

Between the first and second revolutions

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I. The tasks of the November Revolution.

The German Reich was an absolutist military state with a Reichstag based on universal suffrage as a mere decoration. Political power was in the hands of a princes' oligarchy organized in the Bundesrat (Federal Council), with the King of Prussia as the executive head under the name of a German emperor. This oligarchy of princes was supported by a capitalist bourgeoisie and an agrarian nobility. Its power rested on the oppression of all working classes by an all-powerful bureaucracy, behind which stood the boundless omnipotence of the army, embodied in its leaders. The state was thus a poorly disguised dictatorship of the sword, and the army was the basis of all its glory. If the army collapsed, everything collapsed.

The military apparatus was shattered in the world war, and the November uprising completely destroyed it. It swept away the old powers. With militarism, the power of bureaucracy and the political power of the Junker and capitalist classes collapsed. The princely oligarchy and with it the German Empire ceased to exist. Political power passed entirely to the councils, the organs of the revolution. They were the state. The task of the revolution was to retain and consolidate the power of the councils. To do this, it was necessary that they take full power and disarm and oust the enemy from power wherever he happened to still be in power. Where there were still no councils, they had to be formed immediately, and in the first few days the councils had to convene a constituent congress that would make them the basis of the entire administration and create a central government from their midst, the Central Council of Councils, alongside which stood the temporarily convened Congress of All Councils as an extended executive. The old bureaucracy had to be eliminated by transferring the business entirely to the lower organs of the administration wherever possible or by replacing the organs that had been in operation until then with popular organs. And the government of the councils had to immediately create the decisive instrument of power: the Red Army.

The revolution gave the new state the name of a socialist republic. The driving force of the revolution was to liberate the country from the yoke of capitalism, which had led the people into the misery of the world war, and to bring about a socialist renewal of society, which alone could lead it out of the collapse. While the revolution brought forth the instruments in the councils to unite the working and creating elements of the country for reconstruction and renewal, transcending all party lines, it set up its goal and program in that name like a beacon on a tall tower. The name of the socialist republic was there by itself, because no other was possible. And the council government had to make the program come true and realize the goal that lay in this name. It had to approach the socialization of production and the entire economy immediately and to the greatest extent possible, if only to save what could be saved of economic resources in the terrible devastation left behind by the world war.

The Entente could not effectively disrupt this program and its implementation if the revolution, aware of its origin and strength, pursued a revolutionary policy internally and externally. When the front collapsed, the armies were still in northern France. Belgium and the Rhineland, with their ring of fortifications and formidable military might, remained in the hands of the revolution. They were one of the most important means of pressure to secure acceptable

peace terms for Germany. The resistance of the front was broken, but not that of the rear connections. The unconditional destruction of the Wilhelmine system, the complete removal of all generals who had compromised themselves as his henchmen, a full satisfaction given to the conscience of the world by ruthlessly punishing all those on the German side who had brought about the outbreak of war and committed crimes against international law, the rapid formation of a Red Army with a revolutionary officer corps at its head would have made the army a formidable opponent for the Entente, one that was difficult to overcome and whose presence had a significant impact on the timing and content of the peace agreement. At the same time, socialization welded the working masses together like a bloc internally, while it set an example for the working class of Western Europe that could only catch on there. For a mere political revolution could not but fail to make a lasting impression on these countries of perfected political democracy, where the revolution can only be a social one. did not renounce imperialism. If, on the other hand, Germany immediately carried out the social revolution to the borders of France, calling upon the laboring masses of Belgium, who became furious opponents of German militarism and ardent supporters of the German revolution, which, under the banner of social upheaval, led them to freedom from from the yoke of war and capitalism, and at the same time as the establishment of the rule of labor, the full reconstruction and renewal of the country for the cause of the revolution and primarily of the German revolution was proclaimed, then a broad bolt was placed in front of the forces and means of the Entente. To snatch the social revolution of the Belgian proletariat from its own country, the social revolution of Germany from the Rhineland, was at that time beyond the military strength of the Entente and could only be undertaken by it at the risk of conjuring up the social revolution over France and Italy and perhaps even over England. Not a hasty and senseless abandonment of all positions, but revolutionary resistance! A policy which took a different course had to, as the continuation of the starvation blockade immediately made clear, become the strongest conceivable support for the Entente's world imperialism and the greatest obstacle to the revolution in Western Europe, and thus become a betrayal of one's own country and a crime that surpassed in severity all the crimes that had been committed against the German people since the outbreak of war.

The tasks of the German revolution in the west were clearly defined, and it was in its power to give its policy the full security of success by extending it to the east of Europe. Two things were needed: the complete liquidation of the war against Russia, and the completion of the political side of the German revolution.

Every German revolution is, by its very nature, pan-German. Even the one in 1848 was. The national unity demanded by the bourgeois revolution of that year, the union of the German tribes, which the oligarchy of partly foreign princes ruled and kept divided for the sake of this rule, was not achieved at that time because the bourgeoisie, after its victory, feared the awakening working class and resigned into the hands of its Junker and princes. The persistence of the national schism was thus rooted in the class interests of the bourgeoisie, and the preservation of the princely oligarchy was the cause of the later emergence of a German Reich to the exclusion of Austria. With the overthrow of the princely oligarchy and the capitalist powers, with the expulsion of the Habsburgs and the Hohenzollerns, what divided the tribes from each other and the nation disappeared. National unity established itself: it was there. Revolutionary Germany only had to recognize the accomplished fact and declare the annexation of the German provinces of Austria to the homeland in the mutual agreement that existed. This step, which only completed the

political revolution in Germany, was not only a matter of course from the point of view of the proletarian revolution, but also an absolute necessity. It meant an incomparable increase in power and strength when the German Revolution reached out to Vienna, when the state of more than seventy million in the heart of Europe, which once made even Palmerston tremble, became a reality. If it came into being, then it was over for the position of the Entente in Czecho-Slovakia and in the whole of southeastern Europe, then Vienna became the focus and the invigorating center of the revolution in those areas, in Hungary and the Yugoslav borderlands as far as Bulgaria and Rumania. No harder blow could have been dealt to the outposts that England had established on the continent to protect her position in Egypt and even in India than the unification of Austro-Germany with Germany.

Besides Austria, with its influence in South-Eastern Europe, the German Revolution could have secured for itself a much broader and stronger support in the Slavonic East of the Continent, if it had completely liquidated the war against Soviet Russia and in its western border states, which was also absolutely necessary for its own security. For it soon became evident that the disbandment of the Wilhelmine armies in their rear and the transportation of these troops home over time posed a vital problem for them, whereas in view of the collapse in the West, with the revolutionary fever that had seized the people and which was directed primarily against militarism, a revolutionary government, which right from the start showed a revolutionary will and created a revolutionary army, would have had no difficulty in dealing with the generals, who were in any case threatened by the Russian Revolution. But when the German armies withdrew from the German border states, when the government there supported the workers' revolution, which had been fought against with the means of revolutionary politics, then the artificially bred bourgeois rule, which the Entente could not yet rush to the rescue, quickly collapsed. The workers' revolution rose again and forever victoriously. This cleared the way for reaching out to the Soviet Republic and laying the foundation for an enormous complex of states stretching from the Atlantic Ocean down to the Persian Gulf, a complex that could not only sustain itself politically and economically, but also represented an area that was impossible for even the world's strongest powers to conquer militarily and economically. By virtue of its geographical center of gravity alone, this mass of land – here equipped with highly developed technology, there with all natural resources – could also stand up to the most powerful alliance of world powers, without basically having to do more than stand at attention and change its own course. Even if the Entente had found its way to the Rhine or even to the Weser, even if it had occupied the Ruhr basin, what would it have achieved? The political and economic independence of this mass of territory would not have been affected, and it was only a matter of time before the occupied and lost territories fell back to Germany. But what is the main and only decisive thing? There could never have been any talk of a peace of Versailles.

A revolutionary policy at home led to a foreign policy that secured Germany from the clutches of the Entente. And a revolutionary foreign policy in turn consolidated the social upheaval and with it the inner strength of the revolution. The full force of the revolution against the bourgeois democracy of the West, alliance and economic compensation with the workers' revolution of the East, that was the given goal in the November days. It was the only possible policy from the point of view of the revolution and it was therefore also the only possible policy from the point of view of the nation, the German people. But this path was not taken. The nearest goals were misunderstood and thus a situation created that led to civil war at home, to the

enslavement treaty of Versailles in foreign policy and, beyond that, to a serious threat to the world revolution.

II. Who was to make the decision?

The revolution could only be continued and secured internally and externally by its own organs, the councils, which, transcending all political parties, united the working classes as a class in order to exercise power in their direct representation, based on their power in the factories and economic centers. The rule of the councils, in turn, could only be expanded and consolidated through the cooperation of the various political parties into which the working class was divided, a division that represented the most unfortunate legacy of the past, the war policy of the old faction and its parliamentary counterpart, the Independent Labor Party. No matter how serious the objections to the use of the compromised wartime leaders, those of the old party and those of the independent social democracy, none of the factions of the working class could or should be ignored or excluded from implementing and securing the revolution at home and abroad.

The November uprising was not the work of the revolutionary workers alone, but also of the disintegrating Wilhelmine army. While the views of the All Party predominated among the entire working class, the views of bourgeois democracy still prevailed to a greater extent in the army. In view of the discord in the ranks of the working class and among the supporters of the revolution, the fate of the November uprising initially lay with that faction of the workers' movement that had the stronger organizations and the larger following, that is, with the old party. Its participation had to become all the more decisive the more totally the old system collapsed and the more completely the bourgeoisie and militarists were isolated. And could the old party serve itself better than by completely renouncing the coalition it had entered into with the bourgeoisie during the war and the alliance with the old powers? The rule of the political party system belongs to the past, to that bourgeois period of development that was sunk forever in the world war. Communist society no longer recognizes political parties. Only *one kind of* political rule is still justified: the rule of the working class, which, through socialization, abolishes classes and thus removes the foundation of the state and all party systems. What could the old party do better than to prepare the ground for the future by disregarding the setback suffered by the political party system in general and its own party system in particular as a result of the progress of the revolution, and resolutely steer a course of decisive proletarian class politics? Once again, and for the last time, the fate of the world lay in the hands of the old party. The terrible convulsions of the civil war, the ignominy and enslavement of Versailles, the rain of fire with which the volcano of the social revolution will shower the continent in the coming years – all this could be spared to the German proletariat, to the German people and to the nations of Central Europe if the old party could bring itself to play an honest political game in relation to the revolution to which it committed itself. could have been spared, the German proletariat, the German people and the nations of Central Europe, if the old party had had the good sense to pursue an honorable policy and play an honorable game in the face of the revolution to which it committed itself.

The old party had neither the insight nor the self-control to do this. The old party was primarily responsible for the war policy of German imperialism, whose world crime had financed the four exhausting years of war, had brought about the death and infirmity of millions, whom it had driven into ruin and destruction with the scourge of defending the fatherland ruin and destruction, and was guilty before all others, because it was only as a result of its attitude that the world conflagration was able to take on its terribly devastating extent. The old party saw itself as being most closely involved in the collapse of the old regime. In the revolution and collapse, the iron course of events itself hurled a devastating indictment against the old party and its war policy. The new power of the councils, which had taken the place of the state apparatus, not only destroyed the overwhelming and decisive political position that had arisen from the approaching collapse, especially in the last days of the war, it not only threatened their influence in the future, it made the whole party apparatus redundant and threw it into the old junk. The same applied to the trade unions, which had dominated the old party and determined its policy. What was the point of the unions and what tasks did they still have to fulfill if, by virtue of the power of the councils and under their regulatory direction, the means of production passed into the hands of the entire working population, if disputes in factories and economic sites were decided by the revolutionary council not by virtue of a collective agreement but by virtue of its revolutionary power? The councils uprooted the numerous and powerful bureaucracy of the old party and the trade unions, whose material, political and social position rested on the organizational apparatus of the party and the trade unions, and who had learned in decades of struggle to use this organizational apparatus as an instrument of power against the working class itself as well as against the bourgeoisie and the state authorities, who, by virtue of the so-called democratic constitution, governed in the organizations no less than they governed the bureaucracy of public law in the municipality and state by virtue of the so-called democratic constitution. On the other hand, what great tasks did this bureaucracy not see itself called upon to perform, what prospects did not beckon to each of its diligent officials when it took the revival and restoration of Germany into its own pliant fingers! Their opposition to the councils and their hatred of the revolutionary internal and external policy prescribed for the councils arose from the political and economic instinct for self-preservation of a caste which, through the press and organization, deceived and led astray the overwhelming majority of the socialist-minded working class, as well as large sections of the hitherto indifferent working classes and the petty bourgeoisie. The individual might be aware of these connections and take only material reasons for his attitude, or, as was the case with the memberships of the organizations themselves, old habits and old views might continue to have an effect according to the law of inertia. Guided by essentially the same reasons and sentiments as the bourgeoisie, the bureaucracy and the militarists, the party and trade union bureaucracy saw them as natural allies. Just as they had used all their strength on the eve of the revolution to prevent and thwart the outbreak of the uprising, so their attitude was determined by their opposition to the councils and their policy and thus to the revolution itself.

