

OTTO RÜHLE



FROM THE BOURGEOIS TO  
THE PROLETARIAN  
REVOLUTION  
(1924)



**PRINCIPLES, PROPOSITIONS &  
DISCUSSIONS  
FOR LAND & FREEDOM**

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD TO THE ‘ANARCHIVE’  
“Anarchy is Order!”

*I must Create a System or be enslav'd by  
another Man's.  
I will not Reason & Compare: my business  
is to Create'*  
(William Blake)

During the 19th century, anarchism has developed as a result of a social current which aims for freedom and happiness. A number of factors since World War I have made this movement, and its ideas, disappear little by little under the dust of history.

After the classical anarchism – of which the Spanish Revolution was one of the last representatives—a ‘new’ kind of resistance was founded in the sixties which claimed to be based (at least partly) on this anarchism. However this resistance is often limited to a few (and even then partly misunderstood) slogans such as ‘Anarchy is order’, ‘Property is theft’,...

Information about anarchism is often hard to come by, monopolised and intellectual; and therefore visibly disappearing. The ‘anarchive’ or ‘anarchist archive’ Anarchy is Order ( in short **A.O**) is an attempt to make the ‘**principles, propositions and discussions**’ of this tradition available again for anyone it concerns. We believe that these texts are part of our own heritage. They don’t belong to publishers, institutes or specialists.

These texts thus have to be available for all anarchists and other people interested. That is one of the conditions to give anarchism a new impulse, to let the ‘new anarchism’ outgrow the slogans. This is what makes this project relevant for us: we must find our roots to be able to renew ourselves. We have to learn from the mistakes of our socialist past. History has shown that a large number of the anarchist ideas remain

standing, even during the most recent social-economic developments.

**‘Anarchy Is Order’ does not make profits, everything is spread at the price of printing- and papercosts. This of course creates some limitations for these archives.**

**Everyone is invited to spread along the information we give . This can be done by copying our leaflets, printing texts from the CD (collecting all available texts at a given moment) that is available or copying it, e-mailing the texts to friends and new ones to us,... Become your own anarchivist!!!**

(Be aware though of copyright restrictions. We also want to make sure that the anarchist or non-commercial printers, publishers and authors are not being harmed. Our priority on the other hand remains to spread the ideas, not the ownership of them.)

The anarchivist offers these texts hoping that values like **freedom, solidarity and direct action** get a new meaning and will be lived again; so that the struggle continues against the

*“...demons of flesh and blood, that sway scepters down here;  
and the dirty microbes that send us dark diseases and wish to  
squash us like horseflies;  
and the will- ‘o-the-wisp of the saddest ignorance.”*

(L-P. Boon)

The rest depends as much on you as it depends on us. Don't mourn, Organise!

Comments, questions, criticism, cooperation can be sent to [A.O@advalvas.be](mailto:A.O@advalvas.be).

A complete list and updates are available on this address, new texts are always

**WELCOME!!**

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## 1 THE BOURGEOIS REVOLUTIONS

Under the dominion of the Roman Empire the economy had developed in Italy almost to the threshold of capitalism. But the military and political collapse of this world power meant at the same time as result and cause in one the end of the economic development. What followed was reversion to earlier primitive economic forms and centuries-long stagnation. Only the crusades brought back the impulse to new development. Conceived as raids which were to open up the orient with its treasures to the conquering pressure and avarice of western freebooters and adventurers, they introduced for the following period a chain of very successful trade connections, of which the North Italian states became the bases. Via Venice, Florence, Pisa, Genoa, the merchandise found its way on ancient army and trade routes to Nuremburg, Augsburg, Ulm, round from there out to the north and north-west, especially to be transported towards Flanders and Brabant. In connection with this grew up, in Italy first, an indigenous production of goods, which provided for exchange of commodities; the sudden impetus given to the money economy, led to the foundation of banks of exchange and to the concentration of finance capital in the hands of a few families. The springtime of modern capitalism set in.

Its full development was however interrupted and disturbed by the advance of the Turks in the Near East and the discovery of the sea route to the East Indies. The traffic with the orient was cut off; a total displacement of the trade routes occurred. The bulk of the commodity

exchange between east and west was shifted from Italy to Portugal. The Italian states became poor and declined; their Renaissance culture perished; the attempts to attain national unification on the basis of economic unity, through the chaos of the struggles between patrician families and state republics, stopped in the early stages. As no real bourgeoisie, which had learned to recognise itself as a class in the modern sense, existed, it also stopped short of a centralised assertion of capitalist interests on a large scale, short of any independent economic and state establishment over the surrounding dependencies of aristocratic dynasties and city guilds, short of a bourgeois revolution, which would have brought about a fundamental break with the old order of things and set up a new economic and social system.

In Portugal and Spain capitalism shot up like a hot-house plant from the same soil, which was abundantly fertilised with the riches of newly discovered continents opened up to boundless exploitation. But the favourable economic situation found for itself no state power which would have developed from its political task and would have grasped the essence of the capitalist element. The Court, schooled and directed towards territorial internationalisation as a result of marriage, inheritance and conquest, saw itself, if it wished to safeguard its interests, bound to the sole international power of its time, the Catholic Church. This in turn perceived in the state power the surest defender of the faith, which was basically only the ideological armoured shield for its economic interests, anchored in feudalism. Thus Emperor and Pope, state power and church, were present in the Inquisition, which raged against the heretics whose unbelief only formed the pretext for the method of confiscation of goods, high fines, legalised robbery and

systematic combat of the awakening bourgeois class, bearer of a new economic principle. The movement of the Comuneros, in which the self-consciousness of Castilian towns had risen up, was smothered in blood; the hopeful blossoming of the textile industry ended in the chaos of a crisis from which it never recovered; as representatives of the early-capitalist epoch there remained behind only crowds of lumpen-proletariat, who populated an impoverished country, ruined towns and desolate wastelands. The strength of the bourgeois class, loaded suddenly with riches which it dissipated, but just as suddenly pushed into the abyss of poverty, had not found expression in a bourgeois revolution.

The maritime commerce which formed numerous bonds between south and north had established in Bruges and later in Antwerp large depots for the North and Baltic Sea shipping. Soon the Netherlands were interpenetrated with capitalism, central to the entirety of European trade and the great reference point of all nations. The bourgeoisie, grown prosperous and conscious of its worth, held on to what it acquired and was determined to defend property and the right of property under all circumstances and against every danger. This danger came from Spain when Philip sent the dreaded Alba to the Netherlands in order to secure the continuation of the Spanish crown by plundering the capitalist riches. Under pressure of the danger, the Netherlands bourgeoisie welded itself into the compact unity of a class capable of resistance.

The bourgeois revolution in the Netherlands had no aggressive character. It is much more a heroic resistance struggle against an enemy power invading from outside, more a national defence than a social confrontation. But

precisely in the awareness of common economic interests, in the alliance for national action occasioned by it, consisted an important factor for the consolidation of the forces whose sum total was capitalism. The bourgeois class of the Netherlands triumphed over the might of the Spaniards because it stood on the ground of a more developed and more viable economy that's understood. But as it triumphed, the combination into a new national community was accomplished, and political freedom was proclaimed. The strong economic potency lived and developed with national and political vigour.

The shower of sparks from the Netherlands revolution had set fire to the decaying structure of the English feudal economy. The change to the capitalist economic method proceeded very swiftly; trade spread its net over the seas; domestic industry took up all the liberated energies of the impoverished peasantry; big trading and industrial centres with depots, warehouses and counting-houses, mills and banks, wharves and overseas companies were already growing up. And in the parliament of estates, the bourgeois class won an important position after the other classes.

For the first time in world history the Parliament in England became the arena for the fighting out of bourgeois-capitalist interests. Crown and money-bag, royal power and burghers' will, exploded at each other in the fiercest and most embittered quarrels. The king clung to prerogative and privileges, monopolies and tax-raising, highest power of command and Divine Right; the bourgeoisie with total energy and obstinacy stood up for freedom of trade and competition, security of property and fruit of enterprise, free play in energies, markets, profit. In order to break the reactionary power



of the crown, the Parliament under Cromwell organised an army which, after it had destroyed the monarchy, at once set about securing private property through suppression of the Levellers, and winning in Ireland and Scotland a greater Britain for capital's need to expand. Even when the bourgeoisie, dependent on the support of the military, could not prevent the return of the monarchy, it divested it of all real power in affairs and questions of economic life and reduced its existence to the luxury of a decorative accessory, which it could accomplish *nolens volens*.

In the English revolution was demonstrated the entire strength and determination of the bourgeois class, already grown economically firmly rooted and politically independent, which smashes old traditions as soon as they become a hindrance to it, recognises no sentimentality, knows exactly what it wants and shrinks back from no step which its interests order it to take.

The most spectacular of all bourgeois revolutions the 'Great Revolution' took place in France. It is without equal in its class character and its historical import. The historiographers see in it the landmark for the beginning of the modern period, of the bourgeois epoch proper.

A general staff of the most outstanding minds had ideologically prepared the revolution, which had become inevitable through the catastrophic breakdown of the feudal system under Louis XIV and his successors. Montesquieu's 'L'Esprit des Lois' provided the building-stone for the foundation of the later revolutionary constitutions; Rousseau in his 'Social Contract' sketched the picture of a new condition of society; the

Encyclopaedists advocated with much wit and fervour the 'transformation of the general mode of thinking'; Voltaire destroyed the prestige of traditional authorities and propagated the new precepts of a natural morality; SiVyes established with cogent logic and stirring eloquence the political claims of the 'Third Estate'. And while the mass of petty bourgeois and workers did the rough work, while they stormed the Bastille, marched to Versailles, seized the Tuileries and dragged the king to the scaffold, the bourgeoisie, according to the intentions of their political leaders and intellectual mentors, built up the edifice of a new state, which was to come for them a comfortable residential palace; for the proletariat a hated militarily-secured fortress. All attempts to obtain for those cheated of the fruits of the revolution a voice within the new order were bloodily repulsed: Marat, the Herbertists, Danton and finally Ropespierre the head of the Republic of Virtue having become inconvenient fell by the wayside. 'The thieves have won!' cried Ropespierre on being arrested in fact, the bourgeoisie, greedy for booty, came into power. The petty bourgeoisie were burdened with taxation beyond their means, the proletariat was refused the right of coalition. Freedom and equality of franchise disappeared under the brutal fraud of the Two-Chamber system. Baboeuf's desperate attempt to rescue the betrayed communism, even at the eleventh hour, ended on the scaffold. Instead Napoleon sprang from the bourgeoisie as the hero who was to bring them the garland of glory and material success from the heavens. They were going to produce, sell, earn, conquer the world market, rake in wealth. Capitalism was to triumph. Thus the Emperor Bonaparte became the latest and essential executor of the will to power, economically based and politically established, of the bourgeoisie.

The line of the bourgeois revolutions, which reached its high point in France, took a sudden downward turn in the German Revolution of 1848.

The capitalist development begun in the Middle Ages, which had received impetus and nourishment from the Eastern and Levantine trade of the North Italian towns and had radiated its ideological reflections in the Reformation, had slowly died away with the shifting of the trade routes and finally expired completely. Feudalism had struck roots again; with the Peasants' War and the Thirty Years' War the people had been so thoroughly bled that they bore the yoke of blackest reaction for years with dumb submission. Around 1800 the dominant form of manufacturing was still petty handicrafts. Where capitalism had gone over to production, it prolonged a miserable existence in domestic industry or in state manufactures under the police baton of mercantile regimentation. Not until Napoleon opened the eastern markets by force of arms to the acquisitiveness of his capitalist bosses, but especially when he decreed the continental blockade, did a current of fresh air enter the dull and narrow Prussian-German servants' hall. Soon machines were clattering, factories grew up, and in Rhineland, Saxony and Thuringia a great industry developed. The bourgeoisie began to awaken as a class and to announce its political demands. But seemingly everywhere crown and nobility as representatives of the feudal system stood obstructing its path. The call for a constitution which would suit the claims of the bourgeois class was answered by the Hohenzollerns with persecution, treachery and provocative scorn. Finally, the February Revolution in Paris in 1848 produced as a weak echo the German

Revolution. The circumstance that the definitive impulse for a rising against obsolete conditions and privileges came from outside and found a bourgeoisie which, timid and politically innocent, had not acquired the determination of a revolutionary class, had as a consequence that the movement was not adequate to smashing the existing bases of the state and creating a unified state with republican forms in accordance with the interests of the ascending capitalist economy. The German bourgeoisie, achieving meagre success, showed itself content with half freedoms, lame concessions and rotten compromises. It abandoned the leadership of the revolution to a clique of confused and rival ideologists, while the pillars of the industrial development, frightened by the class goals vigorously placed on the agenda by the French proletariat, quickly fled back into the wide-open arms of the princely reaction. Indeed, then the June battle in Paris had shot down the fighting proletariat and the reaction breathed freely again, to raise its head more boldly than ever, in Germany even these meagre gains were again lost by the bourgeoisie. Political ambitions were renounced, people contented themselves with the business of profit-making and went on living in the old servility.

