

# 1525, 1848, 1918-19: Three defeats of the German revolution - The cost of the defeated German revolutions

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## I.

On the occasion of the bicentenary celebrations of the Great French Revolution of 1789, there was an intense public controversy in France, Great Britain and the United States about the alleged 'excessive costs' of this revolution. The conquest of human rights, so far, so good. But what about the deaths caused by the Terror and those of the Vendée uprisings?

We do not want to denounce in detail the mendacity of a historical 'reckoning' which on the one hand blames the revolution for the victims of the counter-revolution (including the Napoleonic wars), and on the other fails to compare the number of victims of the revolution with those of the ancien régime, e.g. those of the Inquisition, St Bartholomew's Day Massacre, the persecution of peasants in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the dynastic wars of the last four Louises, not to mention the famines.

A much more general problem is raised by this macabre preoccupation with death tolls. Should the costs of victorious revolutions not be compared with the costs of defeated or failed revolutions, with the historical consequences of revolutionary defeats? Both in the number of immediate victims and in the long-term social and political consequences, which in turn result in damaged and lost lives?

German history since the 16<sup>th</sup> century is - probably alongside the history of India - the most striking proof of the importance of such a comparative historical analysis.

In modern history there have been three revolutions in Germany: the German Peasants' War, an early bourgeois revolution; the revolution of 1848-49, a late bourgeois revolution; and the revolution of 1918/19, with its possible revival in the general strike against the Kapp-Lüttwitz putsch in 1920 as well during and after the general strike against Cuno in 1923, a proletarian-socialist revolution that at the same time needed to accomplish the tasks of the unfinished bourgeois revolution. All three revolutions ended in defeat. The German people and the whole of humanity paid a high price for these three defeats, far exceeding the price of a victorious revolution.

The defeat of the early bourgeois revolution, the victory of the princes over the peasants, consolidated the fragmentation of Germany for centuries. It enabled the horrors of the Thirty Years' War, which destroyed significant parts of Germany and led to a catastrophic decline in the population and productive forces. It slowed down and suppressed the beginnings of a development from commercial and banking capital to modern industry via cottage industry and manufacturing for a long time. For a century, there was more manufacturing production in the small countries of Holland and Belgium than in Germany.

Not geography, but the patterns of dominant class power and political structures led to the decline of flourishing trading towns such as Nürnberg, Köln and the Hanseatic cities. Otherwise one cannot

explain the simultaneous rise of Lüttich or of Swedish industry, for example, which were just as far as Nürnberg, Köln or Lubeck, if not further, from the new trade routes of the Atlantic and the Pacific. Centuries of stagnation – that was the price of the defeated revolution of the years around 1520.

The slow emergence of capitalism in west Germany, Silesia and partly in central Germany and Prussia created a second historical opportunity for the bourgeois revolution in 1848. It was a late bourgeois revolution. This spelled the revolution's doom.

There was already a young, active working class. Especially in the Rhineland, there was a radical petty bourgeoisie that wanted to follow the example of the Jacobins of the French Revolution. The intrusion of the 'social question' into the political process was therefore even broader and more inevitable than it had already been in France after 1789. There were objective reasons for this and it was not, as some historians, including social-democratic ones, claim, the result of 'wrong tactics' on the part of the radical revolutionaries, first and foremost Marx and Engels themselves.

That is why the bourgeoisie very quickly slipped over into the camp of the counter-revolution. But the proletariat was still too weak to replace the bourgeoisie and lead the revolution to victory. Thus, with the help of tsarist troops under Wrangel, the Prussian-Habsburgian counter-revolution was victorious.

The price was the continuation of Germany's fragmentation for almost a quarter of a century and a corresponding brake on the development of industrial capitalism, which lagged behind not only Great Britain and France, but even Belgium.

Combined with the consequences of the revolutionary defeat of 1525, the social and political effects of the defeat of 1849 were even more devastating than the economic ones. The semi-feudal political power structures hardened, especially in Prussia, Bavaria and Austria. Decisive sectors of the state apparatus, above all the military, diplomacy and the judiciary, remained dominated by the nobility. The small German empire of the Hohenzollerns, which was created by Bismarck, was characterized by a historical entanglement of the economic power of big business with the political rule of the Prussian Junkers. The same was true to an even greater extent for the Habsburg monarchy, where the modern bourgeoisie was weaker than in the Wilhelmine empire and the weight of the Bohemian and Hungarian landed gentry was even heavier, partly as a result of the nationality issue.

