Actes

2e Colloque international
25, 26, 27 mars 1976

Proceedings

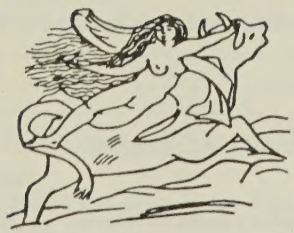
2nd International Colloquium
March 25, 26, 27, 1976

SITUATIONS RÉVOLUTIONNAIRES EN EUROPE, 1917-1922: ALLEMAGNE, ITALIE, AUTRICHE-HONGRIE

REVOLUTIONARY SITUATIONS IN EUROPE, 1917-1922: GERMANY, ITALY, AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

sous la direction de: edited by:

Charles L. Bertrand



Centre Interuniversitaire
d'Études Européennes

Concordia University
et l'Université du Québec à Montréal
membres fondateurs du CIEE

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for European Studies

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Conférenciers invités et présidents de sessions

Voici la liste des conférenciers invités et des présidents de sessions du 2e colloque international du CIEE. De nombreuses autres personnes – soit quelque cent chercheurs et étudiants des cycles supérieurs, du Canada, des États-Unis et de l'Europe ont également participé au colloque. Ces personnes ont été identifiées là où leur intervention a été retenue dans la transcription des *Actes*. Nous ne citons pas ici les travaux des conférenciers invités par le CIEE, mais la bibliographie en fin de volume comble partiellement cette lacune.

Formal participants and chairmen of sessions

The following is a list of formal participants in the 2nd ICES International Colloquium: contributors of papers, critical discussants, and session chairmen. Many others (ca. 100 interested scholars and graduate students from across Canada, the United States, and Europe) enrolled in the conference and participated in its working sessions. They are identified where their contributions have been included in the final edited version of the *Proceedings*. No attempt has been made to list the scholarly work of the formal participants here; the "Working Bibliography" at the end of this volume will, in part, perform this function.

Charles Bertrand, Department of History, Concordia University (SGW Campus)
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Alan Cassels, Department of History, McMaster University
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André Donneur, Département de science politique, Université du Québec à Montréal
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Lewis Pyenson, Institut d'histoire et de sociopolitique des sciences, Université de Montréal
György Ranki, Institut de sciences historiques de l'Académie hongroise, Budapest
Douglas Skopp, Department of History, SUNY Plattsburg
Robert F. Wheeler, Department of History, University of Southern California

Invités / Invited guests

Gerhard Bassler, Department of History, Memorial University of Newfoundland
Robert Gates, Social Science Research Council, New York
Lewis Hertzman, Department of History, York University
Paul Pilisi, Département d'histoire, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi

Préface

Les *Actes* que voici constituent le deuxième volume d'une série de publications provenant des colloques internationaux organisés tous les deux ans par le Centre interuniversitaire d'Études européennes. Le Centre, fondé en 1972 par l'Université du Québec à Montréal et Concordia University (alors Sir George Williams University) et dont le rayon d'action couvre le Québec et le Canada tout entier, a pour mission d'encourager la recherche interdisciplinaire sur les questions européennes. Dans l'optique du Centre, l'Europe s'entend dans le sens le plus large, tant du point de vue chronologique que du point de vue géographique. Le C.I.E.E. s'efforce d'améliorer les ressources à la disposition des chercheurs, de promouvoir la recherche individuelle et collective ainsi que les échanges entre spécialistes de différentes disciplines, d'aider les universités à coordonner leurs ressources et, enfin, de participer à la formation de jeunes chercheurs. Afin de réaliser ces objectifs, le Centre a mis sur pied un programme de séminaires de recherche, de conférences, d'ateliers et de colloques; il publie un *Bulletin* bi-mensuel et compte lancer une revue sous peu; il offre à ses membres, chercheurs et étudiants des cycles supérieurs, des subventions modestes de recherche. Bien que les travaux du Centre se situent dans une perspective historique, ses membres, qui proviennent de toutes les disciplines des sciences humaines et des sciences sociales, lui donnent son caractère interdisciplinaire.

La réussite du deuxième Colloque international est due à l'apport de plusieurs personnes et institutions, que je remercie de leur générosité. L'aide financière du Conseil des Arts du Canada nous a permis d'inviter des conférenciers de l'Europe comme de l'Amérique du Nord. Le Gouvernement du Québec et la Fondation Ford ont versé au Centre des contributions substantielles. Le Colloque doit aussi sa réussite aux efforts soutenus des membres du comité d'organisation, Peter Gourevitch, William Hubbard, André Liebich, Alex MacLeod, Lewis Pyenson et Douglas Skopp. En outre, je remercie tout particulièrement le directeur du Centre, Jacques Lévesque, de l'appui et de l'encouragement qu'il m'a manifestés de jour en jour.

La réalisation du Colloque et la constitution de ces *Actes* sont également le produit du travail constant d'Odile Civitello, administratrice du Centre, sans laquelle il n'y aurait eu ni colloque ni publication de ses actes. Le travail d'Hélène Paré, à qui furent confiées la traduction et la rédaction des résumés en français, a grandement facilité la production de cet ouvrage. Sa préparation est aussi due à la collaboration de Susan Heap, Deanna Drendel Leboeuf, Françoise Okechukwu et M.-Danièle Colban qui a préparé l'index.

Enfin, il convient de mentionner la compréhension que nous ont manifestée les membres du SEUQAM (Syndicat des employés de soutien de l'Université du Québec à Montréal) qui, bien qu'étant en grève, ont fait en sorte que le Colloque puisse quand même être tenu.

Mars 1977

Charles L. Bertrand,
Responsable, Deuxième Colloque international

Preface

These *Proceedings* represent the second in a continuing series of publications issuing from the biannual International Colloquia sponsored by the Interuniversity Centre for European Studies. Founded in Montreal in 1972 by Concordia University (then Sir George Williams) and l'Université du Québec à Montréal, and now Quebec- and Canada-wide in its functioning, the Centre is devoted to furthering interdisciplinary research on European subjects. ICES defines Europe broadly, chronologically and geographically, and works to enrich scholarly resources, to promote individual and group research and exchanges across disciplinary lines, to assist in the coordination of resources on an inter-university basis, and to aid in the formation of young scholars. In pursuance of its goals, the Centre has developed an interrelated programme of research seminars, lectures, workshops, and colloquia, supported by a bi-weekly *Newsletter* and a *Journal*, as well as by a programme of small research grants for scholar and graduate-student members. While committed to a broadly historical framework, the Centre is truly interdisciplinary in its membership, which includes representatives of all social science and humanities disciplines.

The success of the second International Colloquium was made possible by many persons and institutions, whose help I gratefully acknowledge. The Canada Council gave financial support that allowed us to invite participants from Europe and North America. The Quebec Government and the Ford Foundation have generously contributed funds to the Centre. Each member of the organizing committee worked hard to ensure the success of the Colloquium and I would like to thank Peter Gourevitch, William Hubbard, André Liebich, Alex Macleod, Lewis Pyenson, and Douglas Skopp. A special thank you, also, to the Director of the Centre, Jacques Lévesque, for his constant help and encouragement.

Both the Colloquium and these *Proceedings* are the result of the unceasing labours of Odile Colmagne Civitello, executive assistant of the Centre. Without her efforts there would have been no colloquium and no *Proceedings*. The work of Hélène Paré, who translated and prepared the French summaries, greatly facilitated the preparation of this publication. Also helpful in preparing this volume were: Susan Heap, Deanna Drendel Leboeuf, Françoise Okechukwu and M.-Danièle Colban who prepared the index.

Finally, a word of thanks to the SEUQAM (Union of non-academic members of the Université du Québec à Montréal). Its members, although on strike during the Colloquium, understood our position and did nothing to disrupt the meeting.

Charles L. Bertrand,
Chairman, Second International Colloquium

March 1977

Introduction

Le deuxième Colloque international du Centre interuniversitaire d'Études européennes s'est déroulé selon une formule sensiblement différente de la formule adoptée pour le premier Colloque.[1] Pour faire en sorte qu'un sujet aussi complexe que « les situations révolutionnaires » soit abordé de manière adéquate, le comité d'organisation a eu recours à deux modes de présentation. Dans un premier temps, les participants présentèrent des communications ayant trait au problème des « situations révolutionnaires » dans un contexte national. Ainsi les trois régions, Allemagne, Italie et Autriche-Hongrie, firent-elles l'objet d'exposés distincts. Ensuite, les participants animèrent des ateliers consacrés chacun à un thème particulier et faisant abstraction des frontières nationales. Il y eut donc des ateliers portant sur divers problèmes agraires, politiques, idéologiques, industriels, ainsi que sur la situation révolutionnaire. Ce type de structure, ouvrant une perspective à la fois horizontale et verticale sur les problèmes de l'Europe au lendemain de la première guerre mondiale, s'avéra excellente, car elle donna lieu à des débats sur des questions d'ordre historique aussi bien que d'ordre méthodologique.

Ce volume lui-même diffère des ouvrages consacrés aux *Actes* du premier Colloque international, dont les responsables avaient choisi de publier séparément les éditions française et anglaise. Cette décision se révéla peu pratique, pour diverses raisons; aussi a-t-on décidé de publier un seul volume, bilingue, afin d'économiser du temps comme de l'argent. Sous cette nouvelle forme, l'ouvrage reflète le caractère bilingue du Centre interuniversitaire d'Études européennes, sans compter, comme le croit le responsable, que presque tous les intéressés lisent le français comme l'anglais. Les communications ainsi que les interventions faites au cours des débats sont donc reproduites ici dans la langue employée par leurs auteurs. Toutefois, pour le bénéfice de tous les lecteurs, les communications et les commentaires présentés en anglais sont tous suivis d'un résumé en français, et vice versa.

Une dernière remarque s'impose au sujet de l'organisation du deuxième Colloque international. Certains participants ont remis en question le choix des dates délimitant le sujet du Colloque. Le comité d'organisation a déterminé arbitrairement la période de 1917-1922, de manière à fournir aux participants un cadre général pour la préparation de leurs communications, sans attacher d'importance particulière à ces dates, conscient qu'il était de l'impossibilité de circonscrire dans une période précise un phénomène aussi complexe que « les situations révolutionnaires ». Le lecteur remarquera que les réactions des participants ont rejoint les prévisions du comité d'organisation: chaque fois qu'ils l'ont cru nécessaire, ils ont dépassé les limites chronologiques proposées. Il convient donc de considérer ces dates simplement comme un cadre de référence, dont le comité d'organisation n'a jamais prétendu qu'il donnerait au Colloque un sens historique ou idéologique particulier.

1. *Transition du féodalisme à la société industrielle: l'échec de l'Italie de la Renaissance et des Pays-Bas du XVII^e siècle,* publié sous la direction de Paul M. Hohenberg et Frederick Krantz.

Le deuxième Colloque international, tout comme le premier, avait pour but d stimuler les débats et, en effet, les communications comme les discussions ont soulev de nombreuses questions touchant de nouveaux champs de recherches et de nouvelle approche méthodologiques. Le problème le plus persistant et le plus difficile à résoudre toutefois, tenait à la définition même d'une situation révolutionnaire. Comme on pouvai s'y attendre, étant donné la diversité des points de vue, les participants ne purent s'en tendre sur une définition. Cependant, dans les exposés comme au cours des discussion de chaque séance, certains thèmes et certaines questions prirent le pas sur d'autres.

Le thème de la force et de la continuité du pouvoir, par exemple, a été soulevé pa presque tous les participants. Comme l'a soutenu M. Arno Mayer, « . . . les société civiles et politiques du monde moderne sont particulièrement résistantes au démantèle ment et à l'effondrement ». Tous les pays étudiés, c'est-à-dire l'Allemagne, l'Italie l'Autriche et la Hongrie, connurent des changements politiques après la première guerr mondiale, mais dans chacun d'eux l'ordre social survécut à ces changements et demeur intact. Dans plus d'un cas, en fait, les changements politiques s'accompagnèrent de con traintes et de répressions destinées à fixer les limites essentielles au contrôle de ce changements. La plupart des participants ont donc reconnu l'existence d'une situatio révolutionnaire, tout en soulignant que la continuité du pouvoir fut plus déterminant pour l'avenir de l'Europe.

Le lecteur constatera que les participants ont rapidement exprimé leurs divergence à propos de la continuité du pouvoir. Le débat surgit, en partie, d'une question d méthodologie. En général, ceux qui ont abordé la période de 1917-1922 dans un perspective de longue durée ont mis l'accent sur la continuité du pouvoir, tendant ain à minimiser les aspects révolutionnaires de la situation d'après-guerre et insistant plutô sur les divisions au sein de la gauche révolutionnaire. Ils semblaient considérer les insu rections et les aspirations de la gauche comme étant momentanées et éphémères en regar des pouvoirs de répression et de conciliation de l'État comme des classes dominante

D'autres, en revanche, ont soutenu que les soulèvements révolutionnaires de l'après guerre avaient constitué de véritables menaces pour le système. Ils mirent en évidenc le fait que cette époque avait connu non seulement des changements politiques, mai également des changements dans l'ordre social et que, par exemple, les empires de Hohenzollern et des Habsbourg s'étaient effectivemnt effondrés à tout jamais. Ils démon trèrent quel les ouvriers et les paysans avaient obtenu des concessions quant aux salaire aux conditions de travail et à la réforme agraire, tout en admettant que les classes dom nantes avaient cédé sur certaines questions dans le but de contenter les modérés pou mieux réprimer les révolutionnaires intransigeants de l'extrême-gauche. Ainsi, plusieu des participants utilisant de préférence la perspective de courte durée ont déploré l'insu fisance des discussions consacrées aux aspirations des révolutionnaires et aux questio qu'elles soulevaient.

Ce reproche peut être attribué au conflit opposant ceux qui employaient le concep de « modernisation », comme instrument d'analyse, à ceux qui se servaient de l'expressio « rapports de classes ». Les participants eurent recours à l'un ou l'autre de ces concept pour décrire les interactions des groupes et des classes, mais, comme le fit remarque M. Donald Baker, au cours de la discussion sur la communication de M. Charles Mai seuls ceux qui ont fait porter leur réflexion sur les rapports de classes ont analys « . . . le jeu des forces a l'intérieur de (chaque classe) ». Le rôle des classes et des rapport de classes a fait l'objet de discussions tout au long du Colloque. Les divergences quant l'évaluation des forces à l'origine de la crise en Europe expliquent pour une bonne pa le désaccord qui s'est manifesté entre les participants convaincus que les conditions, a lendemain de la guerre, favorisaient la révolution et ceux qui prétendaient que cett éventualité était plutôt restreinte.

Chaque participant dut également affronter le spectre de la Révolution bolchevique qui planait sur le Colloque comme il avait plané au-dessus de toute l'Europe après 191 Plusieurs communications et plusieurs discussions se sont interrogées sur les réactio

suscitées par la Révolution bolchevique et sur la portée qu'elle avait eu sur les idéologies et les situations révolutionnaires. Les révolutionnaires, comme l'ont observé plusieurs participants, étaient partagés sur la question de l'organisation, les uns mettant de l'avant l'idée des mouvements de masse comme étant la clef du succès, les autres soutenant que seule une élite d'avant-garde saurait conduire les masses à la victoire. Quoi qu'il en soit, à compter de 1917, un modèle de révolution réussie existait et ni les révolutionnaires, ni les classes dominantes ne pouvaient se permettre de l'ignorer. Dans cette perspective, la plupart des participants ont considéré le rôle des paysans, dans chaque pays, comme un facteur crucial, durant toute la période de l'après-guerre; car, tout comme en Russie, comme l'a souligné M. Carsten dans sa communication, la classe ouvrière de chaque pays, à l'exception de l'Allemagne, était trop restreinte et trop divisée pour constituer à elle seule la base sociale nécessaire à la révolution.

Parmi les thèmes fréquemment évoqués, il faut aussi compter le nationalisme et les nationalités ainsi que l'influence qu'ils avaient exercée sur les révolutionnaires. De toute évidence, les besoins et les aspirations des ouvriers et des paysans hongrois étaient différents de ceux des ouvriers et paysans allemands ou italiens. La rupture de l'empire austro-hongrois cause de sérieuses difficultés aux révolutionnaires d'Autriche et de Hongrie et les problèmes du nationalisme et des nationalités détournèrent trop souvent les énergies révolutionnaires des questions sociales. En outre, au même moment, les ultra-conservateurs s'emparèrent du concept de nationalisme dans l'intention de faire obstacle aux exhortations des révolutionnaires à l'endroit des masses. Le nationallisme devint rapidement un monstre à deux têtes menaçant la gauche de l'intérieur comme de l'extérieur. Benito Mussolini fut l'un des premiers – mais non pas le dernier – à tirer parti de ce dilemme qui divisait les mouvements révolutionnaires au lendemain de la guerre.

La faiblesse et la scission de la gauche a également préoccupé la majorité des participants. La plupart affirmèrent que la gauche, constamment divisée quant aux objectifs de changement social, n'avait pu réaliser l'unité nécessaire pour imposer sa volonté aux classes dominantes. Les syndicalistes et les sociaux-démocrates, trop occupés à faire des compromis avec le système capitaliste, refusaient de se joindre aux révolutionnaires dans leur lutte pour renverser le système. Là encore, l'ombre de la Révolution bolchevique se profilait sur les événements de l'après-guerre, en Europe: les communistes et leurs partisans appelaient les ouvriers à un assaut rapide et violent contre le système, tandis que les syndicalistes et les sociaux-démocrates mettaient les ouvriers en garde contre la répression qu'engendrerait nécessairement la violence.

L'efficacité de l'action violente posa un autre problème aux participants au Colloque. La plupart ont reconnu que l'État et les classes dominantes étaient prêts et disposés à recourir à la force pour sauver le système et qu'ainsi les attaques violentes des révolutionnaires étaient, d'entrée de jeu, condamnées à l'échec. La situation dans chaque pays, comme plusieurs l'ont remarqué, n'était pas désespérée au point que les ouvriers et les paysans consentent à tout risquer pour renverser le système. De plus, contrairement à ce qui se passa en Russie, l'efficacité des forces militaires et policières fut rapidement rétablie, dans tous les pays, après un bref moment de confusion. Aucun mouvement sérieux de désertion au profit des révolutionnaires ne fut à déplorer de la part de l'armée comme de la police. Tout compte fait, l'une et l'autre demeurèrent déterminées à maintenir « la loi et l'ordre », d'un bout à l'autre de l'Europe.

Par ailleurs, certains participants ont soutenu que la réticence des syndicalistes et des sociaux-démocrates à recourir à la violence avait été aussi déterminante, pour l'échec de la révolution, que le pouvoir répressif de l'État. La violence, ont-ils dit, n'aurait pu triompher que si elle avait été intense et très répandue. Sans l'appui des modérés, toutefois, les révolutionnaires ne constituaient qu'une minorité, que les forces répressives de l'État pouvaient (et purent) isoler et détruire. Sur cette question, les participants au Colloque se partagèrent donc, une fois de plus, en deux camps. Les uns soutenaient la thèse selon laquelle l'utilisation habile de la violence aurait pu conduire à une révolution réussie; les autres affirmaient au contraire que l'État était trop puissant et ne pouvait que sortir vainqueur de n'importe quel affrontement violent.

Tout compte fait, la question de la culture n'a pas suffisamment retenu l'attentio des participants, au cours de ce Colloque. On ne peut pas séparer le nationalisme de l culture nationale, et le comité d'organisation a eu tort de ne confier à aucun atelier l tâche d'analyser le rôle et l'impact des cultures nationales dans chaque société au cour des années tourmentées de l'après-guerre. Un colloque de trois jours ne peut, cependant épuiser tous les aspects d'une question aussi complexe que celle des « situations révolu tionnaires », tout comme une brève introduction ne peut rendre compte avec exactitud du vif intérêt qu'a suscité cette expérience chez les personnes présentes au Colloque Compte tenu du peu de temps et d'énergies qui pouvaient être consacrés à cette rencontre les participants ont fait un travail extraordinaire, que ce soit en soulevant des question importantes, en proposant des réponses judicieuses ou en apportant des suggestion fécondes en vue de recherches futures. La réussite de ce Colloque est due à plusieur personnes, mais avant tout à ceux qui ont présenté les communications et les commen taires qui ont alimenté les discussions. C'est souvent en marge des activités formelles qu se tiennent les échanges les plus fructueux entre des gens qui, en partageant les même intérêts, ont rarement la possibilité de se rencontrer; ce type d'échanges a égalemen conféré au Colloque un intérêt particulier. Tous les invités ont donné généreusement d leur temps, durant ces trois jours, et je remercie chacun de sa contribution.

ntroduction

The format of the Second International Colloquium of the Interuniversity Centre or European Studies differed markedly from that of the first.[1] In order to approach uch a complex topic as "revolutionary situations" adequately, the organizing committee lecided to use two methods of presentation. In the first method, the participants pre- ented papers that concentrated on the problem of "revolutionary situations" within a ıational context. Thus, there were papers and commentaries on each of the three areas: Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary. In the second method, the participants conducted vorkshops that ignored national boundaries and focused on a specific thematic issue. Hence there were workshops on agrarian problems, political problems, ideological problems, industrial problems and the revolutionary situation. This structure, which offered both a horizontal and a vertical look at the problems of Europe in the years following World War I, proved excellent because it provoked discussion about both historical and methodological questions.

The present volume also differs from the publication of the *Proceedings* of the First International Colloquium. The editors of the first volume chose to publish sep- arate volumes in French and in English. Their decision proved troublesome for various reasons and, thus, the present editor decided to publish a single, bilingual volume in order to cut expenses and to save time. The new format reflects the bilingualism of the Interuniversity Centre for European Studies as well as the editor's assumption that almost everyone who is interested in European history and culture can read both languages. Thus the papers and discussions appear in the language in which they were delivered by the participant. Each paper and commentary is followed by a brief summary in the other language (for those who have difficulty reading either French or English).

One additional comment on the organization of the Second International Collo- quium seems necessary. Some participants raised questions about the dates chosen to set the limits of the topic. The organizing committee arbitrarily selected the years 1917 to 1922 in order to give the participants a general guideline for the preparation of their papers. It attached no particular significance to these dates since it recognized the im- possibility of fitting a complicated problem like "revolutionary situations" between pre- cise dates. The reader will note that the participants reacted as the organizing committee had anticipated; each ranged beyond the specified dates when he believed that it was necessary. Thus the dates should be taken for what they were, guidelines. It was never intended that the dates 1917 to 1922 would give some special historical or ideological meaning to the Colloquium.

The purpose of the Second International Colloquium, like the First, was to stimulate debate and the papers and discussions raised many questions about new areas of research and fresh methodological approaches. The most persistant and difficult problem, how-

1. *Failed Transitions to Modern Industrial Society: Renaissance Italy and Seventeenth Century Holland* edited by Frederick Krantz and Paul M. Hohenberg.

ever, concerned the definition of a revolutionary situation. Not surprisingly, the partic pants, with their varied approaches to the question, could not agree on a single definition. A each session, however, certain themes and questions dominated the papers and discussion

One theme that almost every participant stressed was the strength and continuity c power. As Professor Arno Mayer asserted in his paper, "... the civil and politica societies of the modern world are peculiarly resistant to disintegration and breakdown. In each of the countries under study, Germany, Italy, Austria and Hungary, there wer political changes after World War. I, but the social order in each nation survived thes changes and remained intact. Often, in fact, the political changes were coupled wit restraints and repression in order to contain the changes within manageable limits. Henc most participants acknowledged the existence of a revolutionary situation, but stresse the continuity of power as more important in determining the future of Europe.

As the reader will perceive, disagreements quickly developed among the participan about the significance of this issue of the continuity of power. The debate drived, i part, from a mthodological question. Those participants who favored the long-ter approach to the study of the period 1917 to 1922 generally stressed the continuity c power. Thus they tended to minimize the revolutionary aspects of the post World War situation and, instead, accentuated the fragmentation of the revolutionary left. The seemed to view the insurrections and aspirations of the left as momentary and ephemera in the face of the repressive and conciliatory powers of the state and its ruling classe

Others, however, insisted that the revolutionary upheavals of the post-war perio were true threats to the system. They pointed out that there were not only politica changes in the post-war era, but also changes in the social order. They stressed that th Hohenzollern and Hapsburg Empires did collapse, never to be reconstructed. The demonstrated that the workers and peasants won concessions about wages, working con ditions and land reform, albeit they also admitted that the ruling classes acquiesed i many of these changes in order to placate the moderates on the left so that they coul destroy the intransigent revolutionaries of the extreme left. Thus many of those wh favored the short-term approach complained that there had not been sufficient discussio of the aspirations and issues raised by the revolutionaries.

This complaint may have stemmed from the conflict that developed between thos who used the concept of "modernization" as a methodological tool and those who use "class relationships." Participants used one or the other concept to describe how group and classes interact, but, as Professor Donald Baker noted in the discussion of Professo Charles Maier's paper, only those who focused on class relationships investigated "... th dynamic forces at work within [each class]." The role of classes and class relationship remained a contentious issue throughout the Colloquium. The different estimates of th participants toward the forces that generated the crisis in Europe explains much o the difference that developed between those who believed that there was a grea possibility for revolution in the post-war period and those who throught that the possibilit was limited.

Each participant also faced the spectre of the Bolshevik Revolution which hovere over the Colloquium just as it had hovered over all Europe in the years immediatel following 1917. Many papers and discussions focused on the reaction to the Bolshevi Revolution, in particular, how it affected revolutionary ideologies and situations. Th revolutionaries, as most participants noted, found themselves divided between thos who supported the idea of mass movements as the key to success and those who advocate the necessity of an elite *avant-garde* to lead the masses to victory. Whatever else, a mode for a successful revolution existed after 1917 and could not be ignored by either th revolutionaries or the ruling classes. In this context most participants regarded the rol of the peasants in each of the countries as a crucial factor throughout the post-war perio since, as Professor Carsten noted in his paper, except for Germany, the urban workin class in every country, as it was in Russia, proved too small and divided to provide th social basis for a revolution.

Another common theme was that of nationalism and nationalities and the role that hey played in influencing revolutionaries. Obviously the needs and aspirations of Hungarian workers and peasants differed from those living in Germany or Italy. The reak-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire created severe difficulties for the revolu- ionaries in Austria and Hungary and too often the problems of nationalism and na- ionalities diverted revolutionary energies away from social questions. At the same time, ltra-conservatives latched onto nationalism as a concept that they could use to counter he revolutionaries' appeals to the masses. Nationalism, as the reader will see, quickly ecame a two-headed monster that threatened the left from the inside as well as from he outside. Benito Mussolini was one of the first, although hardly the last, to capitalize n this dilemma that divided revolutionary movements in the post-war period.

The fragmentation and weakness of the left also concerned almost every partici- ant. Most argued that since the left could not agree on its demand for change, it ould not achieve the unity necessary to force its will on the ruling classes. The trade nionists and social democrats spent their time compromising with the capitalistic sys- em and rejected the revolutionaries' pleas to join them in the struggle to destroy the ystem. Here again the Bolshevik Revolution loomed over the events in post-war Europe s the Communists and their followers urged the workers toward a quick, violent attack gainst the system, while the trade unionists and the Social Democrats cautioned the workers that violence would simply beget repression.