In the end it was Bismarck who helped the bourgeoisie towards its historic role by means of Prussian domestic power politics. On the way to a German unified state under Prussian hegemony, which offered the rapidly growing capitalism a large market and opened up new possibilities of development, he knocked Austria out of the running as a political competitor in 1866; in 1870-71, France as an economic one. With the right to vote in the Reichstag, he granted the bourgeoisie a political voice.

At the head of the state he set a half-absolute empire, a symbol for the compromise arrived at between feudal power and bourgeoisie, crown and moneybag.

When Germany collapsed after four years of world war, the bourgeoisie, massively strengthened in the meantime, in desperation found the strength to make an abrupt end of the compromise which had become a danger to its dominance and existence. In the choice between throne and bank-vaults, it shortly decided with revolution for the latter; threw the Kaisers and Kings overboard, set up the republic, gave itself a new constitution and completed with the active assistance of the working class organised in parties and trade unions the bourgeois revolution of 1848.

As the last in the line of the great bourgeois revolutions of Europe, the Russian Revolution followed.

Russian feudalism, an economic colossus of bearlike primitiveness and strength of resistance to which the tyranny of tsarism lent the political form, had experienced through the war with Japan a shock that immediately set free energies in which the need for political liberties and innovations of the classes committed to the capitalist economic mode found its expression. The desire of the bourgeoisie for a constitution was however at once extended and strengthened through the demand of the industrial proletariat for minimum wages, 8-hour day, protection of labour; until now never recorded in the bourgeois revolutions: the Russian Revolution had from the beginning a strong proletarian-socialist strand. Certainly in earlier uprisings greater and smaller sections

of the working class had also joined in the struggle and shed blood: but they had always been only appendages and following-troops of the bourgeois class. Even in the German revolution of 1848 the March fighters in Berlin had fallen as plain, mostly unknown workers, not as conscious proletarians and class combatants. In Russia on the other hand the proletarians among the social-democrats, cut off for the first time from the political part played by the bourgeoisie, came on to the stage of history with their own revolutionary demands and aims. Certainly the first phase, starting from the march of the petitioning masses to the Winter Palace under the leadership of the priest Gapon, until the decreeing of the October Manifesto, still took the typical course of all bourgeois revolutions, which are concerned with liberal goals. But already in the next phase the bourgeois-liberal voices thin and timorous enough given the Russian reaction's hardness of hearing got lost in the roaring gale of the mass demands of proletarian deprived of rights, and bloodily tortured, impoverished and neglected peasants. Even if the strongly rooted counter-revolution might succeed in snatching away again from the bourgeois element the first parliamentary and legal concessions, and stifling the revolutionary outcry of the masses with bloody executions and behind prison walls, it still gained by that only a respite, but no rescue. Indeed, on the contrary, the forcibly dammed-up strength of the revolution erupted, after three years of world war loosened the chains, in an explosion of such power that the whole system of tsarism was scattered like dust and left no more trace behind. The thin voice of the Russian bourgeoisie was certainly aptly accompanied by a weak energy: it was not capable of fulfilling its historical task. Then the proletariat put its shoulder to the wheel and seized government power for itself. It concluded peace,

proclaimed the dictatorship of the proletariat and set about causing the dancing star of socialism to rise out of the chaos of the sinking world of tsarism.

If in 1917 the imperialism of the Russian bourgeoisie had conquered, taken Constantinople and achieved all its war-aims, a bourgeois liberal epoch on the English, French and German model would have been instituted in Russia. But as it was, the world war had cut the ground from under the feet not only of the old feudal despotism but also of every capitalist bourgeois government that was at all on the cards. For foreign capital was chased out: domestic capital, anyway only moderately developed, was destroyed. The fiasco of Miliukov, Gutschkov, Kerensky was therefore inevitable. In the end there remained. to last out through everything to the conclusion of the war, only the proletariat as bearer of the state power and executor of the people's will.

But the proletariat stood under the political leadership of intellectuals who had been schooled in the spirit of west-European social democracy. They were socialists and wanted socialism. Now the seizure of state power in Russia seemed to them to offer the chance for the realisation of the socialist idea.

The surrounding world was faced with a sensation: the Russian Revolution, recently still an overdue, feeble bourgeois revolution, turned in an instant into a proletarian revolution. Beginning and end of the bourgeois revolution came together in one.

Was that reality or illusion?

## 2 THE RUSSIAN PROBLEM

It is the historical task of the bourgeois revolution to overcome the absolutism of the feudal era and to procure for capitalism, as the new economic system, legal recognition and social acceptance in the framework of the bourgeois-liberal state order.

In all countries with a formerly feudal economy and absolutist form of government the bourgeois revolution has fulfilled this task.

It never had the aim and function of infringing or even suspending the principle of the economic basis and the social order dependent on it, that is private property in the means of production. It only changed, for the time being, the class which exercised authority over the whole as the representative of this principle.

While in the feudal epoch the nobility forms this class, supported fundamentally by private property, holding dominion in the despotically administered patriarchal state, organised by estates with the monarch at its head, in the capitalist era the bourgeoisie as private possessor of goods and money takes over the government, which is established in the constitutional state with Parliament and Cabinet, at its most ideal in the form of the parliamentary republic.

The bourgeois revolution, everywhere it has manifested itself, brought the bourgeois class to the fore. This class was more or less conscious of its historical mission. It had also prepared the revolutionary movement, at least economically, often ideologically to. Under the pressure of unavoidable necessities resulting from the conflict of



the old and new tendencies, it had finally become the leader of the revolutionary action and had won political power, in order to use it immediately after the victory for the erection of the bourgeois state and social order.

The success alone of the revolution, which consists in the creation of the capitalist economic order and the social order appropriate to it, determines its nature as a bourgeois revolution. The circumstances that proletarian strata also form a part, now smaller, now greater, of the revolutionary fighters, does not come into consideration in determining the historical nature of the revolution. Even when the proletariat is already formed as a class and marches in the revolution with its own political class aims perhaps indeed influences its development considerably or even controls nothing of the historical nature of the revolution is changed. The weak or strong proletarian admixture in a bourgeois revolution can slow down or accelerate, sometimes deflect or disturb, its completion; can temporarily obliterate or deform its face; can affect or sometimes endanger its success, but to the essence of the revolution, its socio-economic content, it can make no difference. Likewise in the bourgeois state and in the army the workers form the strongest contingent, they make up a large class grouping and yet no one will be tempted on this account to call the bourgeois state proletarian or to speak of a proletarian army. Even the Red Army of Soviet Russia, consisting solely of peasants and workers, is a military machine constructed on a bourgeois model and functioning according to the laws of bourgeois state policy, which only political demagoguery, with the intention to deceive, can describe as a 'proletarian' army.

Where and whenever proletarian strata play a role in the bourgeois revolution, they always appear in the train of the bourgeois class, partly as paid mercenaries, partly as fellow-travellers, partly as political auxiliaries of uncertain tendency. They often form the rump, mostly the tail of the movement, never the head. The last is always with the merchants, bankers, professional politicians, lawyers, intellectuals, literati. Here the demands are formulated, the programme developed, the goals fixed, the statements given out. Here bourgeois policy is made. The historical face of the revolution receives its imprint from here outwards.

In the first bourgeois revolutions the proletariat could not yet figure at all as a class because up till then it was not developed as such. At first in England it began to mark itself off as a class from the main body of the bourgeoisie, combined in strong organisations. But it was still always closely intermingled with petty-bourgeois elements and its programmes never went beyond the radicalism of these sections. Thus the Levellers marched beside the left Puritan sects at the very front of the revolutionary forces, yet their whole attitude to the revolutionary problem stayed bound up with the ideology of their time, which was at best bourgeois. The pivot of all bourgeois orientation is: that private property remains protected. To the extent that radical groups and sects transgressed this, it arose out of a wrongly understood primitive Christianity, whose postulates, too literally interpreted, would have been condemned to be shattered with the very first attempts at realisation, because all the conditions of the socio-economic milieu were against them. Likewise in the French Revolution the proletariat was not present as a class: the extent of the development of the bourgeois

class did not give rise to it at all. Not even sixty years later, in the French as in the German revolution, did a proletarian segment come to light. Only half a generation later did Lasalle's agitation work begin, with the aim of preparing, through the awakening of class feeling among the proletariat the general education towards class consciousness.

>From the beginning, the Russian Revolution in accordance with its historical conditions could only be a bourgeois revolution. It had to get rid of tsarism, to smooth the way for capitalism, and to help the bourgeoisie in to the saddle politically.

Through an unusual chain of circumstances the bourgeoisie found itself in no position to play its historical role. The proletariat, leaping on to the stage in its place, did make itself in a moment master of the situation by an unprecedented exertion of energy, daring, tactical readiness and intelligence, but fell in the following period into a fatal predicament.

According to the phaseological pattern of development as formulated and advocated by Marx, after feudal tsarism in Russia there had to come the capitalist bourgeois state, whose creator and representative is the bourgeois class.

But government power from 1917 was occupied not by bourgeois, but by proletarians who repudiated the bourgeois state and were ready to institute a new economic and social order following socialist theory.

Between feudalism and socialism yawned a gap of a full hundred years, through which the system of the bourgeois epoch fell unborn and unused.

The Bolsheviks undertook no more and no less than to jump a whole phase of development in Russia in one bold leap.

Even if one admits that in doing so they reckoned on the world revolution which was to come to their aid and compensate for the vacuum in development within by support from the great fund of culture from outside, this calculation was still rashness because it based itself solely on a vague hope. Rash too was the experiment arising from this calculation.

The first act of the Bolshevik regime was the Peace of Brest-Litovsk. But this treaty, concluded with an advanced capitalist bourgeois government, was an act of bourgeois politics. A really proletarian revolution would have maintained a hostile attitude, would have tied up the German fighting strength further, to thwart German imperialism of victory in the west, and on its part would have mobilised all forces for the furthering of the world revolution. Rosa Luxemburg gave the sharpest expression to this view in her time.

In connection with the treaty, the Bolsheviks declared themselves for the right to self-determination of nations on the basis of which ensued the severing of Finland, Poland, the Baltic, the Ukraine and the Caucasus from Russia. This statement was the outcome of bourgeois political orientation. The result was on the one hand the Russian national state which is not a proletarian goal and on the other the collapse of the proletarian

revolution in the detached states. A proletarian revolution would have had to establish solidarity over all frontier posts and beyond national turnpikes.

The Bolsheviks, however, began the greatest fall from grace with the distribution of the big estates to the peasants. Through this the peasants obtained private property. But socialism should begin not with the introduction but with the elimination of private property. And so the measure was a slap in the face of the socialist idea. As obvious as this act would have been for the government of a bourgeois state power (more or less as at the time of the French Revolution), it is similarly inadmissible in fact, grotesque as an expression of proletarian policy. For, with the peasantry having attained private property, about 85% of the population was thereby recruited to enmity against socialism.

The consequence of this policy is manifest in the irreconcilable opposition between country and town, peasantry and industrial proletariat. It led to the boycott of the towns, to the refusing of food, to the sabotage of the state supply organisations: it compels tactics of concessions to the capitalist-orientated peasantry a policy directed towards peasant interests and a capitulation to profit.

In fact the Bolshevik regime had to go this way. While it still based itself in 1918 on the landless, and the poor peasants with the industrial workers made up its surest following, it now sides with the property owning peasants, creates tenant farmers and big proprietors, sets the grain trade free, permits and encourages in this way the rise of a peasantry with capitalist interests, whose political business it takes care of.

Parallel to this, in the same bourgeois tracks, ran the economic policy vis-a-vis industry. The Bolsheviks carried out the nationalisation of industry, of transport, banks, factories, etc., and thus awoke quite generally the belief that socialist measures were involved here. Nevertheless, nationalisation is not socialisation. Through nationalisation you can arrive at a large-scale, tightly centrally-run state capitalism, which may exhibit various advantages as against private capitalism. Only it is still capitalism. And however you twist and turn it gives no way of escape from the constraint of bourgeois politics. So also in Russia, then, they came to the make great concession to foreign capitalists, to whom mineral wealth and labour power have been handed over for exploitation profit-sharing with the state. The stock exchange is open again. A host of dealers, entrepreneurs, agents, brokers, bankers, profiteers, speculators and jobbers has turned up again and settled in. By the decree of 27 May 1921 the right of possession over factories and workshops, industrial and trading establishments, instruments and means of production, agricultural and industrial produce, financial stock; the right to inventions, copyright, trade marks; the right to take up mortgages or lend money, like the testamentary or legal right of succession, was expressly acknowledged again. With this the bourgeois order is established in its entirety and in all essential components.