This specific 'German path to monopoly capitalism/ imperialism', without an intermediate stage of liberal-conservative rule under the sign of free trade and 'free competition' as in England, France, Belgium, Holland and the United States, is reflected in certain political forms of government and the corresponding prevailing ideologies.

In all capitalist countries in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the period up to the outbreak of the First World War, liberal and conservative, including extreme conservative, currents coexisted in the ruling classes. Nowhere were these 'purely' conservative. Parts of the aristocracy and their corresponding ideologies played a role everywhere. They combined with elements that corresponded to the expansion of colonialism to lead to extreme forms of misanthropic sentiment: militarism, racism, xenophobia, radical great power chauvinism, antisemitism.

In some imperialist states, this combined development was initially more dangerous than it was in Germany – for example, in 1890 or 1900 racism in England, not to mention the United States, was certainly more influential than in the Wilhelmine empire. At the same time, antisemitism was also stronger in France (the Dreyfus affair), in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and in Russia than in Germany.

But the historical outcome of the confrontation between the liberal and conservative wings – the formula is obviously very simplistic – was fundamentally different in England, France, the United States, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries on the one hand and Germany on the other. Only Japan and Russia experienced a development of the politically and ideologically dominant power structures and mentalities (ideologies, forms of thought) similar to that in Wilhelmine Germany, because they too were burdened by the lack of a classical-bourgeois revolution (Italy and Spain are transitional phenomena between the one and the other).

The lack of a victorious bourgeois revolution determines the relative weakness of the liberal tradition, of civil courage, of defense of even 'purely bourgeois' human rights in broad sections of German society. The mentality of the subject rather than that of the citizen, the citizen, is not only prevalent in the big bourgeoisie. It also influences broad sections of the petty bourgeoisie. It even finds expression in certain strata of the working class and the organized labour movement.

It corresponds to a combination of late aristocratic and free-imperialist mentality that stresses obedience and finds its most striking expression in the positive attitude towards the state and militarism. 'Orders are orders': this commandment, so characteristic of German society after 1848, if not after 1524, turned into its negation, at least in part – among broad sections of the population – in countries that had experienced a victorious civil revolution: 'It is forbidden to forbid.'

The confrontation between extreme conservatives and liberals (for their part bourgeois-liberals, therefore moderately conservative, therefore inconsistent liberals) generally ended in the years 1900-1914 with the victory of the liberals, for example in France (the Dreyfusards), in England, in the United States, in Belgium and Holland, in the Scandinavian countries and in Switzerland, and even to some extent in Italy. Only Germany, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, Japan and Russia went the other way: these were all countries without a tradition of a successful or at least partially successful bourgeois revolution.

The long-term consequences of the dominance of this subject-mentality would have a decisive influence on the historical development of Germany and Japan, especially after the outbreak of the First World War and the economic crisis of 1929. The fact that this did not happen in Russia can only be attributed to the victory of the October Revolution, although the lack of a victorious democratic tradition there also had devastating consequences, including the consolidation of the Soviet Thermidor, the Stalinist dictatorship.

## II.

With the turbulent rise of the modern labour movement, the social-democracy, a new political actor appears on the historical stage: the proletariat. Its social position, its daily struggles, its historical interests stand in sharp contrast to the late feudal/early-imperialist mentality. Self-organization and self-activity dominate the proletariat's image of progress: 'the emancipation of the working class must be achieved by the working class itself'; 'There are no supreme saviours, Neither God, nor Caesar nor tribune; We can only save ourselves from misery.' Its growing self-confidence impressed its contemporaries. The battle-cries and self-assurance of those who before were degraded, impoverished, demoralized wage earners corresponded primarily to the successes of this self-activity, not to purely electoral results.

Without a doubt there also existed a contradictory tendency. Particularly under the influence of the Anti-Socialist Laws [1878-88] and the corresponding restrictions on self-activity, elements of an exaggerated 'verticalism' – an automatic, blind obedience – penetrated social-democracy and above all the trade unions. The beginnings of bureaucratization and the growing power of the apparatus can be seen. Rosa Luxemburg correctly denounced a development from the discipline imposed by

capitalist industry through bureaucratic adaptation to the Prussian-Wilhelmine state to declaring discipline as the absolute value. This development seemed to confirm the famous saying that a workers' revolution was impossible in Germany because the so-called revolutionaries would buy a platform ticket before occupying a railway station.

