the relationship between the programmatic objectives and the policy pursued by the Social Democratic Party in real life. The opposition especially opposed the coalition policy with the non-socialist party, the Radical Liberals (Radikale Venstre), pursued by the party at times of general elections.

However, the most important oppositional factor was to be found in the syndicalist current in the trade union movement. To some extent it was influenced by American Syndicalism, and it attached major importance to 'direct action'. To some degree, it was also influenced by the strong Norwegian Syndicalism. Also the radical conscientious objection movement had its roots here.

An accumulation of conflicts caused the break to take place in March 1918, when Marie Nielsen²⁶ left the Social Democratic Party and founded the Socialistisk Arbejderparti. Via the Socialist Commission in Stockholm the party was supported by the Russians, and Lenin had chosen it to participate in the establishment of Comintern. However, as early as in the spring of 1919, the party began to degenerate. At this point in time, the opposition in the Youth Association had decided to break with the Social Democratic Party, and on the 9th of November, 1919 it formed Venstresocialistisk Parti.

Venstresocialistisk Parti which was formed after a Swedish pattern, participated in the 2nd Comintern congress. The party approved the admission requirements, and consequently changed its name to Danmarks kommunistiske Parti (DKP).

However, in addition to the DKP, the Syndicalist FS still existed. The left wing of the Socialistisk Arbejderparti had joined FS, while the right wing had joined the new Communist party. In 1920, the DKP as well as the FS had their own dailies which were only kept alive through major sacrifices on the part of the respective members. Thanks to Martin Andersen Nexø's relations to the Russians it was possible in the spring of 1921 to get approval of a federation of the two organisations and a merger of the two dailies. However, the new construction was short-lived. A coup in January 1922 led to a split-up, and for the next 18 months Denmark had two Communist parties, of which only one, however, was recognised by the CI. This coup split the party according to some rather unclear lines. The main dividing line ran between a left-wing reformist and a Syndicalist- revolutionary wing. But also the members' attitude towards the methods of the coup and its main protagonists divided the membership, and to some extent blurred the political differences. And although the parties were successfully merged in 1923, interfactional conflicts went on for the next 20 years²⁷.

In 1929, the CI intervened by means of an "Open Letter" which removed the

leadership. For the next 18 months, the party was placed under administration from Moscow through an ExR. At the same time, the party chairman, Thøger Thøgersen, was sent into exile in Moscow where he remained until 1936. The administration of the party came to an end when a completely new leadership took over; it consisted of three relatively young people who had all been trained at the Lenin School in Moscow: Aksel Larsen (1897-1972), Martin Nielsen (1900-62) and Arne Munch-Petersen. The leaders of an older generation had now been reduced to second and third rankers. A leadership had now been established which was characterised by a high degree of stability and which stayed in power all the time till the crisis of 1956-58.

In many ways, conditions in Denmark during the '20s favoured the development of Communism. The rate of unemployment was relatively high, and especially during the years 1926 to 1929 social distress was widespread. There was also a certain amount of opposition in the trade union movement against its Social Democratic leadership. For one thing, the large General Workers' Union was not affiliated to the Confederation of Trade Unions during that period. But only to a very limited extent was it possible for the DKP to take advantage of the general dissatisfaction, being, as it was, paralysed by interfactional strife.

The situation changed somewhat after 1929 when the Social Democratic Party joined the Government. When after a few years, Denmark was hit by the world recession, the number of unemployed reached an all-time high. As Denmark was a raw material importer with a manufacturing industry mainly supplying the domestic market, the country initially benefitted from the declining prices. Not until 1931-32 did the recession reach its full effect. During these years, the DKP managed to channel a great deal of the dissatisfaction especially by means of establishing a movement among the unemployed. However, work was severely hampered by the anti-Social-Democratic rhetoric and rigid organisation methods of ultra-leftism.