To this also belongs, besides the bourgeois jurisdiction whose organisational structure is being constructed, the Red Army: a thoroughly bourgeois army functioning in accordance with bourgeois-capitalist interests. In the context of policies dictated in the first instance by the protection of the agrarian profits, it represents the

sharpest weapon of basic defence first against the Cossacks, Denikin, Wrangel and so on, but sooner or later also against the demands of the proletarian socialist revolution.

Not last is a striking expression of bourgeois politics, the dictatorship of the Communist Party leaders set up in Russia, which is falsely described as the dictatorship of the leadership. Behind this pseudo-revolutionary protective screen hides, as everyone knows, the omnipotence of a small handful of people who are the commanders of the authoritarian, centrally organised commissariat-bureaucracy. As inverted tsarism this party dictatorship is a completely bourgeois concern.

These few contentions show and prove that the Russian regime, contrary to its doubtless honest intention to pursue proletarian socialist policy, has been pushed step by step by the power of facts into bourgeois capitalist policy.

Even where they succeeded for a while in developing the shoots of a social revolution and creating the beginnings of an economic and social order of a socialist nature, the pains they took ended finally with a failure, so that they were forced to demolish the attempts and experiments.

And as the best and most honourable of the fighters for a social revolution opposed this, the Bolshevik authorities did not shrink for a minute from throwing them by hundreds and thousands into prisons quite in the bourgeois-capitalist-tsarist manner sending them to Siberia, or condemning them to death. A Trotsky played the executioner of the Kronstadt sailors with the same coldbloodedness as a Gallifet having French

revolutionaries, or a Noske German revolutionaries slaughtered.

It was an historical error to believe that the Russian Revolution was the start of a social revolution. And it amounts to a demagogic fraud to awaken and maintain this belief in the heads of workers.

When the socialists in the Russian government, after the victory over tsarism, imagined that a phase of historical development could be skipped and socialism structurally realised, they had forgotten the ABC of Marxist knowledge according to which socialism can only be the outcome of an organic development which has capitalism developed to the limits of its maturity as its indispensable presupposition. They had to pay for this forgetfulness by a wide, troublesome and victim-strewn detour which brings them in a space of time to capitalism.

To institute capitalism and to organise the bourgeois state is the historical function of the bourgeois revolution. The Russian Revolution was and is a bourgeois revolution, no more and no less: the strong socialist admixture changes nothing in this essence. So it will fulfil its task by throwing away, sooner or later, the last remnants of its 'War-Communism' and revealing the face of a real, genuine capitalism. The struggles within the Bolshevik party are preparing this conclusion, and with it the end of the Bolshevik party dictatorship. The line of development whether that of a party coalition which hastens and alleviates the launching phase of capitalism, or that of a Bonaparte who protracts and aggravates it is not yet clear; both are possible.



The parallelogram of forces will find its correct diagonals.

### 3 THE BOURGEOIS-CAPITALIST STATE

The bourgeois economic order rests on the possession of capital, the production of commodities, the exploitation of wage-workers and the gaining of profit.

The bourgeois state is the organisation of public and legal authority into a mechanism of domination, which ensures the functioning and the success of the bourgeois economic order.

All forces and means, in materials as in ideas, that the state has at its disposal stand directly or indirectly at the service of capital. The authority to order the state power lies in the hands of the bourgeois class. It receives the directives for the use of the state authority from economic necessities. In the interest of the highest expediency in its use, the organisation of the state has followed in accordance with these economic necessities.

In the capitalist economy the capitalist is master of the process of production. He buys the raw materials, owns the means of production, decides the managing of production, sells the commodities, reaps the profit. He builds the factories, seeks out the markets, takes care of the customers, regulates the circulation of money, pays out the wage. He is commander, representative, supreme court. He has money. He is authority.

As in the economy, so in the state. The capitalist demands liberties which the feudal state refuses him: freedom of trade, freedom of occupation, freedom of competition. He needs freedom of movement, liberation from feudal charges and guild barriers, the right to self-determination, the right of personality. He demands the

guaranteeing of his title of ownership, the legal protection of the exploitation process, the legitimising of profit, the social sanctioning of his authority.

In the state-scientific theory of liberalism are set down all the points and principles according to which the capitalist bourgeois wants to see his state, the bourgeois-capitalist state, organised. All the liberal demands and goals, aimed at obtaining and securing for capitalism the fullest freedom for its development, are here woven into a system. The philosophical anchorage of this system is given in individualism as it has been founded, formulated and completed in England by Locke, Shaftesbury, Hume; in France by Bayle, Voltaire, Helvetius, Rousseau and the Encyclopaedists; in Germany by Leibnitz, Lessing, Fichte. Begun as 'Enlightenment', this philosophical school came to dominate the political and social provinces first in England, where after the Revolution the track had been cleared for the unfettered development of bourgeois-materialist interests, and finally found its formulation and strongest emphasis in the principle of Manchester liberalism, 'Laissez faire, laissez aller'. The whole atmosphere of the great French Revolution is dominated by the spirit of bourgeois individualism, where its manifestation resulted in the boldest gestures and most vigorous exaltations as an answer to the heavy pressure of the old state and ecclesiastical situation. In Germany, whose bourgeois class distinguished itself from the beginning by lack of imagination and calculating cowardice, the philosophical thought-content of individualism faded very quickly to an empty egoism, which enjoyed a predominantly materialist life. The bourgeois class also produced no statesmen from its ranks who would have taken care of its business: it

entrusted its interests to the Junker Bismarck who according to his own words saw it as his task to cultivate millionaires. These millionaires symbolise bourgeois-capitalist authority.

Thus the bourgeois class, as soon as it has first won power over feudalism, arrives at a state order according to its needs, in its interests, for its use. Its wishes are decisive, its attitude determines. For it is authority. Its state is an authoritarian state.

In the capitalist economy all commodities develop the tendency to follow the market in order to be exchanged there. This market can be a shop, a department store, an annual market, a fair or the world market. The market is the point to which the centripetal force of all commodities tends. It is, however, also the point from which the centrifugal force of all commodities pushes apart again as soon as they are exchanged, i.e. fulfilled their capitalist purpose. If the commodity is money, the market is stock exchange or bank. Always the market stands at the middle point of a process working in two directions. The market is the centre.

To the law of motion of the capitalist economy corresponds that of the bourgeois state. All the forces of the government collect at one point, there receive their orders and then act back centrifugally. The bureaucracy escalates up to its highest peak, the minister; the army organisation up to the generalissimo; there the decision is taken, the command given, the decree proclaimed; and with the precision of a mechanical apparatus, the organisation functions according to the will of one head, the centre, down to its last errand boy and lowest organ. Only the central office is autonomous: it is the brain and

thinks for the whole. Its decision is definitive, it is to be obeyed unconditionally. Strict order and discipline prevail.

In the feudal era, when every socage-farm with its copyholders formed a small economic unit, more or less self-contained and self-supporting, the individual's power to give orders did not have much scope. One was situated beside the other and each was to the same extent his own master. The system of organisation in which every part of the whole enjoys its full autonomy is called federalism. The feudal state, then, had been a federal state.

The bourgeoisie had gained from the conditions of its capitalist economy the insight that centralism was in many respects superior to federalism. Especially insofar as it united all the dispersed and isolated forces into a whole. They came out in favour of a centralised will and therewith won the ability to do great things. When the capitalist brought the hand-workers together in the factory, went over from domestic industry to co-operation, finally evolved this into manufacture, he went through practical schools of centralism. All the experiences and knowledge thus gained the bourgeois class now utilised in establishing its state structure. It needed a large centralised mechanism that obeyed every finger-touch at the highest point. A mechanism with which it, the small minority, could be the brain, issuing commands, accomplishing its will. And with which the large mass, the proletariat, was subjected to its dominance through strict order and discipline. This mechanism was provided by the centralist system of organisation. It made possible in the best and surest way

the domination of few over many. So the bourgeoisie created its state for itself as a centralised state.

In the capitalist economy the production of commodities soon becomes mass production. But the absorption capacity of the existing market is quickly sated. New, bigger selling outlets become necessary. Capitalism develops a drive to expand, which threatens to burst the boundaries of the state. Thus every young capitalist state seeks, through wars, conquest, colonial acquisitions, etc., to become a bigger state. This requires a certain mental and spiritual preparation and influencing of the citizens a certain ideology which interprets the pressure towards expansion and extension in the interest of profit as the expression of imaginary forces and needs, and lyingly converts warlike conquests into achievements for the common good. This ideology invents the concept nation, exploits sentiments about home and fatherland and misuses them for class-interested purposes of enrichment. It deals in national interests, national honour, national duties and national responsibility, until it gets involved in the national war, which is falsified into a war of national defence. To wage the war a national army has been provided, the schools have been made into abodes of national incitement; in national politics a special national phraseology has been cultivated which furnishes every war, however notoriously for plunder and conquest, with the requisite intellectual and moral justification. When the SPD defended the world war from 1914 to 1918 as a national war, when the KPD, during the collapse of the Ruhr, joined in supporting the national defence of the Ruhr zone alongside Schlageter, then both parties proved their character as national auxiliary organs of the bourgeois state, which is always a national state.

The capitalist economy, once it has entered the arena of large-scale enterprises and beyond that, the formation of stock companies, has created for itself a complicated apparatus of management, very appropriate for its requirements. In it all forces are well weighed up against each other, all functions cleverly distributed, all individual actions bound into an exact collective action. The technology of the machine is its model.

In broad outline, the management structure of a large modern factory looks like this: nominal owners and with them actual interested parties, and so the real beneficiaries of the capitalist large-scale concern are the shareholders. These come together in the shareholders' meeting which passes important resolutions, exercises control, calls in reports, relieves and appoints officials, and concedes wages. From the shareholders' meeting issues the board of directors, which supervises the management, comes to final decisions, constitutes the supreme court in all the vital questions of the works, but is still responsible vis-a-vis the shareholders' meeting.

An image of this large-scale industry's machinery is the bourgeois state. There the bearers of a mandate from the electorate sit in the parliament, a large meeting of the shareholders entitled to vote who, discussing and resolving, equipped with important powers, decide about the weal and woe of the state as a whole. From its midst issues the board of directors, the Cabinet, which has the task of looking after, with special care and heightened vigilance, the interests served by the functioning of the state machinery. The Cabinet members (ministers) represent the state at its highest point; they supervise the work of the management bureaucracy placed under

them, make the big contacts within the competing firms abroad, i.e. the capitalist foreign states, but always they stay dependent on Parliament and responsible to it; by it they are appointed and recalled.

As in the assembly of shareholders, so too in Parliament questions and proposals often manage to be carried through and dismissed which already are foregone conclusions and are only put to the vote for form's sake. They have already been put forward and decided on in another place, whose importance more or less strongly controls the vote of the shareholders' meeting or the parliament. This other place is identical with the offices of the great banks or of the captains of industry. Here, where the most significant decisions of the capitalist economy come down, the decisive resolutions of bourgeois politics are passed. And indeed by the same people in the same case. For politics is nothing other than struggle for the legal protection of economic interests — is the defence of profit with the weapons of paragraphs in law, the securing of the capitalist system of exploitation with the means of state authority.

With tirelessness and zeal the bourgeoisie has worked at the construction of its state form and at the development of its legislature. For this it found its most reliable tool in Parliament, which in turn found its auxiliary organs in the parties. Today, having reached the highest peak of capitalist development, big capital feels the power of Parliament and parties as burdensome. It avoids it by Enabling Acts, military dictatorships, and shifting important authority and decisions to other bodies in which the representatives of capital and economic concerns have the upper hand (state economic council). Open antagonism towards Parliament and



parliamentarism is no longer at all concealed in big-capitalist circles; in fact attacks directed against parliament and parliamentary government are debated quite openly without inhibition. The slave, Parliament, has done his duty. When the idea of a Directory was being discussed in the bonapartist tendency, Herr Minoux was selected as the supreme holder of power. Herr Minoux the General Director of Stinnes.

#### 4. PARLIAMENT AND PARTIES

The character, content and results of laws always correspond to the dominant economic interests of a given time, more specifically to the definitive economic interests of the ruling class. In the bourgeois epoch this class is the bourgeoisie. Parliament therefore had the task of revising old laws according to the needs of the bourgeoisie or abrogating them in favour of new laws suited to the problems of the time.

As early as the last period of the feudal epoch, a kind of parliament had already existed : the convocation of Estates. In the struggle with the estates -- first the nobility, later especially the world of finance and trade, to whose material aid he had to turn -- the prince had drawn or selected representatives of the different orders and occupations and convened them in a corporate body. But this body was only to express wishes, make suggestions, furnish opinions : this meeting of estates was not competent to enact and promulgate laws itself. Eventually a second body partly joined the assembly of estates, coming more from the people and even sometimes elected, so that a distinction was drawn between a first and second chamber (Lords and Commons). But the competences of both chambers were still very limited by the power of the princes. Real parliaments with full legislative power, proceeding from open election, everywhere formed one of the achievements of the bourgeois revolution. As we know, the bourgeois class stood for the principle of liberalism in its state-political ideology and the principle of democracy in its state-political organisation. It was, then, for freedom and equality. But only for freedom as it saw it, namely as far as it regarded the interests of its

economy of profit, and for equality only insofar as it could be expressed in paragraphs on paper, not to be confirmed and realised through equality of social conditions. Not even in dreams did it occur to them to respect and practice freedom and equality in relation to the proletariat, still less did they let the principle of brotherhood carry any weight for it.