But if one looks more closely at the real development of the German workers movement and of workers' struggles between 1900 and 1923, and even between 1890 and 1930, one concludes that this statement is highly exaggerated. It deforms the historical record and, considering the myth of a 'collective blame' after 1945, it is even slanderous. For almost forty years the tendency contradicting the growth of self-activity and self-organization of the German working class was of secondary importance. The main tendency was towards their growth.

To find proof of this, one needs only to look at the lively discussions in the local branches of the SPD, later the USPD and the KPD, during its days as a mass party, something that lasted well into the 1920s. The reverberations of these discussions and the differentiation at the consecutive party congresses; the breadth and self-activity of the local daily press; the size of the partially spontaneous strike movements already before 1914 but most of all in the period of 1917 to 1923; the size of the mass demonstrations - all this crowned by the general strike against the Kapp-Lüttwitz putsch [1920], the most successful general strike in the history of the international workers' movement.

Lenin correctly wrote in 1920 that, despite the opportunist degeneration of the leadership of the majority SPD even before the First World War - which, incidentally, he recognized less clearly at the time than Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky - the German working class after 1914 radicalized and maintained itself more than any other working class in the world, with the exception of the Russian working class. And this exception was no longer true in 1920-21.

It is therefore no coincidence that broad circles of the liberal German petty bourgeoisie, even parts of the (weak) liberal bourgeoisie, saw the growth of social democracy as the only defence against the dangers of the authoritarian state. This partly explains the successes of the SPD, especially its great electoral successes in 1912 and 1919. The modern labour movement appeared simultaneously as the fighter for the liberation of labour, for the solution of the 'social question' and as the force that would realize the unresolved tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution; as the German lyrics of the 'Internationale' put it, 'Die Internationale erkämpft das Menschenrecht' - fights to achieve human rights.

In view of this historical tendency and this enormous potential, the betrayal of majority Social Democracy on 4 August 1914 was an important crossroads in contemporary German history. A direct line runs from 4 August 1914 to the defeat of the German revolution in the winter and spring of 1919, to the liquidation of the revolutionary attempts of 1920 and 1923, and from there to Hitler's seizure of power.

The capitulation of the majority of Social Democracy to German imperialism on 4 August 1914 not only established a tradition of truce with the employers, of the systematic sacrifice of the daily interests of the working class, and later also of the unemployed, which at best deeply divided the working class and at worst to a growing extent paralyzed it. It not only meant a radical restriction of independence and emancipatory concern in favor of 'administration' and incorporation into the bourgeois state apparatus and bourgeois society. Above all, it meant a growing affirmation of the state and militarism, the obedient mentality of 'standing to attention' before military officers, that as a result of the absence of a victorious bourgeois revolution weighed so heavily on German civil society.

Instead of being the major force compensating for the lack of civil courage, this part of the

organized labour movement itself became a large part of the problem from 1914 until the consolidation of the Nazi dictatorship in 1933. This was expressed not just in approval of war credits, in close co-operation with the Supreme Army Command and in Noske's atrocities up to 1920. It was also reflected in formal legalism, which reached the point of absurdity after Hitler was appointed Reich Chancellor by the SPD-elected Reich President Field Marshal von Hindenburg. This formalism meant the stubborn refusal to call for a general strike against the Nazis. Such a strike would still have been possible in February and March 1933 and was demanded by millions of German workers, including, if not above all, by Social Democratic workers. The sad victory of parliamentary cretinism was nothing but the end of the road of conforming to a subject mentality.

But the broad masses of German working class did not voluntarily follow this path. In a constant and sometimes stormy manner, they rebelled against it. The clearest expression of this mass rebellion lies in the revolution of 1918-19, and the pre-revolutionary situation of 1920.

Never before had German history come so close to cutting through the Gordian knot of the failed bourgeois revolution and realizing Tucholsky's imperative that 'the military has to go' as in November/December 1918 and in March 1920. A Germany of councils was on the immediate agenda, not so much in imitation of the Russian example, as corresponding to the internal contradictions of German bourgeois society and the confidence of the German working class.