It is an important feature of this period that the ideological polarisation which developed over the years caused a number of students and young intellectuals to turn to Communism which was considered to be synonymous with "modernity". Modern architecture, modern painting, jazz, psychoanalysis, sexual reform, etc. were things which were thriving in the vicinity of the DKP. This is not to say that they were supported by the party; but then, it did not work against them. Concurrently with being a marginal working-class culture during the '30s, Communism constituted an important factor in the *'kulturkampf'* of the time. These activities also came to form the basis on which the future anti-Fascist work was done.

DKP-candidates were returned to parliament for the first time in 1932; two members, corresponding to 1.1% of the electorate, were returned. At the same general election, the Social Democrats obtained 42.7% of the votes. At the 1939 general election, the DKP won three seats, corresponding to a share of the votes of 2.4%. This election gave the Social Democrats 42.9%.

In other words, the '30s was a period of continuous progress for the party. Part of the success could be attributed to the shift to a popular-front policy which facilitated an adjustment of Communist policies to the special Danish conditions with small industrial undertakings, small-scale capital and a large and strong lower middle-class population. Of course, the role played by the Soviet Unions had an impact. Despite the trials, etc., the Soviet Union was an image, rather than a reality, an image of a place where workers had taken over. At the same time, the Soviet Union appeared as the leader of the anti-Fascist struggle at the time of the Spanish Civil War.

The non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Germany came as a shock to the DKP and turned progress into decline. The Finnish Winter War made a strong impression

in all the Nordic countries and cost the DKP dearly.

The DKP days of glory began with the German attack on the Soviet Union on the 22nd of June 1941. The party and its press had remained legal even after the occupation of Denmark on the 9th of April 1940. On the 22nd of June 1941, the party was made illegal and more than 300 Danish Communists were interned. Later an bill was enacted by the Danish parliament which made membership of the Communist party a criminal offence.

The fact was that in contradistinction to what happened in Norway, the Social Democratic Party had adopted a line of cooperation vis-à-vis the Germans. A national coalition government was formed, which gave in to German demands until the 29th of August 1943 in order to keep the administration and the legal system in the hands of the Danish authorities. Not a single voice was raised in the Folketinget against the banning of the Communists.

The reasoning behind the Social Democratic policy of collaboration probably was the expectation that Germany would win the war, and a wish to keep Denmark out of it. To begin with, this policy probably had the support of the workers. But gradually, as the war went on, after Pearl Harbour and Stalingrad, this support was eroded. During the same period, the DKP built up a powerful and efficient resistance organisation, which together with other, non-Socialist, groups within the resistance movement became the informal government of the country from September 1943²⁸. The Social Democrats did not change their policy and remained outside the resistance movement throughout the occupation. The DKP's efforts during the war, made the party a serious rival in the issue of which party was to have the leadership of the working class during the early post-war years. Indeed, a few abortive attempts were made to merge the DKP and the Social Democratic Party²⁹.

Programme, Membership Figures and Front Organisations

At the second party congress in 1920, a programme was adopted which briefly clarified the position of the party vis-à-vis the working class and the Social Democrats, in addition to its attitude to the topical demands of the day³⁰. With a very few amendments this programme was still in force when the party was admitted to the CI. A more extensive programme exists from the time when the party was split into two³¹. However, after some point in the mid-20s, the party's programmatical basis was identical with that of the CI. Thus, in 1928, the *Programme of the Communist International* was published in Danish. At regular intervals, the Central Committee (CC) adopted manifestos and appeals, but no general, overall programmes. Such a programme was evolved during the war³² following the dissolution of Comintern.

As regards the size of the party, it had 1,200 members in 1922, while the figure is under 1,000 for 1923-27. In the course of the '30s the membership rose to approx. 2,500 in 1936, and possibly peaked at 5,000 in 1938.

Very little reliable information exists concerning the sociological composition of the party. The ECCI report to the 6th World Congress estimates that the proportion of workers in the DKP membership is 69% and that of employees is estimated to be 13.2%. The latter figure probably includes clerks, so there can be no doubt that it was definitely a working-class party. The proportion of intellectuals is estimated at 1.2%. This latter category is probably somewhat larger for the '30s, but sociologically, the party was a working-class party throughout the period. However, there was a different problem in terms of composition, viz. the conflict between the industrially developed Copenhagen and the less developed provinces. The interfactional conflicts of the '20s actually split the party up into a Copenhagen faction and a provincial faction. This is the usual pattern in Danish trade unions, too.