At the same time, bourgeois society is by no means a monolithic class. Rather it contains many layers, groups and professional categories, and therefore a lot of different economic interests. The wholesaler has different interests from the retailer, the houseowner from the tenant, the tradesman from the farmer, the buyer from the seller. But all the different groups and categories want to and ought to be taken into account in the legislature. Each has more prospect of consideration the larger the total of representatives of its interests in parliament. On this account every layer or group tried to collect as many votes as possible for its candidates in parliamentary elections. To make their agitation vigorous and lasting, they combined in election associations from which the parties emerged with firmer organisations and more definite programmes. Whatever these parties called themselves, whichever programmes they put forward, whatever high and holy virtues they stood up for, whatever fine phrases and slogans they used -- their struggle, to the extent that it strove for political influence, was always concerned with quite definite economic interests. Thus the conservative party, which wanted the preservation (i.e. conservation) of the old traditional state form, distribution of power, and ideology, formed the rallying point for the feudal caste of big landowners. The big industrialists with an interest in the national state, who embraced the liberalism of the

capitalist era, formed the party of the national liberals. The petty bourgeois, to whom freedom of opinion and equality before the law seemed achievements worth striving and being thankful for, were found in the democratic and radical parties.

At first the workers had no party of their own, for they had not yet grasped that they were a class on their own with their own interests and political aims. So they let themselves be taken in by the democrats and liberals, or even the conservatives, and formed the faithful herd of voters for the bourgeois parties. In proportion, however, as the workers' class consciousness was jolted awake and strengthened, they went over to forming their own parties and sending their own representatives to parliament, with the mission of securing for the working class as many and as large advantages as possible during the construction and completion of the bourgeois state. Thus, in the Erfurt Programme [\[11\]](#) of the Social-Democratic Party, the many practical demands of the movement are laid down alongside the great, revolutionary final goal, reflecting its parliamentary life and orientation towards the immediate present. These demands had nothing to do with socialism, but derived mainly from bourgeois programmes ; only they were never carried out by bourgeois parties, in fact had never been seriously wanted. It is not to be denied that the representatives of social democracy did hard and sincere work in parliament. But their effectiveness and success remained limited. For parliament is an instrument of bourgeois politics, tied to the bourgeois method of making politics, and bourgeois too in its effect. In the last analysis, the real advantage of parliamentarism accrues to the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeois, i.e. parliamentary method of carrying on politics is closely related to the bourgeois method of carrying on economics. The method is : trade and negotiate. As the bourgeois trades and negotiates goods and values in his life and office, at market and fair, in bank and stock exchange, so in parliament too he trades and negotiates the legislative sanctions and legal means for the money and material values negotiated. In parliament the representatives of each party try to extract as much as possible from the legislature for their customers, their interest group, their 'firm'. They are also in constant communication with their producers' combines, employers' associations cartels, special interest associations or trade unions, receiving from them directions, information, rules of behaviour or mandates. They are the agents, the delegates, and the business is done through speeches, bargains, haggling, dealing, deception, voting manoeuvres, compromises. The main work of parliament, then, is not even done in the large parliamentary negotiations, which are only a sort of spectacle, but in the committees which meet privately and without the mask of the conventional lie.

In the pre-revolutionary period, parliament also had its justification for the working class in that it was the means of securing for it such political and economic advantages as the power relations of any given moment allowed. But this justification was null and void the instant that the proletariat arose as a revolutionary class and advanced its claims to take over the entire state and economic power. Now there was no more negotiation, no putting up with greater or lesser advantages, no compromises -- now it was all or nothing. The first revolutionary achievement of the proletariat would logically have had to be the abolition of parliament. But

it could not fulfil this achievement because it was itself still organised in parties, and so bound up with organisations of a basically bourgeois character and consequently incapable of transcending bourgeois nature, i.e. bourgeois politics, economy, state order and ideology. A party needs parliamentarism, as parliament needs parties. One conditions the other, in mutual sustenance and support. The maintenance of the party means maintenance of parliament and with it the maintenance of bourgeois power.

After the model of the bourgeois state and its institutions, the party too is organised on authoritarian centralist principles. All movement in it goes in the form of commands from the top of the central committee down to the broad base of the membership. Below, the mass of the members ; above, the ranks of officials at local, regional, country and national level. The party secretaries are the NCOs, the MPs, the officers. They give the orders, issue the watchwords, make policy, are the higher dignitaries. The party apparatus, in the form of offices, newspapers, funds, mandates, gives them power to prescribe for the mass of members, which none of the latter can avoid. The officials of the central committee are, so to speak, the party Ministers ; they issue decrees and instructions, interpret the decisions of party congresses and conferences, determine the use of money, distribute posts and offices according to their personal policy. Certainly the party conference is supposed to be the supreme court, but its composition, sitting, decision-taking and interpretation of its decisions are thoroughly in the hands of the highest holders of power in the party, and the zombie-like obedience typical of centralism takes care of the necessary echoes of subordination.

The concept of a party with a revolutionary character in the proletarian sense is nonsense. It can only have a revolutionary character in the bourgeois sense, and then only during the transition between feudalism and capitalism. In other words, in the interest of the bourgeoisie. During the transition between capitalism and socialism, it must fail, the more so in proportion to how revolutionary had been its expression in theory and phraseology. When the world war broke out in 1914, i.e. when the bourgeoisie of the whole world declared war on the proletariat of the whole world, the Social Democratic Party should have replied with the revolution of the proletariat of the whole world against the bourgeoisie of the whole world. But it failed, threw away the mask of world revolution, and followed bourgeois policy all along the line. The USP should have issued the call to revolution when the peace treaty of Versailles was concluded. Its bourgeois nature, however, forced it to a western instead of eastern orientation ; it agitated for signing and submitting. Even the KPD, hyper-radical as its pose is, on every critical question is constrained by its bourgeois-centralist authoritarian character to serve the bourgeois politicians as soon as it comes to the crunch. It sits in parliament and carried on bourgeois politics ; in the Ruhr in 1920 it negotiated with the bourgeois military [\[12\]](#) ; it fought on the side of Stinnes in the Ruhr action against France by means of passive resistance ; it falls victim to the cult of bourgeois nationalism and fraternises with fascists ; it pushes itself into bourgeois governments in order to help further Russia's policy of capitalist construction from there. Everywhere -- bourgeois politics carried out with typically bourgeois means. When the SPD says it does not want a revolution, there is a certain logic in this because it, as a party, can never carry out a proletarian revolution. But when the

KPD says it wants the revolution, then it takes into its programme far more than it is capable of performing, whether in ignorance of its bourgeois character or out of fraudulent demagoguery.

Every bourgeois organisation is basically an administrative organisation which requires a bureaucracy in order to function. So is the party, dependent on the administrative machine served by a paid professional leadership. The leaders are administrative officials and as such belong to a bourgeois category. Leaders, i.e. officials, are petty bourgeois, not proletarians.

Most party and trade union leaders were once workers, perhaps the most sound and revolutionary. But as they became officials, i.e. leaders, agents and makers of business, they learned to trade and negotiate, to handle documents and cash ; they undertook mandates, began to operate within the great bourgeois organism with the aid of their organisational apparatus. To whom God gives office, he also gives understanding. Anyone who is leader in a bourgeois organisation, including parties and trade unions, does so not on the strength of his intellectual qualifications, his insight and excellence, his courage and character, but he is leader on the strength of the organisational apparatus, which is in his hands, at his disposal, endowing him with competence. He owes his leadership role to the authority arising from the position he occupies in the organisational mechanism. Thus the party secretary obtains his power from the office in which all the threads of the administration converge, from the paper work of which he alone has exact knowledge ; the editor obtains his from the newspaper which he has in his intellectual power and uses as his instrument ; the treasurer from the funds he manages ;



the MP from the mandate which gives him an inside view of the apparatus of government denied to ordinary mortals. An official of the central leadership may be much more limited and mediocre than an under-official, and yet his influence and power are greater, exactly as an NCO can be smarter than a Colonel or General without having the great authority of these officers. Ebert [13] is certainly not the ablest mind in his party, yet it has installed him in the highest office it has to give ; he is certainly not the ablest mind in the government either -- but why does he occupy that position? Not on the basis of his personal qualifications but as the random representative of his party, a centralist, authoritarian organisation, in which he has climbed to the highest rung of the ladder. And why does the bourgeoisie put up with this Ebert? Because the bourgeois method of his politics has brought him to this position and because he conducts himself politically throughout as the advocate and counsel of these bourgeois politics. A bourgeois leader in this position would be neither better nor worse than he.

Here a word must be said about leadership in general.

There will no doubt always be people who in their knowledge, their experiences, their ability, their character are superior to others whom they will influence, advise, stimulate in struggle, carry away with them, lead. And so there will always be leaders in this sense. A good thing too, for cleverness, integrity of character and ability should dominate, not stupidity, coarseness and weakness. Anyone who, in his rejection of the paid professional leadership that gets its authority from the organisational apparatus, goes so far as to repudiate all and every leadership without considering that superiority of mind and character is a quality of

leadership not to be repudiated but worthy of welcome, oversteps the mark and becomes a demagogue. That goes too far for those who inveigh and rage against the intellectuals in the movement, or -- as has occurred -- even against knowledge. Naturally bourgeois knowledge is always suspect and usually questionable, bourgeois intellectuals are always an abomination in the workers' movement, which they misuse, lead astray, and often enough betray to the bourgeoisie. But the achievements of bourgeois learning can be re-cast for the working class and forged into weapons, exactly as the capitalist machines will one day perform useful services for the working class. And when intellectuals in the interest of the proletariat attend to the important process of the scientific assimilation and reworking of intellectual works, they deserve recognition and thanks for it, not abuse and inculcation. In conclusion, Marx, Bakunin, Rosa Luxemburg and others were intellectuals, whose scientific labours have rendered the most valuable services to the liberation struggle of the proletariat.

The paid professional leaders of the bourgeois organisations deserve mistrust and are to be rejected as agents of a bourgeois administrative apparatus. Their bourgeois activity generates in them bourgeois living habits and a bourgeois style of thinking and feeling. Inevitably they take on the typical petty-bourgeois leadership ideology of the party and trade union apparatchiks. The secure appointment, the heightened social position, the punctually paid salary, the well-heated office, the quickly learnt routine in the carrying out of formal administrative business, engender a mentality which makes the labour official in no way distinguishable from the petty post, tax, community or state official as much in his work as in his domestic

milieu. The official is for correct management of business, painstaking orderliness, smooth discharging of obligations ; he hates disturbances, friction, conflicts. Nothing is so repugnant to him as chaos, therefore he opposes any sort of disorder ; he combats the initiative and independence of the masses ; he fears the revolution.

But the revolution comes. Suddenly it is there, rearing up. Everything is convulsed, everything turned upside down. The workers are in the streets, pressing for action. They set themselves to casting down the bourgeoisie, destroying the state, taking possession of the economy. Then a monstrous fear seizes the officials. For God's sake, is order to be transformed into disorder, peace into unrest, the correct management of business into chaos? Not that ! Thus 'Vorwarts' [\[14\]](#) on 8 November 1918 warned of "agitators with no conscience" who "had fantasies of revolution" ; thus the newsletter of the trade unions combated the "irresponsible adventurers" and "putschists" ; thus the parliamentary party sent Scheidemann [\[15\]](#) even at the last minute into the Wilhelmitic Cabinet [\[16\]](#) , so that "the greatest misfortune -- the revolution -- might be avoided." And during the revolution, wherever workers wanted to go into action they were eagerly countered every time by party and trade union officials with the call : "Not too violent ! No bloodshed ! Be reasonable ! Let us negotiate !"

As negotiations were resorted to, instead of grabbing the enemy and throwing him to the ground, the bourgeoisie was saved. Negotiation is after all their method of carrying on politics, and on their fighting terrain they are at their most secure. Wanting to carry on proletarian politics in the home of the bourgeoisie and with their

methods means sitting down at the capitalists' table, eating and drinking with them, and betraying the interests of the proletariat. Treachery to the masses -- from the SPD to the most extreme of the KPD -- need not arise from base intention ; it is simply the consequence of the bourgeois nature of every party and trade union organisation. The leaders of these parties and trade unions are in fact spiritually part of the bourgeois class, physically part of bourgeois society.