In their own way, this was also recognized by the leaders of majority social-democracy. They were unable to do away with the revolution of 1918-19 with talk of cooperation between classes or even a 'social market economy'. They had fall back on hypocrisy: 'Socialization will happen anyway. Is it not better if it happens in "orderly" fashion than in chaos?' According to La Rochefoucauld, hypocrisy is the tribute that vice pays to virtue. This dishonest SPD slogan was in a way the counter-revolution's tribute to the possible revolution.

The cooperation between majority social-democracy, the military and civil 'elites' - as well as the weak, not yet fully formed character of the leadership of the revolution - caused the defeats of 1918-19 and of the revolutionary beginnings of 1920. The German people, the working class and then social-democracy, paid a high price for the failure of the revolution.

Despite hesitant attempts to the contrary, the Weimar Republic remained dominated by the traditional 'elites' of the Wilhelmine empire, especially the military, the judiciary and the foreign service. Only in state and local government, especially in Prussia and southern Germany, did liberal social-democratic forces make a breakthrough, but after 1930 they were largely paralyzed by self-imposed restrictions. Even before the Reichstag fire they were abruptly, without opposition, eliminated by the Papen Putsch and the 'national government'.

With few exceptions, big business in industry and banking joined this unholy alliance, not in 1933, but much earlier. The rest was only a matter of opportunism, i.e. differences over the timing of the elimination of the organized labour movement. As long as social-democracy was still needed to contain an immediate revolutionary danger, it was tolerated and courted. As soon as the balance of power had changed sufficiently, they began to think of eliminating it. The Moor had done his duty. On 1 May 1933, those who betrayed the revolution of 1918-19 were presented with the bill for their treachery.

Counter-revolutions and ruling classes know no gratitude. The path of German social-democracy to the authoritarian state was a suicidal one. But with Nazi rule and its barbaric consequences, the German working class, the German people, and the whole of humanity paid dearly for this third missed opportunity of a revolutionary victory, the greatest opportunity of the three revolutions.

The democratic counter-revolution of 1919 led to the totalitarian counter-revolution of 1933 – not inevitably, but with growing inner logic.

### III.

Resulting from the international character of capitalism, the consequences of the three defeated German revolutions became increasingly disastrous over the decades and centuries.

The defeat of the German Peasants' War allowed the French absolute monarchy to gain military supremacy on the European mainland, which extended the rule of absolutism by at least a century. England, which was economically poorer and less developed, was able to carry out its civil revolution 100 years earlier than richer France. At the same time, huge resources were squandered in dynastic wars and wasted by the court and court aristocracy in senseless luxury spending, thus depriving them of accumulation of industrial capital. Periodic famines, not unlike that caused by the French armies in Germany during the Thirty Years' War, were partly the result of the survival of absolutism in France.

Prussian Junker rule, which emerged at least indirectly from the victory of the princes in 1525, in turn caused a consolidation of the Junker rule of Tsarist Russia – a consolidation that found its strongest expression in the 'Holy Alliance' after the defeat of Napoleon and which slowed down the historical development of eastern and central Europe by at least half a century, a slowdown which was further intensified by the defeat of the revolution of 1848.

The combination of the failed early and late bourgeois-revolutions led to a belated, albeit stormy development of German industry and German imperialism after the foundation of the Reich in 1871. The law of unequal and combined development asserted itself in a particularly explosive manner on the world market.

Because it matured too late, German imperialism found the world market already largely divided between different colonized regions and spheres of influence. Because it came to full development later than its main competitors Great Britain and France, German imperialism quickly gained a lead in productivity and industrial development over these competitors at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It gained an advantage which even the military defeat of 1918 could not eliminate. The internal social antagonisms and archaic power structures exacerbated by the absence of a victorious civil revolution prevented the alternative strategy of a purely commercial global expansion. Only after the Second World War did this alternative strategy achieve breakthrough (how permanent remains undecided for the time being).

Thus, for German big business the drive for expansion on the world market, inherent in monopoly capitalism/imperialism, took on a militaristic-aggressive character from the outset. With the attainment of world domination as its goal, it aimed at the establishment of a large colonial empire, first in eastern Europe (Russia), then overseas. At least a shared responsibility for unleashing the First World War, and the main responsibility for unleashing the Second World War – those are the historical results of this dynamic of German imperialism caused by the absence of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the defeat of the proletarian revolution of 1918-19.