The efficacy of violence posed another problem for the participants in the Collo- quium. Most agreed that the state and the ruling classes were prepared and willing to se violence to save the system. Thus most participants agreed that the revolutionaries' violent attacks against the system were doomed from the beginning. The situation in each country, as many stressed, was not so desperate that the workers and peasants were willing to risk everything in order to overthrow the system. In addition, in all other European states, unlike Russia, the efficient functioning of the army and the police was quickly restored after a brief moment of chaos. There were no serious incidents of defec- tion to the side of the revolutionaries from among the army or the police. Throughout Europe, by and large, both groups remained determined to uphold "law and order."

Other participants, however, argued that the hesitation of the trade unionists and the Social Democrats to resort to violence was as important as the coercive power of the state in preventing revolution. Violence, they asserted, could have succeeded if it had been strong and widespread. Without the support of the moderates, however, the revolu- tionaries represented a minority; one that the forces of the state could (and did) isolate and destroy. Thus the participants split into two camps once again during the Colloquium. One group supported the thesis that the skillful use of violence could have led to a successful revolution; the other sustained the argument that the state was too powerful and that it was bound to be the victor in any violent conflict.

In retrospect, the question of culture did not receive enough attenion during the Colloquium. Nationalism cannot be separated from the national culture and the organ- izing committee erred when it did not include a workshop to analyze the role and impact of national cultures in each society during the tumultuous post-war years. A three day colloquium cannot, however, cover all aspects of so complicated an issue as "revolu- tionary situations." Neither, however, can a brief introduction accurately convey the excitement that the experience generated among those in attendance. Given the limitations of time and energy, the participants did an amazing job of raising important questions, giving some shrewd answers and offering fertile suggestions for further research. Many people were responsible for the success of the Second International Colloquium, but none more than those who offered papers and commentaries for discussion. One of the best things about the colloquium was the opportunity that the meeting provided for the exchange of ideas in informal discussions among people of similar interests who seldom have the chance to gather together. Each of the official participants gave generously of his time during the three days. I thank each of them for his contribution.

Premier jour/First Day

Présentation / Opening Session

Le cas de l'Allemagne / Germany

Le cas de l'Italie / Italy

Le cas de l'Autriche-Hongrie / Austria-Hungary

a révolution en Russie
t les situations révolutionnaires en Europe
ues par les dirigeants bolcheviques

erre Broué

Il était bien sûr naturel de commencer ces débats en essayant d'entrevoir la façon ont les bolcheviks, dont on doit reconnaître qu'ils avaient été experts en situations évolutionnaires dans leurs propres pays, voyaient les situations révolutionnaires en urope.

Je voudrais souligner en commençant que pour les bolcheviks – ils le répètent à haque congrès et dans chaque discussion fondamentale pour eux – ce qui est révolu-onnaire, c'est avant tout la période. La période historique, celle de « l'impérialisme, ade suprême du capitalisme », que Lénine qualifie d'ère des guerres et des révolutions. our eux, les contradictions du capitalisme à son stade suprême ont abouti à la Première uerre mondiale et, à travers elle, conduisent à la révolution prolétarienne mondiale, parce u'elle mobilise contre lui des masses de plus en plus larges. Ils ont eu confirmation de ur analyse dans la victoire qu'ils ont remportée en Russie, victoire qu'ils considèrent omme une révolution prolétarienne née de la guerre mondiale, comme le début de la ansformation de la guerre impérialiste en guerre civile; et certes pour eux, la Russie est ien « le chaînon le plus faible » de la chaîne impérialiste et c'est parce que c'était le haînon le plus faible que la tâche des révolutionnaires a été plus facile. Mais il n'y a as pour autant à leurs yeux des différences de nature entre la situation dans les autres ays et la situation en Russie. Pour eux, ce qui fait la situation révolutionnaire, ce sont s deux bouts de la société. En haut, les classes dirigeantes, le gouvernement: en haut, n ne *peut* plus; on vit une crise de domination de la classe dirigeante, une crise du égime qui ouvre des brèches dans lesquelles s'engouffre le mouvement de masse. En as, on ne *veut* plus, et ce sont donc les bataillons toujours plus nombreux des masses ui se lancent à l'assaut pour en finir. Le moment, selon eux, approche où l'avant-garde u parti révolutionnaire – ce qui a été en Russie le parti bolchevique – jalonnera le ouvement des masses vers le pouvoir en exprimant de façon consciente le processus nconscient. C'est sur ce dernier point, sur ce que j'appellerais des conditions subjectives ; ce qui dépendait d'elles, que les bolcheviks ont mis l'accent. J'ajouterai que dans les xtes dont nous disposions, les autres conditions qui font une situation révolutionnaire ont rarement mentionnées par les bolcheviks ne serait-ce que parce que ces hommes, ui avaient vécu de manière intime dans le mouvement ouvrier mondial hors de Russie, vant février 1917, en sont, à partir du début de la révolution russe, coupés pour des nnées.

Si vous le voulez bien, je partagerai en trois parties mon exposé. Dans une première, parlerai de ce que les bolcheviks considèrent comme l'imminence de la révolution. ans une deuxième partie, je jetterai un coup d'oeil sur la vague révolutionnaire qui ous mène jusqu'en 1920 et, dans une troisième, j'essaierai de montrer comment les olcheviks ont tenté de s'orienter vers une analyse plus concrète de la situation.

Dans la période qui s'ouvre avec la révolution russe, les contacts des bolcheviks vec le reste du monde sont extrêmement réduits et se résument à l'activité d'un certain ombre de courriers volontaires et à l'activité, certes plus importante, des ambassades

russes, notamment à Berlin lorsque Joffé est en charge de cette ambassade. Pour l bolcheviks, ce qu'ils attendent en Europe, c'est une projection de ce qu'ils ont vécu. l moteur de la révolution, c'est la lutte pour la paix; le signal du début de la révolutio c'est l'apparition des conseils ouvriers, soldats, paysans – c'est l'apparition de la forr soviétique; et le lieu, l'épicentre de ce mouvement, c'est l'Allemagne. Là-dessus, nous avo une foule d'indications, notamment dans les écrits de Lénine. Pour eux, la révoluti est à la fois inéluctable et proche. Lénine, dans « La révolution russe et la guerre civile (septembre 1917), écrit: « La révolution socialiste universelle mûrit inéluctablement [. une fois qu'il aura conquis le pouvoir, le prolétariat russe a *toutes* les chances de le gard et de conduire la révolution au triomphe en Occident ».[1] La première ébauche d'analy sous sa plume se trouve dans l'article intitulé « La crise est mûre » du 20 octobre 191 Selon lui, les mois qui viennent de s'écouler (la fin de septembre, écrit-il) nous ont appor le tournant le plus grand de l'histoire de la révolution russe et, selon toutes les apparenc de l'histoire de la révolution mondiale. Il distingue, dans cette montée de la révolutio trois étapes: la première a été la période marquée par l'action d'individus isolés – Ka Liebknecht, Fritz Adler, Maclean – vous voyez qu'il met sur le même plan des initiativ qui ne sont pas toutes identiques. La seconde a été que la fermentation dans les mass en Europe a abouti à la scission des partis officiels et il pense, de toute évidence, ava tout à la scission du parti social-démocrate allemand et aussi à la répression sur u échelle déjà large. Et la troisième, qu'il appelle « prélude de la révolution » vient commencer. Il en indique les symptômes: « arrestations en masse des chefs du parti da la libre Italie », et surtout: « début des mutineries militaires en Allemagne », symptôm irrécusables d'un grand tournant, symptômes d'une veille de révolution à l'échelle mo diale; il conclut: « le doute n'est plus possible; nous sommes au seuil de la révoluti prolétarienne mondiale ».[2]

Ainsi, nous pouvons noter dans cette première ébauche d'analyse que, pour Lénin l'élément décisif pour l'ouverture de la crise révolutionnaire dans le cadre d'une situati pré-révolutionnaire, c'est évidemment le mouvement des masses elles-mêmes et ce so ces mouvements qui expliquent le viol des principes démocratiques par les démocrati (Italie), la décomposition de l'armée (Allemagne), bref, la crise du régime qui en sont la fois les conséquences et le facteur d'accélération.

Cette révolution inéluctable et proche qui doit se produire en Allemagne, les bo cheviks y voient d'une certaine façon la solution de tous les problèmes, et de tous leu problèmes. C'est un leitmotiv de toutes les interventions sur les perspectives internationa dans cette période que la révolution allemande comme étape décisive, point de départ la généralisation. Et je me contenterai, ici, de citer Lénine (parce qu'il est le moins encl à se payer de phrases), précisément en février 1918, dans l'article « Sur la phrase rév lutionnaire »: « la victoire de Liebknecht nous délivrera de toutes les difficultés inte nationales; la victoire de Liebknecht nous mettra à l'abri des suites de toutes nos bêtises. Et, en mars 1918, devant le VII[e] Congrès du Parti, évoquant Liebknecht qui est pour l le symbole de la révolution allemande victorieuse: « Il donnera un modèle d'organisati si parfait, il disposera tout de telle façon que nous n'aurons qu'à emprunter des form toutes faites comme nous avons emprunté la doctrine marxiste toute faite à l'Euro occidentale. »[4]

En quelque sorte, il y a à cette époque, une conviction, toujours sous-jacente, pa fois exprimée, que l'histoire, c'est-à-dire le cours de la révolution mondiale, après u détour par la Russie, « le chaînon le plus faible », va en quelque sorte se rapatrier da le pays industriel le plus avancé d'Europe et se remettre sur les rails entrevus par Mar Nous n'avons qu'une série de manifestations de cette conviction: l'attitude provocante Trotski et de Joffé, de la délégation à Brest-Litovsk, leur façon de s'adresser aux solda allemands par-dessus la tête de leurs interlocuteurs, l'organisation soigneusement prépar

1. Lénine, *Oeuvres* (éd. en langue française, Moscou), tome XXVI, p. 33.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.
3. *Ibid.*, tome XXVII, p. 17.
4. *Ibid.*, tome XXVII, p. 92.

la fraternisation, les investissements auprès du mouvement étranger, notamment alle-
and, à partir de l'ambassade de Joffé, l'attitude militante des diplomates bolcheviks.
n bref, une attitude d'impatience fiévreuse; on attend les premiers mouvements de
asse qui vont corroborer les craintes de la social-démocratie allemande, qui combat de
utes ses forces les solutions « à la russe », et qui vont corroborer positivement l'attrac-
on que la révolution russe et les formes soviétiques exercent sur la gauche allemande
dans de larges couches de travailleurs, comme le montrent les événements de Berlin,
janvier 1918. Dans ce tableau, pourtant, des désaccords. Un désaccord latent dans
s rangs bolcheviques au lendemain de l'insurrection d'octobre, et qui va se révéler
utalement lors des débats autour de la paix et du diktat allemand.

Lors des débats sur la paix, Boukharine et les communistes de gauche, partant de
dée commune à tous les bolcheviks que la révolution russe, première étape de la révo-
tion mondiale, serait vouée à la défaite si elle demeurait isolée, traite de la question
la paix en référence à celle de la révolution mondiale en général, mais surtout de la
volution allemande. Ils affirment qu'une paix séparée signifierait que les Russes aban-
onnent la classe ouvrière allemande, que les dirigeants russes accordent à l'impérialisme
lemand un sursis qui lui permettra d'écraser la révolution, bref, que la signature de la
aix par les Russes constituerait un coup de poignard dans le dos de la révolution alle-
ande. Et ils affirment, au contraire, que la guerre révolutionnaire menée par les Russes
rait un encouragement, un appel à l'insurrection prolétarienne, donc à la victoire dans
s autres pays. Cette position provoque des réponses de Lénine, que je me permets de
sumer brièvement; Lénine rétorque (en réaffirmant, bien sûr, sa conviction de l'iné-
ctabilité de la révolution allemande, du fait que cette révolution est l'unique issue aux
aux dont souffre la révolution russe,) qu'il est impossible de bâtir une politique sur
n pronostic quant au rythme de cette révolution. Déjà il écrivait, le 6 octobre 1917,
ans l'article « Pour une révision du programme du parti »: « *nous ne savons pas avec
uelle rapidité en Occident la révolution suivra notre victoire; nous ne le savons et nous
e pouvons pas le savoir; personne ne peut le savoir* ».[5] Dans le débat sur la paix, il répète
s mêmes formules: « On ne peut fixer aucun délai », « la révolution est en train de
ûrir ». « Personne ne peut dire qu'elle est déjà mûre; elle mûrit laborieusement ». Il
mploie la formule « sur la question douloureuse des débuts de la révolution », et, par
pport à la situation allemande concrète, souligne que subsiste en Allemagne ce qu'il
ppelle « la trique », c'est-à-dire le régime militaire, la solidité de l'armée et des forces
e répression, montrant combien il est difficile de tracer un signe *égal* entre la situation
lemande et la situation russe, puisque, en Russie, les soldats, c'est-à-dire les éléments
s plus importants de la paysannerie, s'étaient en quelque sorte retirés de la coalition et
archaient vers les positions de la classe ouvrière, alors que rien de tel ne s'est produit
n Allemagne. Et il souligne enfin qu'il est impossible de prévoir une politique axée sur
insurrection dans la mesure où, en Russie, la classe ouvrière a fait son expérience, entre
évrier et octobre, et où la classe ouvrière allemande, elle, n'a connu ni son « février »,
i son « juillet ». Elle n'a pas ses soviets; non seulement ils n'ont pas mûri, mais ils ne
nt pas apparus. C'est dans ce contexte que l'on atteint novembre 1918. Lénine écrit,
3 novembre, dans la *Pravda* du 4: « À Vienne, on célèbre vraisemblablement le pre-
ier jour de la révolution ouvrière autrichienne. Le temps est proche où on célèbrera
artout le premier jour de la révolution mondiale. »[6] Le 8, au VIII[e] Congrès extra-
rdinaire des soviets, il dit: « jamais nous n'avons été aussi près qu'aujourd'hui de la
évolution prolétarienne mondiale. »[7]

Le lendemain, c'est la révolution du 9 novembre à Berlin, et nous avons, sur les
éactions de Moscou, un témoignage de Karl Radek: « Des dizaines de milliers d'ouvriers
clatèrent en vivats sauvages. Je n'avais rien vu de semblable. Tard dans la soirée, ouvriers
t soldats rouges défilaient encore; la révolution mondiale était arrivée; notre isolement
tait terminé. »[8]

. *Ibid.*, tome XXVI, p. 173.
. *Ibid.*, tome XXVIII, p. 131.
. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
. K. Radek, « Nojabr », dans *Krasnaia Nov*, No 10, (1926), p. 140.

Les débuts de la révolution allemande, que l'on peut dater en effet du 9 novembr marquent la fin d'une période, le rejet définitif dans le passé, un passé « dépassé », d divergences qui s'étaient manifestées avec les communistes de gauche autour de la que tion de la paix. Pourtant, en fait, des divergences subsistent sur l'appréciation de ce qu'e une situation révolutionnaire et les possibilités de victoire dans une situation révolutio naire; mais ces difficultés, ces divergences, pour l'instant, sont au second plan.

Je voudrais maintenant aborder cette question dans la période de la première vag révolutionnaire, celle qu'ouvre la révolution du 9 novembre à Berlin, et que je clos arb trairement au lendemain de l'action de mars 1921, parce que j'étudie la position d bolcheviks sur la question de la situation révolutionnaire. Du point de vue de l'inform tion, du point de vue des liens des bolcheviks avec le mouvement ouvrier, de la quali des données dont ils disposent sur les pays européens, il nous faudrait pourtant distingu deux périodes. 1919, c'est encore la période des liens occasionnels, des liaisons extr ordinairement difficiles, des éléments d'information réduits. Les preuves? Nous en avo plein les mains: la très faible représentativité des partis non-russes à la conférence q est devenue le Congrès de fondation de l'Internationale, le caractère sommaire des an lyses, je dirais même la candeur des délégués qui interviennent dans ce même congrè et le fait, bien connu, que ce soit les affabulations de Gruber-Steinhardt, qui vient d'A triche, qui aient entraîné finalement la délégation du parti russe, la délégation allemand et tout le monde à se décider à sauter le pas et à proclamer fondée l'Internationale. O peut en trouver encore d'autres exemples, dans les écrits de Lénine, où on le voit cite à plusieurs reprises et dans plusieurs circonstances, comme éléments de preuve du cara tère révolutionnaire de la situation en Europe, le fait que les socialistes de droite se soie fait chahuter à un meeting parisien, le 13 janvier, ou encore la résolution des militan socialistes d'un petit village d'Italie saluant les Spartakistes comme leur modèle. Je n parle pas même, bien sûr, des références à la Bavière et à la Hongrie qui sont enco plus minces dans ses écrits.

En revanche, de 1920 à 1921, l'Internationale est véritablement fondée. Il y a dé un réseau important de communications, d'échanges, de discussions. L'Internationale e une tribune de discussions. Il y a des délégués étrangers à Moscou. Il y a des envoy spéciaux de l'Internationale à l'étranger. Lénine débat directement les problèmes a Kremlin. Zinoviev est au Congrès de Halle et des hommes comme Rakosi et Béla Ku le premier en Italie puis en Allemagne, le second en Allemagne, jouent directement au nom de l'Internationale un rôle important. Simplement, cet aspect, que je qualifiera de technique, n'est pas fondamental et nous allons voir que les problèmes d'appréciatio du caractère révolutionnaire de la situation dans les différents pays d'Europe demeure et, avec eux, bien sûr, des divergences.

En ce qui concerne les caractères de ces révolutions, je voudrais m'appesantir u peu sur les remarques qui ont été faites à cette époque, et d'abord sur celles de Karl Radek le premier dirigeant bolchevique à avoir vécu une autre révolution que la révolutio russe puisque, arrivé en Allemagne en décembre 1918, il y a vécu les journées de janvie l'assassinat de Liebknecht et de Rosa Luxemburg puis, dans sa prison, l'ère de Nosk Significatives, de ce point de vue, sont les lettres qu'il adresse de prison, notamme celle qu'il adresse à Alphonse Paquet, et ensuite les brochures écrites dans la prison mêm Dans la lettre à Alphonse Paquet, je note les termes suivants: « sacrifice de sang et richesses absurde », « la révolution élément sauvage et déchaîné », « une guerre civi plus acharnée et destructrice qu'en Russie », « une hémorragie interminable et sa objectifs clairs ».[9] Et dans la brochure sur le développement de la révolution mondial il écrit: « la révolution mondiale est un processus très lent où l'on peut s'attendre à pl d'une défaite, je ne doute pas que dans chaque pays le prolétariat ne soit obligé construire sa dictature et de la voir s'effrondrer à plusieurs reprises. »[10] Trotski, dans l articles de la *Pravda* du 23 avril 1919, va dans le même sens, avec peut-être moins

9. A. Paquet, *Der Geist der russischen Revolution;* lettre de Radek datée du 11 mars 1919, reprodu en introduction, pp. VII-XI.
10. K. Radek, *Zur Taktik der Kommunismus: Ein Schreiben an den Oktoberparteitag der KPD 1919*, p. 5

lleur sentimentale que Radek qui, en prison, est frappé par les nouvelles qu'il reçoit, otski parle de « mouvement intermittent », « chaotique », « tumultueux », de « révo- on traînante mais opiniâtre, resurgissant toujours. »[11] Et Lénine lui-même, dont – et t intéressant à souligner – le silence est presque total sur l'Allemagne, entre novembre 8 et janvier 1919, c'est-à-dire sur l'assassinat de Liebknecht et Luxemburg, dit au viet de Petrograd, le 12 mars 1919: « On supposait qu'à l'Ouest, où, du fait que le italisme est plus développé, les contradictions de classes sont plus fortes, la révolution prunterait des voies un peu différentes et que le pouvoir passerait aussitôt de la bour- isie au prolétariat. Cependant ce qui se passe aujourd'hui en Allemagne prouve le traire. La bourgeoisie allemande, unie pour combattre les masses prolétariennes qui relevé la tête, puise sa force dans la grande expérience de la bourgeoisie occidentale mène une lutte systématique contre le prolétariat. Les masses révolutionnaires alle- ndes, par contre, manquent encore d'expérience *qu'elles n'acquerront qu'au cours de lutte.* »[12] On pourrait, mais cela nous éloignerait, mettre en regard de ce que Lénine it là sur l'Allemagne, ce qu'il écrit dans son enthousiasme initial au moment du début la révolution hongroise qui lui paraît encore un autre type de révolution, puisqu'il y t la renonciation historique de la bourgeoisie à son propre pouvoir et l'appel aux mmunistes dans les prisons pour régler les problèmes que la bourgeoisie ne peut pas ler. Soulignons simplement qu'il y a, sur ces analyses, des désaccords dans les rangs cheviks, parce que beaucoup restent attachés à l'ancienne conception: l'analyse de dek par exemple, l'a conduit en Allemagne à critiquer Liebnecht et la direction du C. pour leur attitude en janvier. Elle le dresse contre l'opposition qui sera le noyau du ur K.A.P.D., de tendance gauchiste, et, en Union soviétique, elle provoque des réac- ns tout à fait vigoureuses, notamment de Boukharine, qui la considère comme parfaite- nt opportuniste, et qui va lui opposer la théorie de « l'offensive révolutionnaire » qui minera au moment de l'offensive de l'Armée Rouge contre Varsovie. Les désaccords nt patents, publics, au sein du parti communiste allemand. Ils sont évidents mais non blics dans les rangs des bolcheviks.

En tout cas, la discussion, à peine ouverte, a le mérite de conduire à une tentative approfondir l'analyse de la situation que les uns et les autres jugent révolutionnaire, alifient de révolutionnaire, mais avec des nuances qui sont en réalité de véritables vergences. Radek, dans ses premiers écrits, tente de montrer en quoi la situation alle- nde et, par conséquent, la révolution allemande, diffère de la révolution russe. Il uligne d'abord la force de la bourgeoisie allemande ancienne, bien organisée, sur la se de la concentration économique, avec l'expérience de dizaines d'années de pouvoir, ec l'expérience de la corruption des sommets du mouvement ouvrier, partis et syndicats, ppui sur ce que les bolcheviks appellent « l'aristocratie ouvrière », et il souligne aussi e cette bourgeoisie allemande bénéficie d'une expérience fraîche, récente mais riche, écisément celle de la révolution russe. Il montre que cette bourgeoisie n'est pas com- rable à la bourgeoisie russe, jeune, faible, très dépendante, arrivée au pouvoir en vrier seulement et finalement éperdue face à la montée des masses. Il relève d'autre rt que le développement du capitalisme dans un pays comme l'Allemagne a entraîné, urri des illusions sur sa capacité à surmonter ces crises, et surtout a nourri le phéno- ène qui fait que les organisations construites par le prolétariat (parti socialiste, syndi- ts) sont, du fait de leurs liens avec l'aristocratie ouvrière, passées de l'autre côté, du té de la bourgeoisie, contre le prolétariat: « Les organisations dont la classe ouvrière emande a hérité se placent du côté de la bourgeoisie et constituent la base de la contre- volution. »[13] C'est évidemment un facteur majeur. Il souligne ensuite que la révolution emande a coïncidé avec la fin de la guerre et que, par conséquent, il n'y a plus en lemagne le facteur décisif qu'avait constitué pour les révolutionnaires en Russie la tte pour la paix. Les paysans sous l'uniforme, une paysannerie d'ailleurs beaucoup plus térogène en Allemagne qu'en Russie, est dispersée par la démobilisation et démobilisée r la paix. La révolution russe disposait des armes avec les soldats. En Allemagne, les

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Reproduit dans L. Trotsky, *The First Five Years of the I.C.*, pp. 45-47.
Lénine, *op. cit.*, tome XXIX, pp. 11-12.
A. Paquet, *op. cit.*, p. IX.

soldats sont rentrés chez eux, et seule la bourgeoisie dispose d'un corps de mercenair professionnels obligeant, dit-il, le prolétariat à lancer « à mains nues » ses premièr attaques. Enfin, la bourgeoisie internationale, dit-il, a désormais une claire conscience d l'enjeu que constitue l'Allemagne, plaque tournante de la révolution ou, si l'on préfèr de la contre-révolution. À travers cette analyse de Radek, bien que les termes mêm empruntés à l'histoire de 1917 « le février », « le juillet », « l'octobre », soient toujou employés, apparaît une prise de distance vis-à-vis du schéma russe considéré jusque- comme un modèle dont on attendait la répétition et, l'on voit un certain nombre de bo cheviques s'aligner sur la perspective de difficultés plus grandes et surtout d'un rythm plus lent. S'il en est ainsi, et, là-dessus encore, tout le monde est d'accord chez les bo cheviks, c'est à cause du problème central pour eux, le facteur subjectif, à savoir le par Déjà Radek le 11 mars 1918, dans sa lettre à Paquet, écrivait: « Il manque en Allemagn un grand parti révolutionnaire; les communistes sont d'abord une direction, mais no un parti avec une tradition comme nous l'étions, nous, en Russie. »[14] Il souligne dans d formules parfois brutales que ce parti doit être un parti capable de « tenir les masses e main » – la formule est sèche –, d'éviter les combats inutiles ou prématurés, de surmonte les réactions spontanées, dangereuses parce qu'inorganisées et risquant de faciliter répression. Même thème sous la plume de Trotski, dans la *Pravda* du 23 avril: le prol tariat allemand est sans défense sur le plan de l'organisation et il doit donc créer, organise former ses cadres à les vérifier dans le cours même du combat. Et c'est ce qui appara avec beaucoup d'éclat aux yeux des bolcheviks en cette année 1919 où, après avoir pens que la révolution allemande règlerait tous les problèmes, ils s'aperçoivent qu'il manqu au pays dans lequel ils attendent la victoire de la révolution une donnée essentielle: u parti qui puisse jouer le rôle qu'eux-mêmes ont joué en Russie. C'est à partir de ce momen que s'impose chez eux l'idée de la nécessaire construction, au plus vite, d'un parti com munisme qui soit aussi un parti de masse, pas seulement une direction, mais un parti en raciné dans les masses. D'où la polémique qui commence contre les gauchistes européen d'où la volonté, qui culminera au deuxième congrès, de gagner la gauche des part socialistes, c'est-à-dire leur masse, tout en chassant les dirigeants opportunistes, d'o l'esprit des vingt et une conditions, inspiré par la croyance que la révolution est à cou terme, en termes de semaines ou au plus, de mois.

Et on peut dire que cette politique de construction de l'Internationale découle à fois de l'analyse globale que j'ai rappelée au début, et de l'analyse particulière faite à fois pour l'Allemagne et pour la Hongrie, où les bolcheviks considèrent que le parti com munisme s'est fondé dans la confusion avec les social-démocrates.