But bourgeois society is collapsing. It is more and more falling victim to ruin and decay. Its legislature is ridiculed and despised by the bourgeoisie itself. Laws on interest rates and currency are promulgated, and no-one gives a damn. Everything that not long ago was regarded as sacred -- church, morality, marriage, school, public opinion -- is exposed, soiled, made mock of, distorted into caricature. In such a time the party, too, cannot go on existing any longer ; as a limb of bourgeois society it will go down with it. Only a quack would try to preserve the hand from death when the body lies dying. Hence the unending chain of party splits, disturbances, dissolutions -- of the collapse of the party which no executive committee, no party congress, no Second or Third International, no Kautsky and no Lenin can now stop. The hour of the parties has now come, as the hour of bourgeois society has come. They will still hold out, as guilds and companies from the middle ages have held out until today : as outlived institutions with no power to form history. A party like the SPD, which gave up all the achievements of the November uprising without a struggle, in part even wilfully played into the hands of the counter-revolution, with which it is tied up and sits in governments, has lost every justification for existence. And a party like the KPD, which is only a West European branch of Turkestan and could not maintain

itself for a couple of weeks by its own strength without the rich subsidies from Moscow, has never had this justification for existence. The proletariat will transcend them both, untroubled by party discipline and the screeches of the apparatchiks, by resolutions and congress decisions. In the hour of downfall it will rescue itself from asphyxiation by strangling bourgeois power of organisation.

It will take its cause into its own hands.

### **Footnotes**

[\[11\]](#) Adopted in 1891.

[\[12\]](#) After the Kapp Putsch (a right wing coup against the SPD government) in April 1920, a proletarian insurrection erupted in the Ruhr and a Red Army was formed. The KPD advocated that the workers disarm and lent its support to the idea of an SPD-USPD coalition government. Lenin shortly was to add his weight to such a course.

[\[13\]](#) Working class originated leader of the SPD and prime minister in several Weimar governments.

[\[14\]](#) 'Vorwärts' was the daily newspaper of the SPD. The 8th November 1918 was the eve of the German revolution.

[\[15\]](#) Leading SPD politician ; with Ebert announced the founding of the German Republic to contain the November revolution.

[\[16\]](#) Last cabinet before the overthrow of the Kaiser (Wilhelm) in the November 1918 revolution.

## 5. THE TRADE UNIONS

What has been said about parties, party leaders and party tactics goes even more for the trade unions. In fact, they show us the typical petty-bourgeois tactics of compromise all the more in that their own existence represents a compromise between capital and labour. The trade unions have never proclaimed the elimination of capitalism to be their goal and mission. Never have they engaged themselves in any practical way to this end. From the beginning the trade unions reckoned with the existence of capitalism as a given fact. Accepting this fact, they have engaged themselves within the framework of the capitalist economic order to fight for better wages and working conditions for the proletariat. Not, then, for abolition of the wage system, not for a fundamental rejection of the capitalist economy, not a struggle against the whole. That, said the trade unions with bourgeois logic, is the business of the political party. Therefore they declared themselves non-political ; made a big thing of their neutrality, and rejected any party obligation. Their role was that of compromise, mediation, curing symptoms, prescribing palliatives. From the start their whole basic attitude was not only non-political but also non-revolutionary. They were reformist, opportunist, compromising auxiliary organs between bourgeoisie and proletariat.

The trade unions grew out of the journeyman's associations of the old artisan guilds. They were filled with the spirit of the modern workers' movement when capitalism, through the great crisis of the 1860s, impressed with particular harshness on the consciousness of the proletariat the pitfalls and horrors of its system.

Under this economic pressure, which greatly swelled the workers' movement throughout Europe, the first trade union congress was convened by Schweitzer and Fritzche in 1868. Fritzche characterised very aptly the trade union organisations and their duties when he explained : "Strikes are not a means of changing the foundations of the capitalist mode of production ; they are, however, a means of furthering the class consciousness of the workers, breaking through police domination and removing from today's society individual social abuses of an oppressive nature, like excessively long working time and Sunday work." In the following period the activity of the trade unions consisted in agitating the proletariat, moving it towards co-ordination, winning it to the idea of class struggle, protecting it against the worst rigours of capitalist exploitation, and constantly grabbing momentary advantages whenever possible from the ever-changing situation between labour and capital. The entrepreneur, formerly all-powerful master of the house, soon had the strongly centralised power of the organisation against him. And the working class, heightened in consciousness of its value in the process of production by co-ordinated action, and schooled from strike to strike and conflict to conflict in the development of its fighting energy, soon constituted a factor with which capitalism had seriously to reckon in all calculations of profit.

We can never seriously think of denying the great value the trade unions have had for the proletariat as a means of struggle in the defence of workers' interests ; no-one will dare to belittle or dispute the extraordinary services the trade unions have performed in advocating these interests. But all this is today, unfortunately, testimonials and claims to fame which belong to the past.

In the struggle between capital and labour the entrepreneurs, too, very soon recognised the value of organisation. To be able to confront the workers' combinations, they combined themselves into powerful associations, at first by trade categories or branches of industry. And -- as they had greater financial resources, had the protection and favour of public officials on their side, knew how to influence legislation and jurisdiction, and could apply the most rigorous methods of terror, harassment and contempt to any bosses who did not grasp their class interests quickly enough and so did not take the required interest in the association -- their organisations were soon stronger, more effective and more powerful than those of the workers. The trade unions saw themselves pushed from the offensive to the defensive by the employers' associations. Struggles became more violent and bitter, were successful increasingly seldom, usually resulted in exhausting the central funds, and so needed more and more lengthy pauses for rest and recovery between the struggles. Finally it was recognised that the questionable half-successes were usually bought too dear, that the compromises (at best) resulting from the rounds of struggle could be won more cheaply if a readiness to negotiate was shown right from the start. So they approached further struggles with reduced demands, with readiness to negotiate, with the intention of making a deal. Instead of struggling openly, each side tried to outmanoeuvre the other. Offering to negotiate was no longer considered as a fault or as weakness. They were adjusted to compromise. As a rule, agreement -- not victory -- formed the conclusion of wage movements or conflicts over hours. Thus, in time, an alteration in tactics, in the method of struggle, came about all along the line.



The policy of signing labour contracts arose. On the basis of agreements and conciliation, contracts were signed in which the conditions of work were regulated in paragraphs. The contracts were binding for the whole organisation of both sides in the branch of industry for a longer or shorter period of time. In the form of a compromise, they represented a kind of truce until further notice. The boss gained significant advantages through the conclusion of labour contracts : he could make more accurate business calculations for the duration of the contract ; he could sue in a bourgeois court for compliance with the terms of contract ; could reckon with a certain stability in his management and rate of profit ; and, above all, he could concentrate his strength in greater peace for years in order to put that much more pressure on the work-force when the next contract was being concluded. In contrast to the boss, the worker only got disadvantages from the labour contract : bound by the contract for long periods, he was unable to make the most of favourable opportunities as they arose to improve his position ; his class consciousness and will to struggle were lulled with time, and he was conditioned to inactivity ; so fell more and more into the atmosphere, fatal for the class struggle, of "harmony between capital and labour" and "community of interests between work-giver and work-taker" ; thus succumbed completely to petty-bourgeois hopeless opportunism, which lives from hand to mouth and makes even the most practical reforms and "positive achievements" more dubious and worthless the longer it goes on ; and in the end becomes entirely the duped victim of a narrow-minded, circumscribed, and often unscrupulous clique of officials and leaders whose main interest has long since been not the good of the worker but the securing of their

administrative positions. In fact, as the policy of labour contracts became predominant, the worker's participation in the life of the unions grew more dormant ; meetings were sparsely attended, participation in elections fell off sharply, dues had to be collected almost by force, terror in the factories got the upper hand along with the bureaucratisation of the administrative apparatus -- both means to maintain the existence of the organisation, which had become an end in itself. The introduction of national contracts for large categories of workers effected an even greater increase in centralism and the power of officials and at the same time, too, an ever-growing split between leaders and masses, greater alienation of the organisation from its original character as a means of struggle, and from the objective of struggle, and deeper degradation of the workers into insignificant, will-less puppets, only paying dues and carrying out instructions, in the hands of the association's bureaucracy.

Another factor was added. In order to chain the worker to the organisation through all his interests, which derive from his permanent situation next to the bread line, the unions developed an extensive and complicated system of insurance, carrying out a sort of practical social policy. Apparently for the benefit of the worker, certainly as his expense. There is insurance against sickness, death, unemployment, moving and travelling to a new job ; a whole social welfare apparatus with little plasters and powders and all sorts of palliatives for proletarian misery. The worker collects insurance policy after insurance policy, pays premium after premium, develops an interest in the liquidity of the union treasury, and waits for the opportunity to call on its help. Instead of thinking about the great struggle, he gets lost in

calculations over pennies. He is strengthened and maintained in his petty-bourgeois way of thinking ; he gets bogged down, to the disadvantage of his proletarian emancipation, in the constraints and narrow-mindedness of the petty-bourgeois concept of life, which cannot give anything without asking what is to be had in exchange ; gets used to seeing the value of organisation in the random and paltry material advantages of the moment, instead of holding his sights on the great goal, freely willed and selflessly fought for -- the liberation of his class. In this way the class struggle character of the organisation is systematically undermined and the class consciousness of the proletarian irretrievably destroyed or devastated. Into the bargain the poor devil carries on his back the costs of a system of social benefits and welfare which basically the state should pay out of the wealth of society as a whole, lightening the burden on the financially weak.

Thus the trade unions have become, over time, organs of petty-bourgeois social quackery, whose value to the worker has shrunk to nothing anyway, since under pressure of the devaluation of money and the economic misery [17] the solvency of all welfare funds has sunk to nil. But more than this : in logical consistency with their tendency toward community of interests between capital and labour, the trade unions have developed into auxiliary organs of bourgeois-capitalist economic interests, and so of exploitation and profitmaking. They have become the most loyal shield-bearers of the bourgeois class, the most reliable protective troops for the capitalist money-bag. At the outbreak of the war they came out in favour of the duty of national defence without a moment's hesitation, made bourgeois war policy their own, recognised the civil peace, subscribed

to the war loan, preached the imperative of endurance, helped to enact the law on auxiliary service, and frenziedly suppressed every movement of sabotage or revolt in the weapons and munitions industry. At the outbreak of the November Revolution they protected the Kaiser's government, flung themselves against the revolutionary masses, allied themselves with big business in a working association, let themselves be bribed with offices, honours and incomes in industry and in the state, clubbed down all strikes and uprisings in unity with police and military, and thus shamelessly and brutally betrayed the vital interests of the proletariat to its sworn enemy. In the building up of capitalism after the war, in the re-enslavement of the masses through capital organised in trusts and connected internationally, in the Stinnes-isation of the German economy, in the struggles over Upper Silesia [18] and the Ruhr, in the retrenchment of the 8-hour day, the demobilisation orders, the forced economy, in the elimination of the workers' councils, the factory committees, control commissions, etc., during the terror against syndicalists, unionists [19], anarchists -- always and everywhere they stood ready to help at the side of capital, as a praetorian guard ready for the lowest and most shameful deed. Always against the interests of the proletariat, against the progress of the revolution, the liberation and autonomy of the working class, they used and use the far greater part of all accretions to funds to secure and materially provide for their existence as boss-men and parasites, which -- as they well know -- stands and falls with the existence of the trade union organisation that they have falsified from a weapon for the workers into a weapon against the workers.

Wanting to revolutionise these trade unions is a ludicrous undertaking, because quite impossible to carry out and hopeless. This "revolutionising" amounts to either a simple change of personnel, changing absolutely nothing in the system but maximally extending the centre of infection, or else it must consist in removing from the trade unions centralism, contract-signing, the professional leadership, the insurance funds, the spirit of compromise. . . .What is left then? A hollow nothing !

As long as the trade unions still exist, they will remain what they are : the most genuine and efficient of all the White Guards of the bosses, to whom German capital in particular owes a greater debt of gratitude than to all the guards of Noske and Hitler [20] put together.

Such generally harmful, counter-revolutionary institutions, inimical to the workers, can only be destroyed, annihilated, exterminated.

### **Footnotes**

[17] This refers to the inflation crisis of 1923.

[18] An area divided between Germany and Poland after the war, following a plebiscite supported by the trade unions. The class-conscious miners in the area fought against being separated from proletarian Germany.

[19] Unionists here refers to the Workers' Unions (*Arbeiterunion*) (AAUD and AAUD-E). See chapter 7.

[20] This refers to the counter-revolutionary actions of the young Hitler up until 1923 when he was involved in the activities of small private nationalist armed bands, mostly in Southern Germany.

## 6. THE LAST PHASE OF EUROPEAN CAPITALISM

The German working class, caught in the chains of its counter-revolutionary organisations and blinded by the phraseology of the petty-bourgeois way of thinking, has once again rescued the bourgeoisie of its country in situations where its existence was at stake ; it has brought it to safety on its strong shoulders, out of the dangers of the World War and the November Revolution.