Originally, no special importance was attached to political work within trade unions. But from the mid-20s it became an important field of activity, and the DKP built up a solid network of trade union bastions. They were nearly all at the local level. That is to say, the DKP succeeded in winning the chairmanship or the majority of the places on the committee of a local trade union. Only in the National Union of Stokers was the chairmanship won. The policy pursued by the DKP followed the guideline laid down by the CI. This meant that in Denmark, too, a Revolutionary Trade Union Opposition (RFO) was established. This was done in May 1932, and it was fairly active over the following few years. By and large, the strike strategy misfired in Denmark, and RFO never managed to organise the oppositional forces in the trade union movement³³.

In the course of time, the DKP has established and dissolved a number of such ad-hoc or front-organisations. However, a few of them merit description. Thus, in the '30s a fairly broad friendship association called Friends of the Soviet Union (Sovjetunionens Venner, SUV)³⁴. Via its periodical, SUV disseminated Soviet propaganda and arranged trips to the Soviet Union. The association probably had about 3-4,000 members when it was at its strongest. During the Popular Front period, the DKP never managed to achieve anything but fragile attempts at unity work with the Social Democrats³⁵. However, it was possible to establish a broad organisation of intellectuals, Liberal Cultural Struggle (Frisindet Kulturkamp), which was very active between 1934 and 39. Among the leaders were prominent Social Democratic intellectuals, although they participated without permission and under protest from the Social Democratic Party's leadership. The organisation published an excellently edited paper, *Kulturkampen* (The Cultural Struggle), which had a circulation figure of approx. 2,000.

The DKP and Comintern

The relationship between the DKP and the CI was always characterised by the size of the party and the unimportance of the country. In the early days, the personal relationship between Andersen Nexø and Karl Radek, Mihail Kobetskij and Otto Wille Kuusinen played a major role. It was undoubtedly of considerable significance that Aksel Larsen, who became chairman from 1932, had for a time during his stay in the Soviet Union from 1924-29 oriented himself towards the Sinoviev opposition. Leaders of the '30s state that he was not well liked by the CI apparatus. At the same time, Richard Jensen had practically been put in place by the CI and had many close relations to people in high places in the CI. According to himself to Dimitrov.

In the early days, Swedish and Norwegian leaders took care of Danish liaison with Moscow. Later, when a Scandinavian secretariat was established, the Finns in particular dealt with Danish matters. Thus, Kullervo Manner was entrusted with finding the solution to the intricate Danish problem in 1922, and subsequently Otto Wille Kuusinen took over. In 1924, John Pepper (a.k.a. J ęszef Pog ęny) was ExR for a short while. At the congress in 1926, it was the German Wilhelm Pieck, who took care of things, and in the following year, Richard Gyptner paid a visit to the party. In 1928, the subsequently so famous secret agent, Richard Sorge, was stationed in Denmark in order to assist the implementation of the cell structure. During the inter-party struggles of 1930, Heinrich Wienecke was stationed in Denmark. During the '30s, it became more usual for DKP-leaders to go to Moscow to get approval of the party policy there.

We have no detailed information concerning the flow of finances from the CI. For a period during the '20, they went via the KPD, which paid an amount corresponding to the salary of one functionary. In the '30, Richard Jensen, among others, was involved in the

transfer of money. Be that as it may, it looks as if the party was subsidised throughout the period. We do not know anything about the size of the amounts. It is possible that the CI emissaries, who were fairly frequent up to 1932, might have brought money with them.

The 'bolshevisation' of the DKP began by the late '20s with the remodeling of the party into a cell organisation. Because of the small size of the party, geographical cells became the pattern. Only at the very largest enterprises were factory cells established. In return, the organisation of factions was thoroughly implemented in the '30s. In trade unions, student organisations as well as in the front organisations, factional organisation was an important factor in the considerable influence of Communists.