After a brief victory march of a few days, which led from the Waterkante via the industrial western and central Germany to Berlin, the revolution ended here with the establishment of the counter-revolution. For it meant nothing less than the surrender of the revolution to the counter-revolution when all the charlatans of the government of Prince Max of Baden, the most unscrupulous and unprincipled henchmen of the old regime from the old party, joined forces with the representatives of independent Social Democracy to form a government in order to hand over

the most important branches of state administration to the bourgeoisie. And the responsibility for this rests no less on the independent social-democratic party than on the old party.

When war broke out, the future spokesmen of the independents had solemnly renounced the weapon of criticism because criticism speaks with arms. While they remained silent about the politics of August 4, they degraded themselves to its henchmen. They approved the war credits even after the war's conquering character had fully and clearly emerged on the German side. When they rose up to reject the credits, they held on to the principle of the credit approval, the imperialist defense of the fatherland. Their emergence as a parliamentary opposition remained a small parliamentary spectacle. They avoided, as embarrassing as possible, going beyond the scope of the parliamentary struggle and calling on the masses themselves and leading them into the field against the imperialist war of plunder. When the Russian proletariat openly rose up against the war of imperialism and voices were also raised in the German working class to do the same as their Russian comrades and start the propaganda of the revolutionary strike in the armaments factories, it was the task of a revolutionary party to rally the masses around the slogan of revolution, to carry forward the banner for them in this struggle. But unwilling to take responsibility for the propaganda of the revolutionary mass action, the working group of that time rejected any kind of association with those who saw the propaganda of the revolutionary strike as the task of the organizations of the working class. For months the two factions of the old party and the independent working group had coexisted in parliament without the unity of the organization being lost. Indeed, the opposites within the leadership, the split in the faction, by no means caused the split in the membership, and the totality of the members, the whole party, those in the field and those at home, had to decide on the split and no one else. But when the rapid development of the revolutionary struggle united and forged the masses more firmly together than ever and had to hand the leadership to the left-wing groups, bypassing the organizational bureaucracy, if the unity of the organization was to be maintained, at that moment the independent Social Democracy undermined the unity of the German workers' organization. Because it wanted to retain a free hand against the left and not be pushed aside by the parliamentary leadership towards revolutionary mass action, because the split with the left took away all its political credit if it remained with the social patriots at the same time, the independent social democracy left the old party at the same time as it made its turn towards the left. Exclusively oriented towards the rules of parliamentary opposition, rooted in the past in terms of its politics and organizational form, an Independent Social Democracy remained chained to its origins and essence even in the revolution. Just as it could not fundamentally fight the old party because it shared with it the ground of pure parliamentary opposition, always saying no where the old party said yes, it could even less find the right position to the revolution because, despite all its seemingly revolutionary phraseology, it is basically just as counter-revolutionary as the old party.

The revolution demanded an irrevocable break with the past, a decisive and uncompromising exclusion of the bourgeoisie from government, a clear and unambiguous policy in favor of socialism and its realization. The old party is to blame for sacrificing the working class to the labor bureaucracy and for clinging to the alliance with the bourgeoisie at this decisive turning point. The Independent Social Democracy is to blame for tolerating and participating in a combination that crowned the victory of the German proletariat and the workers of the capital by maintaining its sworn enemies in power and appointing them to new positions of power, a

combination that fundamentally denied the revolution and thus paved the way for civil war and the recovery of the bourgeoisie.

On November 9, the coalition government was formed which, in the first springtime of the revolution, emerged like a sleeping beauty from a bed of roses, openly resorting to the coalition government of the old Reichstag and blatantly raising the counter-revolution on its shield. For, in direct opposite to the goal and the will of the revolution, November 9 scaled down the content of the revolution. With the appointment of Scheidemann and the admission of the bourgeoisie, it was declared that the revolution should be limited to a mere change in the forms of government and constitutions, and that touching the actual position of power of the bourgeoisie, the private economic was out of the question, because these were the only conditions under which the bourgeoisie could remain in the government and the administration of the state, no matter whether these conditions were explicitly formulated on November 9 or whether they were avoided. The formation of the coalition government openly declared to the world what turn the 9th of November had taken in the German revolution, under the decisive and controlling responsibility of the old party and the assenting, no less decisive and controlling, collaboration of the Independent Social-Democracy, which deceived the masses at the very moment when, relying on the victorious masses, the continuation of the revolution could be secured by the organs of the revolution, when the elimination of the bourgeoisie could be fully implemented and enforced against its supporters in the old party.

III. Against the councils.

The upheaval in the capital had led to the creation of the Executive Council of the Berlin Councils. Since the councils everywhere seized state power to the same extent that they found it, the role of a central authority was initially transferred to it. When the Executive Council, under the leadership of the Independent Social Democrats, did what was its duty and its office, it took over full executive power, preventing any other form of government, and in a few days the Congress of Councils met and created the definitive revolutionary government. Instead, he imagined – what a cozy idea! – that he would have *his own* executive power exercised by the coalition government of November 9 for an indefinite period. Only a few days later, the Executive Council formally transferred the power of the executive to the coalition government. In doing so, it did not merely recognize the counter-revolutionary act that lay in the formation of the coalition government and that was owed to the collaboration of the old party and the independent social democracy: the supreme organ of the revolution expressly subordinated itself to the counter-revolution – a consequence of the narrowest party politics. It was a success that the counter-revolution could never have imagined in the sudden collapse of the old system. In the capital, it had its hands free for the time being.

How would it now assert itself against the revolutionary councils in the country? To stand as a government above the councils, it had to take their political power and strip them of their political essence. The coalition government, which in the first days of its existence had nothing behind it except the compromised leaders of the old party and the independent Social Democracy, was much too weak to consider an open conflict. But the apparatus and bureaucracy

of the old party presented itself as a sure way to establish a direct link between itself and the revolutionary councils. By entering the councils en masse, the bureaucracy provided the counter-revolutionary government with a body within the councils that defended the interests of the government and, because of its own opposition and hatred of the councils, sought to paralyze and thwart the continuation of the revolution and any revolutionary activity by the councils.

In doing so, the party first turned its attention to the soldiers' councils, which were largely in the hands of bourgeois democracy. The close pact between the old party and the bourgeoisie, which led to the formation of the coalition government at the central level, was immediately counteracted in every soldiers' council by the collaboration of Social Democracy and bourgeois democracy. Thus, in a very short time, the vast majority of the soldier councils were brought behind the government, securing the support of the strongest formations. After only a few days, the coalition government, which had just been hanging in the balance, stood on a narrow but firm foundation. As the old party and bourgeois democracy became more and more entrenched in the military formations, they gained the power to oppose any real and decisive arming of the working class and to prevent the councils from extending their activities to new areas. At the same time, they supported the old bureaucracy in its efforts to evade the control of the councils and to restart the central machine of the old administration over them, to exclude the councils from the administrative mechanism and thus isolate them completely. With the old bureaucracy, however, the old state powers came to life again.

In possession of those positions, the old party went on the attack against the councils themselves. These directly unite the working people by enterprise and workshop as an economic unit, as the working class. They are the instruments for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the mighty hammer with which it subjugates the bourgeoisie and, as a political unit, shapes society in its own image. Thus the councils not only go beyond the party system of the bourgeois era, they are in stark opposition to it. For the aim and purpose of the bourgeois party system, whose role emerges most clearly in the most politically developed societies of the bourgeois era, in the democratic state, is to be the means by which the large economic groups fight for political power in order to gain power and exercise political authority alone or together with others in the government. The opposite view of the council system to the bourgeois party system in and of itself naturally also exists with regard to the workers' parties. There is no greater contradiction than councils exercising the political power of the working class and a workers' party striving for political power alongside and against them. Only a party that, like the Communist Party, essentially wants to be a propaganda party in the service of the idea of the councils and – despite its fight for the conquest of the political power of the working class – does not want to be an organ to take over and exercise political power, can be reconciled with the idea of the councils and the council mastery. But between the council mastery and a party, which, like the old party, wants to be a political organ of power, there could only be an undisguised conflict, only an unconditional either-or. Either the councils assumed power or the party supplanted the councils. The ardor and love with which the old party, only yesterday the bitterest opponent of the revolution, suddenly embraced it, had only one meaning and could only pursue the one purpose of overthrowing the rule of the councils and replacing it with its own party rule.

But when the old party resorted to the bourgeois form of exercising power, what did it mean other than the restoration of the class state and the capitalist bourgeoisie? This meaning also

immediately emerged unequivocally. The fact that the old party pursued the most pronounced factional politics from the day it entered the councils was of secondary importance. More attention was paid to the fact that the old party tried to separate the councils from their connection with the factories, the roots of their power, in order to transform them into organs of the party apparatus through new elections along party-political lines, an attempt that was only successful later. The decisive factor, however, was the propaganda for the meeting of the National Assembly. If the revolution was established as a legal right, then it developed by virtue of its revolutionary legal right through the organs created by the revolution. The further development of the revolution, especially in the social sphere, was therefore called the Council regime. The call for a national assembly amounted to a denial of the revolution's right to exist and the demand that it be reviewed and revised in its entirety and in all its parts; the national assembly was to replace the councils as a sovereign parliament with the aim of eliminating them and placing the usual bourgeois parliament at the side of the coalition government, the provisional government of the provisional democracy, as an extended government. It meant that the revolution was to be developed not through but against the councils, and thus replaced by a full-scale counter-revolution.

This shows the peculiar cleverness of the policy of the Independent Social Democrats, who, just as they created the councils in the revolution and the coalition government alongside them, now defended themselves against the attacks of the counter-revolution on the political position of the councils, but vigorously supported their broad frontal assault against the councils and the whole revolution, the campaign for the national assembly. If the First Congress of Councils wanted to safeguard the revolution, it had to seize political power and thereby make the convening of a national assembly impossible; it had to initiate the arming of the working class, eliminate the coalition government and establish a revolutionary government. But since there was no fundamental disagreement between the old party and the Independent Social Democracy, there was no fundamental difference of opinion between the old party and the Independent Social Democracy, the latter had no way of preventing the councils from committing themselves to the National Assembly and thus to the policies of the old party. It is essentially the work of the Independent Social Democracy that the first Council Congress could well have borne the stamp of a party event of the old party and bourgeois democracy, which here too provided the standard-bearer of the old Social Democracy.

The old party seized the congress and made it into a tool of its policy. In doing so, it did much more than have the situation created by the formation of the coalition government confirmed by the parliament of the revolution. By stripping the Executive Council of the Councils, and in it the councils themselves, of their political essence, the Socialist majority in the congress broke the councils' relationship with the bureaucracy, which was based on this political essence. Not only was there no longer any question of the councils controlling or replacing the bureaucracy, but all the rights and powers that the revolution had given to the councils were also lost, so that all the rights and powers of the old bureaucracy were restored to their old extent. By voting in favor of the national assembly and thus for the unrestricted revision of the revolution in the interests of the old society, the party majority of the first council congress surrendered the revolution completely into the hands of the counter-revolution. The counter-revolution's struggle for full power and for full restoration could begin. It began when the party majority of the first council congress cleared the way for the party regiment of the old Social Democracy, which

formed the solid core and the actual basis of the coalition government and provided it with a broad base in the masses through the trade union organizations. In the counter-revolution's struggle for full power and full restoration, the first phase is the erection of the party regiment of the old social democracy in the state, city and municipality, which receives its content from the instruction to restore the old bureaucracy and the old state authority to their full extent, which lies in the elimination of the political essence of the councils.