Y a-t-il désaccord sur ce point chez les bolcheviks? Certainement, bien que tou tiennent le même langage. On peut noter en passant les positions prises par Rakosi, e Italie, lors du Congrès de Livourne et de la scission, les propos tenus par lui, lors de so passage en Allemagne, sur la nécessité de renforcer un parti, au besoin en l'épurant sau vagement. Y a-t-il une conception large du parti communiste de masse et une conceptio étroite? C'est probable, mais c'est latent. Radek, Zinoviev et Lénine lui-même semble par instant passer de l'une à l'autre conception. De toute façon, ce qui est sous-jacent majeur dans cette discussion, c'est l'affirmation du caractère révolutionnaire de la situa tion, et la nécessité d'une politique de court terme dans la construction de l'organisatio qui la dénouera.

Le moment où triomphe la vue traditionnelle, celle que Lénine, au VIII[e] Congrè du parti russe, en 1919, appelait « la vieille méthode, celle qui tranche les problèmes d la lutte par une marche triomphale »,[15] le sommet, donc, c'est l'été 1920. Tout le mond connaît les espérances de l'été 1920 avec la marche de l'armée de Toukhatchevski ver Varsovie, les cartes dans l'entrée, dans le hall où se tient le Congrès, avec les peti drapeaux qu'on avance tous les jours, et la conviction des uns et des autres, sauf d rarissimes exceptions – il faut citer ici Radek –, que le prochain Congrès de l'Interna tionale se tiendra au moins à Berlin, sinon à Paris ou à Londres . . .

14. *Ibid.*, p. VIII.
15. Lénine, *op. cit.*, tome XXVII, p. 92.

Radek, qui a combattu cette conception, résume ainsi, devant le Comité central du i communiste allemand, l'année suivante, ce qu'il appelle le « schéma allemand »: ndant la guerre contre la Pologne, l'exécutif de l'Internationale croyait que les vements révolutionnaires étaient en train de mûrir en Europe occidentale, que, dans arche vers l'Ouest, le but n'était pas d'imposer le bolchevisme à la pointe des baïon-es, mais seulement de briser la croûte de la puissance militaire des classes dirigeantes, s la mesure où il existait déjà des forces internes suffisantes déclenchées en Allemagne r conserver le contrôle. » Et il ajoute, « la deuxième pierre angulaire de la politique 'exécutif était son appréciation de la situation allemande concrète. L'exécutif pensait n Allemagne les choses étaient déjà en train de mûrir pour la prise du pouvoir poli-e. Nous pensions que si nous tenions Varsovie, il ne serait pas nécessaire de poursuivre u'au bout notre avance vers l'Allemagne. »[16]

Cette analyse concrète de la situation que les bolcheviks jugent révolutionnaire, est leversée par le déroulement des événements dans les mois qui suivent cet été de 1920. les mouvements de 1920 que les bolcheviks avaient saisis et compris comme le point lépart d'une nouvelle vague se révèlent en réalité sans lendemain, se révèlent le point lépart d'un reflux et même d'une vague réactionnaire, (voir l'Italie et le rapport entre rève de septembre 1920 et le développement du facisme). Le plus révélateur est l'action nars 1921, conçue sur la base de la théorie de l'offensive, suivant laquelle dans toute ation, à notre époque, c'est l'action offensive du parti communiste qui est le facteur rminant pour donner à la situation son caractère révolutionnaire. Cette action de se fondée sur la théorie de l'offensive aboutit à un désastre. Et c'est pourquoi les cheviks vont tourner.

Déjà, en mars-avril 1920, il y avait eu conflit à l'exécutif, à la direction du parti se, sur les problèmes posés par le cours de la révolution en Allemagne et sur la position dopter vis-à-vis d'un gouvernement purement socialiste, proposé par les syndicats; s les premiers mois de 1921, conflits sur l'initiative du parti allemand adressant une re ouverte aux autres organisations ouvrières, ce qui constituait la première manifesta-de la politique du front unique: là aussi il y a conflit dans lequel Boukharine et oviev attaquent la droite du parti allemand, c'est-à-dire Paul Lévi et, très vraisemblable-nt, Radek lui-même. Mais on trouve d'autres indices; par exemple, en décembre 1920, ine parle aux militants de Moscou du ralentissement du rythme de la révolution opéenne. Au même moment, Zinoviev écrit aux communistes italiens que la révolution létarienne frappe à leur porte. Significatif, le fait qu'apparaissent dans la presse com-niste internationale des points d'interrogation sur le caractère révolutionnaire de la ation. Par exemple, dans *L'Humanité* du 25 janvier 1921, Jacques Mesnil demande si Italie la situation est vraiment aujourd'hui aussi révolutionnaire que le croient les cheviks. Ces contradictions larvées, verbales, explosent avec l'action de mars, puisque tion de mars a été déclenchée sous la pression de Béla Kun, qui est envoyé par l'exé-if, et puisqu'il a développé, devant les dirigeants allemands, une politique qui revient, on ses propres paroles, à « forcer le développement de la révolution », à le forcer, au oin, semble-t-il, en utilisant la provocation; et tout cela aboutit en quelques jours, ès le catastrophique appel à la grève générale lancé par le Parti communiste allemand t seul, à de violents conflits entre ouvriers eux-mêmes; tout cela aboutit à un échec ntissant. La *Pravda* du 30 mars saluait, une fois de plus, la révolution allemande en rche et la combinaison du mouvement de masse et des combats armés comme la forme lus élevée de la lutte prolétarienne; les *Isvestija* du 4 avril se demandent quelle est la onsabilité des communistes dans la défaite qui, de toute évidence, résulte d'un combat maturé.

L'action de mars ouvre un nouveau débat politique au sein du Parti communiste se – d'un côté, Lénine, Trotski, Kamenev; de l'autre, Zinoviev, Boukharine – et c'est ce débat que va sortir une analyse nouvelle de la situation. On en trouve les grandes nes dans les thèses présentées sur la situation internationale, au III[e] Congrès, par

Compte-rendu du Zentralausschuss du KPD du 28 janvier 1921, archives Levi, P 50/a. dans Dachkovitch & Lazitch, *The Comintern: Historical Highlights*, p. 285.

Trotski et Varga. Revenant à ce qui était une tradition, quelque peu négligée dans l congrès précédents, les thèses commencent par une analyse économique, celle notar ment de la crise du système capitaliste dans sa particularité de 1920, qu'elle caractéri comme une réaction à la prospérité fictive de temps de guerre. Mais elle souligne que la crise ouverte par la guerre, ni la crise de l'après-guerre n'ont abouti à la révolution qu'au contraire, entre 1920 et 1921, il y a eu de sérieuses défaites du prolétariat. I conséquence de ces défaites est une stabilisation du capitalisme, qui ne peut pas êt définie simplement en termes économiques, mais qui est la conséquence et l'« autre bo du bâton » de ce que les thèses appellent le « fléchissement de la lutte du prolétariat po le pouvoir. » Trotski déclare au Congrès: « Aujourd'hui, pour la première fois, no voyons et sentons que nous ne sommes pas si immédiatement près du but, la conquê du pouvoir, la révolution mondiale. En 1919, nous disions: c'est une question de mo aujourd'hui, nous disons: c'est peut-être une question d'années. »[17] Autrement dit, période demeure révolutionnaire, la situation ne l'est plus, car la fin de la montée mouvement de masse a permis à la bourgeoisie de stabiliser, temporairement, de surmont sa crise de régime. Au centre de cette stabilisation, il y a le reflux du prolétariat eur péen, lassé, usé par ses propres échecs, démoralisé par sa propre division, impuissant passif; et Trotski, ici, vient corriger dans les débats ce qu'il y avait de peut-être un p schématique dans les vues de 1917-1918 sur l'imminence de la révolution, renouant ain avec la célèbre alternative « socialisme ou barbarie » de Marx, puisqu'il dit: « D'un poi de vue théorique, la possibilité n'est pas exclue que la bourgeoisie, armée de son appar d'État et de son expérience accumulée puisse continuer à combattre la révolution jusqu ce qu'elle ait privé la civilisation moderne de tout atome de vitalité, jusqu'à ce qu'elle plongé l'humanité dans une catastrophe et un déclin durable. »[18]

Cette affirmation concluant les analyses précédentes nous conduit à affirmer q les bolcheviks pensent maintenant qu'ils se trouvent en Europe devant une situation no velle, une situation qui n'est pas une situation révolutionnaire, puisque, en bas, on cessé de ne plus *vouloir,* et puisque, en haut, on a cessé de ne plus *pouvoir.* Ainsi s'exp que la politique qui s'élabore à partir de ce congrès et qui sera définitivement fixée av l'exécutif de décembre, *la politique du front unique ouvrier.* La stabilisation de la socié bourgeoise, y compris sur le terrain économique, ne s'explique, aux yeux des bolchevik que par l'appui des agents capitalistes dans le mouvement ouvrier, que par l'appui l'aristocratie ouvrière, de la bureaucratie ouvrière, des dirigeants opportunistes du mo vement ouvrier. Ils préconisent désormais la lutte pour le front unique sur des reve dications qui, de fil en aiguille, reposeront le problème du pouvoir. Il s'agit de réalis l'unité révolutionnaire de la classe ouvrière, de créer les conditions de l'élimination d opportunistes.

C'est à l'été 1923, à la fin d'août 1923, exactement, que les bolcheviks découvriro en Allemagne une nouvelle situation révolutionnaire: catastrophe économique, inflati galopante, que la bourgeoisie ne parvient pas à maîtriser, division dans ses propres rang avec l'apparition du mouvement nationaliste, premières fissures dans l'armée, nivelleme social paupérisant la petite bourgeoisie, faisant pratiquement disparaître l'aristocra ouvrière, et progrès considérable de l'influence communiste au détriment de la soci démocratie. Une majorité des bolcheviks, sur cette analyse (je dis « une majorité Staline, au moins, n'était pas d'accord), l'emporte dans cette discussion sur les réticenc des dirigeants communistes allemands eux-mêmes et cela aboutira à la préparati d'octobre 1923, que je n'ai pas à traiter, mais qui fut sans doute l'effort le plus sérieu accompli dans le siècle pour préparer une insurrection et la révolution prolétarienne, au moins la preuve que ceux qui l'ont organisée croyaient au caractère révolutionnai de la situation.

Je termine maintenant en disant que, personnellement, je pense que c'est dans ce période cruciale, qui a abouti à l'isolement de la révolution dans un pays aussi arriéré q l'était la Russie, que se trouvent les germes de ce qui a, hélas, caractérisé le deuxièn

17. *Protokoll des III Kongresses der XX Kommunistischen Internationale,* p. 90.
18. L. Trotsky, *The First Five Years of the I.C.,* p. 299.

: du XX[e] siècle, le triomphe et du national-socialisme et du stalinisme, Hitler et ıe, que Trotski qualifiait justement d'« étoiles jumelles ». Mais ce n'est pas là la ion. Je pense que ce tableau rapide a fait apparaître le caractère sommaire, et qui t pu parfois ne pas l'être, de l'analyse des bolcheviks sur les situations et sur les ɔrts de classe dans les différents pays d'Europe, y compris ceux auxquels ils accor- t le plus d'importance, le caractère « millénariste » (d'autres diraient catastrophiste) urs perspectives pour le capitalisme et, par conséquent, pour la révolution – parfois de ce que Lénine définissait pourtant comme l'essence même du marxisme, à savoir lyse concrète d'une situation concrète, – l'importance majeure et parfois exclusive rdée aux facteurs subjectifs et, bien entendu, à l'existence, ou non, de la construction x conditions de la construction des partis communistes, conditions non de la situation utionnaire mais de sa victoire. Voilà, je crois, les grands traits que l'on peut dégager. e garderai de conclure, l'un des objectifs du colloque et de ses différents ateliers précisément de tenter de faire cette analyse concrète et, entre autres, de soumettre ɔreuve de la critique et de la vérification cette conviction, qui était celle des bolche- que l'Europe a connu en ces années des situations révolutionnaires que les révolu- aires n'ont pu utiliser et mener à bien.

nary

Professor Broué's presentation concentrates on the Bolshevik reaction to the revolu- ry situation in the rest of Europe in the years 1918-1923. He divides his discussion three parts in which he analyzes what the Bolsheviks considered as the imminence e revolution in 1918, the revolutionary wave of 1919-1920 and their attempts from to 1923 to assess correctly the European situation.

In the first section Professor Broué examines the Bolshevik hope for a revolution ermany which they thought would provide a solution to their problem. In this context mphasizes the division between Bukharin and Lenin over the peace of Brest-Litovsk its implications for the revolution in Germany. He points out that Bukharin viewed ɔeace of Brest-Litovsk as a "stab in the back" of the German revolution while Lenin, understood the weakness of his communication links with the West, insisted that ediate peace was necessary to ensure the ripening of the revolution in Russia.

Professor Broué then analyses some Bolshevik interpretations of the revolutionary tion in Germany. In particular, he highlights Karl Radek's assessment of the strength ıe German bourgeoisie, the anti-revolutionary attitude of the German trade union ement and the point that the German revolution began after the armistice and hence cked a crucial ingredient, the struggle for peace. And, Professor Broué notes, the heviks recognized that no other European country possessed a political party prepared ay a role similar to their own party's role in Russia.

The Bolsheviks' recognition of these weaknesses, according to Professor Broué, led ıeir determination to create communist parties throughout Europe. A decision, as uthor notes, that led to the divisions of the socialist parties in the West. By 1920-1921 e splits, plus the resurgence of the capitalist class, led Trotsky and others to the rstanding that the world revolution that they had once thought to be a question of ths had become a question of years.

This realization, Professor Broué concludes, led the Bolsheviks to proclaim the y of the united front because they believed that there had been a revolutionary tion but the revolutionaries had not known how to make use of it.

evolutionary Situations in Europe, 1917-1920

ncis Carsten

As we all know, at the end of the first world war revolutions occurred in a number European countries – in contrast with the second world war at the end of which there s no such revolution: with the possible exception of Yugoslavia where the revolution s the result of the guerilla war of the Partisans against the German occupation. It took ce during the war rather than at its end, and it was a civil war rather than a revolution the older variety. The revolutions of 1917-1920, moreover, all occurred in *defeated* ıntries, first in Russia and then in Central Europe. There may have been revolutionary ıations in some of the victor states, above all in Italy, but if so they did not lead to the :break of a revolution. The assumption of power by the Italian Fascists in 1922 hardly serves that name, and not even that of a counter-revolution. It was only in the defeated ıntries that the regime which had led the country into war and failed to bring about egotiated settlement was so discredited, that the masses were so war-weary and hungry, t they turned against the monarchical government which was responsible for their sery and overthrew it. The February revolution in Petrograd and the great January kes in Austria-Hungary and Germany started with bread riots or because the bread ion was cut drastically by the authorities. In these countries, too, even before the ual outbreak of the revolution the armed forces showed dangerous signs of disintegra-n and mutiny; the authorities were no longer able to rely on their unconditional edience. Mass desertion from the Russian armies began even before the February volution. Mutinies broke out in the German navy in August 1917 and in the Austrian vy in February 1918. Smaller mutinies occurred in several units of the Austrian army May 1918, mainly caused by prisoners of war returned from Soviet Russia who used to return to the front. Above all, tens of thousands of soldiers deserted from the ıstro-Hungarian army and formed the 'green cadres' of the Balkans and other less cessible mountain areas, as Professor Plaschka and his collaborators have shown in ecent detailed study.[1] In the German army, on the other hand, there were no mutinies any size prior to the revolution, in spite of all Russian efforts to promote fraterniza-n. In all the armies, the soldiers fighting at the front were much less affected by volutionary ideas than the sailors or the units in the rear, perhaps because the relation-p between officers and men was considerably better at the front than it was in the nterland or on board the battleships.

In Russia as well as in Central Europe revolution actually broke out when it became ar that the war was lost, when troops ordered to take action against striking workers mutinous sailors refused to do so, when the government no longer found the defenders lling to protect it. The decisive event was the fraternization of soldiers and workers: ese two social groups carried the revolutionary movement to victory within a very short ne, and the old order collapsed ignominiously. It is indeed surprising how few people re willing to sacrifice their lives for the preservation of the Romanov, Habsburg and

Richard G. Plaschka, Horst Haselsteiner and Arnold Suppan, *Innere Front – Militärassistenz, Widerstand un Umsturz in der Donaumonarchie 1918* (Graz/Cologne, 1975). For the mutiny of Cattaro, see Richard G. Plaschka, *Cattaro – Prag* (Graz/Cologne, 1963).

Hohenzollern dynasties, how quickly the ruling social groups gave up all hope of resis ance to the revolutionary movements. In Russia, in Hungary and in Germany there wa civil war, but this broke out much later. Nor did the existing left-wing parties play an conspicuous part in bringing about the revolution. In Russia, prior to 1917, the socialis parties led a precarious underground existence and had no mass influence. In Austri and Germany, the social-democratic parties supported the war and were opposed to a but constitutional changes in the existing order of things. The extreme left, the late Communists, were extremely weak and possessed no influence among the war-wear masses. The German Independent Social Democrats were a large left-wing party an opposed to the continuation of the war, but they had no revolutionary aims, did no organize a revolutionary movement and were completely surprised by the events of No vember 1918. So were the leaders of the other political parties. In November 1918 prominent Social Democrat from Saxony remarked that it was "a remarkable fact tha not only the old authorities were pushed back in the first attack by the new worker and soldiers' councils, but also the old parties. Even the Social-Democratic Party for few days ceased to exist. . . ."[2]

This quotation points to another factor which the revolutions in Russia and i Central Europe had in common: the spontaneous formation of workers' and soldier councils which quickly, within a few hours, assumed a position of great authority. I Petrograd, on February 27, 1917, a Soviet of Workers' Deputies was hurriedly const tuted in the Tauride Palace and on the same day transformed into a Soviet of Worker *and* Soldiers' Deputies by a fusion with the revolutionary soldiers of the capital. This wa prior to the formation of the Provisional Government in a different wing of the sam palace. As one of the founder members of the Soviet put it: the Soviet was "the onl organ capable of guiding the movement into one channel or the other, ... the onl organ now wielding any real power in the capital".[3] In Berlin, on November 10, 191 a mass meeting of the newly elected workers' and soldiers' councils confirmed the ne government in office – or as some will have it elected this new government – a coalitio government of the two social-democratic parties. The meeting also insisted on parit of these two parties within the government, and equally on parity within the Executiv Committee of the workers' and soldiers' councils that was elected by the same meetin The Executive Committee claimed the right to control the actions as well as the compo sition of the new government which for the time being depended on the support of th workers' and soldiers' councils.[4] In Russia as well as in Germany, their national congres was – until the meeting of a constituent assembly – the sovereign constitutional organ i whose hands lay the decision about the political future of the country: a sovereig authority created by the revolution.

In the Habsburg monarchy, on the other hand, the revolutionary movement assume national forms and was directed by "National Councils" quickly set up in Budapes Prague and the other capitals. Even in Vienna, the initiative for revolutionary actio did not come from the soldiers or the workers, but from the German deputies of th *Reichsrat* who, on October 21, 1918, constituted themselves as "the Provisional Assembl of the independent German-Austrian State" and elected an executive committee whic took over the power of government. Here the initiative came almost entirely from th three major political parties – the Social Democrats, Christian Social and German Na tionalist parties – who formed a coalition government. In the Austrian army, soldier councils were formed quickly, but workers' councils only appeared somewhat later. I Hungary too, workers' and soldiers' councils came into being after the outbreak of th revolution, and their power slowly increased parallel with the decline of that of th government of Count Károlyi. In Hungary as well as in Russia the authority of the ne

2. Dr. Gradnauer on Nov. 25, 1918: Erich Matthias (ed.), *Die Regierung der Volksbeauftragten 191 1919* (Düsseldorf, 1969), I, no. 30, p. 192.
3. N.N. Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution 1917* (London, 1955), p. 119 (March 1, 1917).
4. For a discussion of these events, see Eberhard Kolb, introduction to *Der Zentralrat der deutsche sozialistischen Republik* (Leiden, 1968), pp. xiii-xv; F.L. Carsten, *Revolution in Central Euro 1918-1919* (London/Berkeley, 1972), pp. 39-40.

ernment was slowly eroded by the growing influence of the workers' and soldiers' ncils. In Austria and in Germany, the opposite was the case. Both governments were ported by new military forces which were created from the remnants of the old ies, and after a few months their authority was more or less firmly established. If e was an equilibrium it did not last, and soon the old authorities, especially the eaucracy, reasserted themselves. So did the established political parties and, accord- to the Saxon Social Democrat whom I have already quoted, "the proven forces of trade unions", and that was only two weeks after the outbreak of the revolution.[5]

In Russia, in the spring of 1917, the development was entirely different. As early March 9/22 – ten days after the February revolution – the War Minister Guchkov te to General Alexeyev: "The Provisional Government possesses no real power and orders are executed only in so far as this is permitted by the Soviet of Workers' and diers' Deputies, which holds in its hands the most important elements of actual power, n as troops, railroads, postal and telegraph services. It is possible to say directly that Provisional Government exists only while this is permitted by the Soviet of Workers' Soldiers' Deputies. Especially in the military department it is now only possible to e orders which do not basically conflict with the decisions of the above mentioned iet."[6] Nor was the situation any better in the civil sphere as the old administrative chinery ceased to function and the Provisional Government failed to create any new ans to take its place. In the country districts, the commissars nominated to succeed former governors "possessed little power except that of persuasion", as one well wn authority on the Russian revolution has put it, and the new committees elected he peasants "paid little attention to instructions from the centre."[7] Already on March 7 the French ambassador Paléologue noted in his diary: "The Provisional Government not long been in capitulating to the demands of the socialists. At the Soviet's command, as actually come to the following humiliating decision: the troops which have taken t in the revolutionary movements will not be disarmed but will remain in Petrograd".[8]

It was not really the case that "dual power" was established in Russia as it has so en been said, but power was increasingly taken over by the Soviets, especially that of rograd which "more and more became the centre of Russian political life".[9] Sukhanov, of our most reliable witnesses of the Russian revolution, has emphasized: "When ntrusted the power to the first cabinet of the revolution the Soviet was only just going battle – for the army and the real source of authority in the State. By April 17th..... ad won this battle and become the master of the situation in another sense.... Now Soviet had in its hands a strongly organised, spiritually united army; now ten million onets were the obedient instrument of the Soviet, which with them had in its hands totality of all state power and the entire fate of he revolution". And again: "All real ver and authority was in the hands of the Soviet. The many millions of the army mitted to it; hundred and thousands of democratic organizations acknowledged it; masses obeyed it".[10] Only two days after the outbreak of the revolution the Petrograd iet issued an order to the armed forces which established its authority over all units all political matters" and instructed them to carry out the orders of the Military mmittee of the Duma "only in those cases in which they did not run contrary to the ers and decisions of the Soviet of the Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies".[11] In April decree was reinforced by an instruction to the Petrograd garrison not to demonstrate the streets with arms "without a summons from the Executive Committee of the iet"; the committee further claimed that it alone was entitled to issue orders in such tters to the units.[12]

Dr. Gradnauer on Nov. 25, 1918: *loc. cit.*
Letter of Mar. 9/22, 1917, quoted by William Henry Chamberlin, *The Russian Revolution 1917-1921* (New York, 1965) I, p. 101.
Ibid., pp. 100-101.
Maurice Paléologue, *An Ambassador's Memoirs* (London, 1973), p. 834.
Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, I, p. 110.
Sukhanov, *op. cit.*, pp. 296, 326.
Order no. 1, Mar. 1, 1917: Valentin Gitermann, *Geschichte Russlands* (Zürich, 1949), III, p. 633.
Paul Miliukov, *Political Memoirs 1905-1917* (Ann Arbor, 1967), p. 450.

In military and other matters power was slipping from the hands of the Provisional Government and transferred to the Soviets, at the centre as well as in the provinces. At first the Soviets only controlled the existing authorities. Later they took over more and more administrative tasks and themselves assumed the local power. In a small way this started immediately after the outbreak of the revolution. Sukhanov recounts that on March 2/15 the telephone rang at the Petrograd Soviet, and the caller, speaking on behalf of the Council of Representatives of the Petrograd banks, asked for permission for the banks to reopen. Permission was readily granted once it was established that the employees were also in favour of reopening. A week later, the Soviet reached agreement with the manufacturers' association on new and improved working conditions, the introduction of the eight-hour day, and the establishment of factory and central conciliation boards for cases of labour conflicts.[13] As no large legal trade unions or factory committees existed in Russia, the local Soviets took over many of their functions and special departments of labour were founded by the more important Soviets. In Kiev the Soviet committee charged with this task settled 65 labour conflicts during the early months of the revolution. In Nizhni Novgorod the Soviet curtailed the 'export' of bread; in Krasnoyarsk it introduced a rationing system for vital commodities. Elsewhere the Soviets organized a workers' control system which was responsible for the allocation of raw materials and fuel; other Soviets supervised sales and wage scales.[14] In the textile centre of Ivanovo-Voznesensk "the Soviet authority was far-reaching and effective long before there was any question of a Soviet regime on the national scale."[15] These examples could easily be multiplied.

The movement in the industrial towns was paralleled by a similar quite spontaneous movement in the villages. The primary motor of this was of course the enormous land-hunger of the Russian peasantry which had erupted with elementary force during the revolution of 1905. In 1917 agrarian disorder quickly reappeared in many districts. The peasants were firmly convinced that the land belonged to the people who tilled it and used every means to freeze out the landowners. They demanded wages for their labour which the landlords were unable to pay. The volost committees often forbade the villagers to work on the estates: "We won't give them any labourers; then they will all starve like cockroaches", they said.[16] At the end of April Countess Lamoyska told the French ambassador that on her family estate in Podolia the peasants simply stood about making arrangements how to divide the land. "One of them will affect to want the wood by the river; another puts in for the gardens and proposes to turn them into folds. They go on talking like that for hours and do not stop even when my mother, one of my sisters or myself go up to them".[17] To another landowner near Voronezh the peasants simply explained "that she had, of course, got to lose her land".[18] Public committees and local Soviets took over from the old autorities which, as a member of the Provisional Government put it, "abolished themselves".[19] Peasant Soviets were also formed on the district and provincial levels, parallel with those of the workers and soldiers. In May the first all-Russian congress of peasant deputies met in Petrograd. It was attended by 1115 deputies about half of whom belonged to the Socialist Revolutionaries and only 14 to the Bolsheviks.[20]

Indeed this whole process – the loss of authority by the Provisional Government, the disappearance of the old administrative authorities, the assumption of more and more power by the Soviets and the growing exercise of public functions by them – seems to have had very little to do with Bolshevik propaganda. Obviously, all these changes eventually played into their hands, but in the early months of the revolution they were

13. Sukhanov, *op. cit.*, pp. 136, 188, 211.
14. Oskar Anweiler, *Die Rätebewegung in Russland 1905-1921* (Leiden, 1958), pp. 138, 168-169, 170-171.
15. Chamberlin, *op. cit.*, I, p. 114.
16. Michael T. Florinsky, *The End of the Russian Empire* (New York, 1961), pp. 233-234.
17. Paléologue, *op. cit.*, p. 923.
18. Bernard Pares, *My Russian Memoirs* (London, 1931), p. 461.
19. Miliukov, *op. cit.*, p. 426.
20. Anweiler, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

› weakly represented in the Soviets to exercise a significant influence on these devel-ments; while the other socialist groups which predominated in the Soviets considered e revolution a 'bourgeois' one and were for that reason alone opposed to any takeover power. Not even the disintegration of the Russian armies which so often has been ributed to Bolshevik propaganda was primarily due to their influence. More important, rely, was the effect of the shattering defeat of the Kerenski offensive in July 1917 and ove all, the ardent desire of the peasant soldiers to participate in th partition of the nd which took place in their native villages. They voted with their feet; they were sick d tired of the war and no longer willing to sacrifice their lives for a lost cause.