Originally, the party was organised along the lines of the Social Democratic Party, with local parties according to the constituency principle. Similarly, the party apparatus followed the Social Democratic pattern. But as 'bolshevisation' gained ground, features from the Russian 'democratic centralism' were added. Thus, at party congresses it became normal practice to elect the Central Committee en bloc, i.e. in reality it was appointed by the CC in office. Between CC-meetings, the secretariat (for short a time known as the polit bureau) constituted the party leadership. The secretariat had a number of central functions under it, e.g. the trade union secretariat, the newspaper, the publishing house, etc. The country was divided into a number of districts which were the highest local authorities. Below the districts were the cells.

The Press

When the party was founded in 1919, a weekly under the name of *Arbejdet* (Labour), was also established. At the time of the parliamentary crisis around Easter 1920 it became a daily paper. After the formation of the Federation in 1921, the name of the paper was changed into *Arbejderbladet* (the Worker's Paper). After the 1922 coup it continued as a weekly, and the other Communist party also established its own weekly under the name of *Klassekampen* (the Class Struggle) (1922-23). During the mid-20s, the *Arbejderbladet* circulation figure was 6,000, dropping to approx. 4,000. After 1930, however, the circulation figure started climbing. From 1934, it became a daily once again, and its circulation figure for 1935 was approx. 7,000, and in 1940 it had probably reached 12,000. In 1935, a weekly was established in Jutland, which did not, however, have any major impact. 1936 saw the establishment of a central weekly attached to the *Arbejderbladet*, which lived on until 1941 (at first under the name of *Arbejderbladets Ugeblad* (the Worker's Paper Weekly), and from 1940 under the name of *Ugens Ekko* (Weekly Echo)), which achieved a circulation figure of 16 - 17,000. 1933-37 the party published a theoretical periodical, *Kommunistisk Tidsskrift* (Communist Periodical), from 1936 under the name of *Tiden* (Time).

Shortly after being banned, the DKP began publishing an underground paper, originally called *Politiske Maanedsbreve* (Political Monthly Letters), but which was soon renamed *Land og Folk* (Land and People). It became one of the most widely circulated underground papers in the country. In addition to this, the DKP published a large number of local papers.

Problems and Perspectives

Throughout its existence, the DKP has had to relate to the Social Democratic Party. In this respect, it probably does not differ from any other Communist party. But in Denmark (and in Scandinavia generally) throughout the CI-period, the Social Democratic Party was the unchallenged leader of the working class (with the exception of the period 1943-45). This

leadership was reflected by the election figures, but also by the workers' active support of the party and the trade unions. At the same time, the Social Democrats were in government office (in a coalition) from 1929-43. It was of importance to the DKP to understand this special relationship between the Social Democratic Party and the working class. Although all discussions were always based on the CI tactics of the day, this undercurrent was present in any discussion of tactics: How to perceive the Social Democrats and thus how to perceive themselves.

The discussions fluctuated between total rejection and total disillusionment. Total rejection could take on the form of a concept of betrayal, according to which Social Democratic policies were seen as a betrayal against working class interests, a betrayal, however, which the class was incapable of seeing for what it was. It was the task of the Communists to 'bring in the correct policy from without'. Or else, total rejection could take on the form of accusations of simple cheating, according to which the 'right-wing Social Democratic clique of leaders' was consciously pulling the wool over the workers' eyes. This configuration of thought was very widespread during the ultra-left period when the policy in question was termed Social-Fascist. It was then up to the DKP to expose the policy for what it was and to tear the masses away from this fraudulent leadership. Total disillusionment as a policy was short-lived in the DKP as it only lasted for a brief period in the mid-20s when some of the leaders were seriously considering disbanding the party.

Only during the popular-front period 1935-39 were there signs of a different approach to the Social Democratic Party. Possibly in the light of the defeat in Germany, the attempts at unity led to an appreciation of the fact that the dominant position of the Social Democrats was due to a genuine satisfaction of workers' expectations. Thus, unity would have to be built on the concept of feasible *common interests* between Communists and Social Democrats in the short term and diverging interests in the long term.