IV. The Old Party's Regiment.

Until then, the old party had the opportunity to pursue a two-pronged policy: it could play off the revolution against the bourgeoisie and the latter against the revolution. Due to the strength and influence of its organizations within the working class, it formed an insurmountable barrier for the revolution. If the fact that the bourgeoisie could not participate in the coalition government without the old party's assistance would be sufficient in the near future to ensure its predominance over the bourgeoisie, the other circumstance, that it could make a pact with the revolution at any time, made its position in relation to the bourgeoisie completely overwhelming and stifling. But the moment the old party changed over from the underground struggle in the councils to the open struggle against the councils, and formally renounced the revolution, the moment it began to carry out the mandate of the Council Congress, namely, to restore the bureaucracy and the old state authority, the situation changed radically.

In the open struggle with the revolution, the old party found itself dependent on the cooperation of the bourgeoisie and closely chained to it. When the struggle took on violent forms and gained a large scope, the old party had to be prepared for setbacks among the layers of the working class that were loyal to it, and for conflicts with the members of the professional associations who used the revolution to improve their own standard of living and resisted its regression. This situation, which could be foreseen with certainty, made the bourgeoisie the shield of the old party, which, in the face of such a development of events, had nothing to offer the working class except to intensify its political disintegration and divisions, and to mobilize the bourgeoisie. In view of the indispensability, the urgency and the magnitude of the help which it expected, the political superiority of the old party over the bourgeoisie was, however, at an end. If the bourgeoisie could do nothing without the old party, the latter could no longer do anything in its struggle against the revolution without the former. Thus it lost the freedom of choice which it had hitherto possessed with regard to its policy. For the bourgeoisie, there was a significant difference between standing in the middle between two mortal enemies, playing one against the other, and being able to prescribe the political direction to be followed at its own discretion, or whether it committed itself to one of the two opponents for better or for worse, aware of all the consequences that resulted from this and from the open rejection of the revolution. From now on, the old party's policy is being made with the significant participation of the bourgeoisie, and, the longer it goes on, it will inevitably be in the interests of the latter.

Under such circumstances, the old party proceeded to abolish the councils and set up its own party regime. To do this, it needed the cooperation of the bureaucracy as well as control over the entire apparatus of public administration. The councils had tried to subordinate the bureaucracy

by exercising strict control over it, with the intention of eventually replacing it wherever possible with popular organs. The old party freed the bureaucracy from the councils in order to subject it to its own determining influence. It replaced the rule of the councils over the bureaucracy for the working class with the rule of a labor bureaucracy that purported to represent the entire people. In order to secure the cooperation of the bureaucracy In order to secure the collaboration of the bureaucracy and the power of disposal over the entire administrative apparatus, the old party resorted to the expedient of permeating the bureaucracy with representatives of the party and laying its hands on the leading posts.

It was an old and dangerous opponent, fatally provoked by the revolution, which regained its old power by eliminating the councils and yet at the same time had its power severely limited and was seriously offended anew by the confiscation of influence and provision, the willing servant of the bourgeoisie and the former authorities, who was rooted in the past with all his interests, who could only be guaranteed a reliable political and material future by the full restoration of the past, who in the regiment of the of the bourgeoisie and the former authorities, who was rooted in the past with all his interests, for whom only the full restoration of the past could provide a reliable guarantee for his own political and material future, who at best could see the rule of the old party as a burdensome transitional phenomenon. The bureaucracy also has its twin brother, militarism. How could it, which had been ruined by the mismanagement of the war and completely crushed by the revolution, embody the old state authority and become a government recognized by the revolutionary popular classes, if it was not backed by convincing arguments such as guns, powder and lead? So it is no wonder that the bureaucracy immediately cried out about those fraternity brothers from the time of the imperialist crimes, some of whom were behaving strangely and conspicuously in the east, while others had been unemployed and lurking by the wayside since the revolution! They formed the natural support of the bureaucracy – those militarists who were eager to preserve the tradition of German militarism for the consolation of all mothers, and who now, courting the National Assembly and courting themselves, returned to the stage with the whole capitalist pack. And if full restoration meant for the bureaucracy the complete suppression of the whole revolution, did not complete suppression of the revolution also mean liberation from the pressure of a labor bureaucracy that sat like a parasite on the body of the old bureaucracy?

The old party recognized the danger that threatened it from the resurrection of the old bureaucracy and its alliance with the militarists. It sent an ever-increasing number of representatives to the official posts. Not only because it is the simplest method to ensure the effectiveness of a bureaucracy in the interests of the new party, or because it only wanted to prevent the gathering bourgeoisie from finding a weak-willed and completely devoted tool in it, which, during the old party's election the National Assembly as an independent power, but to get a firm hold on the military trend which was emerging in the bureaucracy and, since it could not and did not want to prevent it, to use it exclusively in its own interests as and when it needed to. For even treachery has its logic and even the establishment of the party regiment of the old party followed inevitable laws, the conditions dictated by circumstances. Just as the old party's government apprentices could not carry out their party rule without the bureaucracy or against it, so no government of a class state that relies on the bourgeoisie and their relatives, that is, on the minority of the people, can do without an armed force that is responsible for the existence of the state authority and ensures and guarantees its maintenance. The task of restoring the authority

broken by the revolution, and the elimination of a completed revolution from the state apparatus, are necessarily the business and task of the armed forces once the bourgeois class state has been established.

The policy pursued by the old party, by virtue of its continued coalition with the bourgeoisie, was fully in line with the opportunist position it had adopted since the outbreak of the war. It was particularly suited to the opportunist needs of the moment. For the struggle against the revolution, the overcoming of so-called anarchy, was a slogan of the greatest attraction, behind which the whole phalanx of order gathered. Nevertheless, it did not take much reflection to realize that this cunning would ultimately backfire. When the party allowed itself to be prescribed the liquidation of the revolution by the first council congress, it was willing to submit to this prescription to the extent that its own party interests required. But this policy was directed not only against the revolution; it also called into question the rule of the old party itself at the very moment when it was to be established. With the open renunciation of the revolution and the betrayal of the cause of the people that this represented, the old party was forced to become the executor of the bureaucracy's demand and to restore and protect its lost authority with armed hordes. As a necessary supplement to the old party's rule, the bureaucracy has the dictatorship of the sword at its disposal. And in order to rule itself, the bureaucracy is bent on getting rid of the rule of a party bureaucracy which, in and of itself, represents only a very small, if not the smallest, stratum of the people, and whose influence is based solely on the deception it perpetrates on the organizations entrusted to it.

V. The Old Party's Regime.

Until then, the old party had the opportunity to pursue a two-pronged policy: it could play off the revolution against the bourgeoisie and the latter against the revolution. Due to the strength and influence of its organizations within the working class, it formed an insurmountable barrier for the revolution. If the fact that the bourgeoisie could not participate in the coalition government without the old party's assistance would be sufficient in the near future to ensure its predominance over the bourgeoisie, the other circumstance, that it could make a pact with the revolution at any time, made its position in relation to the bourgeoisie completely overwhelming and stifling. But the moment the old party changed over from the secret fight in the councils to the open fight against the councils, and formally renounced the revolution, the moment it began to carry out the mandate of the Council Congress, namely, to restore the bureaucracy and the old state authority, the situation changed radically.

In the open struggle with the revolution, the old party found itself dependent on the cooperation of the bourgeoisie and closely chained to it. When the struggle took on violent forms and gained a large scope, the old party had to be prepared for setbacks among the layers of the working class that were loyal to it, and for conflicts with the members of the professional associations who used the revolution to improve their own standard of living and resisted its regression. This situation, which could be foreseen with certainty, made the bourgeoisie the shield of the old party, which, in the face of such a development of events, had nothing to offer the working class except to intensify its political disintegration and divisions, and to mobilize the

bourgeoisie. In view of the indispensability, the urgency and the magnitude of the help which it expected, the political superiority of the old party over the bourgeoisie was, however, at an end. If the bourgeoisie could do nothing without the old party, the latter could no longer do anything in its struggle against the revolution without the former. Thus it lost the freedom of choice which it had hitherto possessed with regard to its policy. For the bourgeoisie, there was a significant difference between standing in the middle between two mortal enemies, playing one against the other, and being able to prescribe the political direction to be followed at its own discretion, or whether it committed itself to one of the two opponents for better or for worse, aware of all the consequences that resulted from this and from the open rejection of the revolution. From now on, the old party's policy is being made with the significant participation of the bourgeoisie, and, the longer it goes on, it will inevitably be in the interests of the latter.

Under such circumstances, the old party proceeded to abolish the councils and set up its own party regime. To do this, it needed the cooperation of the bureaucracy as well as control over the entire apparatus of public administration. The councils had tried to subordinate the bureaucracy by exercising strict control over it, with the intention of eventually replacing it wherever possible with popular organs. The old party freed the bureaucracy from the councils in order to subject it to its own determining influence. It replaced the rule of the councils over the bureaucracy for the working class with the rule of a labor bureaucracy that purported to represent the entire people. In order to secure the cooperation of the bureaucracy In order to secure the collaboration of the bureaucracy and the power of disposal over the entire administrative apparatus, the old party resorted to the expedient of permeating the bureaucracy with representatives of the party and laying its hands on the leading posts.

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VI. The Generals.

In the East, German imperialism had created an area of interest for itself in the border states torn away from Russia, which was sufficient to satisfy its economic and political needs even if it failed to gain the Flemish and Northern French coast and the position in the Middle East had to be abandoned, an area that allowed the deployment of military forces on a scale that ensured the successful resumption of the fight in the west and southeast at any time. While it was crushing the workers' revolution in Finland and the Baltic Provinces, in Poland and the Ukraine, its policy of treating the Soviet Union as a peripheral state was like a tie around its neck, cutting off its economic supply and thus also strangling it politically, forming a counterpart to the hunger blockade practised against Germany. The Council Republic was to be ruined by the withholding of machines and industrial products, just as Germany was finally brought to its knees by the food blockade. And just as the Entente, German imperialism also counted on time as the great helper that would automatically ensure the success of its policy of strangulation.

It was the duty of the revolutionary government to quickly and completely liquidate the war in the East. Instead, however, the generals were allowed to continue the fight against the workers' revolution in those once Russian territories with the obvious intention of continuing the tradition of German imperialism, regardless of and in the opposite of the upheaval in Germany, and to keep a well-trained army in hand. They counted on the favor and compliance that their effectiveness against the world revolution would trigger and find in the Entente, after the military collapse of imperialist Germany had become a complete and irrevocable fact, while at home they received the covert and open support of all militarists. After all, their manner of implementing the instructions of the old imperial government and exploiting them in the interests of the counter-revolution was much too in line with all militaristic interests and instincts for it not to have met with their bright satisfaction and understanding support in these circles.

From the first day of the revolution, the generals in the east and their military power became the nucleus around which the counter-revolution of the militarists and the Foreign Office crystallized, and to which the counter-revolution throughout the country looked with all its hopes and aspirations. Since the regime of the majority party, itself determined to fight against the coup, renounced the support of the revolution and thus the only, but certain means of power against the independent general policy and also speculated on an understanding with the Entente, it dare not dare to tie in with those, even if it had wanted to, which was not the case. Therefore, the continuing war in the east was initially considered a service to the fatherland of the rich and the counter-revolution, which had to be acquired tacitly and without the explicit permission of the coalition government. However, as was to be expected given the counter-revolutionary nature of the latter, an understanding quickly developed between the government and the generals when the government began to take up the fight against the revolution. The generals' eastern policy was given the stamp of official government policy, which considerably strengthened the influence of the generals, both those outside and those inside. The cover provided by the government for the generals' actions in the east made them completely in control of the situation there and enabled the militarists at home to also interfere independently in domestic politics.