The element of spontaneity which for several months was predominant in the Rus-n revolution was equally predominant eighteen months later in Central Europe. At e outset, the revolution in Austria and in Germany was a revolt of sailors and soldiers, t it quickly spread to the industrial workers. Exactly as in Russia, workers' and soldiers' uncils were formed in all major German towns, but they nowhere replaced the old thorities which continued to function as before.

On the day of its formation, November 12, 1918, the new social-democratic govern-ent of Prussia expressly asked all state authorities and officials to carry on with their ficial duties, so as "to contribute to the preservation of law and order in the interest of e fatherland".[21] Ten days later even the Executive Committee of the workers' and sol-ers' councils appealed to all local councils not to interfere with the processes of admin-ration and to let the old administrative authorities which accepted the new regime nduct their business unhindered. The local workers' and soldiers' councils were em-wered to exercise control over the old authorities and "to consolidate the revolutionary hievements",[22] but this was a vague formula and the control never became real. No ualism" ever developed. Indeed, in many towns the workers' and soldiers' council erely functioned as a rubber stamp for the actions of the existing local authorities.

The new social-democratic ministers were convinced that they were unable to master e severe problems arising from the lost war, the armistice, the demobilization, the lack food and raw materials, the undefined frontiers of the German republic, without the pport of the skilled bureaucrats who had administered the country in the past. Except the top, there were very few changes of personnel. Even at the top the undersecretaries state for foreign affairs, justice, finance, labour, posts and telegraphs, and the navy ere left in office; so was the Prussian minister of war, General Scheüch, whose post as of vital importance as there was no German war ministry. The Social Democrats lieved that no qualified socialists or democrats were available to replace the conserva-ve and monarchist higher civil servants. They were afraid to make any radical changes the complex machinery of government at a time of great stress and acute shortages. As bert, the chairman of the Council of People's Representatives, put it on November 25: We were obliged, after we had taken over political power, to see to it that the machinery the Reich did not collapse; we had to see to it that the machinery continued to run so at our food supply and the economy could be maintained. . . . . Therefore we appealed rgently to all Reich offices to continue with their work until further notice. Only thus ere we able to prevent the collapse. . . ."[23]

The same policy prevailed in a sphere of even greater political importance, the mili-ry one. It has often been said that as early as November 10, 1918 an "alliance" was ncluded between Ebert and General Groener who telephoned Ebert from army head-uarters; speaking in the name of the High Command, he put himself and his fellow-fficers "at the disposal of the government" as Groener wrote in his diary.[24] Yet the

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. Decree of Nov. 12, 1918: Gerhard A. Ritter and Susanne Miller (eds.), *Die deutsche Revolution 1918-1919* (Frankfurt, 1968), no. 4d, p. 94.

. Proclamation of the Executive Committee of Nov. 23, 1918, printed in Richard Müller, *Vom Kaiserreich zur Republik* (Vienna, 1925), II, p. 255.

. Speech at the conference of prime ministers of the German states on Nov. 25: Matthias (ed.), *op. cit.*, no. 30, pp. 180-181.

. Entry of Nov. 10, 1918, quoted by F.L. Carsten, *Reichswehr und Politik* (Cologne, 1964), p. 20, n. 16.

agreement reached on that day was a strictly utilitarian one. The new government in Berlin believed that it needed the services of the skilled military technicians to bring the armies back safely from the vast occupied territories in west and east and to carry through their demobilization as well as the provisions of the armistice with the Entente. The officer corps in its turn needed the support of the government to maintain "order and discipline in the army", which threatened to break down as they had already broken down in the navy. Many years later General Groener wrote in his memoirs that he had also told Ebert on November 10 that "the officer corps expected from the government a fight against Bolshevism"; but there is no proof that words such as these were used by him over the telephone.[25]

In the eyes of the generals, discipline and order in the army were theatened above all by the soldiers' councils which were elected by all units and demanded radical changes in the structure of the army, for example, the election of officers, a participation in the officers' power to issue orders, and the abolition of the officers' epaulettes and other insignia of rank. Such radical demands were anathema to the officer corps. Only four weeks after the telephone conversation between Ebert and Groener the High Command thus demanded that the officers' power of command must be fully restored and that the soldiers' councils must disappear from the army; they were to be replaced by mere trustees who would only be entitled to inform the officers of the grievances of the other ranks. But the demands of the High Command were not limited to the military field and included the immediate summoning of a National Assembly and the exclusive conduct of affairs "by the government and the legal organs of administration":[26] demands clearly directed against the influence of the workers' and soldiers' councils and caused by fear that through that influence the election of a National Assembly might be delayed. In reality the opposite was the case. At their national congress in mid-December 1918 the workers' and soldiers' deputies decided with an overwhelming majority to hold the elections as early as the 19th of January 1919. In general too the large majority of the local councils stood under the influence of the right-wing Social Democrats and were in favour of early elections. In other words, they voted themselves out of power, for the elections did not produce a socialist majority.

Three weeks before the elections, in late December 1918, the coalition of right-wing and left-wing Social Democrats broke up when Ebert and his colleagues ordered troops loyal to the High Command into Berlin in an attempt to evict a 'red' sailors' unit from the palace. The sailors considered themselves the legitimate defenders of the revolution which they had started by their mutiny, and there had been clashes between them and the government. Actually, it was once more General Groener who telephoned Ebert and *demanded* from him that he should accept the protection of the High Command, otherwise it would cease to support him.[27] Thus within a few weeks what started as an understanding with a strictly limited purpose became not precisely an "alliance", but a relationship in which the military could put forward their demands in the form of an ultimatum, which the weak government then accepted. When Groener was heard under oath as a witness in the so-called Stab-in-the-Back trial in Munich in 1925 he declared that he and Ebert had also agreed that the Independent Social Democrats should be pushed out of the government, and this was certainly achieved.[28] When one of the experts attached to the court asked Groener against whom the "alliance" of the 10th of November was directed, Groener without any hesitation replied "against the danger of Bolshevism and against the system of councils":[29] like so many other Germans he completely identified the two.

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25. Wilhelm Groener, *Lebenserinnerungen* (Göttingen, 1957), p. 467, Cp. the comment by Ulrich Kluge, *Soldatenräte und Revolution* (Göttingen, 1975), p. 144, the most recent study of this important topic.
26. Letter of Hindenburg to Ebert, composed by Groener, Dec. 8, 1918: quoted by Carsten, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
27. Entry in Groener's diary of Dec. 23, 1918: quoted by Kluge, *op. cit.*, p. 451, n. 277.
28. *Der Dolchstoss-Prozess in München/Oktober-November 1925* (Munich, s.a.), p. 225.
29. *Ibid.*

About the same time that the fight for the palace in Berlin ended in a draw at ristmas 1918 the government began with the recruitment of "reliable" volonteer units Free Corps. These came under the orders of the High Command and those of pro- sional officers. There were no soldiers' councils in the new units, while those function- ; in the units of the old army lost their *raison d'être* with the return of the front-line its and the progress of their demobilization. Whatever left-wing or republican forma- ns had come into being in the early months of the revolution were either dissolved or nsformed into police forces. The new army which was eventually recruited from the ee Corps and similar units no longer knew any soldiers' councils. Their early disap- arance also led to a fatal weakening of the workers' councils which became more and re isolated. Many of the local authorities rendered passive resistance to the councils' ims of supervision; in many cases the funds and facilities granted to the workers' ncils by the authorities were withdrawn. After the election of the national assembly d of state parliaments and local councils on the basis of universal franchise the majority the workers' councils themselves considered that their functions were terminated and ny dissolved themselves. The whole council movement which had begun with such h hopes of democratization and participation reached its end in the early months of 19. It is true that the authorities did their level best to bring the movement to an early d, but by that time it had lost is fighting spirit and the will to resist. It revived briefly the time of the Kapp Putsch in March 1920, but only in certain parts of Germany, ecially in Saxony and the Ruhr: proof that many left-wing workers still put their trust the workers' councils as a means to prevent a comeback of the old ruling forces and a ctionary *coup d'état*. In the Ruhr a veritable Red Army came into being on that occa- n, further evidence of quite spontaneous working class action, as a recent study has own.[30] But these were the last sparks of a dying movement, and they too were quickly ppressed. In Germany there was no longer a revolutionary situation.

The question might, of course, be asked whether such a situation existed in Novem- r 1918. My answer would be an emphatic 'yes', but it only lasted a very short time. e total collapse of the Hohenzollern Empire within a few days, the vast spontaneous vement of the sailors, soldiers and workers which led to the formation of the workers' d soldiers' councils, the take-over by the new government and similar revolutionary vernments in all the German states, the radical break with the monarchical and semi- dal past, are in my opinion the best proof that there was a real revolutionary situation. ermany went 'red' but only for a brief period. There was a break with the past, but it mained limited to the constitutional field and did not extend to the social one; the social ucture remained virtually unchanged. Soon the old ruling groups, the bureaucracy, the ficer corps, the large landowners, the industrialists, regained much of their former ength. As it was expressed by a popular novel, *"Der Kaiser ging, die Generale blieben"* e Emperor went, the generals remained); and the generals were not the only group at retained its power. In Germany the bourgeois revolution came very belatedly and it as not complete. Perhaps it remained incomplete because the middle classes did not ar a return of the old order, but feared 'Bolshevism' or what they understood under at label. This fear was shared by the leaders and the majority of members of the Social- emocratic Party. It was that fear too which, fifteen years later, helped Adolf Hitler into wer. But it was not a fear based on reality, for the German Communists, even in 1932- , were weak and did not constitute a serious threat to the existing order.

If we ask the question: why did the German revolution, in contrast with the Russian e, so quickly lose its impetus, some of the answers are very obvious. In Russia, the volutionary movement became more and more radical because the Provisional Govern- ent did not solve any of the burning issues of the day. Under war-time conditions, the ections to the Constituent Assembly proceeded very slowly and it finally met *after* the olshevik assumption of power, only to be dispersed by military force. As there was no onstituent Assembly, no decision was taken on the vital issue affecting the large majority

. George Eliasberg, *Der Ruhrkrieg 1920* (Bonn, 1974): Vol. 100 in a series edited by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

of the population: the land question; and meanwhile the peasants solved it by seizing the land of the big landowners and appropriating it. A vast agrarian revolution engulfed Russia. The Provisional Government not only failed to conclude an armistice with the victorious Germans, but in the summer of 1917 launched a large offensive which ended in complete failure and caused new mass desertions from the army. The Russian masses desired nothing more than peace and land, and the February revolution brought them neither. In all three respects the German revolution took the opposite course. The National Assembly was elected two months after the outbreak of revolution and met soon after.

There was no agrarian revolution, and no attempt to seize the estates of the Junker families in the east of Germany. The peasants were only drawn into the council movement on any scale in Bavaria, and Bavaria had very few large estates. The German Social Democrats failed signally to mobilize the peasantry and there was no land-hunger on any scale, perhaps because of the rapid growth of industrial towns. At the national congress of the workers' and soldiers' councils in Berlin in December 1918 only one delegate pleaded in favour of the partition of the large estates and the creation of smaller farms to increase production – and he was not a socialist.[31] No one else spoke on this vital issue. Two Independent Social Democrats advocated the socialization of the land, and especially of the latifundia, and the moderate Social Democrats ignored the issue.[32] There could be no clearer evidence of their total lack of interest in a question so decisive for the future of Germany. Finally, the armistice between Germany and the Entente was concluded two days after the outbreak of the revolution: the longing of the war-weary masses for peace was satisfied by the new government. That the peace settlement would bring new hardships and unleash a violent nationalist agitation in Germany could not be foreseen. The revolutionary impetus evaporated quickly with the overthrow of the monarchy, the election of a new government of left-wing tendencies, and the conclusion of the armistice. When the extreme left two months later, in January 1919, tried to force the German revolution on to a more radical course it was defeated with ease by the Free Corps. But the brutality used by them in supressing the extreme left caused further polarization and drove masses of socialist workers to the left. It was only then that a serious Communist danger began to appear. If the Free Corps had been created to "combat the Bolshevik danger", their actions certainly increased it. But the slogan "All power to the Soviets!" never caught on in Germany.

It seems much more doubtful whether a revolutionary situation existed in Austria in November 1918, or at any time in 1919. As already stated the new Austrian government was not a social-democratic one but a coalition of the three major parties in which Social Democrats held only a few posts. This government was not responsible to any workers' and soldiers' councils but to parliament. Soldiers' councils quickly came into being, but they remained isolated because workers' councils were only formed later, and they never supervised the government or the administration. Their first national conference only took place in March 1919, six months after the revolution. At this conference only the industrial areas of Upper and Lower Austria and of Styria were represented in any strength, for most of Austria was still rural and conservative. A speaker from Linz emphasized that it was impossible to win the large and medium peasants to the cause of socialism. He was seconded by a speaker from Leoben who declared that, if the workers' council was to be a revolutionary organ, "peasant councils would dilute it; most peasants are reactionary"; it would be pointless to put any hope in the peasantry.[33] Thus the workers' councils remained isolated in Vienna and a few industrial areas and from the peasantry, which Otto Bauer considered "a determined enemy of the working class".[34] There was no land-hunger among the peasants and, although there were large estates,

31. *Allgemeiner Kongress der Arbeiter – und Soldatenräte Deutschlands vom 16. bis 21. Dezember 1918, Berlin, s.a. (1919), col. 327.*
32. *Ibid.*, cols. 319, 339.
33. (Karl Heinz), "Die Geschichte der österreichischen Arbeiterräte", MS. in Arbeiterkammer Wien, pp. 66, 70.
34. Thus Bauer on Nov. 1, 1918: *Protokoll des Parteitages des sozialdemokratischen Srbeiterpartei*, Oct. 31-Nov. 1, 1918, p. 111: Parteiarchiv Wien.

y consisted mostly of woods and land unsuitable for agriculture. The Austrian peasants re catholic, conservative and law-abiding, and any rural surplus-population seems to ve been absorbed by the growth of Vienna and industrial towns, while in Russia the posite was the case.[35]

In military affairs, the development was very different from Germany, for the old stro-Hungarian army simply disintegrated into its national components. The High mmand and the general staff did not survive the revolution. In Vienna and other parts Lower Austria the Social Democrats succeeded in creating a fairly efficient new army, *Volkswehr*, in which soldiers' councils played a prominent part and officers had to approved by the units in which they exercised the command. But in the provinces ere the Social Democrats were weak their influence within the *Volkswehr* was very ited, and so was that of the soldiers' councils. The whole council movement, inside d outside the army, met with the bitter hostility of the provincial governments, the urgeois parties which had a clear majority in the Constituent Assembly,[36] and the ddle and lower middle classes in general. It was rightly identified with the Social-mocratic Party and its stronghold in Vienna and thus had no chance ever to become ational movement. When the *Volkswehr* was transformed into the new regular army social-democratic efforts to preserve the structure of the soldiers' councils were de-ted by the bourgeois majority. Indeed, this was one of the causes leading to the break- of the coalition government, and the Social Democrats moved into permanent position. As Austria was much less industrialized than Germany, the working-class vement was considerably weaker.

In Vienna the left-wing movements received a considerable impetus in the spring of 19 when the Hungarian Soviet Republic was proclaimed, followed a few weeks later the proclamation of a *Räterepublik* in Munich. It appeared that Vienna – and Austria general – might form the bridge between 'red' Hungary and 'red' Bavaria. But the uncil Republic in Munich lasted only a few weeks; it aroused but little enthusiasm in al and catholic Bavaria and was suppressed by government troops at the end of April. is, however, did not end the Hungarian efforts to spur the rather reluctant Austrian mmunists into action. The leaders of the Austrian party were removed by an emissary t from Budapest, and in May 1919 a new 'directory' was appointed at his prompting ich was to proclaim a Soviet Republic in Vienna. In mid-June the attempt was de, but it ended in miserable failure, for the ever-watchful Austrian police on the ening before the planned rising arrested the assembled Communist leaders. On the y itself, the demonstrators were dispersed by a volley of police shots, and the Vienna *lkswehr* succeeded in preserving law and order without much difficulty.[37] Even if attempt had succeeded in Vienna – and that was extremely unlikely against the position of the Social Democrats – 'red' Vienna would have been surrounded by a ally hostile countryside and cut off from all supplies of food and other necessities. t even in Vienna there was no revolutionary situation in June 1919;[38] and the Austrian mmunists were much weaker still than their German comrades, partly because ıstrian Social Democracy was further to the left than the German party. In Germany, most revolutionary situation during this period probably existed in the days after Kapp Putsch when the whole left was suddenly united in resisting a reactionary litary Putsch; but even their motor was absent in Austria. There the end of the ıngarian Societ Republic in August 1919 marked also the end of all efforts at mmunist revolution.

The question arises whether there was a revolutionary situation in Hungary when e Soviet Republic was proclaimed there by a united action of Social Democrats and

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See Harry T. Willetts, "The agrarian problem", *Russia Enters the Twentieth Century* (London, 1971), p. 136.

On Feb. 16, 1919 the Social Democrats only gained 40 per cent of the vote and 69 out of 159 seats. For details see F.L. Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe 1918-1919* (London, 1972), pp. 231-234. This against the opinion of Hans Hautmann and Rudolph Kropf, *Die österreichische Arbeiterbewegung vom Vormärz bis 1945, Sozialökonomische Ursprünge ihrer Ideologie und Politik* (Vienna, 1974), pp. 133, 197.

Communists in March 1919. There too, workers' and soldiers' councils were formed after the outbreak of the revolution in October 1918, and their power grew while that of the new government declined. Exactly as in Russia, this new government was unable to solve the land question, and in Hungary – in contrast with Austria – there were many thousands of land-hungry peasants. When the government did not carry out the promised scheme of land reform many large estates were forcibly occupied by peasants and agricultural labourers: there was an incipient agrarian revolution. In some counties, the administrative officials were chased away or forced to resign; in others, the local administration was taken over by new 'directorates'.[39] The government was unable to resist the occupation of the large estates because it had no reliable force at its disposal. Peasant councils took an active part in these developments. In short, the situation in Hungary in the early months of 1919 began to approximate to that in Russia two years earlier. Similar too was the semi-feudal state of society which made the peasants and the agricultural labourers a revolutionary class in both countries.

Yet the actual establishment of the Soviet Republic was caused not by a revolution, but by the ultimatum of the Allies handed to President Károlyi which demanded a further withdrawal of the Hungarian army and the occupation of more Hungarian territory by the Romanians. The government resigned rather than accept the ultimatum, and the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was proclaimed by the united Social Democrats and Communists in Budapest with the consent of the workers' council. At first an outburst of Hungarian nationalism worked in favour of the Soviet Republic and enabled the Red Army to conquer large areas which had belonged to the former kingdom, especially in Slovakia. Yet for doctrinaire reasons the revolutionary government did not distribute the land to the peasants and was thus unable to secure their loyalty. Disloyalty turned into hatred when punitive expeditions were organized against the peasantry to enforce deliveries and to crush all opposition. If Lenin thought it necessary to adopt the agrarian programme of the Socialist Revolutionaries and to sanction the take-over of the land by the peasants, this lesson was not learned by his Hungarian disciples. With regard to the land question, Communists could be as rigid and doctrinaire as German Social Democrats. It seems likely that, even if the Károlyi government had not resigned in March 1919 on account of the ultimatum, its authority would have declined further and a more left-wing government would have finally taken its place. But whether it would have been able to stay in power is a very different question. As it was the Allies were responsible both for the establishment and for the overthrow of the Soviet Republic.

In Italy, finally, a semi-revolutionary situation existed not in October 1922 when the Fascists marched on Rome, but two years earlier. In September 1920 the workers occupied the factories in Milan and Turin. 600,000 workers participated in the occupation, but it only took place in northern Italy and it ended in complete failure. The Italian Socialists were completely surprised by this spontaneous action and did not know what attitude to adopt towards it. The prime minister, Giolitti, suggested a compromise by which the workers received a small wage increase and the empty promise of workers' control in industry; and the factories were evacuated after some weeks of occupation.[40] About the same time an incipient agrarian revolution took place in many parts of Italy, especially in Emilia, Umbria, the Marches and Tuscany. Landless labourers and small-holders seized large areas of land belonging to big estates, land that was often badly farmed or not farmed at all. This again was a spontaneous movement not led by the Socialists or any other party. But it was unable to overcome the deep antagonism between small-holders, leaseholders and labourers who often clashed violently. The strikes and boycotts of the agricultural labourers were broken by the landowners, partly by offering some of them better conditions and even small plots of land, partly by the

39. For details see F.T. Zsuppan, "The Early Activities of the Hungarian Communist Party", *Slavonic and East European Review*, no. 101, (June 1965), pp. 331-334.

40. Denis Mack Smith, *Italy – A Modern History* (Ann Arbor, 1959), pp. 338-339; Erwin v. Beckerath, *Wesen und Werden des fascistischen Staates* (Berlin, 1927), p. 4; Robert Michels, *Sozialismus und Faschismus in Italien* (Munich, 1925), pp. 201 ff.

e of armed fascist squads. This movement too ended in failure, and it offered to the scists the opportunity to establish their control in certain provinces, as a recent study Fascism in Ferrara has shown.[41] As far as the Italian left was concerned, it was a e of missed opportunities; but this does not mean that a dictatorship of the proletariat ıld have been established in Italy, for Socialist strength was concentrated in the north ile the other regions and the Church were hostile to it.

The March on Rome itself can hardly be classified as a revolutionary seizure of wer. It is true that some 25,000 Fascists were assembled in four columns in the ghtbourhood of Rome, many of them unarmed, wet and hungry, to occupy the city. eanwhile Mussolini waited in the safety of Milan for the royal summons, and this ly came after the king had refused to sign a decree proclaiming martial law. Thus ıssolini was able to arrive at Rome station in a sleeping car and *before* his men, and the invitation of the king to form a constitutional government.[42] Recently Professor nzo de Felice has maintained that Fascism was "revolutionary because it mobilized masses for the first time and actively involved them. . . . in the day to day functioning the system."[43] But in the twentieth century many regimes have succeeded in the bilization and involvement of the masses: must they therefore all be called revolunary? If this were so, then in the words of Denis Mack Smith's reply to this claim, e shall have to find a new word for the events of 1789 and 1917".[44]

What, then, caused a revolutionary situation in Europe in the years after the first rld war? In the first place, clearly military defeat which discredited the government d made it unable to resist demands for radical change. Military defeat also caused ıtiny or near mutiny in the armed forces. Either they started the revolutionary vement, or they fraternized with the masses protesting against the continuation of war and the misery which it had created. The old armies soon disintegrated under impact of defeat and revolution. Their place had to be taken by new force more less loyal to the revolutionary government. The revolution itself was not organized prepared by any left-wing party, but it was a spontaneous mass movement in which workers joined hands with the soldiers: their alliance was an essential element for victory of the revolution. So was the support of the peasantry. In a Europe which s still largely agricultural the attitude of the peasants was of decisive importance. ıere they turned against the revolution – as in Bavaria, Austria and Hungary – its ıievements proved shortlived. The peasants could withhold vital supplies and force revolutionary government to its knees. Everywhere the support of the urban working ss provided too small a social basis, and the working class usually was deeply disunited. e attempts by radical minorities to push the revolution on to a more extremist course re doomed to failure from the outset, whether undertaken in Berlin, Munich, Vienna Budapest. Especially in Munich and in Budapest these attempts prepared the way counter-revolution, and ultimately for the rise of Fascism. In Russia, on the other nd, the revolutionary situation deepened in the course of 1917 because the Provisional vernment continued a disastrous war and refused to sanction the expropriation of land by the peasants, because the Soviets became more powerful than the government ıich possessed neither a military force nor an administrative machinery on which it uld rely. These very exceptional circumstances played into the hands of the Bolsheviks: ey did not create this situation, but they exploited it to the full.

Paul Corner, *Fascism in Ferrara 1915-1925* (Oxford, 1975).
For details see Mack Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 365-372.
Michael Ledeen, in the *Times Literary Supplement* (Jan. 9, 1976), p. 36.
Mack Smith, *ibid.*, (Jan. 16, 1976), p. 58.

Résumé

Qu'est-ce qui fut à l'origine des situations révolutionnaires qu'ont connues plusieurs régions de l'Europe au lendemain de la première guerre mondiale?

Il apparaît très clairement que la cause première en fut la défaite militaire, qui discrédita les gouvernements forcés à capituler et les rendit impuisants à contenir les mouvements populaires en faveur de changements radicaux. La défaite militaire fut également à l'origine des mutineries comme des autres manifestations d'insoumission au sein de l'armée. Les soldats déclenchèrent le mouvement révolutionnaire ou fraternisèrent avec les masses protestant contre la poursuite de la guerre et la misère qu'elle avait engendrée. L'impact de la défaite et de la révolution démantela rapidement les armées traditionnelles auxquelles se substituèrent bientôt de nouvelles forces, plus ou moins loyales aux gouvernements révolutionnaires. L'organisation et la préparation des révolutions elles-mêmes ne sont attribuables à aucun parti de gauche; il s'agit plutôt de mouvements de masses spontanés où soldats et ouvriers se donnèrent la main, leur alliance constituant un des facteurs essentiels de la victoire révolutionnaire. Ceci s'applique également à l'appui de la paysannerie. Dans une Europe encore largement agricole, l'attitude des paysans était d'une importance décisive: là où ils se retournèrent contre la révolution – comme en Bavière, en Autriche et en Hongrie – celle-ci ne fit pas long feu, car les paysans étaient en mesure de couper les vivres aux insurgés et de contribuer ainsi à la chute des gouvernements révolutionnaires. Dans tous les pays concernés, la classe ouvrière urbaine ne pouvait constituer, par son appui, une base sociale suffisante pour la révolution et, de surcroît, cette classe ouvrière était en général profondément divisée.

Les tentatives, de la part des minorités radicales, de donner à la révolution une orientation extrémiste furent, d'entrée de jeu, condamnées à l'échec, que ce fût à Berlin, à Munich, à Vienne ou à Budapest. A Munich et à Budapest, en particulier, ces tentatives ouvrirent la voie à la contre-révolution et, finalement, à la montée du fascisme. En Russie, en revanche, la situation révolutionnaire s'aggrava au cours de l'année 1917, le gouvernement provisoire s'entêtant à poursuivre une guerre aux conséquences désastreuses et refusant de sanctionner l'expropriation des terres par les paysans; la force des soviets se révéla alors supérieure à celle du gouvernement qui ne pouvait compter, pour maintenir son autorité, ni sur l'armée, ni sur l'efficacité de sa machine administrative. Ces circonstances exceptionnelles jouèrent en faveur des bolcheviks: sans avoir été les artisans de cette situation, ils surent néanmoins l'exploiter à fond.