Then the bourgeoisie installed itself in the saddle again, to ride more boldly and brutally than ever over the bodies and heads of its rescuers. Although laden with unheard-of wealth, which it looted meanwhile, it is still gripped by anxiety and terror : it has looked death in the face and stood close to the abyss of its destruction.

Thus the German bourgeoisie in 1924 is no longer the one it was in 1914. For even German capitalism has become another. It has left the national phase of its development and has entered the international phase. This change and progression is connected with the outcome of the World War.

If the World War originated in the drive to expansion of all the capitalist states and had the aim of placing the whole world under the dictatorship of one of these capitalist states or combination of states, so the result of the World War was, for the power of German capital, the miscarrying of this plan and the painful price of renouncing for the future its independent existence and letting itself be incorporated into the association of interests of the conquering combine.

The forces of German capital are represented in the first place by heavy industry. Germany is rich in coal but lacking in ore. On this account, the daily morning and evening prayer of the Stinnes and their like was already, decades ago : Dear God, give us a victorious war with France so that we can gain possession of the rich ore deposits of Briey and Longuy. As, on the other side, the French capitalists implore their Lord God, in view of the scarcity of coal in their country, for the rich coal treasures of the Ruhr region. Ore and coal, then, also acted in the determining role in the World War, especially in the struggle between France and Germany - -- after world domination had showed itself to both as an illusion.

The treaty of Versailles brought the French capitalists the Saar region ; but they remained discontented, for they claim the Ruhr region as before. The mining industry, massively strengthened in the Comité de Forges [\[21\]](#) , asserts that it cannot fulfil its economic task without the Ruhr, especially as many of its plants and factories in Northern France had been destroyed by the German warfare and rendered useless for years to come. Since 1918 it has pressed the French government into the military invasion of the Ruhr and finally achieved its occupation. German heavy industry was desperate. Indeed their slogan also ran : Ore and coal belong together. But they wanted the fulfilling of the slogan in their favour. Now that it was happening in favour of the Comité de Forges, they summoned the German government, the German nation, the whole seething spirit of the German people to resistance. It was useless ; German heavy industry had to surrender to French

capital through treaties, for coal will gravitate to iron, and the greater right is with the stronger.

But still another economic power stands in the wings of the world political theatre : petroleum.

The victory of the Entente in the World War was in the last analysis a victory of the superior war technology of America. For the first time oil triumphed over coal for the heating of the submarines and ships, of the aircraft, motors, tanks, etc., was accomplished with oil and by a technology which had undergone especially high development in America and opposite which the German technology was backward. After the ending of the World War, the most pressing imperative for America, if it did not want to lose again the hegemony won over world economic domains, was to bring the oil production of the world into its hands in order to thus monopolise the guarantees of its ascendancy.

The richest oil field lie in Asia Minor (Mossul) and belong to the zone of the English protectorate ; the way to them leads over Europe. American oil capital began very quickly to secure this path for itself. It financed large-scale French industry, took over banks, bought up newspapers, and won influence in the government. Starting from France it pressed on -- by courtesy of the gesture of the French statesman or the bayonet of the French military -- towards Czechoslovakia, Poland, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, as far as Turkey. The war between Greece and Turkey, the revolution in Bulgaria, the Lausanne talks, the Balkan incidents, the military convention between France and the little Entente, etc., are more or less connected to the perpetual striving of American oil capital to procure itself a large base of



operations for the confrontation which must follow sooner or later -- in the interest of world monopoly over oil -- with the competitors, England and Russia. Just as the oil trust has been at work for decades in Mexico to obtain dominion over the Mexican oil fields through a chain of political shocks, putsches, revolts and revolutions, so it also leaves no stone unturned in Europe in order to take possession of the approaches to the oil districts of Asia Minor, against every competitor and every opposition.

Germany represented the only gap in the path. As the endeavours to detach South Germany from North Germany and bring it under French overlordship did not lead to the goal -- in spite of the enormous sums made ready for the financing of the Bavarian fascist movement and anti-state conspiracy -- and because the interests of New York clashed here with the interests of Rome, oil capital applied other tactics. Supported by the depreciation of money consequent on inflation and certain stock-exchange manoeuvres, it bought up one economic combine after another and thus gradually brought the entire power of German capital under its control. When the Stinnes combine, for which the proffered quota of shared profits was not high enough, offered resistance and opposed its conversion into the mere appendage of an international community of exploitative interests, force was resorted to. The military occupation of the Ruhr meant the fulfilment of long-cherished wishes of oil capital just as much as it was a deed after the heart of the French mining industrialists.

Meanwhile the German capitalist class has recognised that it too was able to benefit considerably from its dependence on Entente and world capital. Certainly it

was pledged by treaties to high payments which would severely curtail its rate of profit, but in return the German proletariat was handed over to it, completely defenceless, for unrestrained exploitation. It enjoys the advantages of tax concessions under the favour of a plutocratic fiscal legislature ; has thrown away all the burdens and fetters which, however insignificant they might be, had been put into practice in recent years to lessen social conflict in the interest of the proletariat ; above all it is again in full possession of the reactionary power, as in its best times under the Wilhelmitic regime. It has secured its position with the 10-hour day, starvation wages, the gold standard swindle, martial law, and military dictatorship.

Germany has become a colony of the Entente. The German workers are the enslaved natives. The German entrepreneurs represent the privileged caste of slave-owners, who take so great a part in the extorted and ill-gotten gains which they have to pay over to foreign high finance that a sumptuous life-style is possible for them. As the economic, so also the political power has gone over completely into the hands of big capital. The "shop stewards" and delegates of the leading industry sit in the government, manage high public office or hold in their hands the strings on which the current party and government puppets hang. When in November 1923 [\[22\]](#) the establishing of a Directory was planned, Herr Minoux, the right hand of Stinnes, was considered quite generally and as a matter of course (as already mentioned) as the coming man. Whether in the end Minoux or Stresemann or Schlacht, a representative of big capital, of the industrial and banking world, will always stand at the head and have the reins of government in his hands. The parliament is barred from

co-determination by Enabling Acts or is faced with accomplished facts ; its only remaining value is as a decorative exhibition which is necessary to the appearance of a republic. The preponderance of all the big decisions lies not with it, not with the government, but with the banks and employers' combines, the state economic council, the small circle of influential pillars of the economy. It becomes increasingly obvious in society as a whole that as the economic factor stands in the foreground, the political moves more and more into the second line.

This phenomenon can perhaps be designated as an Americanisation of politics, because it first arose in the country of the greatest lords of capital and is typical of the way in which the trust magnates and bank potentates are accustomed to making their politics. The undisguised domination of the money-bag, veiled with no romance, excused by no ethic, sanctioned by no diplomacy, justified by no parliamentary phrase -- the whole direct, brutal power-politics of the economic dictators, the Stinnes-isation of politics -- that is the characteristic sign of the last phase into which German capitalism of the post-war period has been hurled, the phase of internationality.

### **Footnotes**

[\[21\]](#) French employers combine.

[\[22\]](#) After the abortive KPD putsch in Saxony and Thuringia in October 1923.

## 7 FACTORY ORGANISATION AND WORKERS' UNION

(Betriebsorganisation & Arbeiterunion)

When in the November Revolution of 1918 the bourgeois and counter-revolutionary character of the parties and trade unions revealed itself in all its glory for the second time, a section of the proletarians, who were serious about the revolution, reached consciousness. They recognised that the proletarian struggle which plays itself out on the given basis always exhausts itself in shifts of power; that bourgeois organisations with bourgeois tactics of struggle, even when they have proletarians as members, necessarily end up with a compromise with the bourgeois economic and state power; that in view of the displacement of the main emphasis of all struggles towards the economic side, remaining in political organisations and fighting out political struggles from here on must lead to defeat.

Thus a section of the proletariat began to orientate itself towards new viewpoints and finally also to organise. It was recognised that:

The proletarian revolution is completely different in character from the bourgeois revolution.

The proletarian revolution is first and foremost an economic affair.

The proletarian revolution can be fought out not in bourgeois but only in proletarian organisations.

The proletarian revolution must develop its own tactics of struggle.

The consequence of this recognition was the decisive withdrawing from party, parliament, trade union and everything connected with them. At first the positive outcome hovered in the air, not too clearly, and only gained form and shape in time, in the course of many struggles and discussions. The revolutionary trade union of the American workers, IWW, emerged as the model, although known only to few. In addition to this, precisely in the revolutionary period, the idea of the councils system which had played a great part in Russia, was being eagerly discussed, and stood at the centre of all practical suggestions for and attempts at socialisation. 'Wildcat' strikes which broke out everywhere and were carried on against the will of the trade unions gave rise to the election of revolutionary action committees, from which revolutionary works councils soon followed. Finally, the movement grew, first in the Ruhr region among the miners, into the struggle for revolutionary factory organisations (BOs). These BOs, combined in local groups and further united in economic areas, their construction and completion in a united council organisation extending over the whole state, soon became the main idea and prime aim of a movement which flowed into the Union as the new organisational vessel of the will of the revolutionary workers' struggle. Not reasoned out in the official quarters of the leaders, not transmitted by propaganda to the workers as a subtle invention, but grown in quite an elemental fashion from the soil of the most vigorous and serious struggles, it soon stood independently as the object of the most heated conflicts of opinion and debates, in the centre of the revolutionary movement.

The Union movement stems from the basic knowledge that the proletarian revolution, because it wants to see the basis of society overturned, is in the first place an economic revolution, and that capital's work force, whose power is anchored in the factories and works itself out in the first place economically, must advance from the factories as determined power.

Only in the factory is the worker of today a real proletarian, and as such a revolutionary within the meaning of the proletarian-socialist revolution. Outside the factory he is a petty-bourgeois, involved in a petty-bourgeois milieu and middle-class habits of life, dominated by petty-bourgeois ideology. He has grown up in bourgeois families, been educated in a bourgeois school, nourished on the bourgeois spirit. Marriage is a bourgeois penal institution. Dwelling in rented barracks is a bourgeois arrangement. The private household of every family with its own kitchen leads to a completely egoistic economic mode. There the husband looks after his wife, the wife looks after her children; everyone thinks only about his interests. Even the child in bourgeois schools is directed to knowledge influenced by the bourgeoisie, which is tailored in accordance with bourgeois tendencies. Everything is dealt with from the standpoint of the bourgeois-ideological interpretation of history. Then in apprenticeship, in business, in the workshop: again in bourgeois surroundings. What someone reads, what he has picked up in the theatre, in the cinema and so on everywhere, in the street, in the guest-house, bourgeois existence comes to meet him. And all that gives rise to a bourgeois way of thinking and feeling. Many become, as soon as they have taken off their working clothes, bourgeois too in their behaviour.

They treat wives and children as they are treated by their bosses, demand subjection, service, authority. When the proletariat is liberated from the bourgeoisie, women and children will still have to be liberated from the men. This has nothing to do with evil intent, but emerges from our bourgeois attitude, through the environment, through the bourgeois atmosphere. Whenever the worker is seen outside the factory, he is a petty bourgeois. In clothing, habits, life-style he apes the bourgeois and is happy when he can not be distinguished from the bourgeoisie. If we group the worker according to living areas and streets, with the party and trade union membership, then we only find him as a petty bourgeois. At best we get him along to distribute a leaflet, to a peaceful demonstration, hardly anything more. He prefers to avoid fighting or retreats quickly. 'The leaders ought to fight,' he says in his cowardice, 'that's what they're paid for.'

In the factory the worker is another person. There he confronts the capitalist face to face, feels the fist on his neck, is irritated, embittered, hostile. If a conflict breaks out here, he cannot shirk so easily. He is under the control of others, subject to the general influence, is carried away the rest and holds his own. Revolutionary disposition and revolutionary determination coincide here.

Parties and trade unions, because they always include only the petty bourgeois, never the conscious, real proletarians, can never on the sole grounds of the composition of their human resources bring about a revolutionary action. At best, a riot or a putsch. But then, when these infuriated petty bourgeois, their anger bursting out, rush on to the streets to fight, they are

rounded up, crippled or stabbed by the bourgeois organism (bosses, police, military). And the movement is lost.

Not so in the factory. In every factory there is a core of revolutionary elements. They come from all camps and parties. Only gross delusion can maintain that there are revolutionaries exclusively in one party or that adherence to this party constituted the revolutionary quality. All the revolutionaries in the factory, unencumbered by previous adherence to party of trade union, get together and form the revolutionary factory organisation. Are you revolutionary? Do you want to struggle? Are you abandoning party and union? That is enough. Whoever wants that can become a member of the revolutionary factoryorganisation.

The proletarian revolution has to destroy a powerful system from the bottom and to create something quite new on the largest scale. For this task the forces of parties and trade unions are not adequate. Even the strongest associations are too weak for it. The proletarian revolution can only be the work of the whole proletarian class. All energies must be included for this. Every individual must stand in the proper place and do his best there. This proper place is the factory, where everyone does his duty. Here, in the factory, all proletarian forces find their expression.