The defeated German revolution of 1918-19 and the strangled revolutionary possibilities of 1920 and 1923 (for which French, British and US imperialism bear a not insignificant share of the blame) were the great turning-point in 20<sup>th</sup> century world history. The unification of the victorious October Revolution with a victorious revolution in Germany and Austria would have transformed the whole of central and eastern Europe, including Italy, in a socialist direction. Even without extending to France or England, this socialist confederation would have changed the course of European and

world history.

A decisive break would have been put on the Soviet Thermidor. Large parts of Europe would have been spared the devastation of the Great Depression. There would have been neither Stalin nor Hitler, neither Auschwitz nor the Gulag, and probably not even the Second World War.

The crisis of the colonial empires would have erupted twenty years earlier. At least 100 million humans who perished miserably worldwide between 1918 and 1945 would have remained alive. That is the extent of the world-historical tragedy of the third missed German revolution, following the tragedy of the two previous defeated revolutions.

Certainly, some of this is merely speculative. One cannot replace a real historical process with an imaginary one based on the formula 'what if...'. But it is perfectly justified to recognize a causal chain where sufficient empirical material is available.

No serious historian can deny that the combined possibilities of the German and Russian revolutions in the first months and years after the collapse of the Wilhelmine empire were regarded as realistic by contemporaries themselves, perhaps even more so by the international counter-revolution than by the Communist International. One need only look at the statements of Winston Churchill and Marshal Foch to draw this conclusion.

The way in which international capital, above all American capital, attempted to simultaneously consolidate and tame capitalism in Germany – huge bank loans plus reparations policy – led straight to the economic and financial catastrophe of 1929-31, which made a significant contribution to the collapse of the Weimar Republic. Without this chain of causes, Hitler's mass party and mass demagoguery would not have had the opportunity for the demonic development that opened up to them from 1929 onward. On the other hand, without the hypertrophy of militarism and militaristic ideology from 1914 onward, and their almost unlimited proliferation after the defeat of the revolution as a result of this defeat, Hitler would hardly have been conceivable.

The growing paralysis of the self-activity of the Soviet working class from 1920 onward can be attributed objectively to hunger and disorganization of the economy, and subjectively to the dwindling hope for world revolution. These two decisive moments for the victory of the Soviet Thermidor in the form of the bureaucratic dictatorship, Stalinism, could have been largely avoided by merging a soviet Germany with a soviet Russia. German industry and the Russian market, united under the leadership of the working class, would have been able quickly to lift the worst of the misery. That is not speculative. It is empirically demonstrable.

Those who bear responsibility for the defeat of the German revolution have therefore incurred a huge debt – in world-historical terms. They missed a unique opportunity to save the world from the horrors of Hitler, Stalin, the atomic bomb and starvation in the Third World.

Revolutions and counter-revolutions are made by people. Certainly, classes, significant class fractions, parties and, to a very limited extent, leaders, play a decisive role. But classes and parties are themselves made up of people, each individual with his or her own subjectivity, just like the 'outstanding personalities'. If the latter nevertheless occupy such a central position in both the rise and fall of revolutions, it is because the subjective factor – insight, decisiveness, the ability to express the interests of the class most clearly, the ability to make them aware of their destiny and to carry them along to action, etc. – plays a key role at decisive turning points in the historical process.

The victories of the counter-revolution are characterized by *Vae victis* (Woe to the vanquished!). The counter-revolution knows exactly how dangerous the 'agitators' are for the rulers when their

message coincides with the uprising of broad masses (only the most stupid believe that the 'agitators' cause this uprising, which however does not mean that cynics cannot use this 'argument' to justify violent repression). Murdered revolutionary leaders loom large on the battlefield of victorious counter-revolutions. The murders of Thomas Müntzer in 1525, of Robert Blum in 1849, of Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Leo Jogiches, Hugo Haase, Kurt Eisner, Eugen Leviné in 1919 – significantly in the two main centres of the preceding revolution, Berlin and Munich – are representative of the thousands murdered in the defeated revolution (in 1848 there were just as many, if one takes Austria, Hungary, Poland and Italy together).

History seems to be on the side of the victors. Not only, as is all too often claimed as a commonplace, because the victors write history. In recent centuries, this has only been true to a limited extent. But mainly because victory itself seems to determine the further course of events, the fate of millions.

But immediate decisions and long-term effects must be separated. Revolutions break out because certain socio-economic and or political forms of rule are no longer functional and are no longer tolerated by the broadest masses. Victorious counter-revolutions can temporarily suppress the second state of affairs. But they cannot abolish the first.