In order to develop the situation created by the old party's domestic policy, the generals needed nothing more than to be given the opportunity to fulfill the obligations to maintain authority and order to which they were entitled by law and custom of the class state. They therefore reclaimed the position that the old state law had assigned to them, and the old party had to grant it to them. For she could not refuse this demand of the counter-revolution, even if she had wanted to, which again was not the case. If she re-established the power of the civil bureaucracy by abolishing the workers' councils in her own party interest, then the restoration of the military bureaucracy necessarily resulted from the exclusion of the soldiers' councils in the interest of the militarists. The decree on command authority, which restored the authority of command in the old sense, is a direct result of the policy of the first Congress of Councils directed against the councils. This was an unexpected result for the military wing of the congress, which pushed through the adoption of the seven Hamburg points. But just as all counter-revolutionary measures went far beyond the immediate purposes they pursued in their fundamental significance and thus in their practical effects, the decree also meant considerably more than a mere renewal of command. For, in the first place, this renewal included from the very start the authorization to use the power of command in accordance with the still existing laws of the capitalist class state and to dispose of the troops in the event of so-called state necessities, in the event of any disturbances of public peace and order – and what else was the revolution in the opinion of reactionary military leaders? Furthermore, the state created by the revolution might initially impose certain practical limits on the militarists: the decree on command restored the full legal basis of old militarism, but with it also the independent position that the military bureaucracy had held on the basis of this law alongside the civil bureaucracy. The way was clear for an independent domestic policy of the militarists and their central headquarters of murderers.

The counter-revolution, as embodied in the regime of the old organizational bureaucracy, needed an armed power to establish, consolidate and secure the authority of the state, which had become the authority of that very organizational bureaucracy. The armed counter-revolution in the East and its satellites at home – the bureaucracy, bourgeoisie and Junker class – supported

them in this, but from the outset they set their sights much higher. They needed an army that could be used in their service, strong enough to wage war, thanks to the policies of the old party, initially in the country itself. For their interest and that of the militarists, who could not yet let go of the dream of German imperialism and geared their entire policy to the next goal, the maintenance and renewal of the armed forces, demanded the civil war. How else were generals and officers to prove the necessity of their own continued existence before the Entente! The civil war also put the bourgeoisie back in control of the country. The bourgeoisie's superiority consisted precisely in this, that it understood the situation and understood it better than the workers' world. After the revolution, it had cleverly adapted itself to the circumstances, in order to be able to use and turn them decisively to its own advantage as soon as they were favorable. Now the attitude of the old party intensified and completed the political fragmentation and disunity of the working class. If the struggle against the revolution took on violent forms, grew into a civil war, then, according to the calculations of the bourgeoisie, it atomized the ranks of the working class, demoralized the struggle for the revolution, and shattered the economic movement of the workers, the strikes, which would be all the more likely to be broken and fizzle out the more the industrial workers, especially in the big cities, were bled dry. If the workers were goaded into an armed defensive struggle, they would fritter away their strength in local struggles that would deliver their best men to the machine guns and their leaders to the courts martial of the officers. Only all the more closely would the organizational bureaucracy then have to lean on the bourgeois elements of the population, only to fall into all the greater dependency on the bourgeoisie. If this calculation was correct and the game was successful, then the political leadership and with it the political power in its entirety fell back to the ruling classes of yore; the bourgeoisie and especially the military became masters of the domestic situation.

The generals knew that the discipline of the old army could not be restored to the troops that had emerged from the war, and that the old army was not a useful tool for the counter-revolution. Even if the greater part of these troops declared themselves in favor of the existing government, strong and compact organizations tended towards revolutionary politics, and the attack on the soldiers' councils also deeply offended and alienated the others, even if they had otherwise formed a solid following of the old party, which was by no means always the case. The generals needed a new army of fresh, politically untouched troops. But how to get this new apparatus when the whole population was still under the spell of the disastrous war policy and the terrible collapse that had followed it? How could a new army be created out of nothing, without arousing mistrust and immediate resistance among the majority of the people, and without adding new and dangerous allies to the revolution instead of weakening its forces? The militarists' policy could certainly not be justified by the situation in the country. Only external facts could prepare the ground for it.

Since capitalist economy is only possible under imperialist forms, and the essence of imperialist capitalism is that a number of great states, which can only be reduced in number by world wars, are fighting for domination over the planet, in order to divide it into zones of influence and exploitation and divide it among themselves; since in this world all nations with capitalist economies are participating actively or passively, either plundering or being plundered, the efforts of German capitalism to survive as an economic power are aimed at ensuring that it does not participate passively but actively in the plundering of the world, that it continues to be an imperialist state, an expansionist state. This will to expansion, which is the will of self-

preservation, underlies its fight against the revolution, and where it makes use of foreign policy to fight the revolution, it necessarily appears as what it is, as the will to expansion.

In their fight against the workers' revolution in the border states, the generals were guided by their own interests and those of the German bourgeoisie. Although the bourgeoisie of those countries certainly had no objection to further suppression of the revolution, it did demand, as was to be expected after Germany's military collapse, that the German armed forces serve only itself and only advance its own interests. Depending on the strength of the bourgeoisie in the individual regions, on their internal and external situation and on their ability to establish their own armed forces, the leeway within which German militarism could still pursue a policy in its own interest and in the interest of the German bourgeoisie in the border states without coming into conflict with the established bourgeoisie varied. If it pursued a policy of its own which, in terms of its overall aims and objectives, ran consistently counter to the interests of the bourgeoisie in those areas, then serious opposites lay dormant in it, and militarism had it hand to provoke disputes of any scope at any time under the guise of a fight against the revolution, disputes whose content could only be the German position in those areas, only German expansion. Disputes of this kind were the most obvious and easiest to bring about in the evacuation of Poland. It was indeed hardly possible to conceive of anything more foolish than to initiate complications at this very point, and to give this folly a generous touch, as it were, through the policy of the generals in the Baltic States in agreement with the government. The claim of the Baltic Provinces as so-called German settlement area with the aim of joining them to Prussia, pushed a broad barrier in front of the emerging and to the Baltic Sea advancing and had the precondition that the parts of West Prussia inhabited by Poles remained with Germany, a policy whose implementation would have kept the Polish state dependent on the German bourgeoisie.

The implementation of this policy made conflict with Poland inevitable. It was clear that Poland's borders were being determined by the Entente and not by the German generals. It was clear that the Entente was going a long way to meet Polish wishes, a fact that was due to the war policy of the German militarists, but which was self-evident after the German bourgeoisie had lost its war. It was clear that an Eastern policy that openly resorted to the expansionist desires of the Wilhelmine era would lead to disaster. But the capitalist appetites of the bourgeoisie and the militarist appetites of the blood camarilla cried out for civil war. Faced with the choice between their own class interests and the political downfall of the people, they unhesitatingly chose the latter in order to forge the tool for the civil war. And as always, the German philistine presented himself as the nameless, simple-minded object of a predatory policy that was on the verge of mauling and tearing him apart once more. With the same mastery as from the beginning of the war to its end, the militarists knew how to take into account and exploit the state of mind of the German philistine, both the governed and the governing. Only a few weeks had passed since the revolution, and once again jingoism swept through Germany like a fever. The lying press of the war period, both capitalist and majority socialist, vied with each other in their outrage at Polish greed, which after all depended on the Entente rather than the Poles. And when the generals behaved as if they still felt strong enough for the fight in the east, if only more troops were given to them for the protection of the borders, this heroic pose could not make an impression on the Entente, but it strengthened, the more serious the bluff looked, the mood of the population evoked and nourished by the lying press of the war period. Supported by that unscrupulous press

manipulation and encouraged by the country's hardship, the advertising bureaus, which sprang up like mushrooms all over the country, developed a bustling activity. Before the eyes of the entire civilized world, the German counter-revolution organized the civil war. With God for the border protection for Ebert and Fatherland!

VII. The Outbreak of the Civil War.

Even before the National Assembly convened, the civil war broke out. The formation of counter-revolutionary troops went quickly. No sooner had the call for border protection had its first effect than the threats against Spartacus were added to it. For the militarists were anxious to hasten the course of events in the country and to open the struggle while the complications in the East were still in their early stages and the illusion still held, which in fear and hope clouded the Philistine soul. Experience has shown that the military instruments of power grow and become stronger most rapidly through military action itself. But what gave the leaders a firmer hold on the troops and what bound the troops more closely to the leaders than the shared blood of their own people and language?

Once the new instrument of power was in their hands, it was up to the militarists to decide when and under what circumstances the fight should break out inside and outside, when the civil war would flare up with all its horrors, to punish with blood and fire the audacious subjugation of a revolution that had bowed the power of the rulers to the dust. In the course of the dismissals, those remnants of the old army that consisted of supporters of the revolution decreased daily and in due course they completely disappeared from the scene. But it was not in the interests of the militarists that the embodiment of the armed revolution should leave the scene peacefully. Where could the civil war be more easily unleashed than here? What more did it take than the mocking disregard for justice and humanity in reducing or completely cutting the allowances and pay due to these troops to incite and force acts of rashness and desperation? The bitterness of the remnants of the old army at the removal of the councils' power of command and at the renewal of the old power of command, the tremendously growing need in the country, the rising Spartacist terror of the bourgeois world, which was completely equivalent to the socialist terror before the adoption of the exceptional law of 1878, all these circumstances, skillfully exploited, had to facilitate the intentions of the counter-revolution and support its plans. If the responsibility for the outbreak of armed conflicts and their military suppression could be placed on the revolutionary popular classes and they could be burdened with the odium of the aggressor and public troublemaker, then the intention of drawing the revolutionary workers into the armed struggles through systematic provocations and thus wearing down the workers economically, imposing its own rules on the entire revolutionary movement in the country and involving it in a series of armed struggles, without the counter-revolution having to deal with the revolution as a whole and with the full force of its economic power, then the blood camarilla had won. All these successes beckoned if the bureaucracy and the militarists seized them with a bold hand. And did they need to do more than resolve the internal tension created by the struggle of the organizational bureaucracy against the revolution and awaken the dormant conflict that constituted the existence of the existing government and by virtue of which it existed? Did it take more than to start the armed struggle in some place, which from the first minute had to become

the pivot of the whole internal and external policy, as soon as the working class allowed itself to be drawn into it? The counter-revolution was excellent at realizing its plans. Hardship and Spartacist terror, bitterness in the army and pogroms among the people, political murders and the maltreatment of revolutionary troops – in its hands, everything was woven into a single great conspiracy against the revolution.

The grim faces of the Medusa head, grinning at us from all the later battles, were already visible in the serious struggle in Berlin in the first days of January. After the outcome of the Council Congress, the interests of the revolution demanded that the government resign, whether it was the working class that took the reins of power again, or whether it was the bourgeoisie and militarists, who already exercised actual power, formally assumed power in order to bring about the clarification of the situation that alone could initiate the unification of the entire working class, transcending all factional differences. As long as a so-called socialist government was responsible for the civil war and, in the eyes of broad sections of the working class, turned it into a fight against anarchy and for the realization of socialism, the division and inner turmoil of the working class could not be overcome. The revolutionary workers of the capital therefore wanted to force the government to resign through a general strike. Even if it failed in its objective, it would weaken the counter-revolution by increasing the general economic disorganization and complicating the position of the party regiments, which had to restart capitalist economic life if it wanted to prove its right to exist, and yet had no weapon against the strike and was powerless against it. But the counter-revolution responded with a terrible counterattack that clearly showed the purposeful work the militarists had accomplished in a few weeks. In order to blunt the impact of the strike, they provoked a fight with the revolutionary troops, relying on the deeply rooted solidarity in the working class, which considers it a disgrace to abandon someone who is willing to go down for a great cause in his hour of need. Heavy and bloody fighting developed that lasted several days, in which parts of the working class were involved. Their outcome was clear from the outset, and the defeat of the revolutionary troops and those parts of the working class that were involved in them not only increased the forces of the counter-revolution, it also strengthened the position of the militarists vis-à-vis the government, making them the masters of the domestic situation : the terror of the sword against Spartacus, the terror of order against the revolution had won its first victory over the economic movement of the workers, the strike, in which, since the collapse of the councils, the strength of the revolution lay, and on which the fate of the revolution depended.