L'Italie connut, en 1920, une situation semi-révolutionnaire, qui se conclut sur un échec total pour les ouvriers des villes comme pour les paysans. En ce qui concerne la gauche italienne, cette situation ne fut qu'une suite d'occasions manquées. Ceci ne signifie pas que la dictature du prolétariat aurait pu être instaurée en Italie, car les forces socialistes étaient surtout concentrées dans le Nord, tandis que l'Eglise, hostile au socialisme, conservait son emprise sur les autres régions.

ésentation / Opening Session

cussion

Gourevitch. I would like to ask both conférenciers a question. It seems to me that en one says that there was a revolutionary situation, there are quite a range of sibilities of potential developments that one can imagine that could be called olutionary in the sense that things would have been different from what actually pened. I wonder if you both care to indicate, a little bit, what possibilities you think e opened when one says that there was a revolutionary situation in Germany. For mple, do you think that it was conceivable that a Leninist or Bolshevik-type regime ld have been established in Germany at that time? Or, do you imagine something when you say that the capacity for action of the Social Democratic Party was to e done more that it did? Do you envisage an outcome intermediate between the which actually occured and a Bolshevik-type?

Carsten. Well, if I understood the question rightly, it was whether I think it would e been possible to establish a Leninist regime in Germany in 1919? Now these are y opinions I can put forward, no facts. In my opinion, there was no possibility atever to establish a Leninist or Communist regime in Germany in 1918-1919 for simple reason that the Spartakists, or later, Communists were extremely weak; the -wing workers at that time, if they supported any party, did not support the mmunists, but supported the Independent Social-Democrats, the U.S.P.D., which was rge left-wing party, but not as I said, a revolutionary party.

What other possibilities were there? Well, for the first time in the history of rmany, a democratic regime was established, a bourgeois, liberal, democratic regime. my opinion, there was, however, a very good chance that such a regime need not e relied on the General Staff and the generals. Such a regime could have created own military force. There was no need (although this is denied by conservative rman historians today) to rely on the General Staff and the High Command and generals. As German Social Democracy was considerably stronger than the Austrian ial Democrats, they also could have created a "Volkswehr"; and indeed the Germans sed a law that created the "Volkswehr" and local "Volkswehr" units came into being many parts of Germany. The elements were there, but the chance was not used.

There is then the somewhat more difficult question whether these Social Democrats ld also have replaced more of the top civil servants in Germany as a whole and in states and on the local level, whether they had people qualified to do so? Now, s is not easy to answer. There certainly were enough officers available in the army who uld have served in the "Volkswehr"; this we know, because an organization of that d actually came into being which called itself the "Republican Leaders Association" l which had many members among officers and even more surprisingly, among the C.O.s. of the old Prussian army. For the civil servants we have much less information, I should have thought that it would not have been necessary to replace the old reaucratic apparatus from top to bottom; but, if enough changes had been made at top, the whole apparatus would have acquired a new political face. And for the top

positions there were people, only that the Social Democrats had no confidence in their own strength, and also did not want to upset the applecart at a time of very serious economical and political difficulties; they thought it best to leave things as they were. In my opinion, it was not necessary. And changes of a more radical and democratic kind, not Communist or revolutionary, could have been introduced, but they would have had to be introduced very quickly before the old forces had had a chance to consolidate themselves, and the real possibility existed in November and December 1918, before the revolutionary impetus evaporated.

P. Broué. Je ne répondrai pas de la même façon. Croyez-vous qu'il soit juste de poser ainsi la question? Un exemple me suffira: supposons que la révolution russe ait été vaincue, et que quelqu'un demande ensuite s'il était possible qu'un régime communiste s'établisse en Russie; il ne fait aucun doute que tout le monde assurerait que non! Et pourtant, nous savons, nous, qu'un tel régime s'est établi. Mais il est vrai que la Russie était, sans nul doute, l'un des pays d'Europe les moins préparés à un tel développement, et cette réponse négative – dont nous savons qu'elle n'aurait aucune valeur – ne serait pas stupide!

Donc, pas de réponse catégorique. En revanche, des éléments pour y répondre. J'affirme personnellement que je crois que la victoire du socialisme était possible en Europe, à cette époque, et qu'à plusieurs reprises, dans les années d'après 1917, elle s'est trouvée en quelque sorte au rendez-vous de l'histoire. Bien entendu, il ne se serait pas agi de ce qu'on appelle ici « le bolchevisme » – un modèle calqué sur l'évolution historique concrète en Russie – mais d'une forme *forcément* nouvelle, marquée par le développement économique, social, culturel de l'Allemagne qui était l'un des pays les plus avancés d'Europe, enrichie notamment par la tradition de démocratie ouvrière qui avait marqué le mouvement allemand, et qui en eût fait une qualité différente. Le professeur Carsten a raison quand il dit qu'en décembre 1918 ou janvier 1919, l'hypothèse de la victoire d'une révolution prolétarienne était rigoureusement exclue en Allemagne, parce que les communistes n'y constituaient qu'une faible minorité. Mais seulement la victoire *immédiate*, car nous savons tous qu'une minorité peut conquérir la majorité et que les bolcheviks n'étaient, en février 1917, qu'une petite minorité. La victoire à court terme était exclue, non seulement parce que les communistes étaient une petite minorité, mais bien plus encore parce que les communistes allemands étaient sur une ligne politique qui faisait d'eux non pas une « avant-garde », celle de la classe toute entière, mais une « minorité agissante ». Il est vrai que la masse des travailleurs allemands suivait à l'époque l'U.S.P.D., mais, précisément – l'histoire de l'année 1920 l'a prouvé – ils en attendaient une issue révolutionnaire. Imaginons encore une fois que le parti bolchevique ait été isolé décisivement et décapité en juillet 1917, ne pourrait-on dire aujourd'hui que le succès final des bolcheviks était rigoureusement exclu au moment des journées de juillet?

En dehors de l'année 1923 – qui se situe en dehors du champ d'étude de notre colloque – je pense que le moment historique qui a été le plus riche de possibilités d'une victoire révolutionnaire en Allemagne se situe au lendemain de l'échec du putsch de Kapp face à la grève générale lancée par Legien – le chef « archi-réactionnaire » des syndicats, disaient les communistes, – et qu'il s'y est présenté, pendant quelques jours, une extraordinaire occasion qui a été manquée, puisque cette situation a finalement débouché sur une véritable impasse politique pour la classe ouvrière allemande. Je rappelle que les dirigeants syndicaux proposaient un « gouvernement socialiste », avec S.P.D., U.S.P.D. et syndicats, sans tenir compte de la composition du Reichstag. Or les indépendants ont refusé, par souci de « pureté », disaient-ils, et peut-être, aussi, par peur de l'aventure révolutionnaire. Les social-démocrates majoritaires, sans refuser ouvertement – et c'était significatif – ont cherché à gagner du temps afin de retourner tranquillement aux coalitions parlementaires avec les partis bourgeois. Les communistes ont oscillé et, finalement, n'ont rien fait pour mettre les partis socialistes au pied du mur et s'en sont consolés en disant que ce gouvernement « socialiste » n'aurait été qu'une réédition du gouvernement Ebert-Haase de 1918, alors que tout démontre qu'il aurait pu en aller tout autrement.

A mon avis, les uns et les autres, en refusant les propositions des dirigeants syndicaux, fermé la porte non seulement à un développement révolutionnaire, qui serait passé ravers ce gouvernement et les comités d'action formés dans toutes les régions indus-lles, ouvrant la possibilité d'une résurrection des formes « soviétiques » à travers conseils de délégués, mais même à la démocratisation qu'évoquait tout à l'heure le fesseur Carsten, à travers une épuration profonde et réelle de l'appareil d'Etat. Ce ment-là a été un moment crucial dans l'histoire de la révolution européenne. Il l'a aussi, dans celle du mouvement communiste, puisque c'est en prenant le contre-pied la condamnation, par l'exécutif de l'I.C., de la « déclaration d'opposition loyale » K.P.D. à un éventuel gouvernement socialiste en Allemagne, que Lénine va développer certain nombre d'argument dans son offensive contre la ligne de la « minorité ssante »: la politique du « front unique ouvrier » et la lutte pour un « gouvernement rier », que l'Internationale communiste adopte à partir de 1922, sont là en germe. printemps 1920 a été un de ces moments où l'histoire semble hésiter.

Hoffmann. (McGill University). There appears to be the assumption that the term volutionary" is associated with leftwing movements. I wonder if Professor Carsten uld care to give a definition of "revolution", or "revolutionary", that would include possibility of other than leftwing movements for radical change. Or, it is to be derstood that the term "revolutionary", without further modifications such as "con-vative revolutionary", is to be reserved for leftwing radical movements?

Carsten. In central Europe the conservative forces were completely dead for a short e. They were defeated. In 1918-19, they showed no strength whatsoever and they y came back into power with the failure of Communist uprisings and their suppression the Free Corps or the white terror in Hungary. But these movements, the Free Corps he white terror in Hungary, I myself would not classify as revolutionary. They were ch more – Professor Ránki may have to supplement what I am going to say here – I wouldn't call the Horthy forces, the white forces in Hungary, "revolutionary", the Free Corps in Germany. There were reactionary military forces which were d, deliberately, to destroy the so-called Bolshevik danger.

Orban. (U. de Montréal). Ma question se situe dans le prolongement de celle qui nt d'être posée. Elle concerne le concept de révolution. Je ne suis guère satisfait de éponse qui vient d'être fournie.

Il est évident que le terme révolution, tel que défini jusqu'ici, reste extrêmement ue. On l'utilise pour qualifier toutes sortes d'expériences, allant de la révolution russe 1917 à la « révolution anglaise » du XVIIe siècle.

On aimerait savoir quelles sont les grandes caractéristiques de ce que vous appelez révolution ou, ce qui est beaucoup plus intéressant, quels sont les mécanismes damentaux d'une révolution. On peut toujours dire que c'est une remise en question structures, voire un effondrement de ces dernières. Mais de quelles structures s'agit-il? quels sont les mécanismes généraux qui permettent d'identifier une révolution? Et i pose une autre question, puisque l'on parle de dynamisme révolutionnaire: quelles t les grandes étapes que l'on rencontre dans la plupart des révolutions? Ceci me semble ticulièrement important, car vous parlez d'une situation révolutionnaire. Cette expres-n n'est-elle pas inadéquate et contradictoire? « Situation » donne une idée de stabilité forme une antithèse par rapport au terme révolution?

En d'autres termes, au début d'un colloque comme celui-ci, il me semble indispensable l'on définisse ses concepts et sa problématique, sinon je ne vois pas quels liens nous urrons établir entre les différents exposés.

Carsten. Well, I can only give an answer in one sentence. The mechanism of the olution was expressed in the Soviets which became workers' and soldiers' councils Central Europe. They were the organ of the revolution and the organ of the revolution ich in a way also determined its course, its course in Russia towards the Left and its urse in Central Europe towards a more moderate or democratic-liberal solution.

I. Smith. (Concordia U.). You repeated several times that the revolution came to the countries that experienced defeat. I am sure that you are aware of the fact that many members of the Provisional Government in Russia chose to remain in the war in the hope of preventing the acceleration of the Revolution. Surely, there were many people who felt that the war was one way of preventing revolution. Could you comment on that?

F. Carsten. Well, if this was so, I have not seen the evidence. It may well have been that they remained in the war to prevent a further escalation of the revolutionary movement, but if so, they chose the wrong course, because the fact that Russia remained in the war escalated the Revolution. It is exactly the same with the Free Corps in Germany which fought to suppress Bolshevism. In reality they created the Bolshevik danger. The action that people take very often has the opposite result from what they intend and if there was such intention on the side of members of the provisional government, it certainly did not produce that result, but produced the opposite result.

G. Feldman. This is a somewhat simple-minded question about periodization which puzzles me. Our program says 1917 to 1922. Professor Carsten would seem to end the German Revolution or revolutionary situation in about January 1919 for all intents and purposes, although recently some scholars have argued that at least until April/May of 1920 there was a revolutionary situation in Germany. Professor Broué in his recent book goes up to 1923, and I am just wondering how long you would say that the revolutionary situations last.

P. Broué. Je crois que le professeur Carsten a raison quand il arrête en 1920 la *période* des situations révolutionnaires en Europe. Mais cela n'empêche pas que se crée, en 1923, en Allemagne, une nouvelle situation révolutionnaire, qui tient à la situation internationale – l'occupation de la Ruhr – et à l'inflation galopante qui secoue alors l'Allemagne. C'est, si l'on veut, une rechute, qui pouvait marquer un renversement de la tendance. Pour très peu de temps, la situation allemande présente tous les traits d'une situation révolutionnaire. Il est vrai que l'année 1923 se situe en dehors du cadre chronologique du colloque. Si je l'ai mentionnée dans mon rapport, c'est parce que je crois, d'une part, que les bolcheviks venaient d'affiner leur analyse de ce qu'était une situation révolutionnaire et que, d'autre part, une fois de plus, ils se sont trouvés confrontés à un tournant brutal de la situation, une modification soudaine du rapport de forces, et qu'ils ne s'y sont adaptés, une fois de plus, que lentement et avec un retard considérable.

F. Carsten. If I may reply briefly to Professor Feldman – Professor Kolb considers that the Spartakist rising of January 1919, was the battle of the Marne of the German revolution. I would perhaps not go quite that far but I would certainly say that by the time that the Munich council republic was suppressed in April 1919, the revolutionary situation in Germany had come to an end. The victory of the government supported by the Free Corps was secured. Then in Germany there were two brief revivals later on of a revolutionary situation. One was the Kapp Putsch and that I did discuss briefly; in March 1920 there was a semblance of a revolutionary situation but it was very localized: the only serious clashes, as you of course well know, took place in the Ruhr and there were no clashes in other parts of Germany.

In the Ruhr, basing myself on the recent study by George Eliasberg, I would say that there was a revolutionary situation for a short time in March 1920, but not in any other part of Germany. The second revival – and my colleague has already discussed it – was, as we all know, in 1923. This I considered, taking my dates from the organizers of the Colloquium, outside the terms of discussion. But in 1923 in Germany there probably was a semi-revolutionary situation at the time when inflation reached its height and when the whole policy of the government had collapsed. But even then, in 1923 in Germany, I think that the danger of a right wing revolution was much greater than the danger of a Communist revolution.

L. Hertzman. (York U.) I found quite interesting Professor Broué's description of Bolshevik attempts to analyze what was going on in Europe under revolutionary circumstances. He showed quite well that Bolsheviks and Socialists were much stronger in

viding a theoretical framework than in relating the objective situation to their frame-
k. I found the descriptions of Professor Carsten truly interesting because he is doing
ve and original research in these fields, but I am a bit troubled by what appeared to
his conclusions and the framework in which he is trying to place all the situations.

The question I would direct to Mr. Carsten is in terms of his methodology. I would,
act, like to know what he is trying to achieve in the sense of creating a framework.
n another one who is troubled by his looking particularly to military defeat. I can
k of two definite situations where this does not apply. It may be that the exception
ves the rule, but I really would like to know to what extent he feels confident about
viding a kind of theoretical framework in which these revolutionary situations of the
od can be fitted. I am thinking in particular of two exceptions, the Irish and the
nish, because I think that the situations in Ireland and in Spain at this time are quite
vant in terms of revolutionary situations; but they do not seem quite to fit the
gested tentative framework that we heard this morning.

Carsten. Well I am certainly not opposed to the creation of such a framework if we
do it. I think we must try. It would be very difficult, I think, to establish that frame-
k.

Hertzman. Fine, I think that this answers the question You as an historian are not
ly interested in frameworks. You are really interested in describing the concrete
ations.

Chodak. (Concordia U.) It is an established fact that the Russian Revolution served
n inducement for other revolutions in Western Europe. It was less analyzed to what
nt the Russian Revolution was a deterent to other revolutions in Western Europe.
at I have in mind is the effect it had on people like Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Lieb-
cht who criticized the Russian Revolution and described it as a "revolution behind
barbed wire".

Broué. Comme, finalement, tous les phénomènes historiques, la révolution russe et
lendemains ont comporté un aspect négatif et un aspect positif. La révolution russe
abord été un facteur d'accélération, de centralisation, et un moteur du mûrissement
a révolution européenne, c'est absolument incontestable pour les premières années.
s les historiens, indépendamment de leurs divergences, en sont d'accord pour ce qui
cerne l'Allemagne, où les archives de l'époque multiplient les références, dans toutes
assemblées ouvrières, « aux Russes », à la façon de lutter « à la Russe ». Pour prendre
exemple moins connu, le livre du professeur Meaker sur *The Revolutionary Left in*
in (1914-1923) donne des exemples saisissants de l'attrait, du prestige de la révolution
e dans les campagnes andalouses, et du rôle de l'exemple russe dans l'agitation
sanne à cette époque, à partir de 1917. Il s'agit certes du « modèle russe » tel qu'on
agine, de façon souvent incertaine, vague, parfois confuse, mais c'est bien de lui qu'il
it.

Je voudrais dire aussi qu'il ne me semble pas juste d'associer Rosa Luxemburg et
l Liebknecht aux critiques « de droite » de la révolution russe. Il ne semble pas que
knecht ait été le moins du monde critique de la révolution russe. Ensuite, les critiques
Rosa Luxemburg sont des réflexions personnelles, encore inachevées, qu'elle consigne
s un cahier de prison et qu'elle confie à son avocat pour les mettre en sûreté. Ces
ques – normales entre camarades d'un même combat – sont autant d'interrogations
t nous ignorons comment elle y a répondu et si même elle y a répondu entre la date
eur rédaction et celle de son assassinat. Il ne faut pas oublier qu'elles n'ont été publiées
plus de deux ans après sa mort, et par Paul Levi, qui avait été depuis cette époque
des dirigeants de l'Internationale communiste, et qu'il ne le fera qu'après sa propre
ture avec Moscou.

Je pense que ce qui dominait dans la pensée de Rosa Luxemburg, à l'époque où
rédigeait ces notes pour elle-même, c'est qu'elle apercevait des dangers dans la poli-
e des bolcheviks, certes, mais qu'elles les situait dans un contexte bien précis, celui

du retard de la révolution mondiale, de la non-réalisation de la révolution allemande. Il me semble qu'on peut résumer ce qu'elle pensait, avec bien d'autres révolutionnaires allemands, de la façon suivante: « Les Russes font des bêtises, mais c'est de notre faute, car ils ont commencé, et nous, nous n'avons pas su continuer ». Si mes souvenirs sont exacts, c'est d'ailleurs de cette façon qu'elle conclut ses notes en disant des bolcheviks: « Ils ont osé »; en d'autres termes, ils ont fait le premier pas vers la révolution mondiale et c'était l'essentiel.

C. Maier. I have a question for Professor Carsten. I was trying to put some pattern onto his valiant survey of events, and it struck me that the critical variable he seemed to be citing was the existence of an agrarian revolutionary situation. Where this did not exist, or where it was not mobilized by urban revolutionary leaders, one did not have a revolutionary outcome, and perhaps not even a revolutionary situation. I would like to pose the question: if the variable is indeed agriculture and the state of the countryside, how do we evaluate all the urban forces and social-democratic parties, and what sort of revolutionary situation are we then in during 1917-23?

F. Carsten. Well, I would say it depends of course on the country in question and on its relative economic development. In Russia, I think we can all agree that the agrarian revolution determined the fate of the revolution. In Central Europe, this is perhaps not recognized, and there people may disagree, but in my opinion, in Central Europe too, the course of the revolution was to a large extent conditioned by the development of the agrarian problem. And if there was no agrarian revolution at all, the revolutionary movement would remain isolated in the towns and could there be fairly easily defeated. I would think that even in comparatively advanced countries, such as Germany was in 1918, the agrarian problem and the fact that there was no agrarian revolution exercised a decisive influence on the course of the revolutionary movement as such. This may be to some extent a heretical view, but it is certainly a view which I hold and I hope that there will be ample opportunity for discussing it further in the course of these different sessions.

x oriente lux?" The Soviet Example d the German Revolution, 1917-1923

ert F. Wheeler

Ex oriente lux – light from the East; this expression was used in 1919 by Ernst mig a leader of the revolutionary German Räte or Councils movement.[1] His words bolized the appeal of the Russian Soviet example for many German workers. Yet many? How widespread were such feelings? How pervasive was the Bolshevik uence? What sort of relationship existed between the Russian and the German olutions? To what degree was the German Revolution sui generis and to what extent it influenced by the reality and the preceptions of the Soviet example?

A German Revolution after the first world war? A West German undergraduate ny German history survey indicated she had never heard of such a thing. And until early 1960s the same was probably true of most Western academics. As Reinhard up has shown, the traditional approach favored by most scholars was either to ignore o pass over lightly that period of German history between the armistice of November 8 and the Versailles treaty in June of the following year.[2] Many archivists labeled r files on the events of these days "November revolte", "Umsturz", "Umtriebe", nwalzung", "Unruhen", or "Zusammenbruch" rather than "Revolution" and for a g time it seemed as if the historical establishment shared this attitude. Then about 15 rs ago, the German Revolution of 1918/1919 was rediscovered by a number of young olars.[3] Like many of their colleagues they were searching for a better understanding he failure of the Weimar Republic. But they chose to look at something other than political and economic crises that marked Nazism's ascendancy, at something other n the treaty of Versailles, at something other than the Weimar Constitution; rather y chose to examine what had for so long been confined to the dustbin of history, nely the revolutionary situation that gave birth to the German Republic. The results heir research, if perhaps less celebrated than that of Fritz Fischer and his students cerning the origins of World War I, are at least of equal importance. They indicate Germany did experience Revolution during 1918/1919.

This Revolution was spontaneous and had its own unique institutions – the *Arbeiter Soldatenräte* (the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils). With few exceptions, these itutions which bore a superficial resemblance to the Russian "Soviets" were initially

Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich, *Curt Geyer: Erinnerungen*, p. 85. (Wolfgang Benz and Hermann Graml are preparing an edited version of these memoirs. They will appear shortly with an introduction by Robert F. Wheeler.)

See the following works by Rürup: *Probleme der Revolution in Deutschland 1918-19* (Wiesbaden, 1968); "Problems of the German Revolution 1918-19", in *Journal of Contemporary History*, III (1968), No. 4, pp. 109-135; "Einleitung", *Arbeiter- und Soldatenräte in rheinish-westfälischen Industriegebiet* (Wuppertal, 1975).

See in particular the studies of Eberhard Kolb, *Die Arbeiterräte in der deutschen Innenpolitik 1918-1919* (Düsseldorf, 1962) and "Rätewirklichkeit und Räteideologie in der deutschen Revolution von 1918-19", in Helmut Neubauer (ed.), *Deutchland und die Russische Revolution* (Stuttgart, 1968), pp. 94-110, and Peter von Oertzen, *Betriebsräte in der Novemberrevolution* (Düsseldorf, 1963) and "Die grossen Streiks der Ruhrbergarbeiterschaft in Frühjahr 1919", in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, VI (1958), pp. 231-262.

revolutionary but not radical in a Bolshevik sense; they advocated the complete democratization of German society – politically, administratively, economically and militarily. This Revolution was a singularly German phenomenon; it was the product of neither Lenin nor Wilson. That the German Revolution ultimately failed, that its institutions were destroyed and its memory suppressed, can not alter the reality of 1918/1919; any more so than the Communists' attempt to claim this revolutionary heritage at their own.[4]

Yet if this be so, why were the German Communists for so long so successful in such attempts? Why were the Räte commonly associated or even equated with Bolshevism? Why the attraction of the Russian Soviet example in post-war Germany? Was the German Revolution really so uniquely German after all?

There is no question that the German Revolution had an international dimension. On the one hand, it formed a part of that revolutionary wave, which, to reverse the 1848 analogy, began in the East and swept across Europe until turned back by the forces of counterrevolution assembled at Paris. There are recorded instances of German revolutionaries agitating among West European prisoners of war in Germany, and of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils in the Rhineland attempting to spread revolution among the armies of the victors.[5] On the other hand, the German Revolution was also an important factor in the Renaissance of Socialist Internationalism that immediately followed the war, be it the resurrection of the old Second International or the creation of the new Third or Communist International.[6] And given the situation Germany found herself in after the armistice, it was unavoidable that external factors would play a role in the development of the Revolution.[7] But to recognize this international aspect is not to deny the uniqueness of this event itself nor to suggest a direct causal link between the Bolsheviks and the German Revolution. Ironically the actual attraction of the Soviet example was inversely related to the success of the German Revolution, i.e., German failures made the Russian model more attractive. As long as the German workers and soldiers on the whole remained satisfied with their Revolution, they expressed little desire to imitate the Russians, although they were not unsympathetic to the new Soviet state. But the more disillusioned German workers became with the course their Revolution was taking, the more they were drawn to the Soviet example. Whatever influence the Russians had on revolutionary developments in Germany prior to 1919 was largely indirect; thereafter it became increasingly direct. This is best illustrated by examining the pre-revolutionary, revolutionary and post-revolutionary situations in Germany between 1917 and 1923.

The Russian "February" Revolution was enthusiastically greeted by the German Left. In April 1917, the founding congress of that party which was in many ways to reflect the course of the revolution, namely the Independent Social Democratic Party (USPD), referred to the "shining example" of the Russian Revolution and to the "March storms that roar through the world."[8] Still the influence of the "February" Revolution on pre-revolutionary action in Germany while not unimportant, was an indirect one. The Russian experience tended to heighten the growing demand for peace within German society but without giving it any particular form. Thus the split in the Social Democratic movement and the formation of the USPD while they followed the "February" Revolution owed nothing to developments in Russia. And the first major anti-war action to take place in Germany, the April 16 metal workers strike, was only related to the "February"

4. See Rürup, "Einleitung", p. 11ff. For a review of East German scholarship on this Revolution see Alexander Decker, "Die Noverberrevolution und die Geschichtswissenschaft in der DDR", in *Internationale wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arberterbewegung*, X (1974), pp. 269-299.
5. See Wheeler, *USPD und Internationale, Sozialistischer Internationalismus in der Zeit der Revolution* (Berlin, 1975), pp. 50-51.
6. See Wheeler, *USPD und Internationale* and Albert Lindemann, *The "Red Years". European Socialism Versus Bolshevism, 1919-1921* (Berkeley, 1974).
7. See for example Arno J. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking* (New York, 1967), especially chapters eight, nine and twenty-two.
8. Emil Eichhorn (ed.) *Protokoll über die Verhandlungen des Gründungs-Parteitags der USPD vom 6.-8. April 1917 in Gotha* (Berlin, 1921), pp. 8 and 79.

lution in the most general sense.[9] Organized by Independent Social Democrats and spontaneous as some historians have suggested, this action involved approximately arter of a million German workers primarily in Leipzig and Berlin.[10] Ostensibly trikes were called to protest the reduction of the bread ration; in fact the economic was a tactical device used to get the workers out and many of the strikers' demands clearly political, for example, the calls for peace without annexations, for an end nsorship and martial law, and for the freeing of political prisoners.[11] As one con- orary observer noted, in the course of this action the "question of bread disappeared and more behind the question of peace."[12]

The growing concern with the "question of peace" was both reflected in and rein- d by the various efforts, including that of the Petrograd Soviet to hold an inter- nal Socialist peace conference in Stockholm during the spring and summer of .[13] Although ultimately unsuccessful, the idea received substantial publicity and lly captured the imagination of a large number of increasingly war-weary Europeans. ng them were members of the German fleet.