This is why the mole continues to lurk beneath the topsoil of even the most successful counter-revolution. It leads to the paradox that Friedrich Engels noted in his later historical appraisal of the defeated revolution of 1848-49: that the victorious counter-revolution, at least in Germany, became in part a good executor of the defeated revolution.

Victorious counter-revolutions are only victorious in the long run if a long-term process of historical backward development takes place. However, if the productive forces continue to grow and the objective and subjective bases of historical progress expand, the counter-revolution will sooner or later come to the end of its life. Then the previously defeated rise to new, greater power. Therein lies the great difference between the consequences of the defeat of the German Peasants' War, which plunged Germany into disaster almost three hundred years later, and the consequences of the defeat of the revolution of 1848-49, which barely 15 years later could not prevent the rise of the German labour movement.

This deeper dialectic of history does not alter the immediate human tragedy of the victims. The dead remain dead. Real history knows no resurrection of the murdered flesh. The thousands of dead, of whom history does not record the names, were mourned by their descendants. The disappearance of outstanding revolutionary thinkers and leaders had a negative effect on the further course of historical development. A living Rosa Luxemburg could have decisively changed the further history of the KPD; her survival would have at least made Hitler's seizure of power significantly more difficult.

But if history does not know the resurrection of the flesh, it does know the power and continuity of revolutionary ideas. It is a harsh but just judge. It mercilessly separates the grain from the chaff, what is valuable for the progress and emancipation of mankind from the bluster of the executioners, the torturers and their apologists. In the language of politics, this is called historical 'rehabilitation', in both the narrowest and broadest sense of the word.

Nobody remembers the name of the victorious princes of Bad Frankenhausen. But the monument to Thomas Muntzer stands today in Bad Frankenhausen with the beautiful giant painting by Werner Tübke. The wretched murderers of our Rosa are held in almost universal contempt in Germany. They too will sink into general oblivion. But it won't be long before a monument to Rosa Luxemburg is erected on Landwehr Canal in Berlin. It already exists in the hearts and minds of hundreds of thousands, if not millions. Never has the saying 'and yet you won' been so appropriate as in the case



of the victims of defeated revolutions. As the Russian and Polish revolutionaries sang in the 1905 revolution: 'Immortal victims...'

This is a lesson of history that is almost two thousand years old. The names of the Roman rulers who nailed tens of thousands of slaves to the cross along the Via Appia to punish them for daring to rebel against slavery have been forgotten. The name of Spartacus the slave, on the other hand, lives and will live as long as there are people thinking and fighting. The names of Stalin and Rakosi are only mentioned with hatred by the overwhelming majority of the Soviet and Hungarian working class. Comrades Bukharin and Imre Nagy, who were murdered by them, have been officially rehabilitated. This will continue.

The judiciary and the court are usually portrayed as blind. The 'law is the law' and does not always have much to do with justice. The blind world court strikes relentlessly once against the left, then again against the right. But if one says that world history is the world's judgment, then despite this apparent temporary blindness, a long-term objective justice prevails. What history owes to the defeated revolutionary masses and their foes of 1525, 1848 and 1918-19 cannot be denied in the long run.

This is clearest in the case of the defeated revolution of 1918-1919. Who today can deny that Hitler was the greatest evil of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Who today can deny that a victorious social revolution at the end of the First World War would have saved Germany and the world from this barbarism?

It is characteristic that, in the so-called historians' dispute, the 'revisionist' historians, for the most part in revision of their own earlier views, deny the continuity of the expansionist and predatory plans of German imperialism before, during and after the First World War with the Third Reich in order to explain, if not justify, Hitler as a result of the 'Bolshevik terror'. What this amounts to is a justification of the suppression of the German revolution of 1918-19 with the help of the Freikorps and the Reichswehr - which led to the SA/SS and the integration of the Wehrmacht into the Nazis' policy of robbery and murder.

Fighting for the historical rehabilitation of the council movement and the revolution of 1918-1919 means fighting for historical truth, that it was the only realizable alternative to fascism in the face of the deepest structural crisis of German capitalism. Everything else was Hitler by steps, which ultimately had to lead to Hitler or something similar. In the West, and especially in the FRG [Federal Republic of (West) Germany], we urgently need this glasnost for our own history. We must, we will, fight for it.

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**P.S.**

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