The January battle made the organizational bureaucracy a prisoner, a will-less tool of the blood camarilla. In the days of May, the party regime, which had promised rejuvenation to Germany, was driven with fatalistic necessity towards its doom. Those who want to overcome the revolution, who want to renew the capitalist state authority together with the bureaucracy and militarism that cannot be separated from it, must also want the means that alone lead to this goal and bow to the circumstances they themselves have created. Because it was a simple and inevitable consequence of its own policy, the old party placed the militarists as an independent factor alongside itself. But what was only supposed to be a shadow of its party rule now, as master, directed their will and reduced them to a mere shadow themselves. While militarism enjoyed complete freedom of movement vis-à-vis the government, the old party's freedom of movement vis-à-vis the militarists came to an end. If the old party wanted to save the appearance of freedom of will and co-determining equality, then it had no choice but to place itself at the

head of those whose entire policy ultimately had to be to destroy not only the revolution but also the regime of the old party. The organizational bureaucracy had prostituted itself so often that this new and worst self-prostitution was no longer important to it. Because it was in line with the situation it had created itself, out of necessity and inclination, it became the lackey of the blood camarilla and the hangman of the proletariat, in which it still had its strength at the beginning of the revolution. While the militarists seized it by the throat and began to strangle its breath, it put itself in front of the strangler's nakedness as a fig leaf. As a praetorian guard of the bloodthirsty mob, it provided them with the compliant and contemptible tool in the person of Noske, the man with the robust conscience, and absolved them of responsibility for the blood of the proletariat, which was shed in rivers in the name of the old party, in the name of the working class itself.

No attitude could be more disgraceful than that of the organizational bureaucracy, which now and in the following supported the bloody actions of the militarists throughout the country. Even at that time, this slippery development of their party mightiness and make them recoil at the terrible and bloody fate which these unscrupulous charlatans had conjured up for the working class of Germany and the European continent. No more disgraceful attitude! For the slaughter of the working class under the supreme command of the Laborers Noske was surpassed by the role played by the right-wing socialist leadership in the tragedy. For the sake of momentary power, in the only hope of a saving chance in the future, it chains its fate to the terror of the militarists in the certain knowledge that all circumstances preach with equal eloquence that the blood camarilla drags the regime of the old party behind it towards certain doom and just retribution.

VIII. The National Assembly.

The counter-revolution could not possibly triumph without supplanting the councils and reinstating the old bureaucratic-military apparatus. The necessity to undertake this task, which was bound to be disastrous for them, was removed by the party, which, by virtue of the strength of its organizations and its position in the working class, was alone able to mislead the masses and to an insurmountable barrier by stubbornly resisting the view that the working class can only exercise its rule in forms that allow the establishment of the new society and that must therefore correspond to the economy of that society. For it means destroying or permanently preventing the rule of the working class if forms of political power and thus of the state are retained that belong purely to the bourgeois social period and presuppose for their effectiveness the existence, i.e., the preservation or renewal, of the society that suits them. Through the political power of a party, the working class can participate in the government of a bourgeois class state, but it cannot realize socialist society.

Eliminating the councils would not free the working class from the destructive consequences of the four years of war or from the ruinous effects of the total collapse that had occurred. With the constant increase in paper money and the rapid fall in the value of money, with the continuing isolation from the world market and the unrestricted use of commercial jobbers, the prices of all food and essential items soared and unaffordable; a lack of job opportunities or the impossibility of making a living with hard work also created severe hardship among those sections of the working class whose wages had risen considerably in comparison to before. The councils were able to completely or partially eliminate the trade union apparatus and its lengthy and cumbersome negotiating practices, and to resolve the conflicts between workers and

entrepreneurs with their sovereign legal rulings. Their repression put the suffering masses in a bind, leaving them with no choice but to resort to the pre-revolutionary weapon of the strike. The destruction of the council power is followed by large-scale strikes. And, as befits the circumstances, these struggles take on revolutionary forms. This is ensured by the revolutionary way in which the conservative trade jobbers and the counter-revolutionary paper money economy treat the prices of all food and the most necessary items, revolutionizing them from one day to the next. Whether or not the fighters act with political consciousness, whether the strikes are regular wage movements or spontaneous protests against growing unemployment and the general emergency, they necessarily turn their backs on the old order, which is trying to reform and consolidate itself, and against the regime of that organizational bureaucracy, which must fall before the restoration of capitalism can be stopped. In doing so, they have an impact far beyond the country's borders. Beginning as early as the turn of the year, they are the prelude to the economic actions of the working class in the countries of the Entente, the major strikes that have been shaking France and England, Italy and the Union since the spring.

The strikes increasingly paralyzed what remained of economic life and completely disrupted it. When the old party replaced the council regime, it took on the task of restarting production and trade in the forms of the old society. It therefore had to get the strikes under control at all costs, and it believed it could accomplish this feat with the help of the trade unions. By declaring them to be the sole legitimate representatives of the working class and by setting up the arbitration committees, before which industrial disputes between workers and employers were to be bindingly settled and which were intended to prevent them from escalating into strikes, it blatantly placed the old workers' organizations at the service of the capitalist economy and its renewal. And just as the labor organizations were to participate in and promote the reestablishment of the capitalist economic order, so the trade-union bureaucracy as a whole—for exceptions only prove the rule—became the strongest support of the entrepreneurial class against its own membership. Now, a party that had been socialist and that undertook to restore bankrupt capitalism could not simply prohibit the strike, especially since the strike is a necessary part of bankrupt capitalism. Therefore, the measures of information did not mean a solution and overcoming of the situation, but only the admission that the regime of the old organizational bureaucracy, with its inability to master the growing economic chaos, was rivaling the bourgeoisie itself. And just as the bourgeoisie, at the height of its power, had repeatedly resorted to the power of the state to break strikes, so now, in the plight of its political bankruptcy, did the organizational bureaucracy. While it set the new army, which the mendacious machinations of its press had helped to drum up, on the striking workers to trample the economic movement and to suffocate it in blood, it clung with all its hopes to the National Assembly, which was supposed to bring peace, but above all bread and work.

The significance of the National Assembly lies in the fact of its convening, not in what it achieved. Its mission was clear from the outset. It had to create a legal basis for the ruling counter-revolution and anchor it in the constitution. To preserve the foundations of the capitalist economy from being touched by the proletariat and to reaffirm and secure them by giving bourgeois law a fresh look; to surround the capitalists' power of disposal over the means of production with subordinate the capitalist economic process, with the subordinate participation of the old labor organizations, with special and better safeguards than formal civil law was still able to provide. It satisfied the political demands of capitalist society by re-assembling the old

empire, its federal states and its state constitution, while excluding the dynasties. This provided the formal structure for bourgeois democracy and the changed position of parliament in relation to the government. Under the constitutional monarchy, a body of control over the government, in bourgeois democracy, parliament embodies the power of government itself, so that the government becomes an executive committee of the ruling parliament. In this respect, the German Reichstag comes close to the chambers of the West. As in foreign policy, so in domestic policy, the restoration of capitalism means an orientation towards the West. But if political and economic dependence on the financial combine of the Entente promises the restoration of the free economy and with it the shifting of all the consequences and burdens of the world war onto the proletariat and the consumers, if it promises a new and golden age of gleeful mass plundering, then it also means submission to the imperialist robbery system of the Entente Trust for the capitalist class itself.

Only the slogan of democracy, which appealed to the masses' basic nature, and the proletarian democracy, which it sought to achieve in its organizations, equated with bourgeois democracy, which is capitalism's most developed and effective means of domination, only that slogan made it possible to beguile the senses of the proletariat and to deceive it about the nature, purpose and goal of the National Assembly. As in the fight for an orientation towards the East and for an alliance with Russia, the communists were also alone in the fight against the National Assembly. Under the banner of the National Assembly and under the leadership of the old party, the entire counter-revolution joined forces in anticipation of dealing a crushing blow to the revolution through the parliament of bourgeois democracy; under the banner of the National Assembly, the militarists launched their bloody crusade against the so-called anarchy. Nevertheless, the independent social democracy did what it always did: it talked about the revolution and in fact pursued a policy of counter-revolution. In the struggle for bourgeois democracy, it was the third party alongside the old party and the generals, who led the two wings of the counter-revolution marching side by side.

The convening of the National Assembly could not be prevented. The counter-revolution was strong enough to push it through at all costs. What attitude should the revolutionary workers now adopt towards it? Should they boycott the National Assembly and denounce the counter-revolutionary nature of this parliament to the whole proletariat by the obvious protest of abstaining from the election? Or should they take part in the election campaign itself? The National Assembly was a bourgeois parliament. Since the twilight of bourgeois society dawned, since the proletariat has begun the struggle for power, which can only be decided by proletarian and not by bourgeois power elements, a revolutionary party would support bourgeois society by participating in parliamentary activity, which it fights against. If the question had been the meeting of any bourgeois chamber under the usual circumstances and conditions, then the question of participation in the election campaign was meaningless. But the National Assembly convened under special circumstances. This bourgeois parliament was to not only legally establish capitalist counter-revolution, but also to ensure the economic and political restoration of capitalism, the civil war was to be permanent, and to provide the necessary military means to do so. But it was the vital question of the revolution that it was possible to beat the militarists at their own game, to prevent the spread of the civil war, which had quickly spread from the capital to other places, to stop military action against the people. Hence those voices that, while also boycotting the National Assembly, did not want to see activity in it begin, but nevertheless

recommended participation in the election campaigns in order to exploit them for a decisive advance and to rally the masses against the policy of civil war.

IX. The revolutionary strikes.

The spectre of hunger swung its scourge over the German lands. The meager harvest of the previous fall had been consumed and the Entente was maintaining the naval blockade. Thanks to the Ebertines and the militarists, the border states between Germany and the Russian granaries were tightened in the east. A spring full of unspeakable misery! The famine killed thousands, and the government looked to the meat pots of Western capitalists.

The masses are driven into the struggle by necessity. The wave of strikes rises and rises. Strata that were previously considered the most secure supporters, the most loyal paladins of order, that dutifully and honestly acknowledged the new government as they had acknowledged the old one, groups that may have been proletarianized before the war and during the war or now, when the completed collapse was raging in the daily upheaval of all prices, were hopelessly falling into proletarianization, but whose thinking and feeling had remained bourgeois until now — the working masses in their entirety are being pushed into the movement. No profession, no trade is spared by the storm. Up and down the country, the struggles surged from place to place like a wildfire, gripping the big cities and the small towns, sometimes encompassing entire economic areas to cut off the main arteries of production and economic life almost to a complete standstill, and sometimes sporadically, indiscriminately, haphazardly, jumping here and there, as if pouring a downpour of the most diverse occupational strikes over the places of a territory. And alongside the hardship, there is the deep-seated instinct that the life of the revolution and the fate of the working class itself are at stake. With wild energy, the masses rise up against the complete destruction of that creation of the revolution that was supposed to be the organ of the masses, the organ of power of the working class. From the bosom of the economic movement there rings out, at first isolated, then taken up by ever larger masses and swelling to a tempest, the call that gathers the multitude of movements in a mighty surge and throws them like a storm-lashed surf towards the National Assembly: the call for the maintenance of the workers' councils and the renewal of their power.