With the exception of the U-boat command, the German navy had seen relatively action during the war. Most of its time was spent in or near port in the equivalent kind of garrison duty. But while the sailors did have some contacts with civilians, did not have the other amenities of garrison life. On the contrary, living conditions oard ship for the ordinary seamen were quite poor and discontent tended to be erbated by exaggerated discipline and the sharp distinctions that existed between ers and men. The disturbances in the fleet which broke out spontaneously during ummer of 1917 were a product of this situation.[14] At the same time the ordinary r's desire for peace was underscored by contacts with the USPD and support for proposed Stockholm peace conference, sentiments which were reinforced by the utionary Russian example. But again, as in the case of the April strikes, the Russian ence was felt more in a general way than in some direct fashion.

The Bolshevik "October" Revolution of November 1917, brought something closer n immediate and a direct response in Germany. The USPD called for mass dem- rations throughout Germany in support of the Bolsheviks' appeal for a general e-fire and peace without annexations. But the authorities quickly suppressed this lamation and prohibited the proposed demonstrations.[15] The few public displays of ort that took place anyway often ended in bloody clashes with the police. No equent major action was attempted in part because of government repression – this the time of a concerted government attempt to destroy the USPD,[16] in part because rts indicated that there was not sufficient support present among the working classes large scale underaking.

For an account of the strike see Fritz Opel, *Der Deutsche Metallarbeiterverband während des ersten Weltkrieges und der Revolution* (Hannover, 1957), pp. 57ff. and Gerald D. Feldman, *Army, Industry and Labor in Germany 1914-1918* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 33ff.

See Wheeler, *USPD und Internationale,* pp. 27-28. Compare David Morgan, *The Socialist Left and the German Revolution* (Ithaca, 1975), p. 83 who argues only limited USPD involvement and Susanne Miller, *Burgfrieden und Klassenkampf* (Düsseldorf, 1974), p. 291 and Erich Matthais, "Die Rückwirkungen der russischen Oktoberrevolution auf die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung", in *Deutschland und die Russische Revolution,* p. 77 who argue the strike was "spontaneous."

See for example the demands of the Leipzig strikers in Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus, *Dokumente und Materialien zur Geschchte der Deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (Berlin/DDR, 1958), I, p. 612.

Ernst Haase (ed.), Hugo Haase. *Stein Leben und Wirken* (Berlin, n.d.), p. 143 (letter of April 25, 1917).

See Hildemarie Meynell, "The Stockholm Conference of 1917", in *International Review of Social History,* V (1960), pp. 1-25, 202-225; Merle Fainsod, *International Socialism and the World War* (Garden City, 1969), pp. 163ff.; Arno Mayer, *Wilson vs. Lenin* (Cleveland, 1964), pp. 191ff. and Wheler, *USPD und Internationale, p. 29ff.*

See Daniel Horn, *The German Naval Mutinies of World War I* (New Brunswick, 1969), pp. 76ff. and Miller, *Burgfrieden,* pp. 296ff.

See Wheeler, *USPD und Internationale,* p. 36.

See Morgan, *The Socialist Left,* pp. 78-79, 85-86; also Wilhelm Diest, "Die Unruhen in der Marine 1917/18", in *Marine-Rundschau,* LXVIII (1971), 333ff.

By January of 1918, this last impediment no longer existed. The devastating fourt winter of the war combined with the hard line taken by the German military in th peace negotiations with the Bolsheviks had raised discontent to new heights. Takin advantage of this situation, the USPD organized a massive nationwide political strik for peace at the end of January.[17] The result was characterized by Lenin as a "turnin point in the attitude of the German proletariat" and by a German contemporary a the "greatest event in the history of the German working class."[18] An estimated on million workers, over half of them in the Greater Berlin area, responded to the USPD appeal and walked off their jobs. Planned as a three-day protest action to pressure th government, the strike lasted for over a week in Berlin when the government refused t meet with the strike leadership to discuss the strikers' demands. The strike was onl broken by the government after it banned all strike meetings, arrested or drafted th strike leaders, militarized the factories and sent recalcitrants off to the front. Considere in terms of its main goals, peace without annexations in the East and the prevention o the spring offensive in the West, the strike was a failure. For immediately after dictatin peace terms to the Russians, the Imperial German Army launched a final desperat attack on the western front. But again as in April 1917, only more so, the strike had a immeasurable political value in terms of educating and radicalizing large masses o people. The government's behavior only added to this process. Not only did it completel disregard or repudiate the main strike demands but its reliance on force to break th strike resulted in a number of violent clashes between strikers and police in which at lea six people were killed. In addition in Berlin alone two hundred strikers were sentence to prison by special military courts while some 50,000 others were drafted and man sent to the front.[19] The government's reaction was consistent with its increased use o the courts to get rid of troublemakers and the draconian judgements meted out follow ing the naval disturbances: ten death sentences and a total of 131 years jail *(Zuchthau* and 180 years prison *(Gefängnis)*.[20] But it was also guaranteed to feed the fires of resen ment that would ultimately topple the Wilhelmine state.

There is no question that the January strikes had an international dimension.[21] The were influenced by the decision of the third conference of the Zimmerwald movemen meeting in Stockholm the previous September for mass international strikes to end th war; they followed by a few weeks strikes in Austria-Hungary; and they occurred simu taneously with the peace negotiations between the German and Russian government If nothing else the strike was clearly designed to send a message to the Imperial gover ment regarding these negotiations – peace without annexations was the main deman It is also difficult to believe that the series of revolutions which had shaken Russia durin the previous year had no impact on the German working class. Still the Russian influenc was probably to be found more in general attitudes and consciousness rather than i affecting any specific demands or developments. At least an examination of the reco suggests nothing Bolshevist or radical about the January strikes; on the contrary th demands were of a decidedly moderate nature.[22]

The minimal direct Soviet influence on pre-revolutionary developments in Germar is perhaps best illustrated by the relative ineffectiveness of the Russian embassy in fu thering revolutionary activity. Established in Berlin in April of 1918 following the co clusion of the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, the Soviet mission definitely attempted to agita for the revolution but its success in so doing was another matter. Police records indica that embassy personnel were in contact with dissident labor leaders and it is documente

17. Morgan, *The Socialist Left,* pp. 87ff.; Miller, *Burgfrieden,* pp. 371ff.
18. Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus, *Geschichte der Deutschen Arbeiterbewegung,* III (Berli DDR, 1966), p. 32; *Haase,* p. 157 (letter of February 10, 1918).
19. *Erinnerungs-Schrift der Verwaltungsstelle Berlin des Deutschen Metallarbeiter-Verbandes* (Berli 1922), p. 30.
20. Miller, *Burgfrieden,* p. 297.
21. Wheeler, *USPD und Internationale,* pp. 36ff.
22. *Dokumente und Materialien,* II, 75, 78-19, 102-103.

the Russians provided money and propaganda to radical groups.[23] Nonetheless, te the exaggerated fears of various government officials, it is apparent that the et diplomats were unsuccessful in instigating even a single revolutionary action against Wilhelmine state. Paradoxically, the geographic area in which the Russian mission most active and which, based on its involvement in the major strikes of 1917 and , would have appeared fertile ground for revolutionary Soviet propaganda, namely n, proved to be one of the last cities to experience the Revolution in November 1918.

It must also be kept in mind that the Bolshevik dictatorship was by no means uni- lly welcomed within the labor movement. And during much of 1918 a major debate l in the Socialist press over Bolshevism.[24] Criticism of the Soviet system was forth- ng not only from conservative trade unionists and Social Democrats but also from n the USPD in the person of such notables as Edouard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky. Bolsheviks were not without their prominent defenders, e.g., Franz Mehring and a Zetkin, although in Zetkin's case her support was anything but uncritical.[25] The rtant point, however, was this debate indicated that the Soviet experiment repelled ell as attracted. The whole issue appears to have become so explosive that it was placed ne agenda of a USPD national conference in September. But, significantly, most of gathering's attention focused on another issue – "future actions"; spontaneous revo- nary upheaval was predicted for the coming winter.[26]

The German Revolution did not wait for winter nor did it wait for those who were ning insurrection. Rather it erupted spontaneously and spread from the fleet in the n and the army in the south across the length and breadth of the country.[27] On ember 9, roughly a week after the red flag had been hoisted in Kiel, the Revolution ned Berlin; within 24 hours the Kaiser had fled, a Republic was declared, and a isional government – the *Rat der Volksbeauftragten* – was set up composed of an l number of Social Democrats and Independent Social Democrats. It was a revolution sing expectations carried out against little resistance. The palace reforms of October, uted at the demand of the military high command in an attempt to secure a quick stice through Wilson, had given the people a taste of freedom. For the first time August 1914, it was possible for those who opposed the war to agitate and organize ly; they did so with a vehemence, demanding not only immediate peace but increas- calling for the removal of the entire system that had brought on the war. The ober reforms" did not go far enough in the direction of changing that system. And is this failure as much as certain naval officers' perverted sense of honor that was onsible for the ultimate outbreak of the Revolution. Had the Navy leadership not npted to take the fleet out to meet the Briish in one last "galant" encounter thus oking the sailors into the mutiny that sparked the Revolution, it is almost certain the Revolution would have broken out somewhere else within another week or two. Wilhelmine state was an overripe fruit ready for the picking. The best indicator there-

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See Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Bonn, *Europa Generalia Nr. 82. Die Sozialdemokratie,* XIII, p. 166; Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus/Zentrales Parteiarchiv St. 8/13, pp. 68ff.; also Winfried Baumgart, *Deutsche Ostpolitik 1918* (Munich, 1966), pp. 338ff.; Peter Lösche, *Der Bolschewismus im Urteil der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 209-210; Werner T. Angress, "Juden im politischen Leben der Revolutionszeit", in Werner C. Mosse (ed.), *Deutsches Judentum in Krieg und Revolution 1916-1923* (Tübingen, 1971), pp. 214-215; Abraham Ascher, "Rusian Marxism and the German Revolution, 1917-1920", in *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte,* VI/VII (1966/67), p. 401.

See Lösche, *Der Bolschewismus,* pp. 116ff.; Morgan, *The Socialist Left,* pp. 98-103.

See Zetkins letter to the USPD Frauenreichsausschuss in early summer 1918 reprinted in *Alles für die Revolution! Aus Leben und Werk der Kämpferin Clara Zetkin* (Berlin, 1927), pp. 26-47. The Institut für Marxismus-Leninismus' edition of selected Zetkin material, *Clara Zetkin. Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften,* II (Berlin/DDR, 1960) contains a copy of this letter (pp. 8-40) *minus* those passages critical of the Bolsheviks!

See Wheeler, *USPD und Internationale,* p. 42.

In addition to the work of Kolb, von Oertzen, Rürup and Morgan, see F.L. Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe 1918-1919* (Berkeley, 1972); A.J. Ryder, *The German Revolution of 1918* (Cambridge, 1967) and Volker Rittberger "Revolution and Pseudo-Democratization", in Gabriel A. Almond, et al. (ed.), *Crisis, Choice, and Change* (Boston, 1973), pp. 285ff.

of was the ease with which the Revolution triumphed and the paralysis of the sta authorities in the face of the bands of revolutionary sailors and soldiers that spread t Revolution throught the country.

The relation of Bolshevik Russia to the German Revolution, at least at the outs was minimal. *Die Rote Fahne,* the newly minted organ of the radical Soviet orient *Spartakusbund,* suggested one similarity when it noted that the Berlin workers had ce brated the anniversary of the Russian Revolution with their own Revolution.[28] Yet fe would argue that such accidental chronology was of any significance. In point of fact, t German Revolution was much different from the Russian "October" Revolution; wh the latter was the product of a calculated action by a "vanguard" party at the center power which eventually was carried to the countryside, the former was a spontaneo upheaval that began in the provinces and ultimately reached the capital a week lat It is true that there were certain similarities between the German workers and soldi councils or Räte and the Russian Soviets; but whereas the Soviets were used by the B sheviks as instruments in the seizure of power and in the establishment of minor dictatorship, the Räte were products of the Revolution which were initially seen as pr visional bodies representing the majority of the population and committed to a thorou going democratization of society.[29]

There were, to be sure, expressions of solidarity with the Russian Revolution em nating from groups in Germany at this time (and vice versa).[30] But the main thrust of t attempts to internationalize the German Revolution was directed westward towards t labor movement of the neutral states and the victorious powers.[31] Ironically the Russi diplomatic mission which had attempted to incite rebellion was not even in Germany welcome the Revolution. It had been expelled from the country only days before t Revolution reached Berlin by the liberal pre-revolutionary government of Prince M von Baden, an action that was encouraged and welcomed by the SPD leadership.[32] Desp the demand of the Berlin Workers' and Soldiers' Councils, to which the provisional n tional executive – *Rat der Volksbeauftragten* – owed its mandate, that the Soviet missi be recalled and normal relations resumed, this was never done.[33] On the contrary the SP representatives in the *Rat der Volksbeauftragten* collaborated with the old foreign offi to block the reestablishment of diplomatic relations, rebuffed Soviet overtures at c operation, and even prevented a duly invited Russian delegation from attending t national congress of Workers' and Soldiers' councils in December. What few individu did manage to reach Germany from Soviet Russia did so by sneaking across the frontier This hostile attitude towards the Russian Revolution is only understandable when o recognizes the irrational fear of Bolshevism that gripped the German bourgeoisie and sizeable section of the labor establishment.[35] The paradox was that this same exaggerat fear of "Bolshevism," i.e., any thorough going change, and resistance to the same ultimat resulted in the growing attraction of the Soviet example! This crucial point can best illustrated by briefly examining the course of the Revolution at the national level.

The *Rat der Volksbeauftragten* had been set up after the Revolution reached Ber in order to administer the country. It was technically responsible to the *Vollzugsrat* of t

28. November 10, 1918.
29. See Rürup, "Problems of the German Revolution"; Kolb, "Rätewirklichkeit und Räteideologi Lösche, "Zur Problematik von Rätesystemen", in *Berliner Stimme,* May 12, 1973; Ulrich Klu *Soldatenräte und Revolution* (Göttingen, 1975).
30. *Dokumente und Materialien,* II, pp. 350-351, 360-361; *Deutsch-sowjetische Beziehungen von Verhandlungen in Brest-Litowsk bis zum Abschluss des Repallovertrages,* I (Berlin/DDR, 196 pp. 810-811; 826, 829.
31. See Wheeler, *USPD und Internationale,* pp. 45ff.
32. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy,* p. 238; Baumgart, *Deutsche Ostpolitik,* p. 354.
33. *Dokumente und Materialien,* II, 249; Baumgart, *Deutsche Ostpolitik,* pp. 360ff.; Horst Günt Linke, *Deutsch-sowjetische Beziehungen bis Rapallo* (Köln, 1972), pp. 28ff.
34. Among those to do so were Karl Radek and Ernst Reuter-Friesland. See Marie-Luise Goldba *Karl Radek und die deutsch-sowjetischen Beziehungen 1918-1923* (Bonn, 1973), pp. 18-19; War Lerner, *Karl Radek* (Stanford, 1970), pp. 78ff. and Willy Brandt and Richard Löwenthal, *Er Reuter* (Munich, 1957), pp. 112ff.
35. See Lösche, *Der Bolschewismus,* pp. 158ff.

n Workers' and Soldiers' councils but in practice it tended to function independently.[36] posed of three Social Democratic *Volksbeauftragten* and three Independent Social ocrats, it was actually dominanted by the SPD even before the USPD withdrew from overnment in late December. But the Social Democratic leadership did not rule the try alone; rather they worked in tandem with the old bureaucratic, business, diplo- and military establishment. Whether because of a failure of nerve on the part of the leaders or because they shared the attitude of their chairman Friedirch Ebert, who rked that he hated the Revolution "like sin," the Social Democrats objectively under- d the Revolution of 1918/1919 by cooperating with the very institutions of the old ne the Revolution was directed against.[37] They were successful in so doing because of ature of the Revolution and the weakness of the USPD, their nominal coalition partner.

Since the Revolution had developed spontaneously and haphazardly, it had lacked central direction or organization. And since it had taken place against minimal resist- it had not physically destroyed the forces of counterrevolution. The Workers' and ers' councils, for example, generally existed side by side with the old political and nistrative institutions. While they exercised a control function, the degree of this ol varied markedly from locality to locality. Further, it was not until December 16 he Workers' and Soldiers' councils held a national congress and established their own al authority – the *Zentralrat*.[38] But in the meantime, the Social Democratic *Volks- ftragten* had stepped into the existing national power vacuum and established their ority with the help of the old administrative institutions. This in turn was only possible use the SPD leadership was able to eliminate any significant USPD influence in the *der Volksbeauftragten*. The Social Democrats were assisted in this respect by the old ne bureaucrats who actively undercut the USPD *Volksbeauftragten* while cooperating the SPD. Equally important the USPD was divided over the question of collaborating the Social Democratic leadership or "social patriots" as they were derisively termed. bstantial section of the party opposed the coalition and this weakened the position e Independent Social Democratic *Volksbeauftragten*.[39] Finally the USPD organization use of government repression throughout the war was only in the process of being Moreover like the Räte movement it was characterized by decentralization and control. The SPD, by contrast, had a highly centralized organizational structure n emerged from the war stronger than ever. This not only provided a solid base of ort for the Social Democratic *Volksbeauftragten* but made it possible for the SPD minate the national congress of Workers' and Soldiers' councils.[40]

Even so the Social Democratic leadership tended to look upon the institutions of the lution with distrust and sought instead the establishment of a "parliamentary" system. oubt they were reinforced in this attitude by the victorious powers and their diplomats, generally and inaccurately viewed the German Räte as an extension of Russian evism.[41] Rather than cooperate with the workers' councils in the full-scale democ- ation of the country, the Social Democrats and their trade union allies chose instead Rürup has so fittingly described as the "coalition of order."[42] Perhaps nothing r symbolized this cooperation with the institutions of the old regime than the

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Erich Matthais, *Zwischen Räten und Geheimräten. Die deutsche Revolutionsregierung 1918-1919* (Düsseldorf, 1970); Susanne Miller and Heinrich Potthoff (eds.), *Die Regierung der Volksbauf- tragten 1918-1919* (Düsseldorf, 1969); Ingo Materna, "Der Vollzugsrat der Berliner Arbeiter- und Soldatenräte in der Novemberrevolution", (Ph.D. Thesis, Humboldt Universität Berlin, 1970).

See Richard N. Hunt, "Friedrich Ebert and the German Revolution of 1918", in Leonard Krieger and Fritz Stern (eds.), *The Responsibility of Power* (Garden City, 1969), pp. 340-361; Rürup, "Problems of the German Revolution", pp. 126ff.; Rittberger, "Revolution and Pseudo-Democrati- zation", pp. 345ff.

See Kolb and Rürup (eds.), *Der Zentralrat der Deutschen Sozialistischen Republik 19.12. 1918- 8.4. 1919. Vom Ersten zum Sweiten Rätekongress* (Leiden, 1968).

Morgan, *The Socialist Left*, p. 126; Wheeler, *USPD und Internationale*, p. 44.

Roughly 60% of the delegates were affiliated with the SPD. See Rittberger, "Revolution and Pseudo-Democratization", p. 340.

See Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy*, pp. 97ff. for a discussion of how the old regime diplomats played on such fears in order to undermine the Revolution.

"Problems of the German Revolution", p. 131.

Ebert-Groener pact and the Stinnes-Legien agreements. Going behind the backs of the USPD *Volksbeauftragten* Ebert reached an accommodation with the head of the old military General Groener;[43] the SPD would recognize the continuity of the officer corps in return for the army's support of the new government. Meanwhile big business and big unions, represented by Hugo Stinnes and Carl Legien respectively, formalized an agreement in early November whereby the unions would recognize business domination of the economy in return for the eight hour day and collective bargaining.[44] Not surprisingly therefore, the decisions of the national congress of councils calling for the drastic reform of the military and the beginning of socialization were disregarded by the SPD *Volksbeauftragten*. By contrast the congress' call for the speedy election of a national constituent assembly – something that fit in nicely with the Social Democrats' ideas about parliamentarization – received prompt action.

As Volker Rittberger has observed the SPD leadership attempted to give its participation in the "coalition of order" a certain credibility by playing up the so-called and non-existent "Spartacist threat."[45] But it was the Social Democrats' foot-dragging which gradually led to a radical reaction by those who believed they saw their Revolution being betrayed and not the other way around. In some cases this blacklash took on extreme forms as in the establishment of the short lived Räte republics in Bremen and Munich.[46] More often, however, it was characterized by defensive actions designed to force the government to carry through on certain reforms or to protect what the Revolution had gained. In both Central Germany and the Ruhr, for example, massive general strikes were employed in the spring of 1919 to pressure the government on the socialization issue.[47] The result was regional civil war or what Rürup and Eberhard Kolb refer to as the second phase of the Revolution.[48] Making use of its pact with the military, the government sent in the troops time and time again to break local resistance. This led, in turn, to the radicalization of a growing number of workers, something that was reflected in the greater emphasis that was placed on the "pure" Räte movement, on the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and by an increasing attraction to the Soviet example. It is important to stress, however, that this heightened radicalization was not the cause but the effect of the collaboration between the Social Democratic leadership and the institutions of the old regime. Interestingly enough in the summer of 1919 the reactionary Freikorps were estimated at between 200,000 and 400,000 men, that is between two to four times the number of German Communists![49] Moreover the councils were dominated not by Communists, or even Independent Social Democratics, but by Social Democrats. The "coalition of order" stood in direct contradiction to what the SPD's own members were demanding.

There are perhaps no sharper indicators of the depth of resentment that rank and file Social Democrats and trade unionist felt with their leadership that the following sets of

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43. See Wolfgang Sauer, "Das Bündnis Ebert-Groener" (Ph.D. Thesis, Freie Universität Berlin, 1957).
44. See Feldman, "German Business Between War and Revolution: The Origins of the Stinnes-Legien Agreement", in *Entstehung und Wandel der modernen Gesellschaft: Festschrift für Hans Rosenberg* (Berlin, 1970), pp. 312-341.
45. "Revolution and Pseudo-Democratization", p. 343.
46. Peter Kuckuk, "Bremer Lindsradikale bzw. Kommunisten von der Militärrevolte im November 1918 bis zum Kapp-Putsch im März 1920" (Ph.D. Thesis, Universität Hamburg, 1970), pp. 97ff. Allan Mitchell, *Revolution in Bavaria 1918-1919* (Princeton, 1965).
47. See von Oertzen, "Die grossen Streiks der Ruhrbergarbeiterschaft", in *Geyer: Erinnerungen*, pp. 98ff.; Morgan, *The Socialist Left*, pp. 219ff.; and the following essays in *Arbeiter- und Soldatenräte im rheinisch-westfälischen Industriegebiet:* Irmgard Steinisch, "Linksradikalismus und Rätebewegung im westlichen Rhuhrgebiet", pp. 205ff.; Inge Marssolek, "Sozialdemokratie und Revolution im östlichen Ruhrgebiet", pp. 279ff.; Ulrich Kluge, "Der Generalsoldatenrat in Münster und das Problem der bewaffneten Macht im rheinischwestfälischen Industriegebiet", pp. 369ff.; Jürgen Tampke, "The Ruhr and Revolution", (Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University-Canberra, 1975).
48. "Problems of the German Revolution", p. 119; "Rätewirklichkeit und Räteideologie", p. 96.
49. Robert G.L. Waite, *Vanguard of Nazism. The Free Corps Movement in Postwar Germany 1918-1923* (New York, 1969), pp. 39-40; Ossip K. Flechtheim, *Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt a.M., 1969), p. 347; Hermann Weber, *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus* (Frankfurt a.M., 1969), I, p. 362.

election returns. In the fall of 1919, the USPD won control over the largest German trade union, the 1.6 million member *Deutsche Metallarbeiter Verband*.[50] Then in the Reichstag elections of June 1920, the SPD's share of the vote dropped precipitously while that of the USPD more than doubled.[51] Whereas the Social Democrats had polled 37.9% in the January 1919 elections to the Constituent Assembly, they could manage only 21.6% less than eighteen months later (i.e., a drop of 16.3%). By contrast, the Independent Social Democrats had a mere 7.6% in the Constituent Assembly elections but 18.8% in the Reichstag elections (i.e., an increase of 11.2% leaving them less than three points behind the Social Democrats). The USPD's rapid growth was not only electoral; at the outbreak of the Revolution, it had at best 150,000 members but by the spring of 1919 this had doubled and by the end of the year more than doubled again, until it reached nearly 900,000 in the summer of 1920.[52] This development is all the more significant for it corresponded with the USPD's adoption of an increasingly radical program and leadership. And, more than any other organization, this party mirrored the course of the German Revolution. Further it was in the USPD, rather than in the small German Communist Party (KPD), that the growing appeal of Russian Communism in Germany can best be measured.

Ex oriente lux – light from the East: in 1920 a local USPD paper carried a poem by a "worker" in which the Communist International was referred to as the "light that shines in the darkness."[53] The darker the situation became in Germany, the bleaker the outlook for realizing the goals of the Revolution, the greater the attraction the Soviet example took on. Thus, in the summer of 1919, at about the same time the German Revolution effectively came to an end, a grass roots movements for affiliation to the newly formed Communist or Third International began among Independent Social Democrats. This move for "union with Moscow" paralleled the increasing radicalization of the USPD; by the end of the year it had unequivocally endorsed the dictatorship of the proletariat as exercised through the Räte system.[54] In addition there was a growing awareness that the German Revolution could expect little support from organized labor in the West; the international protest action concerning the Versailles treaty had proved notably unsuccessful. Within this context Ernst Däumig and other leaders of the revolutionary Räte movement first looked to Moscow as a way out of the impasse they faced. And it is only at this point that the direct impact of the Soviet example begins to be experienced by the revolutionary movement in Germany.