The perception of the Social Democratic Party, of unity and of Fascism also formed the basis for the establishment of oppositional groups outside the party. Thus, from 1934 a Brandlerian opposition group existed, and from the following year also a Trotskyite and a Syndicalist, but they remained weak and virtually without any influence³⁶. Only after the Moscow-trials and as a reaction to developments during the Spanish Civil War, opposition of a certain importance resulted among students and intellectuals. The group published the periodical *Clart* 1936-43. Several of these opposition groups continued as underground organisations and participated in resistance activities.

The trials, the Spanish Civil War and the non-aggression pact that had roles to play in relation to the opposition, also had internal impacts, but to varying degrees. Strangely, the trials were accepted without much ado - and only lead to one instance of expulsion. Only the opposition made an issue of the role played by Communists in the Civil War - in the party itself, it was viewed as a heroic period, exclusively. Approx. 500 Danes took part in the Civil War, 60% of them Communists or sympathisers³⁷.

By contrast, as already mentioned, the non-aggression pact came as a shock, and it caused many resignations from the party. Especially the preceding anti-Fascist activities made the pact hard to swallow. But undoubtedly the many resignations also reflected an escalation of dissatisfaction: Members had now swallowed the trials, and the slaughtering of the opposition in Spain, the non-aggression pact was simply the last straw. When the Finnish Winter War was added, a regular witch-hunt against the DKP set in during which public burning of Andersen Nexø's books took place.

Perhaps the most important outcome of the DKP's history during the CI-period is the creation of a specifically Communist culture. It develops as a minority culture with the special

distinguishing and protective features which characterise, for instance, religious sects. It lent to it a phantastic psychological strength and considerable social perseverance. Party life became such an important part of the life of the individual that it tended to become the cohesive factor in it, the very focus of identity. This made it very difficult to leave the milieu and bound the members together by a lot of cultural and psycho-social ties.

A particular feature of the Danish Communist culture was the importance of the alliance with the intellectuals. This alliance, among other things, meant that four of the most important authors of this century, Andersen Nexø, Otto Gelsted, Hans Kirk and Hans Scherfig were Communists. But also prominent architects, teatrical people, medical people, painters, etc. were Communists. And it led to a sort of fusion between working-class culture and intellectual culture, so that the Communist culture differed from Social Democrat culture by, for instance, giving a very high priority to the reading of literature, to theatre, to having good reproduction art on one's walls, etc. Similarly, a distinctive Communist culture of festivity evolved marked by the many progressive artists who participated in the entertainment or who decorated the rooms.

In a decisive manner, experience from the resistance movement came to mark the DKP in the post-war and post-CI years. But the basis on which the party had been able to take part in the resistance movement was laid in the '20s and '30s. The building up of the Communist culture and the high priority given to anti-Fascist efforts were the two principal components of it.

1. A study based on this point of view can be found in Jørgen Bloch-Poulsen and Morten Thing, *Danmarks kommunistiske Parti 1918 - 1941*, (Copenhagen, 1979).

Very little is printed in English on Danish Labour History. The outlines can be found in John Logue, *Socialism and Abundance. Radical Socialism in the Welfare State. A Study of the Danish Socialist People's Party* (Copenhagen-Minneapolis, 1982), chapter III, "A Short History of the Danish Left". A sketch of the history of DKP can be found in A.F. Upton: *The Communist Parties of Scandinavia and Finland*, London 1973, p. 3-33.

2. Carl Heinrich Petersen *et al.*, *Christian Christensen og den danske syndikalisme*, 2 vols. (Århus 1979).

3. John Bech Thomsen, "Socialdemokratisk Ungdomsforbund, SUF, 1906-21", *Historievidenskab*, 8 (1976), pp. 7-86.

4. Jens Christensen, "Danmarks socialistiske Arbejderparti 1918-19", *Årbog for arbejderbevægelsens historie*, 5 (1975), pp. 59-112.

5. Kurt Jacobsen, *Moskva som medspiller, DKP's gennembrud og Aksel Larsens vej til Folketinget* (Copenhagen, 1987).

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