The working class does not fundamentally reject armed conflict with the counter-revolution, provided that the violence is used by the class and not by uncontrolled individuals or small groups of individuals. But armed conflict was not in the nature of the tremendous economic action, nor did it correspond to the interests of the revolution. It could only weaken the power of the strikes. That is why the counter-revolution repeatedly and stubbornly resorted to this means and subordinated all its other means to it. Threatened with being buried and destroyed under the ruins of the tottering social structure, it fought back desperately. Its white guards rush in all directions of the compass. Wherever major strikes break out, they appear on the scene with flamethrowers and machine guns. And no means are left untried: states of siege and martial law, courts-martial and the terror of the soldiery, riots, looting, bloody challenges — no expense is spared to turn the strike into a Spartacist shootout, into a putsch, to provoke the anger of the bourgeoisie and create that bloodthirsty mood in which guns go off by themselves, to make it

impossible to refrain from fighting through terrorist provocations. The organizational bureaucracy, which is fighting for its bare existence side by side with the militarists, is competing with them to achieve this goal. It adds fuel to the fire to bring about armed conflicts where they can be avoided; it deliberately thwarts the resolution of conflicts that have arisen; it abuses its position in the councils to bring about the defeat of the workers in struggles with the white guards and to prevent the sending of aid. And where the rebellion of the disappointed workers justifiably chases them out of their usurped offices, they return with armed help and rivers of blood.

The military camarilla must summon ever greater means of power. Chest to chest, the power of the murder machines, deployed with unconditional brutality, wrestles with the momentum of the strike, pushing forward. Uprisings that walk alongside it, that the cunning instigates or terror provokes, are naturally defeated. Bremen and Berlin, the Ruhr area, West Germany, Central Germany! Streams of blood mark the path of the marauders. The fact that sections of the working class take up arms to avert the worst suffering – honor to the dead who fell for their great cause – changes the exclusively economic character of the strike action as little as it can be changed by the terrorist tactics of the organizational bureaucracy, which also counts itself among the working class. The policy of paralyzing the economic action of the working class by military terror fails because of the trained core of the working class, because in spite of all resistance the communist leadership ultimately always manages to prevail. It is defeated and broken through in many ways, but it prevails: The bloodless putsch, to use the words of one of the great statesmen of the old party, overcomes the bloody and real putsch.

The destruction of the councils – that was the program of the old party when it came to power. Giving in on this point directly called into question the prerequisites for its own glory. Nevertheless, the old party had to come to terms with such a step. It conceded the continued existence of the councils. To grant them political functions would have meant reinstating them in the old power structure. This goal could only be achieved if the strike action of the spring ended with the complete overthrow of the counter-revolution, a goal whose realization was already prevented by the fact that the political opposites within the working class were still in an ascending line. But the councils were to continue to exist as the economic representation of the working class, and in fact in the politically decisive place, where the socialization will practically take place in the conflict between the working class and the entrepreneurial class, where the fire-gutted areas of the social revolution lie: in the factories. Thus the principle of the councils, the social revolution, was forced to be recognized by the counter-revolutionary powers themselves. What role the works councils would play in the further course of the revolution could be left to the organizations that the working class had to create to ensure the revolutionary effectiveness of those councils. And whatever objections may be raised against the fiscalization of the coal trade, however little this state-capitalist measure has to do with socialism, the fact remains that the strikes have forced the government to intervene in the property and master rights of the strongest and, until now, politically decisive group of entrepreneurs.

X. Versailles.

German imperialism always claimed the right to destroy its opponents in order to take their place. But when it was the victorious opponent, it ignored the conditions that led it to pursue the

same policy. Just as it completely misjudged British policy at the outbreak of the war and thus ran into disaster, so it now had foolish illusions about the United States.

World capitalism exists as a chain of national capitals and is led by the financial conglomerates of the great nations, which are constantly at loggerheads with each other for decisive influence. After the world war had crushed one of the two power blocs into which world capital was divided, the German-Austrian bloc, the old opposition was replaced by a new one, the opposition between the Anglo-American and the Japanese-Chinese financial groups. In this situation, American capital demands the realization of its League of Nations idea. What it wants is unequivocally clear from the idea itself, since it represents nothing less than a transfer of the underlying state idea of the United States, and thus of the form of rule and the conditions of American capital, to the whole world. Its purpose is a world trust of capital, which, above all, incorporates those parts of world capital that remained neutral in the world war into the Anglo-American combine and secures world domination for it for the foreseeable future.

The sharp cracks that are appearing in the Entente are making it more difficult to achieve this goal anyway: these cracks arise from the policy of England and France on the European continent, from the decline of England's financial supremacy and the preponderance of the United States over the mother country, from the struggle of Japan and the Union for supremacy over the Pacific Ocean. A resurgent Germany would not only be the natural ally of Japan, but also of all those Latin American states, led by Mexico, that are in the opposite camp to the Union. The goal of the League of Nations idea, to realize world domination by American capital in close alliance with British and neutral capital, can only be achieved if the military, political, and economic the military, political and economic outcome of the world war, the total collapse of German finance capital, is not called into question, if its weakness makes it permanently impossible for Germany to intervene again as a significant factor in the affairs of the European continent and the world. Fools who do not understand that the orientation towards the West, the understanding with the Entente was a will-o'-the-wisp over deadly swamps, who did not understand that the prerequisite for that League of Nations program was the complete destruction of German finance capital, that is, the concentration of German big industry and German banks together with their close union. Fools who did not realize that any attempt at an independent foreign policy, especially one of an imperialistic nature, as was the case in that insane act, the declaration of war against Poland, would not only meet with the united opposition of England and France, but would first and foremost have to fail due to the decisive rejection of the United States. The fact that the government was willing to cover up for the arrogance of the generals only proves the degree to which it lacked all sense of proportion regarding the world situation, Germany's international position, and its own position.

But even if the German counter-revolution misjudged its relations with the victors, if it counted on a leniency for itself and its backers that the policy of the United States in particular forbade, there could be no doubt about the treasonous effects of its counter-revolutionary policy. They had to know that by waging war against Poland, they were playing the game of the Entente, which was quick to seize the convenient pretext to send an army to the aid of the Polish bourgeoisie, an army that it was supposed to protect against the German generals, who were frightened off by a simple order from London or Paris, but against the return of revolution in their own country. They must have realized that these intermediate empires in the East gave the

Entente a flank position on the Rhine and on the Vistula, and thus a strategic basis that bourgeois Germany laid at the feet of the victors, defenceless forever. She must have realized that she was handing over to the Entente a position that went far beyond Napoleon's combinations after the war against Prussia and the subsequent war against Austria. She must have realized that she was completing a continental constellation that exceeded the boldest plans of the French Henry IV against the House of Habsburg and made Germany more powerless than it had been at the end of the Thirty Years' War. She must have known that she was putting the Entente in a position to impose the harshest peace on Germany unconditionally.

All this was known to the counter-revolution, the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy, the militarists and their henchmen, the democrats and the social democrats, who all swore to preserve, secure and expand the achievements of the revolution. But are the militarists not once again being beckoned with honor and reward, whether they serve the Entente in the fight against their own people or against the Russian Republic of Councils, whether they lie in wait for the continental complications that will arise from the second phase of the world war in the conflict between America and Japan? What more could the jackals of German finance and the hyenas of German trade want than to save the rest of their capital abroad and change flags to take shelter under the wing of the Entente, so that the golden blessing that the Entente will squeeze out of the German people through hard bondage will also fertilize their coffers? And those miserable fellows of the Social-Democratic Party, the dishonorable prisoners of their dishonorable regime, how else will they earn their daily bread, if not as the ham actors of the Entente and as the executioners of the German revolution! The bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy, the militarists and their henchmen, the democrats and the social democrats, when faced with the choice between their own class interests and the economic and political ruin of the people, unhesitatingly chose the ruin of the people in the vain hope of saving themselves. Robbers who had plundered half the world like corsairs, with their murder of millions more terrible scourge of humanity than Attila's Huns once were, worse scoundrels than the hordes of Cortez and Pizarro, who cared nothing for the honor and lives of thousands of defenseless girls and women, whom they and murdered in cold blood, they relied on the word of a robber, in the delusion that he would, out of guild-like collegiality, decree mercy before justice, that he would let them continue in their old glory as exploiters if only they would become his tools against the world revolution at home and abroad.

What only a determined policy in the interests of the revolution could have prevented was brought about by the madness and self-interest of small-minded unscrupulousness. The Treaty of Versailles became reality. It removes bourgeois Germany from the ranks of the nations. It takes away the greater part of its ore production, a huge part of its coal production, large portions of its agricultural production. Within the framework of a bourgeois world order, it destroys the foundations of its major industry. It imposes a mass of debt on it, 'which exceeds the remaining national wealth many times over, the repayment of which defies all possibility, and which delivers the nation to centuries of economic enslavement. Just as the gigantic dimensions of the world war surpass all military conflicts of the past, so the tribute imposed on Germany surpasses all contributions of the past. The Peace of Versailles destroys Germany, a country of big capital, forever in the heart of Europe, militarily, politically and economically. There is no doubt about it – that is its purpose, which the Entente is pursuing deliberately and with forethought because it arises from the unavoidable necessities of its imperialist predatory policy. It is foolish to hope for

a revision of the treaty! It is doubly foolish because England and France could only expect to overcome their financial difficulties and avert the social revolution if the Treaty of Versailles were also fulfilled on the financial side.

Orientation towards the West led to Versailles and had to lead there. Where only communism can still save society, every attempt to renew the capitalist order hurls society into the abyss. And once again the Communists were alone in the fight against the orientation towards the West. Just as the Independent Social Democracy, by promoting the National Assembly, worked towards the politics of the blood camarilla within the country, so it aided the march towards Versailles by fighting for orientation towards the bourgeois democracies of the West. Speaking for the revolution and acting for the counter-revolution, as it has always done, it shared all the illusions of the old party, only to finally reveal the ambiguity and absurdity of its policy to everyone by demanding that the Versailles Treaty be signed and by simultaneously refusing to fulfill the unfulfillable treaty, as is the consequence of signing it.

The salvation and rights of the German people lie in the socialist renewal of the economy. The treaty between the German exploiters and the exploiters in the Entente camp does not concern them and does not bind them. The right of slavery is null and void, says Rousseau in his great work on the social contract, in his fundamental treatise on the right of the state of that bourgeois democracy with which the Entente would like to bless the whole world: the right of slavery is null and void, because the right of slavery is not only unlawful, but also senseless and meaningless.

XI. Munich and Hamburg.

The more the counter-revolution felt the fist of the Entente at its throat, the more it ran itself into ruin and entangled itself, the more tenaciously it fought for its own preservation and domination in the country itself. One of its main concerns was to ensure that the promise to maintain the council system, extorted by the strikes, was honored in such a way as to deprive it of all meaning. For it was under no illusion that this concession exposed it to serious conflicts as long as the workers had the opportunity to use the councils in a revolutionary way, and this possibility continued indefinitely if the councils were to remain in existence alongside the old organizations and without any connection with them. Only by incorporating them into the bureaucratic administrative apparatus and the trade unions could the danger be averted, or at least significantly mitigated. If the trade unions could no longer be the sole representatives of the workers, then at least the idea of the councils had to be discredited in the eyes of the revolutionary masses, and the councils had to be transformed into instruments of the counter-revolution and capitalist restoration.

When the strikes forced the government's hand, the government and the old party could not have hoped for anything more than the demand of the Independent Social Democratic Party to anchor the councils in the constitution. A council system to which the capitalist class state – and that is what the so-called socialist republic is – assigns its position, to which it assigns functions and powers, is transformed from a tool of the proletarian revolution into a tool of capitalist class

rule. To focus the dispute on the question of what rights the councils should be granted within a capitalist social constitution meant to deceive the working class about this decisive metamorphosis, meant to falsify the meaning and content of the struggle and to work against the counter-revolution by transferring the dispute to the ground of capitalist interests and judging and settling it from there. The attitude of the Independent Social Democrats made it much easier for the government to destroy the political success of the strikes by enshrining the councils in the constitution, as was often called for. While the local councils were limited to subordinate control and advisory functions, their electoral system based on companies was replaced by a political electoral system based on parties, thus transforming them into municipal parliaments of second and third order. The shop stewards may represent the workers in the factories, but only under the supervision of the trade unions and without touching the capitalists' power of disposition over the means of production and economic resources, while at the higher levels of economic organization the council idea is completely excluded and the employers' associations and the trade unions again work together in the form of working groups in such a way that the property rights of the employers remain untouched. With this regulation, the interests of the old organizations and the needs of the capitalist entrepreneurs seemed to be fully served at the same time. The old party had not completely eliminated the councils, as was originally intended, in order to make it impossible for them to become the political expression of the working class, but it had nevertheless taken away all their political functions and, by degrading them to tools of the currently ruling organizational bureaucracy, transformed them into tools of the employers. If the regime of the old party was only a backdrop for the re-established capitalism, then no stronger safeguard could be invented for it than that not only the dead principle of the trade unions, but also the living principle of the councils, took over the guarantee of its continued existence by being inserted as an active link in the capitalist economic order.