Developments during the first half of 1920 reinforced this tendency. The counter-revolutionary forces now began to attack openly. In January a massive demonstration in front of the Reichstag organized by the USPD to protest the *Betriebsrätegesetz* – what Kolb succinctly described as the first class state funeral of the Räte movement – was fired upon by troops under the command of General von Lüttwitz.[55] Although 42 demonstrators were killed and over a hundred wounded, the government responded in typical fashion. Instead of investigating the causes of the violence – it was reported that many of the demonstrators were shot in the back, martial law was declared and repressive measures taken against the left. Däumig, now co-chairman of the USPD, and other radicals were arrested while many others were forced to go underground. They had hardly surfaced when the Kapp-Lüttwitz Putsch in early March temporarily overthrew the government and forced them on the defensive again.[56] This right-wing action clearly demonstrated

0. Franz Osterroth and Dieter Schuster, *Chronik der deutschen Sozialdemokratie* (Hannover, 1963), p. 233; *Der Deutsche Metallarbeiter-Verband im Jahre 1919* (Stuttgart, 1920), p. 67.
1. Statistische Reichsamt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich*, XL-XLI (Berlin, 1919-1920), pp. 236-237 (1919) and 178-179 (1920).
2. See Wheeler, "The Independent Social Democratic Party and the Internationals" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1970), pp. 798-799.
3. *Arbeiter-Zeitung* (Darmstad), No. 6, 1920.
4. Wheeler, *USPD und Internationale*, p. 163.
5. Kolb, "Rätewirklichkeit und Räteideologie", p. 95; *Geyer. Erinnerungen*, pp. 211ff.; Morgan, *The Socialist Left*, pp. 315-317.
6. See *Geyer. Erinnerungen*, 232ff.; Johannes Erger, *Der Kapp-Lüttwitz-Putsch* (Düsseldorf, 1967); Erwin Könneman and Hans-Joachim Krusch, *Aktionseinheit contra Kapp-Putsch* (Berlin/DDR, 1972); Waite, *Vanguard*, pp. 140ff.

that while the old military was prepared to "defend" the government against the revolution it was not prepared to do so against the counterrevolution. At the same time, it led to brief resurgence of the revolutionary movement as exemplified by the nationwide general strike and the establishment of workers militias in various parts of the country.[57] But once again, as in previous defensive actions, the revolutionary forces proved too autonomous, too diverse; they still lacked centralized organization and direction. What successes they gained were purely local. The result was that after minor cosmetic changes in the government and military, the old "coalition of order" was reestablished stronger than ever.

Nevertheless, at about the same time the revolutionary forces in Germany were suffering yet another setback, the revolutionary forces in Russia were on the offensive. The Red Army, after repelling a Polish invasion in the spring of 1920, had gone on the attack.[58] By mid-summer, they were threatening Warsaw and more than one frustrated German worker looked forward to the Revolution finally coming to Germany on the bayonets of the Red Army.[59] The light from the East appeared to be drawing closer, salvation seemed near at hand. Probably at no time did Bolshevik stock stand higher in the eyes of the German working class than in the summer of 1920.

But the Red Army was thrown back and its defeat at Warsaw was realistically seen by many on the Left as marking the end of an era.[60] The revolutionary wave had passed. Still it took some time before this realization became widespread enough to be incorporated into radical policy and practice. Before this took place, a number of other developments occurred which severely reduced the attractiveness of the Soviet example.

The first of these was caused largely by the Russian Bolsheviks themselves: the promulgation of the infamous "21 Conditions" for admission to the Communist International by the Second Comintern Congress in the summer of 1920. Designed to transform the Communist International and its member parties into highly centralized, military organizations, this "Diktat", as it was frequently referred to by its German critics, led to the split of the radical labor movement. The first party to divide over this issue was the USPD.[61] If the vast majority of Independent Social Democrats now looked to Moscow for support and leadership, the "21 Conditions" came in for across-the-board criticism. And even for the plurality of members who ultimately supported acceptance anyway, the conditions were generally something to be ignored or discarded. Based on their experience during the first half of 1919 and the Kapp Putsch, there was general agreement that centralization and discipline were necessary and desirable in the revolutionary movement. But the Comintern overemphasis on these things plus its demands concerning trade unions, expulsions, Communists, and other matters were simply too extreme for many of Moscow's sympathizers. That some 45% of the USPD maintained its support for the Third International under the circumstances speaks more for the continued appeal of the Soviet revolutionary example than for the Conditions. For many disillusioned German revolutionaries no price was too high for the Comintern panacea; or so it seemed at the time.

A year later many of the prominent USPD leaders who had swallowed the "21 Conditions" and joined with the German Communists to form the United German Communist Party (VKPD) – Ernest Däumig among them, had quit the Comintern and rejected the Soviet example. And they were not alone; the VKPD lost over half of its 450,000 members during the first half of 1921. The cause for this mass exodus was the pseudo-revolutionary fiasco known as the *März-Aktion* – the Communist led uprising in Central

57. Erhard Lucas, *Märzrevolution im Ruhrgebiet* (Frankfurt a.M., 1970), pp. 86ff.; George Eliasberg, *Der Ruhrkrieg von 1920* (Bonn, 1974).
58. E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*, III, (Baltimore, 1966), pp. 212ff.
59. Wheeler, "German Women and the Communist International", in *Central European History*, VIII (1975), p. 113.
60. *Geyer. Erinnerungen*, pp. 321-322.
61. Wheeler, "Die '21 Bedingungen' und die Spaltung der USPD im Herbst 1920. Zur Meinungsbildung der Basis", in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, XXIII (1975), pp. 117-154.

Germany during March of 1921. There are differences of opinion about whether the *März-Aktion* was ordered by Moscow or was simply the ill-advised over-reaction of new militant VKPD leadership to a police provocation.[62] Whatever the case may be, it does seem clear that this attempt at revolutionary action in a non-revolutionary situation would never have taken place had not the Comintern forced a change in the VKPD leadership a month earlier.[63] Moscow had gained a direct influence in Germany but in the process the revolutionary movement had been severely weakened. This was the practical impact of the "21 Conditions": the Bolshevization of the radical labor movement. The "light from the East" had become a guiding hand. A further illustration of this tendency was the abortive Hamburg uprising of October 1923.[64] Planned in Russia as part of a nation-wide insurrection in Germany, the tragic irony was that the Hamburg uprising should never have taken place. The whole action had been called off at the last moment. But somehow, despite the centralization and the strict discipline which had supposedly been gained through the "21 Conditions," the word never reached the local Communist organization in Hamburg! The result was another defeat for the revolutionary movement. On this unhappy note East German historiography brings to an end the "class struggles of the revolutionary post-war crisis period."[65] Nevertheless for much of the working class the light from the East continued to serve as a beacon of hope and in the years to come the direct influence and control of the Bolshevik leadership over German Communism would become greater still.[66] Paradoxically though, for all their revolutionary rhetoric and all their professions of allegiance to the Russian Revolution, the German Communists never again, not even in the crisis years of the early 1930s, attempted a truly revolutionary action.

At first glance it often seems that some aspect of the past has developed in a strange or illogical fashion. Upon closer examination, however, one discovers that it was one's own understanding that was faulty, that one was attempting to make events conform to one's own false logic. It would seem, for example, that the Russian and German Revolutions because of proximity in time and place would have been closely interrelated. Yet in reality, so long as a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation existed in Germany, the impact of the Russian Revolution remained largely indirect and general. Only when the German Revolution was broken by the "coalition of order," did the German worker begin to look for a solution outside his own country. Thus in searching for an explanation for the growing attraction of the Soviet example in Germany after 1918 one need go no further than the forces of counter-revolution. Just as a generation later Francisco Franco was in large measure responsible for creating the very Communist movement he purported to be saving Spain from, so Gustav Noske and his *Freikorps* must be seen as largely responsible for Bolshevizing the revolutionary movement in Germany. And just as the Spanish Communist movement under Moscow's influence became increasingly non-revolutionary, so the German Communists, after two hopeless attempts at revolution in non-revolutionary situations, would become, under Comintern tutelage, little more than practitioners of revolutionary rhetoric.

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62. Compare Lowenthal, "The Bolshevisation of the Spartacus League", in *St. Anthony's Papers,* IX (1960), pp. 57ff. and Werner T. Angress, *Stillborn Revolution. The Communist Bid for Power in Germany* (Princeton, 1963), p. 105ff. with Stefan Weber, "Der Kampf des revolutionaren mitteldeutschen Proletariat im März 1921 gegen die Schupoprovokation" (Ph.D. thesis, Berlin/DDR, 1969) and Arnold Reisberg, *An Quellen der Einheitsfrontpolitik* (Berlin/DDR, 1971), pp. 89ff.
63. At the end of February five members of the VKPD Executive, including both chairmen resigned. See Angress, *Stillborn Revolution,* pp. 99ff.; Reisberg, *Lenins Beziehungen zur deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (Berlin/DDR, 1970), pp. 423ff.
64. See Angress, *Stillborn Revolution,* pp. 378ff.; Richard A. Comfort, *Revolutionary Hamburg* (Stanford, 1966), pp. 123ff.
65. *Geschichte der Deutschen Arbeiterbewegung. Chronik* (Berlin/DDR, 1966), p. 156.
66. See Weber, *Die Wandlung des deutschen Kommunismus,* I.

C'est à de jeunes chercheurs que l'on doit la mise à jour, il y a une quinzaine d'année à peine, de la Révolution allemande de 1918-1919. Comme leurs prédécesseurs ils s'in terrogeaient sur l'échec de la république de Weimar; mais, contrairement à eux, ils choi sirent de se pencher sur la situation révolutionnaire qui a donné naissance à la républiqu allemande, plutôt que sur le traité de Versailles ou la constitution de Weimar.

La Révolution allemande a bel et bien eu lieu. Elle fut spontanée et eut ses propre institutions originales, les conseils d'ouvriers et de soldats, dont les ressemblances ave les soviets russes n'étaient que superficielles. À quelques exceptions près, ces institution furent à l'origine révolutionnaires, sans être radicales, au sens bolchevique du terme elles préconisaient la démocratisation totale de la société allemande, politiquement administrativement, économiquement et militairement. Ni son échec ultime, ni la destruc tion de ses institutions, ni le silence dont on l'entoura par la suite, ni le fait que le Communistes allemands s'en proclament les héritiers ne peuvent modifier la réalit de 1918-1919.

Phénomène proprement allemand, la Révolution eut toutefois des dimensions inter nationales: les tentatives de fraternisation et de propagande aux frontières occidentales la renaissance de l'internationalisme socialiste, après la guerre, ainsi que les mouvement de grève pour la paix et autour des conditions de l'armistice en sont des exemples frap pants. Mais qu'en est-il des rapports entre la Révolution russe et la Révolution allemande Quelle portée eut l'exemple bolchevique sur les organisations ouvrières en Allemagne

Si cet exemple exerça un attrait quelconque sur la Révolution allemande, ce fu singulièrement, au moment où celle-ci essuya des échecs: avant 1919, l'influence de soviets russes fut très indirecte, bien que la gauche et les ouvriers allemands aient accueil avec enthousiasme les révolutions russes de février et d'octobre 1917. Ce n'est qu' compter du moment où les ouvriers allemands furent déçus de l'orientation prise par leu Révolution qu'ils se tournèrent vers l'exemple soviétique. Les tentatives d'agitation in fructueuses de la part des diplomates soviétiques à Berlin, au printemps de 1918, démon trent bien les limites de l'influence soviétique sur la situation allemande. La dictatur bolchevique était d'ailleurs loin de faire l'unanimité au sein du mouvement ouvrie allemand: le système soviétique était fort critiqué, non seulement par les syndicaliste conservateurs et les sociaux-démocrates majoritaires, mais également par des Indépen dants notoires, tels que Bernstein et Kautsky. La Révolution allemande n'attendit n l'hiver, ni ceux qui préparaient l'insurrection, pour se manifester: elle surgit spontanémen au début de novembre 1918, des rangs de la marine, au nord, et de l'armée, au sud, e se répandit en quelques jours dans tous les coins du pays, n'atteignant la capitale qu'un semaine plus tard. À cette époque, d'ailleurs, les relations diplomatiques avec le gouverne ment soviétique de Russie avaient déjà été rompues . . ., au grand soulagement de dirigeants du S.P.D. Comme la Révolution s'était développée spontanément et presqu au hasard, elle manquait d'organisation et de direction centrale. Et comme elle n'ava rencontré que de faibles résistances, elle n'avait pas matériellement détruit les forces d la contre-révolution. Par exemple, les anciennes institutions politiques et administrative existaient toujours, aux côtés des conseils d'ouvriers et de soldats. C'est ce qui permit l constitution de la « coalition de l'ordre » entre les dirigeants du S.P.D. et les bureaucrate de l'ancien régime, coalition qui se donna pour tâche de briser la Révolution et d'instaure un régime « parlementaire ».

C'est alors seulement que l'exemple soviétique commença à représenter un espoi pour les ouvriers regroupés dans l'U.S.P.D. et, plus tard, dans le K.P.D.: à mesure qu s'estompaient les possibilités de réaliser les buts de la Révolution, plusieurs fractions d la classe ouvrière allemande s'accrochèrent de plus en plus fermement à cet espoir, cette « lumière venant de l'est », au point de contribuer à l'affermissement de l'influenc et du contrôle directs des dirigeants bolcheviques sur le communisme allemand.

Commentaire / Commentary

The German Revolution and the Fallacy of Misplaced Concreteness

Allan Mitchell

In attempting to take inventory of recent writings concerning Germany at the conclusion of the First World War, it would be well to recall Alfred North Whitehead's caveat about the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. Precisely because this notion is so elementary, we probably all need to be reminded of it from time to time. Otherwise we are liable to commit an act of personification which, however convenient, finally falsifies the historical record in much the same fashion as did Jakob Burckhardt when he persuaded himself and an entire generation of historians that there had been a Renaissance. The truth is, of course, that Burckhardt's Renaissance was actually a brilliant construct of his imagination. It was not, however, a palpable historical agent that possessed an identity, a will to succeed, or an urge to accomplish something. In the culture of quattrocento Italy there was no Unmoved Mover. One would therefore be incorrect to assert that the Renaissance *produced* the works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. Rather, to the contrary, we should posit that in the fifteenth century a number of Italian scholars-writers contributed to a revival of classical letters. In retrospect we may want to describe their collective efforts as a renaissance of learning, albeit one which had antecedents in previous centuries and parallels in other areas of Europe. But we need to keep our presuppositions straight and our language exact.

All of which might seem unobjectionable and terribly obvious if we were not now confronted with a similar problem regarding Germany in 1918. Throughout Professor Wheeler's interesting essay the word "Revolution" is invariably placed in upper case. Like Burckhardt, he writes history with a capital R. In his version, "the Revolution of 1918" becomes a persona which wanted something. Evidently it had an objective that was not attained, since he concludes that "the German Revolution ultimately failed." Yet, says Professor Wheeler, this "can not alter the reality of 1918/1919" – a statement that patently begs the question we are convened to consider: what was the reality of 1918/1919? Was there, in Professor Wheeler's sense, a Revolution? Or was there not a situation in which a variety of political, economic, and social aspirations were expressed, some of which were more revolutionary than others and some of which were consequently more thwarted than others in the outcome?

In supporting the latter proposition I must naturally take care not to throw out the baby with the bath. As the author of a monograph about 1918, I have at least as much of a vested interest as does Professor Wheeler in retaining the notion of a revolution. But we must be clear as to what that term implies in the German context. We should define, in other words, what it means and what it does not mean.

Two things, I think, the revolution in 1918 was *not*. First it was not the beginning of the end of the Kaiserreich. That had already occurred during the war years, as Arthur Rosenberg once so capably demonstrated.[1] The military and political opinions of William

1. Arthur Rosenberg, *Die Entstehung der Deutschen Republik* (Berlin, 1930) and *Geschichte der Deutschen Republik* (Karlsbad, 1935).

II had long been evaluated for their true worth in the imperial headquarters at Kreuznach It was General Ludendorff who made the crucial decisions: was there to be a new chancellor? unrestricted submarine warfare? a separate peace with Russia? a final offensive in the spring of 1918? And when his desparate gamble had failed at last, Ludendorff donned his dark blue glasses and disappeared to Sweden, leaving the Kaiser with essentially three choices: to retire into exile, to remain and risk being tried as a war criminal or to seek a heroic death at the front. William did the prudent thing. But in any event he would have been forced to acknowledge that his authority had been seriously diminished well before November 1918.

Secondly, neither did the revolution signify the emergence of the SPD as a key party in the government. That, too, had actually occurred sooner. We need not rehearse here the pre-war history of German Social Democracy; and we can, I think, accept without hesitation Carl Schorske's judgment that, to anyone who has carefully studied the record the vote for war credits in 1914 must appear altogether logical.[2] As for the war years what is remarkable in hindsight was the incredible discipline exercised by the party and the workers in spite of an immense strain caused by food shortages and intensified labor conditions. Professor Wheeler ably recounts the few peace-and-bread demonstrations that erupted. The only potentially serious strike-wave was in protest against the annexationist terms of Brest-Litovsk in January 1918; and even that incident lasted merely over a three-day weekend. The overwhelming majority of German workers returned to their regular employment without further upset, except in Berlin and Munich where the strike collapsed upon the declaration of martial law. Thereafter the home front was virtually untroubled until the end of October – that is, until the collapse of Ludendorff's offensive had become common public knowledge. Through it all the SPD had effectively functioned as a governmental party, whose primary service it was to prevent the tiny faction of Independent Socialists from making important inroads in the ranks of the labor movement. In that purpose, we must conclude, the Majority Socialists were largely successful. Hence they did indeed deserve to claim to represent the majority of the working population. The outbursts in November 1918 confirmed this and did not fundamentally alter the political role that the SPD had assumed. It had become a party of law and order whose leadership was suddenly faced with the distressing fact that the imperial government could no longer assure law and order.

This is already to suggest at least one of the two novelties of the revolutionary situation. Above all, it meant a victory for parliamentary reformism. Before the war a coalition of reformist elements had failed to coalesce; then in 1917 the Reichstag's peace resolution provided an exercise in parliamentary collaboration; and finally the military and political debacle of the old regime opened the way to the provisional government of Max von Baden and thence to the Weimar coalition of Majority Socialists, the Catholic Center, and some Liberals (DDP). It is in this perspective that the figure of Friedrich Ebert must be evaluated. Caricaturists have made careers of Ebert's protruding belly and bulldog face, but it was his unheroic stature which, under the given circumstances, made him an appropriate leader of his party, of the new reformist coalition, and of the defeated German nation. In his most infamous phrase, duly quoted by Professor Wheeler, Ebert said that he hated revolution "like sin." No doubt he feared violence in the streets and destested the spectre of a Spartakist insurrection in Berlin. But he surely did not hate the disappearance of William II, the abolition of the three-class voting in Prussia or the increased probability that a reformist coalition might now shift weight in Germany from imperial authoritarianism to parliamentary democracy. We do not need to make a hero of Friedrich Ebert in order to grant that this was indeed his conception of the revolutionary situation; and we can agree, whether with approval or disapproval, that he went to considerable lengths to assure that his views would prevail among a majority of German workers. By the time of his death in 1925 Ebert could justifiably claim that in his own terms, he had succeeded. To which one may perhaps add that Hindenburg's succession to the presidency of the republic was in itself a dubious testimony to the quality of Ebert's success.

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2. Carle E. Schorske, *German Social Democracy, 1905-1917* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955).

To be sure, not everyone in Germany was equally devoted to Ebert's conception of revolution. Which is to indicate a second essential attribute of 1918: the appearance of the councils of workers, soldiers, and peasants. Therewith we approach the heart of the matter and the most controversial aspect of Professor Wheeler's essay. Frankly I do not find particularly controversial his leading question: "How pervasive was the Bolshevik influence?" With one exception I know of no Western scholar (i.e., outside of the DDR) who does not agree that the example of the Russian soviets was very remote from Germany in November 1918.[3] In fact, the answer seems so obvious that the question evidently needs to be rephrased. To his credit, by placing the issue in a general scheme of Socialist internationalism as he does in his recent book, Professor Wheeler himself has raised the problem to a higher power.[4] But consider the implications of the assertion in his essay that "the Räte were products of the Revolution which were initially seen as provisional bodies representing the majority of the population and committed to a thoroughgoing democratization of society." First of all, we find here an example of the persistent reification of "the Revolution" which it appears *produced* the councils. This manner of speaking betrays Professor Wheeler's implicit assumption that "the Revolution" really knew what it was about, that it had well defined goals, and that those goals were articulated whenever the councils met. I would suggest that an examination of council records will demonstrate, instead, that council gatherings were ordinarily scenes of extraordinary confusion. Such studies as those of Eberhard Kolb and Francis L. Carsten amply document the variety and disunity of the councils throughout Germany.[5] Yet Professor Wheeler contends that they were all dedicated to "a thoroughgoing democratization of society" – a phrase that yields to none in its sheer imprecision. He qualifies "democratization" variously as "thoroughgoing," "complete," and "full-scale." But the closest he comes to defining these terms is the phrase: "The removal of the entire system." Personally I can find little evidence in the archives to confirm any such categorical intention on the part of the vast majority of council members. So far as I can see, the councils (which were, as Professor Wheeler correctly notes, "dominated" by the Majority Socialists) were scarcely inclined to radical objectives of political and social engineering. They more often conceived of themselves as agents of law and order. If so, at the very least, Professor Wheeler's manner of speaking is misleading.

Another nagging problem is revealed by Professor Wheeler's conspicuous use of the passive voice. We are told that the councils "were initially seen as provisional bodies representing the majority of the population." But who saw them as such? Certainly not the bourgeoisie – nor, not even in Bavaria, the peasantry. Presumably, then, the workers. Professor Wheeler repeatedly asserts that the German workers possessed a clear conception of "their Revolution," as if the labor force constituted a politically unified and sociologically homogeneous group that thought and spoke in unison. It is only when they became disappointed with the progress of "their Revolution" and felt betrayed by the Ebert regime that they turned to more radical solutions. Thus, Professor Wheeler continues, "the darker the situation became in Germany, the bleaker the outlook for realizing the goals of the Revolution." Then, as the Red Army advanced into Poland, "salvation seemed near at hand" and the light from the East shone more brightly. "Probably," he concludes, "at no time did Bolshevik stock stand higher in the eyes of the German working class than in the summer of 1920."

It strikes me that Professor Wheeler's scenario has a certain consistency which requires that I, too, remain consistent in reiterating and elaborating the following five points:

1) I do not believe that there ever existed an entity that can properly be designated as "the Revolution." In this respect Professor Wheeler is apparently a neo-Platonist

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3. Gilbert Badia, *Les Spartakistes 1918. L'Allemagne en révolution* (Paris, 1966).
4. Robert F. Wheeler, *USPD und Internationale. Sozialistischer Internationalismus in der Zeit der Revolution* (Berlin, 1975).
5. Eberhard Kolb, *Die Arbeiterräte in der deutschen Innenpolitik 1918-1919* (Düsseldorf, 1962). Francis L. Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe, 1918-1919* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1972).

of sorts; I remain a nominalist and must charge him with the fallacy of misplaced concreteness.

2) Therefore it is, in my judgment, methodologically impermissible to speak of "the goals of the Revolution." Various people had various goals. Professor Wheeler glosses this over and performs a semantic sleight of hand whenever he employs a tantalizingly vague phrase such as "more than one frustrated worker" (how many more?) or "seen by many on the Left" (how many?). This enables him to make the past, and specifically the labor movement, appear far more coherent than the reality of 1918/1919 would warrant.

3) Such meager statistical evidence as Professor Wheeler cites – for example, a vote of Berlin metal workers in 1919 or the Reichstag elections of 1920 – does not adequately support his case. Those numbers document nothing about the initial revolutionary phase before the summer of 1919 (at a time when the Independent Socialist premier of Bavaria, Kurt Eisner, received only 2.5% of the popular vote).[6] Nor do they sufficiently characterize the second phase. It seems to me that Professor Wheeler needs to alter the focus from a party history and to analyze the polarization of the entire political spectrum from mid-1919 to 1923. During that period of Leftist agitation there was a corresponding and numerically even more significant shift toward the Right. Surely there were other reasons for the unpopularity of the Weimar coalition than Friedrich Ebert's betrayal of "the goals of the Revolution." Professor Wheeler nowhere mentions that Ebert was presiding over a government which could not avoid accepting the onerous treaty of Versailles; which had been saddled with reparations; which was unable to counter the effects of economic dislocation or to prevent political assassinations; which was blamed for food shortages and production stoppages; and so on. There are, in short, alternative hypothese to explain the circumstances described by Professor Wheeler, whose attention stays riveted on a single aspect of the subject.

4) Professor Wheeler formulates a paradox: that there was an inverse relationship between the success of "the Revolution" and the impact of Russian influence in Germany. But was that really so paradoxical? It only seems so, I would suggest, when one assumes that there existed a pure revolutionary movement embodied by the radical wing of the USPD, that Ebert stood entirely outside of the revolutionary movement, and that he betrayed it. For my part, I can see no reason to define the revolutionary situation in Germany after November 1918 exclusively in terms advocated by a minority which first failed to have its way, then turned in vain to Moscow for assistance, and finally disintegrated.

5) Professor Wheeler fails to convince me that the leadership of the SPD "stood in direct contradiction" to the aspirations of most of its constituents. That every German worker's dream was not fulfilled by the Weimar republic is indisputable. But the Majority Socialists were in fact the majority when the Congress of Councils voted for a parliamentary system in December 1918. And they continued to represent the majority, I believe, in subsequently attempting to make that system work. Unquestionably there is evidence of widespread disappointment and disaffection during the autumn of 1919 in the wake of the brutal measures of repression by Gustav Noske and his *Freikorps*. Yet before we condemn the SPD out of hand, we would do well to remember words once spoken by Otto Bauer: the council system, he observed, "would not be the representation of the whole German nation, but only that of a minority of the German nation. That such an order could maintain itself can be believed only by those who have never thought about it seriously. Eight days after the attempt, such a government would be bound to collapse."[7] All things considered, that impresses me as far more realistic than Professor

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6. Allan Mitchell, *Revolution in Bavaria, 1918-1919. The Eisner Regime and the Soviet Republic* (Princeton, 1965).

7. Quoted by Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe*, pp. 31-32. Viewing the revolutionary situation from the perspective of Vienna in 1918, Bauer anticipated the creation of a German-Austrian republic and was thus commenting on the prospects for a council system in the entire German nation. Professor Carsten observes: "There is no doubt that he was right."

Wheeler's fanciful contention that "for much of the working class the light from the East continued to serve as a beacon of hope." Still less can I believe that any significant portion of workers "looked forward to the Revolution finally coming to Germany on the bayonets of the Red Army." With that statement an initial fallacy culminates in a final absurdity.

For these reasons I must reluctantly conclude that Professor Wheeler has not pointed us toward a better understanding of the Weimar republic. In reality he has told us the old, old story of valiant revolutionaries subverted in their purpose by treacherous party bosses. He has presented us with a conspiracy theory which is narrated largely as a political episode. Some years ago, in those heady days when a young generation of scholars first set out to resurrect the story of the revolutionary period, much still remained to be discovered and detailed about the political history of that era. But now the time has come to take a longer and a broader view: to see the revolutionary situation as a symptomatic phenomenon of Germany's peculiar economic and social development in a phase of rapid industrialization. It is not the light from the East but the light from the forge by which we should henceforth illuminate our investigations.