The factory organisation is, basically, absolutely nothing new. That it grew quite naturally from the struggle is explained by the fact that, in the development of the struggle and of labour, everything was prepared for it to arise. It was, so to speak, at hand for a long time; capitalism itself created it. For the sake of profit it



constructed a wonderful system of organising work: the factory, the mine, the works, the economic complex, the business district. The workers only need to acquire revolutionary consciousness of this organisation in order to seize it, surround it and use it to organise the district. It has to create afresh no party-substitute, no trade union competitor. It only has to take possession of the existing organisation of labour, which serves capitalist profit goals, and place it in the service of revolutionary aims of struggle. This happens as the workers in the factories themselves recognise what power they have in their hands; as they take greater pains to seize for themselves the existing organisational apparatus; and as they finally take possession of the factories, to eradicate the bourgeois system and put socialism in its place. The means to that is the factory organisation.

The BO is a federative form without centralism. All members are independent; no-one outside the factory has a say in their factory business. In their BO the members are autonomous. No boss from the office or a central HQ, no intellectual or professional leader can interfere in their affairs. The BOs construct themselves from their own resources and settle their affairs with their own energies and their own means. This is federalist independence. Autonomy. The BO is neither party nor trade union. It has nothing to do with agitation and participation in the unions. It is not a labour association, not a relief institution; it signs no labour contracts and has no interest in Hapag steamers christened 'Karl Legien'. It is, then, simply a place for the preparation and stirring up of the revolution.

If one BO exists near the others, then they must form links with each other. Let us assume that in a large

factory BOs exist in the different section (casting, moulding, turning, carpentry and book-keeping). These sections together comprise the works. On questions which concern not the individual sections but the whole, the BOs must work together. This happens through the factory delegates or shop stewards who are elected on an ad hoc basis. For a discussion, a certain resolution, the delegate receives a binding mandate from his BO. The delegate has only to carry out the instruction of his BO, and disposes of no kind of independent rights on that account. Thus the leader is not independent of his electors like the party secretary or MP. He cannot decide one way or another and subsequently refer back and take a vote of confidence. He has only to carry out the will of the masses. The membership has the right of recall at any time if the delegate is unreliable. He can then be replaced by a better one. He is permanently in the control and power of the masses through him the working mass speaks.

But there can be questions which go even beyond the sphere of a factory, perhaps affect a whole economic region. Then the delegates of the factories of the whole economic region meet together. They too have a binding mandate and are always recallable. Thus the structure is completed, from the factory, through the works, the economic district, out to the entire state. This is not a new centralism, but only the councils system constructed from below upwards. Centralism also has, superficially, this form of organisation. But there the command goes from above downwards. In the structure of the factory organisation the decision goes from below upwards; it does not rest on a leader's judgment but on the foundation of the expression of will of the masses. The leaders do not command while the masses have to obey;

rather, the masses decide and the leaders have become executors of the masses' will. Policy is made in the name and after the initiative of the masses. This is the fundamentally new thing, the proletarian element.

The old parties and trade unions established their structure as follows: a few people who considered themselves as leaders from the beginning, drew up a programme, composed a founding resolution and gave themselves a name then members were recruited. First the officers were there, then the soldiers the influencing and conferring of blessings on the people followed from above according to the authoritarian principle.

In the structure of the factory organisation it is exactly the other way round. First of all the masses are there, getting together, organising and deliberating their affairs. If people are needed to carry out the decisions taken, then delegates are chosen to whom the decision is conveyed as a binding mandate. If the delegates meet at a conference with the delegates of other BOs, the conference does not have to deliberate and conclude, it has only to establish the will of the BOs represented. The assertion of this will is the decision. Now, it is the task of the conference to deliberate how it will carry out the decision with greatest expediency. Thus the delegates become executive organs discharging the will of the BOs. They stand last in line, not first. For the movement goes from below upwards. The main emphasis lies in the masses, not with the leaders.

The combining of the factory organisation in a larger and stronger unity is called Workers' Union (AU). The leadership of the Workers' Union is formed by those at

the top of the regional organisations. In its organisational structure the Workers' Union is neither federalist nor centralist, but both and also neither. It lets freedom and independence go on existing in the substructure, as guaranteed by the federalism of the BOs, but adds in the superstructure the unifying factor of concentration, deriving from centralism. But as federalism is present without its weakness of fragmentation and lack of unity, so the centralism is without the disadvantage of paralysing and smothering individual initiative and mass will. In the Workers' Union, then, federalism and centralism appear in a higher unity, in a synthesis. Therein lies the great superiority of the Workers' Union over every other organisation. It is more complete than every merely federalist or merely centralist association; it is both without the disadvantages of oneform or the other.

In the pre-revolutionary phase the splitting of organisations into political and trade-union had a meaning. At that time there were indeed pure political struggles which were to be fought out with political means, and pure economic struggles which demanded exclusively economic means of struggle. Since the war and the great transformation it brought about, this has altered. Today every economic struggle, however small at first, grows in the twinkling of an eye into a political conflict: every wage movement ends with the recognition that the proletariat is no longer to be helped by wage increases, that rather the setting aside of the whole wages system alone assures it rescue from downfall. But that too is a political matter. And vice versa: every serious political conflict immediately sets in motion the weapons of economic struggles. Ebert and Noske, sworn enemies of the general strike when they

saw their political system endangered by the Kapp Putsch, summoned the masses to the general strike. The KPD, in its famous 21 points of the Heidelberg Party Conference quite decisively rejected sabotage and passive resistance as 'syndicalist and anarchist methods of struggle.' But in the Ruhr struggle, government, SPD and KPD together summoned the workers to sabotage and passive resistance. In the revolution the actual situation demands that now this, now that method be employed in the struggle, that methods be changed swiftly, a combination of methods often be undertaken, etc. The revolution itself changes its aspect continually, is now more an economic, now more a political process. It has the highest interest in an economic-political integrated organisation, with which it has measured up to every situation and phase of the struggle. The Workers' Union is such an integrated organisation.

The first Workers' Union as an integrated organisation originated in October 1921 following the lead of East Saxony which had already withdrawn from the KAPD in 1920. A national conference adopted on the suggestion of East Saxony the following founding principles of the AAU (Integrated Organisation):

"1 The AAU is the political and economic integrated organisation of the revolutionary proletariat.

2 The AAU fights for communism, the socialisation of production, raw materials, means and energies and of the necessary goods produced from them. The AAU wants to set planned production and distribution in the place of the capitalist methods of today.

3 The ultimate aim of the AAU is society without domination; the way to this goal is the dictatorship of the proletariat as a class. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the exclusive exercise of the workers' will over the political and economic establishment of communist society by means of the councils' organisation.

4 The immediate tasks of the AAU are: (a) the smashing of the trade unions and of the political parties, these main hindrances to the unification of the proletarian class and the further development of the social revolution, which can be no business of parties and trade unions. (b) the combining of the revolutionary proletariat in the factories, the embryos of production, the basis of the coming society. The form of all combination is the factory organisation (BO). (c) the development of the workers' self-consciousness and sense of solidarity. (d) to prepare all the measures that will be necessary for the political and economic construction.

5 The AAU rejects all reformist, opportunist methods of struggle; it turns its back on all participation in parliamentarism and in the legalised works' councils, for these signify sabotage of the idea of the councils.

6 The AAU fundamentally renounces professional leadership. So-called leaders can only be considered as traitors.

7 All functions in the AAU are honorary.

8 The AAU regards the liberation struggle of the proletariat not as national but as an international matter. The AAU therefore works for the combining of the

revolutionary proletariat of the world in a Councils' International."

With this programme of guiding principles, the AAU in 1921 constituted itself as an integrated organisation. After two years' development, the Dresden local group took occasion to set down in the following programmatic and organisational principles its insights and experiences, which it had gained from uninterrupted struggles waged with the most extreme consistency:

## 1 The Origins of the Unionist Movement

"The World War with its national and international effects in political, economic and cultural spheres brought in the age of revolution at accelerated speed.

The mounting collapse of the capitalist economy engenders as its consequence an ever increasing impoverishment of the working class.

This mounting impoverishment, as experience shows, no longer can be compensated through struggles for better conditions of pay or through legislative (parliamentary) reforms. It can only be eliminated through the elimination of the capitalist-economic system itself and its replacement by the socialist-communist economy of need. As the winning of this goal through struggle can only be the business of the proletarian class itself, the demand hence arises quite naturally for the proletariat to give up all reformist methods of struggle and replace them with a resolute, revolutionary form of struggle, also organised differently. The victory of the revolution has as its pre-requisite the unification of the working class.

Parties and trade unions, inclined by their whole nature to reformism, have proved themselves an obstacle to the necessary revolutionary unity. Centralist in their organisational structure, with the particular characteristic of professional leadership, these forms of organisation especially hinder the development of the proletariat's self-consciousness. Therefore the problem of unity became at once a problem about the revolutionary form of organisation.

The AAUE arose out of this knowledge and in accordance with the materialist concept of history by which changing economic and social relations necessarily imply consequent changes in organisational form.

## 2 Nature and Goal of the AAUE

Proceeding from the understanding that economic questions and political questions cannot be artificially separated, the AAUE is neither trade union nor party but the integrated organisation of the proletariat. In order to bring about the unified front of the proletarian class, the Union organises all the workers who profess its goal at the places of production, the factories. All the factory organisations combine in the Union on the basis of the councils' system.

The original transformation of the capitalist economy into the socialist-communist economy has as its prerequisite therevolutionary expropriation of the means of production by the proletariat. The process of transformation can only be completed through the dictatorship, that is the exclusive expression of the will



of the proletarian class. The instrument of the transformation is the revolutionary councils' system. The councils' system, according to which the Union is structured, ought to anticipate in the present the basic traits of the future councils' system.

### 3 Structure of the BO (Factory Organisation)

The factory organisation elects from itself a number of shop delegates judged necessary according to its size and type of factory. They embody the particular works council, which has to regulate all matters in agreement with the members. The leaders (workers' council) are to stand at a new election every quarter. Re-election is permissible. Every member is eligible. If several Union members are employed in one factory, they have a duty to found a factory organisation. Individual members organise first of all according to groups of industries or living areas, as also with relations between small factories. Autonomous small-scale firms, as likewise do intellectuals, organise themselves by dwelling areas. The area groups bear the character of interim organisations insofar as every member in one has to withdraw as soon as the conditions cited above are present for the founding of a BO of its own in his factory.

### 4 Structure of the Union (Councils' Organisation)

Every factory organisation, or dwelling area or industry group has to send at least one shop delegate to the local Heads-of-Councils body of the Union. Larger factory organisations, and regional and industry groups send several shop delegates. Their number can be regulated

from time to time according to a uniform schedule adapted to practical considerations. All three of the above organisations together form a local councils' group in a given place. All the local groups in a certain economic area form together an economic district. The local groups elect from among themselves a district economic council; for the most part it acts as an information post for the district and is in addition executive organ for the tasks assigned to it by the district conference. Conferences arising from necessity are to be called by it whenever the situation at the time makes impossible a previously customary understanding among local groups. National conferences are to be dealt with likewise. Every local district group has the duty of being represented at the district conference. At least once a year a national conference has to take place at which all the economic districts, as far as possible, must be represented. The national conference elects a national economic council. Its character and its duties correspond to those of the district economic council, only with the difference that its activity extends over the whole area of the state. If necessary measures extra to its deliberations arise in the time between national conferences and they concern the Union as a whole, it must first submit them to the general decision process. National and district conferences only have their own right of decision insofar as general national or district questions respectively are concerned. In particular, such decisions must not transgress against generally acknowledged principles. By and large these conferences should serve to exchange experiences. All the shop stewards of the individual BO, as of the Union as a whole, are recallable at any time.

## 5 Tactics

The AAUE fundamentally rejecting all participation in the elections to the legal works councils' committee as a consequence also rejects the delegation of Union members to this body, proceeding from the viewpoint that activity in the legal works councils effects an artificial masking of class oppositions.

>From the recognition adduced under point 1, the AAUE likewise rejects on principle propaganda and agitation for partial strikes. Since the Union, however, is at present not yet in the position to influence the development of the situation in its direction, the circumstance automatically arises that Union comrades will be drawn into economic strikes with the trade union orientated workers. In such cases Union comrades in work have to raise the necessary solidarity money by means of arranged contributions. The level of the necessary contribution for the time being is discussed and fixed in the meeting of council leaders and is in the form of a lump sum, equal for everyone, to be collected from every comrade and paid over to the local work committee through the head of BO. It is left up to each BO whether it collects a fund for such purposes or raises the contribution amongst itself from case to case. The decisive principle must be: 'Whoever gives fast gives double!' If the necessity for solidarity to be applied arises for the whole region, the level of the necessary regional contribution is to be calculated by the appropriate regional body. If the application of solidarity becomes necessary throughout the country, the corresponding national body has to undertake its regulating in the same way.