The horse-trading policy, which deprived this promise of all meaning and gave the bourgeoisie new positions of power, could not, of course, resolve the difficulties in the country. The economic movement continued as before. Even if the counter-revolution had wanted to change its policy, it no longer had a choice. The blood orgies they conjured up kept them on the chosen path with iron compulsion. Further provoking the working class, wearing them down in local struggles, crushing their forward-pressing elements, hunting down their determined champions and having them eliminated by murderous headquarters remained their method, as in fact they had no other means. And victory after victory she had heaped up! Western and central Germany, Brunswick and Saxony, the Ruhr Basin and the coastal plain bore witness to her successes. Like a demon that feeds on blood, she grew stronger in the struggle. And yet the strikes forced the government to give in, and the attempt to turn the economic struggle into an armed conflict had failed completely. So how to master the situation, how to quell the ferment in the country? The military reaction redoubled its efforts and changed its approach, not by refraining from civil war, but rather by bringing it to bear on the highest level.

Germany's big industry and exports have been destroyed; with the efficiency of its labor and transport, it is rapidly declining. There are many millions of people too many if the newly established bourgeois order is to consolidate and hold. As in Poland and the Ukraine, in the Baltic countries and in Finland, the supernumeraries, who will not be able to emigrate in the foreseeable future due to the lack of ships, must be eliminated; what thinks and feels revolutionary must be destroyed if the counter-revolution is to be rid of their existence and

achieve the guarantee and security of its own duration. The economic calm must be preceded by the churchyard calm. But since military terror against the strikes did not fulfill its purpose and was unable to embroil the working class in armed conflicts, the conflict was to be transferred to the political arena. The same methods that had been used in the peripheral areas to crush the workers' revolution and trample the workers of the big city in the mass were supposed to guarantee the success that had so far eluded them. Just as the civil war had paved the way for the Treaty of Versailles, so the Treaty of Versailles was accompanied by an intensification and broadening of the civil war. With it, the militarists' domestic policy entered a new phase. Until now, their efforts had been directed primarily at strikes and individual localities; now the big fight was to begin with politically and economically cohesive territories and their metropolitan centers at the same time.

The counter-revolution initially achieved its goal in southern Germany. The infamous ambiguity of the representatives of the old party led to the establishment of the Bavarian Council Republic, against the advice of the communists, while the socialist majority government of Hoffmann voluntarily cleared the field. After the councils had been robbed of all political functions, when works councils were to be only the lowest organs of the trade unions and local councils only represented municipal parliaments of the lowest order, the moment seemed to have come to deal a fatal blow to the idea of the council itself in the struggles, from which the blood camarilla hoped for the decisive defeat of the revolution ; the Bavarian Council Republic was presented as a particularist splintering-off, which, given the importance of Bavaria for the nation as a whole, was tantamount to the collapse of national unity. It was branded as a danger to the general public and was thus to be brought into sharp opposition to the national consciousness. Noske and his accomplices seized the desired opportunity with both hands and prepared for a devastating blow. Within a few days, enormous forces were massed against the Bavarian capital in order to use operations on the grandest scale to force the Hoffmann government back by force of arms, to throw the traitors to the ground and to destroy the revolutionary workers of Munich. A terrible battle ensued. The workers fought like lions. By the thousands, their bodies covered the Blachfeld. Street by street, house by house, they struggle to the last moment. In the end, they succumb to the superior forces. Order triumphs and, without restraint, the military dictatorship rears its head.

Quickly and without difficulties that would have seriously jeopardized its success, the first part of a large-scale plan to finally put an end to the revolution was successfully implemented. There was no doubt that it would be followed by the next part. The second blow was to be struck in the north, against Hamburg. Here the revolt in Kiel had turned into a revolution; here, across all factional differences, the idea of the unity of the working class had taken deep root; here the people's army, which had already been disbanded in the rest of Germany, still had its rifles in its hands. And it seemed as if the luck of the blood camarilla would once again play into the hands in an unexpected way.

Unspeakable food scandals led to justifiable outbursts of outrage and public demonstrations in Hamburg, and enabled the militarists to carry out one of their outrageous, if habitual, provocations. Without warning, Noskides who had rushed to an unarmed demonstration shot into a crowd, killing and wounding even women and children. Seized by an unbridled rage, stalwart workers from all party groups began the fight that ended with a serious defeat for the Noskids

and their disarmament. The Senate, dominated by the majority socialists, remained invisible during these difficult hours. The Commission of Twelve of the workers' councils did what would have been its duty: it ensured calm and restored order in the city. And it was completely successful. But the Senate, whose helplessness was only exceeded by its malevolence, had secretly called upon the government of the Reich, which had long been lying in wait to crush the revolutionary wing of the Hamburg labor force. The news spread immediately throughout the world that Noske had ordered the Reich to crush the free city, as the Reich law called it. Within two days, his Reichswehr troops were advancing from all sides and stood at its gates, clear proof that everything had been meticulously planned well in advance. The imperial execution against an independent imperial city in alliance with the government of that city, because it was considered a bulwark and a foundation of the German revolution! What was intended is indicated by the untrue report that the Twelve Commission had seized and exercised political power. The activities of the Twelve Commission were to be branded as a new high-treacherous council experiment, and a mass bloodbath was to turn Hamburg into the Munich of the north. The militarists installed their best man, in whom they saw their own political future embodied, as leader. The scope of the step and its political meaning are obvious. If the second decisive blow was struck in the north against the German revolution, the working class of Greater Hamburg, which was still standing in full, unbroken strength, was thrown down in a heavy bloodbath. Then the establishment of the military dictatorship had to follow, at least over the whole of northwestern Germany, as the case of Munich had already led to the military dictatorship over the whole of Bavaria.

It was imperative to thwart this policy, to halt the armed action and to put a stop to the civil war at a decisive point. The intention succeeded thanks to the incomparable attitude of the Hamburg working class and the tactics observed by the Communists. They brought about the meeting of the plenary assembly of all works councils and united the entire workforce of all party groups against the government's action and the policy of civil war. In this way, it then became possible to establish and maintain calm in the city, to break off all provocations, and to rein in putschist currents among the population. But it was not only that the defense councils proved themselves to be a basis for united action and a powerful weapon of the revolution: the tactics adopted led to a complete and resounding success. The troops encountered a completely calm city when they marched in, and this image of complete peace caused the troops, as soon as the march in had barely begun, they had to be withdrawn again. They voluntarily laid down their weapons in the simple words of the unarmed men, women and children who confronted them, and when the invasion resumed after a few days, the leadership of the invading army had to take special precautions to prevent the population from having such a dangerous influence on the troops. But there could be no question of the bloodbath that the counter-revolution needed if it wanted to realize its more far-reaching plans.

Thus the plans of the counter-revolution were thwarted, and the civil war was brought to a halt for the first time in the middle of a decisive situation for domestic politics. The sudden setback suffered by the policy of the counter-revolution had significant consequences. The counter-revolution might still try to terrorize individuals through the mistreatment of individuals and through heroic deeds against street crowds, but the mass slaughter of the revolutionary working class was over.

XII. Organizational Bureaucracy and Military Dictatorship.

The German counter-revolution splits into two major branches. From the outset, the generals and their supporters in the state bureaucracy, capitalists and landed gentry stand as an independent power alongside the organizational bureaucracy of the old party and the trade unions, behind which parts of bourgeois democracy are stepping. Strong opposites prevail between the two wings, which the civil war covered up and concealed, but which immediately came to light when the far-reaching plans of the reaction failed and the armed action essentially came to a halt.

Who does not remember the downpour of revelations that occurred soon after the failure at Hamburg? Basically, it did not reveal anything that had not been known for a long time. But the revelation fever gained importance because it showed the sharpness to which the opposite between the generals and the government, between the new army and the organizational bureaucracy had grown. The threat issued by the government at that time to publish all the wartime records had no effect on the generals. Conscious of having the troops in hand, they scoffed at those who had no more justification for the role of accuser than they did, despite the fact that they themselves had participated in and supported every aspect of the policy of the imperialist war for four long years. The necessity that it had to face in order to get the capitalist economy back on its feet forced the old party to follow the tracks of the militarists, as clearly demonstrated by the reduction of unemployment benefits, this attack on all wage increases that have occurred during the last years of the war and since the outbreak of the revolution, this general and all-encompassing wage reduction on a grand scale at a time of rapidly rising prices, which, as the organization bureaucracy undoubtedly foresees, must lead to severe struggles and upheavals.

But will it always be possible for this organizational bureaucracy to submit to the dictate of the military dictatorship in every situation? The organizational bureaucracy has put the bourgeoisie in power and enabled it to renew the old economy by betraying the revolution and starting the fight against it. Meanwhile, it has degenerated into a tool of the bureaucracy, which exercises supreme power only in the name of the latter and by the grace of the generals. The bourgeoisie cannot permanently resign itself to the fact that the realization of its goals should only be permissible up to the limit determined by the interests of that organizational bureaucracy. The prevailing opposites must be fully expressed as soon as the actual implementation of the Versailles Treaty is at stake.

The Entente does not want to see the revival of a strong, export-oriented, economically and politically powerful large-scale industry in Germany, quite apart from the fact that, in order to create it, a complete reorganization of the production apparatus would be required, for which raw materials and other materials are lacking, since the Entente will first think of replenishing its own severely damaged economic resources. The German economy is in the position of a bankrupt company that has come into the hands of a trust and is to be run for the benefit of that trust, to the extent that its interests allow, against crushing levies and with the impossibility of meeting its usurious demands, under increasingly unfavorable conditions. Even now, conditions are

unbearable for the masses. What will it be like if the Treaty of Versailles is implemented? Only a country in a state of great economic prosperity would be able to afford the huge contributions of goods and money that Germany is being forced to make under that treaty. The narrow layer of the bourgeoisie that manages production on behalf of the Entente trust, that has hidden its capital with the Entente in order to participate in the plundering of Germany, the militarists and bureaucrats who support this rule and live from it, may still find a way of existing under the rule of the Entente trust. For the broad masses of the people, however, the conditions are becoming completely impossible, if only because the liquidation of the internal bankruptcy, which the lost war leaves behind, and the simultaneous liquidation of the external bankruptcy, which the treaty imposes on the people, requires levies that would leave hardly anything of the annual production yield of the people's labor. No party that calls itself democratic and depends on the approval of the masses can take on the task of implementing the contract. Only an armed dictatorship can attempt to do so, based on the narrow layer of the high bureaucracy and the capitalist big bourgeoisie in the city and in the countryside. If the organizational bureaucracy does not unconditionally submit to this situation, if it refuses, as its own political existence demands of it, to participate in it, then its overthrow becomes an inevitable necessity for the militarists.

The generals' strength, both internally and externally, is based on this position regarding the Treaty of Versailles. The productive capacity of the German economy is inexorably declining, while the Entente will unconditionally insist on the implementation of the treaty, because it must insist, since the fire is burning on its nails. The Entente knows it and the German counter-revolution knows it, that the coming winter months will probably bring the decision for the European revolution and thus for the world revolution. The decision in the sense of answering the question of whether the social revolution in Russia will develop into a social revolution in Europe through the progress of the German revolution, or whether the European revolution will come to a premature halt in order to assert itself as a setback to the social revolution in America. The German counter-revolution and the Entente are therefore equally anxious to take every precaution to hold back the German revolution during the coming winter months. The importance that the Entente attaches to the generals is sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that, instead of the 10,000 men that the German army was supposed to be reduced to by October 1, 400,000 are currently allowed to be kept under arms.