All moneys collected are to be immediately handed over from the local labour committee to the regional or local group involved in the strike. The method of calculation follows from the plan that 25 comrades should support one comrade. The support rate should amount to 60% of a general average wage, taking into account of the fall in real wages.

Moderate or other comrades fallen into need in the struggle for our goal have an equal right to solidarity; the level of the support rate at the time is determined by the nearest competent body, to which the contribution is sent.

## 6 Nature of Administration

All the money required for administration by the local, district and national committees is to be collected by way of contributions. All functions in the Union as a whole are to be performed on an honorary basis; reimbursements are only accorded in cases involving loss of pay, or for fares and additional expenses necessarily arising for travelling speakers.

## 7 Membership

Membership is open to every man or woman who subscribes to the foregoing rules and principles.

The right of exclusion only belongs to the BO; the eventual exclusion of the BO, to the local Union. A whole local or economic district can only be excluded by the national conference. Exclusions can only result when

transgressions against generally acknowledged principles are in question.

Against all exclusions appeal can be lodged within four weeks with the next highest body, whose decision can be contested no further. Until the rejection of his appeal, the appellant is still a full member of the whole Union and the appropriate documents for elucidating the circumstances may not be withheld from him.

Every comrade always has the duty to take the liveliest interest in the question of principle, tactics and organisation of the AAUE; the structural completion of the organisation and our power are thereby assured."

## 8 THE COUNCILS' SYSTEM

Factory organisation and Workers' Union are sustained and dominated by the principle of the councils' system.

The councils' system is the organisation of the proletariat corresponding to the nature of the class struggle, as to the later communist society. If Marx said that the working class could not simply take over the government machine of the capitalist state, but must find its own form for carrying out its revolutionary task, this problem is solved in the councils' organisation.

The idea of councils was born in the Paris Commune. The fighters in the Commune recognised that it was necessary to destroy resolutely the bureaucratic military machine instead of transferring it from one hand to the other if they wanted to reach a 'real people's revolution'. They replaced the smashed state machinery with an institution of fundamentally different character: the Commune. 'The Commune,' wrote Marx, 'was to be not a parliamentary but a working body, executive and legislative at the same time. Instead of deciding once in 3 or 6 years which member of the dominant class is to represent or trample on the people in parliament, the general right to vote was to serve the people constituted in communes as the individual right to vote serves every other employer, to locate workers, foremen and book-keepers in his business.' The first decree of the Commune was the suppression of the standing army and its replacement by the armed people. Then the police, the tool of the state government, was at once stripped of its political attributes and converted into the responsible tool, removable at any time, of the Commune. Likewise,

the officials of all other departments of administration. From the members of the Commune downwards, public service had to be performed for workers' pay. The acquired entitlements and upkeep allowance of the high state dignitaries disappeared with these dignitaries themselves. The judicial officials lost that apparent independence; they were to be henceforth elected, responsible and removable. The effecting of complete eligibility and removability of all official persons, without exception, at any suitable time, the reduction of their wages to the level of the usual workers' pay, these simplest and most obvious democratic measures, bound up the interests of the workers with those of the majority of the peasants and served at the same time as a bridge linking capitalism and socialism.

The measures taken by the fighters of the Commune could not be more than such a linking bridge because their political reorganisation of the state lacked the appropriate economic basis.

In the Russian Revolution the link bridge became a proper coherent structure. As early as 1905 in Petersburg, Moscow, etc., the institution of the workers' councils existed, although it soon had to give way to the reaction. But their image had impressed itself on the workers, and in the March revolution of 1917 the mass of Russian workers immediately seized on the formation of councils again, not from lack of other forms of organisation but because the revolution had awakened in them the active need for an amalgamation as a class. Radek wrote at that time in observing this phenomenon: 'The party can always call only upon the most skilled, lucid worker. It shows a broad path, wide horizons, presupposes a certain level of proletarian consciousness.

The trade union appeals to the most direct needs of the mass, but it organises by occupations, at best by branches of industry, but not as a class. In the period of peaceful development only the front ranks of the proletariat are class conscious. The revolution however consists in the broadest layers of the proletariat, even those which have hitherto met politics with hostility, being drummed out of their rest and seized by deep ferment. They wake up, want to act; various bourgeois and socialist parties, different in the aims of their efforts and in the path they want to take, turn to them. The working class feels instinctively that it can triumph as a class. It seeks to organise as a class. And this feeling, that it can only conquer as a class, that the efforts of its opponents who group themselves around a single party cannot be victorious, is so great that with every continuation of freedom of agitation for the party slogans, even the most advanced sections of the proletariat, whose endeavours go farther than the momentary wishes of their class, submit to class organisation in the decisive days. They do it from clearer insight into the nature of the proletarian revolution. In the peaceful epoch of the movement, the proletarian vanguard sets itself narrowly limited political goals, to attain which the strength of the whole class was not at all necessary. The revolution places the question of the conquest of power on the order of the day. For that the energies of the avant-garde are not adequate. The workers' councils thus become the ground on which the working class unites itself.'

The Russian revolutionaries, the workers and small peasants, conquered economic and political power with the help of the councils. They took power for themselves only, no longer shared it with any remnant of the



bourgeoisie. They divided up Russia into Districts, in which the Soviets were elected by workers and poor peasants, first for the local areas then for the districts; the District Soviets elected the Central Soviet for the whole state, and the Executive Committee issued from the Congress of these Soviets. All the members of the municipal, district and Central Soviets, just like all officials and employees, were only elected on a short-term basis; they always remained dependent on their electorate and were accountable to them.

In the workers' councils the workers had found their organisation, their amalgamation on a class scale and expression of will, their form and their essence. For the revolution as for socialist society.

Through the setting up of workers' councils, even if it could not itself maintain them in their revolutionary form and make them effective for the tasks of socialism, the Russian Revolution has given to the workers of the world the example of how the revolution as a proletarian phenomenon will be carried through.

With this example before it, the proletariat can prepare the world revolution. The proletariat of the world, in order to transport themselves and themselves alone to economic and political power everywhere the proletarian revolution is starting to unroll, before, during and after the struggles, will have to create workers' councils in municipalities, districts, provinces, areas of country, and nations.

When the German November Rising broke out, suddenly at the centre of all the revolutionary demands and slogans stood the watchword: All power to the Councils!

And all at once, workers' and soldiers' councils arose.

They were certainly incomplete and often unsuitable the German worker confirmed here too the old lesson that the German has no great aptitude for revolution but they were not so bad, miscarried and disunited as the criticism of the parties and the hostility of the counter-revolutionaries has made out. However gross their mistakes might be, they represented a new principle the principle of the proletarian revolution, the principle of socialist construction. Therein lies their significance, their world-historical value. And on that the respect owed to them should have been based.

But the SPD, accomplices of reaction and allies of the bourgeoisie (which latter it had already rescued with its policy of collaboration through the dangers of the war), fell raging upon the workers' councils. It insulted and slandered them, never tired of discrediting them by false and exaggerated insinuations and accusations, and sabotaged them by making the existence of the workers' councils dependent on parliamentary elections. When these, as the result of the participation of bourgeois elements quite unreliable or directly opposed to the revolution, turned out in a more or less reactionary way, it let the power of the councils won in the revolution be bestowed by majority decisions and the bureaucratic authorities on the National Assembly. Where the revolutionary workers resisted this treacherous and malicious procedure, the Noske guards stepped in, suppressed the workers with armed power in sometimes embittered struggles (Bremen, Braunschweig, Leipzig, Thuringen, the Ruhr) and violently made an end of the councils.

If these councils had not been quickly opened blooms of revolution which fell unexpectedly into the lap of the German workers but were basically alien to their political ideology and remained alien, if rather they ripened organically in the consciousness generated through proletarian struggle and had been firmly rooted forms in the places of employment, with whose function and mode of operation the mass would have familiarised itself they could never have been so quickly erased and obliterated again from the image of the German Revolution. So the German proletariat let the only gain

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## 9 THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

The November Revolution of 1918 was the last offshoot of the bourgeois revolution of 1848. It brought to completion the liberal-democratic republic which the determination and power of the German bourgeois of that time in the struggle against feudal ownership and princely power had not been able to achieve. In order to save its sinking ship (in extreme danger because of the World War), the bourgeoisie unceremoniously threw overboard the last feudal, monarchical, absolutist ballast which it had dragged round with it for seventy years and which now seriously threatened to become fatal to it. With that was created a basis for understanding and negotiation with the west-European capitalist powers, in particular with the victorious democratic-republican states of France and America. By giving itself a bourgeois liberal constitution and taking the government into its own hands, the bourgeoisie made possible and attained its new structure.

Its rescue, admittedly, as regards the concept of a capitalist nation state, came too late. The German bourgeoisie, while it was adding the finishing touches to its bourgeois-capitalist state and at last seeing the work of making an independent democratic republic crowned with success, had at this very moment to give up its economic independence and let the victorious states dictate the degree of its political freedom. That is the tragedy of missed opportunity and belated courage.

The German proletariat tried, to an extent, to drive the revolution farther. From Liebknecht to Holz it strained every nerve in numerous, vigorous, indeed heroic risings to make a social revolution out of the bourgeois

revolution, to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to establish socialism. The crowd of fighters did not lack determination and dedication. Tens of thousands have been slain, others tens of thousands thrown into prisons and penitentiaries, still more have gone into exile, pursued, persecuted, driven underground and ruined. But all the struggles, all the heroism, all the sacrifices have not led to the goal. For the German proletariat the revolution is, for the present, lost.

It was defeated because, under the leadership of its party and trade union apparatus, the major part of the German proletariat kept their fighting class-brothers back in fact stabbed them in the back. Deceived by their petty-bourgeois ideology, prisoners of their counter-revolutionary organisations, confused by their opportunist tactics, betrayed by their self-seeking and demagogic leadership, they themselves had to become traitors, saboteurs and enemies to the liberation and rising up of their class. That the bourgeoisie looked after itself, and had recourse to cunning and violence to save its skin, is obvious, for it was a matter of necessity in the struggle between classes. But that the German proletariat, which was in possession of the strongest organisations, which prided itself on being the most advanced in the world, and which had already for a space of four years just experienced physically the terrible consequences of bourgeois-capitalist politics, wading through a sea of blood and tears that this proletariat in the hour of revolution knew nothing else to do and was able to do nothing better than to rescue once again the bourgeoisie of its country, this bourgeoisie unparalleled in brutality, audacity, incorrigibility and lack of culture that is a deeply shaming and sad indictment. An indictment which, even if not completely justified, would

make it seem quite understandable if thousands, demoralized and despairing, throw in their hands: This nation of serfs cannot be helped!

And yet this people deserve not our contempt but our help, in its lack of courage as in its lack of understanding. After all it is itself the victim of a centuries-long serfdom, from which everything free and independent was beaten and broken out of it, and of a unique gross deception which the leaders committed against it again and again. It must now go through the terrible school of hunger and slavery, and if under the pressure of world capital's multiplied power of exploitation, it will have the last drops of blood squeezed from its veins, all the bad instincts and vices of the martyred creature will be squeezed out too; in this way the school of misery will also yet become the school of inspiration and political awakening.

The German proletariat must finally realise that the proletarian revolution has nothing to do with parties and trade unions, but is the work of the whole proletarian class.

The German proletariat must finally set about gathering this proletarian class in the places of its servitude for the task of revolution, schooling it, organising it, setting it on the march and leading it in the struggle.

The German proletariat must finally resolve upon slipping the halter of its leadership and taking into its own hands the work of its liberation, in order to complete it with its own energies and methods, on its own initiative and under its own leadership.

World history allows us time until all forces are ripe for the task which is set us.

Parliaments are becoming increasingly empty trappings: the parties are collapsing, destroying one another, and losing their political credibility: the trade unions are changing into ruins. The breakdown of this organisational and political system all along the line is inevitable.

Proletarian and petty bourgeois strata are recognising in growing numbers that they have become victims of the decrepit party economy, if not victims of party-political and trade union confidence tricks and, as they still believe deep down in the rightness and future of the socialist idea, are turning to movements which lead them up the garden path of a liberation without struggle, a paradise for which they need do nothing: to the anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner, the Free-country Free-money movement of Silvio Osell, the work co-operatives which bowdlerize the ideas of councils, to the National Socialism of Adolf Hitler, the band of rebels who deny every organisation, or the Serious Bible-Searchers who hope for pie in the sky. They are all going astray: their way is full of disappointment; it ends in nothing.

There remains solely and only the class struggle, developing on the broadest economic basis, unleashing all proletarian energies and advancing to the social revolution, that leads to the socialist goals. The class struggle, in which the proletariat is at the same time leader and mass, general-staff and army, brain and arm, idea and movement, impulse and fulfilment.

The road of the class struggle is a moment of world history. It binds feudal past through and beyond capitalist present to the socialist future. It leaves behind it all exploitation and domination. It leads to freedom.

Follow us on this road, comrades!

We have a world to win!



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