But the Entente also needs the German generals in the East. The Treaty of Versailles makes it possible for the Entente to make the Russian border states the basis of its Eastern policy. The Entente's imperialism, master of Germany, sets up its throne and its mighty army camp on the Vistula, in order to keep the center of the continent down forever and at the same time to realize the dream of German imperialism to rule over Poland the east and southeast of Europe and to bring down the Russian Soviet Republic by advancing all the border states against each other simultaneously and concentrically. The latter succeeded in repelling Kolchak's troops on the Siberian front and driving them far into Siberia. By contrast, the situation on the European front has become more difficult in recent weeks. A chain of counter-revolutionary armies stretches from the Baltic Sea down to the Black Sea. General Mannerheim's Finnish army is flanked by General Yudenich's Russian Northern Army in the area north and northeast of St. Petersburg. The Lithuanian and Polish armies are attached to them, followed by General Petliura's Ukrainian National Army and Denikin's army, which consists of Cossacks and Russian volunteers. While in the south Ukraine was lost again and Kiev fell into the hands of the attackers, in the north the

Red Army broke through the enemy front at the politically decisive point, turned the thrust away from St. Petersburg and put Yudenich's army in a difficult position. The Entente's attempt to establish a kind of high command for the entire Eastern Front by sending a French general has also failed due to national opposites, which, particularly strong in the south, are skillfully exploited by the Soviet Republic.

Russia is one of the countries that are defending themselves militarily, since only a few months out of the year are suitable for military operations in these vast territories with poorly developed rail networks. For this very reason, the Entente, supported by the ruling classes of the border states and their superior military power, is seeking to cut off the Soviet Republic ever more tightly, both militarily and economically, in the expectation that the government of the Bolsheviks will one day collapse of its own accord under the pressure of internal and external adversity. In their calculations, the German troops in the neighboring states, especially the army in the Baltic, play an important role. The less willing and, in view of the mood in their own countries, the less able the Entente is to deploy its own troops in the east, and the greater the successes the Red Army has achieved against the troops operating against St. Petersburg, the more heavily the German contingents and their officers will weigh in the further course of the campaign. On the other hand, the generals in Germany are all the more eager to exploit the situation by coming to an agreement with the Entente – for example, about the coming government – in order to gain influence over the course of operations. It is not necessary for Ludendorff to be at the head of the new government, whose task would be to fully implement the Treaty of Versailles internally and military policy externally.

Thus, the German generals are, so to speak, at the center of the so-called big politics. And they apparently have a free hand in all directions. They can seek an alliance with the Entente and could just as easily approach Russia to turn against the Entente in the Baltic with the Red Army at their back. They can implement the Versailles Peace Treaty with the Entente, but they could just as easily turn against its implementation and play the people off against the Entente. There is no doubt that the generals, with their healthy sense of the opportunities afforded by the current situation, are using all these opportunities in the present situation. There is no doubt that they are making friendly smiles and flaming ardor to the Russian Soviet Republic, just as it negotiates with the Entente about the overthrow of the existing government, while at the same time playing with the idea of armed resistance to the implementation of the Versailles Treaty. But only fools can be taken in by a heroic pose that clenches its fist against the West. No matter how loudly the militarists let their patriotic fanfare sound and swing: in the current world situation, anyone who, as a Condottiere of the Entente, finds nourishment and work and, as a pauperized proletarian, has sown countless piles of corpses across the land to awaken capitalism from the dead, cannot seriously be thinking of resisting the implementation of the Versailles Treaty. In reality, the generals have only a semblance of freedom of choice. Apart from all the other aspects already mentioned, their entire policy has been based on the idea of continuing the fight against the revolution in order to maintain and restore the old social order. Their policy remains bound to this prerequisite because they cannot make peace with the revolution at home or abroad and cannot make a pact with it without completely surrendering the political and military position on which their entire existence is currently based. However, it is even more out of the question that the revolution could make a pact with the generals that would surrender it to them.

But the generals would certainly not be averse to seeing the Noske-Ebert government forced to resign by a popular movement, for which the artificial escalation of food difficulties could provide the occasion at any time, while the generals themselves would be standing at attention, and a revolutionary government would take the place of the former, which under such circumstances could only have a short life. Two reasons suggest such an assumption. Since, according to the general conception of the bourgeois system of representation, the organizational bureaucracy acts in place of and in the name of its organizations when it participates in the government – and since broad sections of the working class are still under the spell of this delusion – it is not to be foreseen to what extent the organizations themselves would be drawn into a conflict between the generals and the labor bureaucracy, while the generals would be relieved of all difficulties by a situation of the kind indicated. The other reason is more important. Even a revolutionary government is not in a position, in the face of the disruption of the entire economy, the isolation from the world market caused by the lack of shipping space and the low value of currencies, to immediately establish a communist economy, which, as long as the social revolution in the countries of the Entente is not victorious, is only possible in alliance with Eastern Europe, from which Germany is separated by the barrier of periphery states under bourgeois rule. Nor is a revolutionary government capable of magically procuring the necessary, but unavailable, quantities of food and coal that would be sufficient to quickly counteract the general emergency. The legacy of the total bankruptcy of the organizational bureaucracy and the bankruptcy of capitalist restoration still to come would have the armed counter-revolution of the generals at its back, to make it pay for that bankruptcy and quickly replace and crush it. A second Hungary on a larger scale, with correspondingly greater setbacks at home and abroad, would not only break the back of the German revolution for the time being, but would also involve the entire European revolution in its defeat.

There are many indications that such thoughts are not alien to the militarists and influence their policy. The shortages of food and fuel and the sharp price increases of recent weeks cannot be explained by purely economic reasons, as things stand at present. Political motives are at play here, and above all the desire to force the German revolution to fight under circumstances that will ensure a heavy defeat. But for the German communists, in any case, there is no reason to take up positions that become vacant because the murderous centers would like to see them there. Only when the proletariat seizes power in the struggle with the counter-revolution of the military, whether it has overthrown the regime of the organizational bureaucracy or bent it unconditionally to its will, only then will it be able to assert the power that falls to it and fulfill its mission in the service of the world revolution.

XIII. The Fall of the Bourgeoisie.

Just as bourgeois Russia could only be a colony of the strongest financial power of the Entente, the United States of America, so, to an even greater extent, the events in the neighboring states threatened Germany itself. After the collapse of the Western Front, German Eastern policy opened the way to the Baltic for Britain without any need for it, and thus helped Britain to achieve unconditional and overwhelming influence in Scandinavia and Denmark, and to lay Finland completely at Britain's feet. German Eastern policy delivered Poland without reservation

into the hands of French policy, which, by virtue of a centuries-old tradition, claims that country as its natural zone of influence on the continent. If the Entente's policy of marginalization were to succeed and Russia were to succumb, Germany would be reduced to the status of a mere British and French appendage on the continent, and even below the status of a colonial country like Egypt or India.

Even the attempt to restore the capitalist economy has created conditions under which the broad masses of the people cannot survive, and in the maintenance of which those layers of society, who today still call themselves bourgeois, who still think and feel in a bourgeois way, although they have already been proletarianized or are rapidly and irreparably falling into the process of becoming so, have no interest. The attacks on reduced working hours and increased wages and salaries affect them even more severely than the working class itself. But their situation, the situation of everyone, will be infinitely worse when it comes to implementing the Treaty of Versailles. How could it be possible in a country that is facing a winter hardship greater than all the hardships of the war years combined, a tax burden of more than 25 billion, that has to pay billions upon billions for the import of the most necessary things, without there being any exports to offset them! And yet the Entente demands payment of the war debt, because in France and England, too, the passivity of the trade balance is increasing to an immeasurable extent. And yet the collection of fabulous sums of money must begin, which the state of the German foreign exchange increases fourfold and fivefold, in a country whose great masses can barely scrape out a bare existence. The restoration of capitalism was a product of bankruptcy, and it will collapse in the destruction of a greater bankruptcy. If the German people do not want to perish and sink into nameless misery, then they have only one choice: to destroy the counter-revolution, which is the overthrow of the bourgeoisie.

With its basis in Germany, the basis of the entire European counter-revolution is destroyed. For the Versailles Treaty not only prepared the ground for the Entente's attack on Russia and for its domination of southeastern Europe. It also cleared the way for Britain and France's non-European policies. If Britain has now closed the great chain of countries from the Cape to Egypt to India by incorporating Persia and Afghanistan, and has completely transformed the Indian Ocean into an English lake, and if France is nesting in Syria to resume the role it played there in the time of the caliphs in the Near East and the eastern Mediterranean, this image of imperialist greatness receives its light and its framework only through the Treaty of Versailles. It is the exponent of the entire political and economic situation as created by the world war and the restoration of German capitalism after the November uprising. In it, the world position of the European bourgeoisie is destroyed. The fall of the German bourgeoisie drags the bourgeoisie of the West into the abyss.

The second revolution will face far greater difficulties than the November uprising, without having the same wealth of political and economic resources at its disposal. The German economy, weakened by the increasing disorganization and the deliveries to the Entente and severely affected by the civil war, is in a much higher degree of disintegration than at that time, while the Entente has consistently mastered the resistance that has always arisen in Europe when the world war broke out. Even if the military conflict across the Pacific Ocean between Japan and America had already begun, this need not necessarily provide relief for the second revolution. Threatened on all sides by storms, in the midst of reefs and dangers, with its own country's

population too scarce, it will have to accomplish those tasks, the solution of which the November uprising criminally neglected: the union with the fighting Soviet Republic, the overthrow of bourgeois rule in the border states, and the propaganda of world revolution towards the West by the revolutionary example of its own revolutionary policy. For next to victory in Germany, herein lies their strength and power. Just as the accomplished fact of the Russian Revolution provided the guarantee for the onset of the German Revolution, so the completion of the German Revolution, in the rise of the political to the social revolution and the resulting destruction of the Treaty of Versailles, provides the certainty for the onset of the revolution in the countries of Western Europe.

To assert its interests within the national whole, the bourgeoisie has at its disposal a large apparatus, parliaments of all kinds, the banks and the press, the public administration and numerous other means of power. But the bourgeoisie constitutes only a small minority of the people; as an earning stratum, it comprises in Germany barely one million persons among the sixty million; the proletarian dictatorship, which is the rule of the overwhelming majority of the people, including those strata that consider themselves bourgeois and are proletarian, is directed against them and their apparatus of power. The consequences of the policy that culminated in the Treaty of Versailles, which hammer the necessity of the second revolution into the public consciousness, prepare this dictatorship and pave the way for it. What already lives in the circumstances gains life in the realization of all. The social revolution, in the November uprising only consciously striven for and demanded by a comparatively small minority, becomes the cause of the people, of the nation.

A revolutionary party will adjust its policy and tactics to this in order to facilitate and enable the accomplishment of those tasks. Establishing and maintaining close links with the revolutionary parties in the peripheral states, in Austria and the western democracies, in order to bring about a common political orientation and joint action to promote the world revolution, breaking the revolutionary layers of the country from all ties with its reactionary institutions, to enable them to act at any time and under any circumstances, ruthlessly fighting against the means of power and the organizational the most ruthless struggle against the means of power and the organizational And while it fights for the abolition of national borders, for the peaceful interpenetration of human economies and societies, with the aim of securing for the German people the freedom withheld from it by the Entente, to live and work in its own way in the circle of humanity, in language, customs and economy, it relies all its might and strength on the people, the nation, and gathers it and organizes its ranks to storm against enslavement under the capitalist foreign domination, to overcome the dictatorship of world imperialism in its own country by overthrowing the bourgeoisie, by the dictatorship of the working nation. In the communist view, this working nation includes all manual and intellectual workers and, of course, scientific specialists in any field who are willing and able to place their specialized knowledge at the service of the popular organization grouping itself around the proletariat. Lasalle's national tactics are resurrected and flow together uniformly with the international tactics, as Marx and Engels have demanded since the days of the Communist Manifesto.

The German revolution is neither concluded nor dead. It is already shaking the gates of the European world anew to blow them up. With brazen tread it crushes the obstacles, and the

opportunists of world capital, both the militarists and the old organizational bureaucracy together with their followers scatter and fly apart into the winds.

In hard labor the new day is born! Fight and conquer!