Résumé

Parmi les pièges qui guettent tous les chercheurs en sciences humaines, il en est un qu'il serait opportun de rappeler ici, d'autant plus que le professeur Wheeler, dans son intéressant exposé, semble s'y être engagé dès le départ. Il s'agit du piège de la réification ou de la personnification d'un phénomène historique. Dans l'interprétation de M. Wheeler, la « Révolution de 1918 » devient une personne « voulant » quelque chose. De toute évidence, l'objectif qu'elle « visait » ne fut pas atteint, puisque M. Wheeler conclut que « finalement, la Révolution allemande échoua ». Toutefois, dit-il, « ceci ne modifie en rien la réalité de 1918-1919 ». Mais quelle était la réalité de 1918-1919? Y eut-il vraiment une révolution, au sens où M. Wheeler l'entend? Ou n'y eut-il pas, plutôt, une situation au cours de laquelle s'exprimèrent une foule d'aspirations politiques, économiques et sociales, dont certaines étaient plus révolutionnaires que d'autres et dont plusieurs, par conséquent, furent davantage mises en échec, en définitive? Il faut voir, tout d'abord, ce que la révolution, en 1918, ne fut pas. Elle ne fut pas responsable de l'effondrement du *Kaiserreich,* non plus que de l'émergence du S.P.D. au sein du gouvernement, en tant que parti ayant un rôle déterminant; ces deux phénomènes avaient, en effet, commencé à se produire bien avant novembre 1918.

Le S.P.D. s'était révélé, depuis le début de la guerre, un « parti de l'ordre » et ses dirigeants durent soudain reconnaître que le gouvernement impérial n'était plus en mesure d'assurer l'ordre social. Ce qui triompha alors, c'est davantage le réformisme que la révolution. Si Ebert abhorrait la révolution (« comme le péché », disait-il), s'il redoutait les émeutes et le spectre de l'insurrection spartakiste, il ne déplora certainement pas la disparition de Guillaume II, l'abolition du vote par ordre en Prusse ou l'éventualité d'un passage à la démocratie parlementaire grâce à une coalition réformiste. Les conseils eux-mêmes étaient-ils de conception tellement révolutionnaire? Avaient-ils réellement pour objectif une « profonde démocratisation de la société » et le « renversement du système en entier », comme le suggère M. Wheeler? Les documents d'archives permettent d'en douter. Les conseils penchaint tout au plus vers des objectifs radicaux d'administration politique et sociale et ils se définirent, plus souvent qu'autrement, comme des agents de la loi et de l'ordre.

Aussi, non seulement est-il erroné, du point de vue épistémologique, de prêter des intentions et des objectifs à la « Révolution », mais il est également faux, du point de vue des faits, de présenter les conseils comme un « produit révolutionnaire », Ebert

comme un traître à l'égard des « buts de la Révolution » et la classe ouvrière allemande comme un groupe politiquement unifié et sociologiquement homogène, pensant et parlant à l'unisson. En conséquence, la question qui est au centre des préoccupations de M. Wheeler et qui porte sur l'importance de l'influence bolchevique russe est elle-même un faux problème.

Il serait temps que l'on aborde la république de Weimar sous un angle plus vaste et que l'on considère la situation révolutionnaire comme un phénomène caractéristique du développement économique et social spécifique de l'Allemagne, au cours d'une phase d'instrialisation rapide. En somme, ce n'est pas à la « lumière venant de l'Est », mais à la lueur de la forge que devraient désormais s'éclairer les recherches en ce domaine.

Le cas de l'Allemagne / Session on Germany

Discussion

F. Carsten. I would like to make three very brief comments to Professor Mitchell's comments on Professor Wheeler. I do not wish to comment on Professor Wheeler's paper, with the basic tenor of which I am really principally in agreement. Now, among Professor Mitchell's statements, three struck me as very questionable. The first was that he said the German revolution did not achieve, if I understood him rightly, (a) the end of the Wilhelminian empire, and (b) a dominant role of the social-democratic party in the German government, because this had been achieved previously. Well, my submission to you would be they had *not* been achieved previously. The Wilhelminian empire might have been transformed under the constitutional reforms of Prince Max von Baden into a constitutional monarchy. It would have been a different empire, but it would still have been a Hohenzollern empire, and the revolution of the 9th of November precisely achieved the end of this empire, even in its constitutional form.

The social democrats did not occupy, I would like to submit, a dominant role prior to the November revolution. They played a very modest role, they had a very modest part in the government of Prince Max von Baden and previously to that, even a smaller one. Under Prince Max von Baden, they had two secretaries of state in the government, but this was not a dominant role, and did not give to the SPD a dominant influence on the government. And, again, this was precisely achieved by the revolution of November 1918.

Second point: Professor Mitchell pointed out quite correctly, quoting me among others, that there was a vast variety of opinion among the German workers and soldiers councils. With that I would agree, but, they were agreed in the vast majority, I would like to submit, on one thing, or on two things perhaps: on achieving a democratization of the German army, as exemplified by the unanimous acceptance of the Hamburg points by the Congress of December 1918, and equally, and that, of course, was connected with it, the democratization of the German civil service, of the German machinery of administration. On these two points, the vast majority of the workers and soldiers councils were agreed, but neither was achieved by the revolution.

Thirdly, Professor Mitchell said that the council movement could not have maintained itself in Germany society within the framework of the German constitution, because it only represented a minority of the German voters. That they only represented a minority is perfectly correct: after the disappearance of the soldiers councils, they only represented at best the working class, and not even the entire working class; but, I should like to point out that Arthur Rosenburg, many years ago, already emphasized that the councils could have been allocated a small share of political influence within the framework of the Weimar Constitution, and indeed, there is a paragraph, an article in the Weimar Constitution, which hints precisely at this, but it wasn't carried out in practice, and in that way, I would like to submit, as Arthur Rosenburg did many years ago, the council movement could have been combined with a democratic constitution for Germany, and could have preserved some small share of political influence even after 1919.

A. Mitchell. Thank you very much, Professor Carsten, and I think I could agree with you on all three points. As for the first, I attempted to state what I thought was most characteristic of the revolution of 1918 and I was being slightly facetious, I suppose. The end of the Empire and the beginning of the role of the Social-Democratic Party as a governmental party, I believe, had both begun before November of 1918. Those developments were, I believe, corroborated and ratified by the revolution. What I tried to establish was what I thought was unique and altogether new about the revolution of 1918, namely, the victory of parliamentary reformism and the appearance of the revolutionary councils. I never claimed that the SPD had a dominant role before November 1918, so there is, I think, no problem there.

Secondly, I would agree that the councils could argue – most of the council members could argue – that they were in favour of the democratization of the army and the democratization of the civil service. What I objected to, however, was Professor Wheeler's repeated use of the word "thoroughgoing" democratization, or "full-scale" democratization, without doing as you did, being precise about what was in fact implied. I don't believe that one can find records in the archives which will support the contention that they knew what they were talking about, if anyone indeed advocated "thoroughgoing" democratization.

And thirdly, it was not I who said that the council system could not have maintained itself; it was Otto Bauer, whom I quoted, and I took that quotation – I have to make a confession, Professor Carsten – from your own book. In your book, you say that Otto Bauer was absolutely correct in making that assertion. Now, what I want to make is the distinction between. . . I'm sorry. . .?

. . .

Intervention to the effect that the quotation referred to Austria.

A. Mitchell. The quotation refers to Austria and Germany.

. . .

Interventions that the quotation *only* refers to Austria.

A. Mitchell. I will have to read the quotation again; I've only, of course, got part of it here. He said that the Council system "would not be representative of the whole German nation, but only that of a minority of the German nation. That such an order could maintain itself. . ." etc. Now, if you wish to read that as meaning Austria, the entire German nation, you may do so, but I don't think it is correct. My point, in any event, is this: that Otto Bauer was saying that the council system, in that view, would replace the parliamentary system. If it attempted to replace the parliamentary system, then it would not be viable. It would not be viable, as the quotation in Professor Carsten's book continues, because the peasantry would not support it, and the peasantry in Central Europe, in Germany specifically, was unlike the peasantry in Russia. Therefore, it would only be possible in the immediate vicinity of large cities to confiscate enough foodstuffs to maintain those cities. But that could only hope to last for a brief while. And, as he said, eight days after such an attempt, such a system would collapse. That is quite a different proposition from the one advanced by Professor Carsten, with which I agree, that the councils might have been integrated into the parliamentary system. There was a much greater potential for reform, in other words, in 1918, than the Social Democratic leaders realized. I think they did a lousy job, but that is quite different from saying that the Revolution – capital R – had certain goals; and that it failed to achieve those goals because it was done in from without. I believe that the problem with the revolution was that *within it* were the seeds of contradiction.

G. Bassler. My first question concerns the spontaneity of the outbreak of the revolution. You, Professor Wheeler, contend that the revolution broke out completely spontaneously – it was not organized by any group. When we stress this, we tend to underrate the fact that various groups were intensely at work for over a year in preparing the revolution. I'm not saying that they succeeded, but that preparations did have some effect. Spartakists,

for example, in spite of their weak organization and their small rank and file, did have a tremendous propaganda impact on Germany. There are many sources that support the contention that Liebknecht was immensely popular far beyond the rank of the left and the social-democrats, especially at the Front and behind the Front. There were the revolutionary shop stewards which haven't been mentioned at all. These people were no doubt responsible for the strikes of April 1917 and of January 1918, and they were at the point of preparing a general strike for all of Germany for October and November 1918. The rising of the sailors at the North Sea coast simply preceded by a few hours the strike which would have broken out as planned by the revolutionary shop stewards. So, to speak of a completely spontaneous outbreak of the revolution is a slight exaggeration. And then, the USPD, as has been brought out, had also made intense propaganda throughout 1918 and compared the German situation with the Russian situation pointing out what could be done to bring about peace.

The second point that I would like to raise is the fact that the German councils are always viewed as having little to do with the Russian Soviets. When we stress this, we always emphasize the direct impact that the German equivalent of the Russian Communists – the Spartakists – had on the councils. They had, admittedly, a weak impact, but we tend to overlook the entire psychological situation. I would like to suggest that without the Russian revolution, there would be no German revolution. The Germans learned from the Russians before November 1918 the methods, the symbols, and the forms of a revolution. They had had no revolution for seventy years; there would have certainly been no revolution of that kind had the Russian revolution not preceded, and had shown them how to bring about peace, namely by way of a mass strike, by what forms to bring it about – by way of the councils, and what symbols to use – the red flag and the socialist program. It is symptomatic that even the name that the Government gave itself – the more or less conservative Social Democratic Government – was borrowed from the Bolshevik example.

My third point concerns the question of the failure of the German revolution. Here too, I think, one tends to focus too much on the potential danger that could have come from the German Spartakists, who are often considered as equivalent of the Bolsheviks. Were the German Spartakists, or the German Communists, among whom I would include other left-wing groups, really the equivalent of the Bolsheviks? I would say *no* – they were exactly the opposite in many respects! These people knew little and did not care at all about the Leninist concept about the new type of party in 1918 and early 1919. Their party organization was diametrically opposed to that of Lenin. They knew no central committee. They were emphasizing total democratization. They were relying on propaganda. They were hoping for the development of a revolutionary consciousness among the masses. They were emphasizing winning over the majority of the workers who should make a revolution, denying that minorities can and should make the revolution. They were doing in many respects exactly the opposite of what Lenin did. So, in other words, one could argue, and a few have argued, that the revolutionary vanguard in Germany is at least as much to blame for the failure of the revolution as the conservative policies of Ebert and his government.

R. Wheeler. Since we are rapidly running out of time, I will keep my comments brief. But I do wish to respond to at least some of the points raised by Professor Mitchell and discussed by others. While I am very thankful for Professor Mitchell's interesting observations, I am inclined to reject them entirely. Indeed, a careful reading of my paper and notes will directly refute many of his objections and indicate that others were well wide of the mark.

There are a number of factual inaccuracies in Professor Mitchell's presentation and while, in the interest of space and time a detailed corrective is impossible, a few examples do seem called for. Typical is his attempt to discount the January strikes of 1918 as an "incident" that "lasted merely over a three-day weekend" whereas in point of fact, it involved some one million workers, began on a *Monday* and lasted in some centers for over a week! Another involves a blatant misrepresentation. As evidence of the "meager

statistical evidence" I allegedly provide, he refers to "a vote of Berlin metal workers in 1919" while in truth I make no such reference! Rather, I cite the USPD victory at the 1919 *national* congress of the *1.6 million member* German Metal Workers' union. Professor Mitchell's comments are all too frequently marred by such carelessness and distortion.

Let me focus on two of the more important assertions he makes. The first concerns the reality as well as the complexity of the German Revolution. I suggested that there existed certain basic tendencies and goals in the Revolution and some of these are perhaps not so different from what Professor Carsten has suggested. We must recognize that these goals and tendencies are not easy to isolate in a complex series of events but they are nevertheless evident.

If we analyze the development of the Revolution, we will undoubtedly find examples of disagreement and debate. But to conclude, therefore, as some historians have done, that confusion and a lack of goals were endemic is incorrect. For out of the debate and revolutionary ferment, there emerged importanf decisions and basic positions. These can be documented, for example, by the proceedings of the first *national* congress of councils in December 1918. The common goal regarding the need for the democratization of the military was illustrated by the adoption of the "Hamburg points." Agreement about the goal of democratizing other areas of society such as the civil service and the economy – including a vote for the beginnings of socialization – were also articulated. These actions were approved by a majority of this national congress, the supreme body of the Revolution. To say this is not to ignore the disagreements, the existence of opposition minorities, etc. but it does show that the Revolution possessed certain overall goals. If one of the historian's functions is to recognize complexity and avoid simplification, he or she must at the same time try to extract from the mass of apparent confusion the general trends and goals that manifest themselves in the sources.

The second point involves Professor Mitchell's decision to question the relevance of my topic and whether the Russian influence, real or imaginary, is a valid point for discussion at all. There are a host of reasons, only a few of which I can discuss now, that justify the significance of this issue. An obvious one was the fear of Bolshevism during the Revolution. At times this fear amounted almost to a paranoia on the part of individuals like Ebert as any number of observers have pointed out. I am not trying to cast Ebert as the *bête noire* of the Revolution; I think he acted consistently in the context of his political beliefs. What I want to emphasize is that the objective *result* of his behavior was a kind of paranoia, something which was consciously reinforced by various elements of the old regime with whom he cooperated.

In addition, there is the relevance of Bolshevism in terms of the growth of anti-republican elements within the Weimar Republic. It was not my intent to give a brief history of the Republic and why it failed. But a critical factor in the failure of the Weimar Republic was the permanent division of the German labor movement and what I wish to stress is that this in large measure must be traced to the attraction of Bolshevism. This new and strong pull of Russian Communism did not become evident until after 1918/19. Convinced that the Revolution had been betrayed, a sizeable number of workers and others turned to the Soviet example. To understand the origins, development and full extent of this phenomenon, we must consider the Revolution itself and this is what I have done.

P. Broué. Deux brefs commentaires sur l'exposé du professeur Wheeler. Dans sa comparaison initiale entre les *soviets* russes et les *Räte* allemands, il a souligné à juste titre que la confusion entre ces deux formes est faite à l'époque aussi bien par leurs partisans que par leurs adversaires, et c'est très important. Il a également souligné les différences entre eux, mais en prenant comme éléments de comparaison les *soviets* d'octobre 1917 et les *Räte* de novembre 1918, c'est-à-dire d'une part, des conseils au terme d'une révolution relativement longue, huit mois après leur apparition, côté russe, et des conseils tels qu'ils apparaissent dans leurs premiers jours d'existence, côté allemand, d'autre part.

Je crois qu'il serait plus fructueux de comparer les soviets et les Räte au moment de leur apparition, soit en février 1917 pour les premiers, et en novembre 1918 pour les seconds. On découvrirait alors un certain nombre de traits communs, que le professeur Wheeler tient pour caractéristiques des conseils allemands, à savoir qu'ils étaient tous inspirées et dominés par les plus modérés des éléments socialistes, qu'ils ne cherchaient pas consciemment à se transformer en « deuxième pouvoir », mais se tenaient eux-mêmes pour transitoires, bref, qu'ils reflétaient un état d'esprit conciliateur. On trouverait également des différences, et, au risque de surprendre, je dirai que l'une des plus importantes est sans aucun doute qu'en Allemagne la minorité révolutionnaire « radicale » tient, en novembre 1918, une place beaucoup plus importante que la minorité révolutionnaire en Russie, en février 1917.

Une telle comparaison nous conduirait évidemment à envisager sous un autre angle le développement politique dans les mois suivant la constitution des conseils. Très vite, les bolcheviks s'orientent, à partir d'avril, pour conquérir la majorité dans les soviets et faire que ces derniers luttent pour s'emparer de *tout le pouvoir*. La minorité révolutionnaire allemande est loin d'avoir la même clarté de vues; c'est ainsi que les futurs communistes de Dresde quittent le conseil ouvrier de cette ville où ils sont élus, parce qu'ils refusent de siéger avec ceux qu'ils appellent les « social-traîtres » et préfèrent leur laisser la place. D'autres – et Liebknecht fut sans doute de ceux-là – trouvent sans doute trop lente la conquête de la majorité et préfèrent tenter de faire plier leurs adversaires politiques en organisant de l'extérieur des manifestations en direction des conseils.

Selon moi, la comparaison prend fin en janvier 1918, en Allemagne, puisqu'à cette date indépendants de gauche berlinois et spartakistes se sont enfermés dans le piège que constituaient les combats isolés dans la capitale et les manifestations, certes gigantesques, mais sans véritables perspectives. Ce piège, les bolcheviks l'ont évité, de justesse il est vrai, en juillet 1917.

Ma deuxième remarque porte sur ce que le professeur Wheeler a dit concernant l'influence du parti social-démocrate. J'aimerais qu'on essaie d'approfondir ce problème. Personnellement, je crois d'abord que les secteurs décisifs de la classe ouvrière, traditionnellement fortement organisés dans le parti social-démocrate et autour de sa direction, sont passés en majorité sinon en totalité du côté de l'U.S.P.D. Particulièrement significatif de ce point de vue est le changement de majorité qu'il a relevé dans le syndicat de la métallurgie, décisif s'il en est. D'où viennent alors les millions de militants et sympathisants nouveaux qui affluent en cette période vers le S.P.D.? Je pense personnellement qu'il s'agit de couches qui s'étaient jusque-là tenues à l'écart de la vie politique, ou du moins à l'écart des opinions socialistes ou socialisantes, et qui rejoignent ce parti parce qu'il leur apparaît d'abord comme celui de la révolution victorieuse en novembre, ensuite parce qu'il est conciliateur et leur promet le socialisme aux moindres frais, par la voie pacifique, et avec beaucoup de démocratie. Cela ne signifie pas pour autant que ces millions soient « réformistes » au sens où le sont Ebert et Scheidemann, ou qu'ils soient prêts à accepter l'existence du fil téléphonique direct qui relie le bureau d'Ebert au grand quartier-général de l'Armée . . .

En résumé, je pense qu'il y avait beaucoup de néophytes du socialisme dans les rangs et autour du S.P.D. – et que c'est un phénomène qu'on retrouve au début de toute révolution, l'afflux vers le parti traditionnel qui arrive au pouvoir, – qu'il s'appuyait donc sur ces gens qui espéraient renverser le capitalisme sans douleur, et qu'en revanche il y avait beaucoup plus de militants socialistes éprouvés et expérimentés, et notamment les cadres organisateurs des ouvriers d'usines, à l'intérieur et autour du parti social-démocrate indépendant. C'est là une hypothèse qui mériterait à mon avis d'être discutée.

Revolution and Counter-revolution in Italy, 1918-1922

Adrian Lyttelton

What does it mean to talk about a 'revolutionary situation?' From a strictly logical point of view, one can say that the only possible revolutions are those which actually happen. A second, less stringent definition, would allow the term to be used to describe those situations in which the structure or objective circumstances of a society seem to make the success of a revolutionary movement feasible, and in which only shortcomings of leadership and organization prevent the revolution breaking out. Finally, we can, I think, talk about a 'revolutionary situation' in all those cases where the possibility of revolution, in the short term, achieves credibility in the eyes both of political leaders and of large masses of the population. The advantage of this last and loosest definition is that the question: 'did the political actors of the time act as if a revolution were possible?' permits an easier and less arbitrary answer than the question 'were the objective circumstances favourable?' I should like to add that the terminology of 'objective' and 'subjective' circumstances is itself highly dangerous for the historian. Since the knowledge, expectations, and motives of the actors are the major constituent of all historical situations, we can say that it makes sense to talk about 'objective circumstances' only in relation to a particular programme of action. For the revolutionary, the mental set and capacity for action of the dominant class is an objective circumstance: but for the conservative the reverse is true.

I propose to argue that at least in the third and weakest of the senses I have outlined, the situation in Italy at the end of the First World War *was revolutionary*. The action of the participants in the political struggles of the postwar period cannot be understood without reference to the project of revolution, or its prevention. It is still, however, possible to argue that the leaders of the Italian Socialist Party were mistaken in believing that a revolution was possible, and that this belief condemned them to an inevitable and disastrous defeat. I believe, however, that too hasty and absolute a judgement on this point would also be an obstacle to our comprehension of the postwar crisis.

Both to its opponents and to its defenders the Italian liberal state appeared a fragile construction. The state had played an indispensable role in economic development and modernisation; however, the intervention of the state in economic and social life did not succeed in achieving a lasting and stable consensus, or even in winning the confidence of the industrial entrepreneurs and other elites. As an agent of a 'revolution from above', of the type that instead was carried out in the more authoritarian systems of Germany and Japan, the Italian Liberal State was inadequate. Why was this? Several answers may be suggested: the lack of homogeneity of the bourgeoisie; its political and social fragmentation into groups of whom the horizon was still the city or province rather than the nation, and the consequent incapacity to form strong national parties or other organizations. The bureaucratic and military traditions of Piedmont, which were notable, were not, however, strong enough to be reproduced successfully on a national scale. Neither the army nor the administration of the new state acquired much prestige or reputation for efficiency.

An influential body of opinion – (I need only here mention Pareto)[1] – consequently attacked the state as a parasitic growth which preyed upon the true producers of wealth. I am not suggesting that this diagnosis was correct: but the prevalence of this opinion is proof of a central ideological failure of the Liberal State.

To understand the roots of the postwar crisis, it is necessary to go back some way, at least to the Libyan War of 1911-1912. This is not the place to discuss the nature and causes of Italian imperialism. But one must make some reference to it in any explanation of the origins of the revolutionary crisis. The tacit alliance, or at least agreement to limit conflict, which was concluded between Giolitti and the reformist wing of the Socialist party during the era of the former's dominance of political life, had its origins in their common opposition to the imperialist programmes of Crispi. The opposition of the proletariat, still very weak and disorganized, could not have been effective if imperialism had not at that date (the 1890s) also been unpopular among the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie of northern Italy. But between 1896 – the year of Crispi's invasion of Abyssinia – and 1911 – the year of Giolitti's invasion of Libya – the constellation of forces changed. New industrial and financial interests emerged which had an interest (like the armaments and shipbuilding industries) in an aggressive financial policy – or which – like the Bank of Rome – saw profitable opportunities for overseas investment. But while recognizing the importance of these changes and their impact on public opinion, one should also remember the point I made earlier, about the State's lack of prestige and authority. The widespread belief that only a strong, aggressive policy and the realization of Italy's hitherto somewhat mythical status as a Great Power would serve to give the State the authority it lacked, and the belief also that in an age of imperialism powers which did not dominate were bound to be dominated – these were the *idées-forces* to which Giolitti had to surrender.

But the idea that foreign conquest and war, by reinforcing the prestige of the state would also reinforce its authority at home, proved incorrect. The economic consequences of the Libyan War were severely felt in terms both of unemployment and of a rising standard of living; and the hardships which the working-class experienced were interpreted in the light of an already well-established ideology of anti-militarism and anti-imperialism. The fact that the most progressive statesmen of the Italian Liberals had taken the initiative of war seemed to be a clear proof that the policy of collaboration with bourgeois political forces was doomed to failure and would result in a betrayal of all of Socialism's most essential principles and interests.

The Libyan War was a real watershed in Italian politics. It marked the breakdown of Giolitti's consensus, and the victory of the intransigent or maximalist wing of the Socialist Party over the reformists. The maximalist leadership remained in control of the PSI throughout the period of the war and the postwar crisis. It is therefore of prime importance to analyse the basis of its success. What was the social base of *massimalismo*? More work needs to be done before this important question can be answered. I think any very simple answer is liable to be mistaken. *Massimalismo* has been identified by its opponents with the persistence of pre-industrial patterns of protest, and viewed by its defenders as the expression of the new and most modern sectors of the working class.[2] These contradictory explanations, however, need not be exclusive if one recognizes that *massimalismo* was a composite formation, or coalition of forces. It seems quite likely that *both* these explanations have a measure of truth.

The intransigents had received their most consistent support during the Giolittian era from central Italy, (Tuscany, Romagna, Marche). Here, *massimalismo* was one manifestation of a tradition of small-town and semi-rural opposition to the State – (usually

1. See G. Carocci, *Giolitti e l'età giolittiana* (Turin, 1961), p. 110; G. Are, "Pensiero economico e vita nazionale in Italia 1890-1922. Considerazioni preliminari", in *Storia Contemporanea*, 1971. 1-2, p. 114.
2. For the latter view, see M. Degl'Innocenti, "La guerra libica, la crisi del riformismo e la vittoria degli intransigenti", in *Studi storici*, 1972, 3, pp. 466-517; for a different viewpoint, Carocci, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-72.

combined with violent anti-clericalism) – that embraced the anarchists on the one hand and the republicans on the other. If the Socialists in these areas had repudiated anarchism, the anarchist tradition and mental attitude was still a powerful influence. Food riots, barricades and violent insurrection were the indices of the peculiar revolutionary sensitivity which marked out the Romagna, and the region of Ancona, or to a lesser degree the small towns of NW Tuscany and the Arno Valley in Carrara, Viareggio, Pisa, Empoli. In moments of crisis the anarchists tended to re-emerge as leaders of insurrection and active propaganda in the army. The military mutiny of Ancona in June 1920 took place in the same city which six years before had seen the beginning of the *Settimana rossa*.[3] Until the postwar period the socialism of most of central Italy was an urban rather than a rural phenomenon, although the towns were not centres of modern industry but of markets, communications and small-scale artisan or workshop production. In the postwar period, however, the sharecroppers of Tuscany, traditionally a stable area, showed a new militancy.

Massimalismo had another, more modern, face. If the reformists were strong among the skilled working-class, especially in industries of strong craft traditions like printing or building, among the working class of the big factories and the big cities, in which the *operaio comune* or semi-skilled worker had assumed new importance, the *massimalisti* were successful.[4] It was in this milieu that the orthodox idea of working-class solidarity had the greatest relevance to actual conditions.

I should not like these generalisations to be taken as implying a rigid sociological determinism. Reformists and *massimalisti* were engaged in a constant contest for the allegiance of the politically active minority of the working class, which, it should be remembered, even in the great cities numbered only a few hundred members. This politically active minority was highly sensitive to changes in the economic climate, to the success or failure of strikes, and also to specific political events.

In the world of agrarian socialism it is even less possible to make generalizations about social support. In the pre-war period the reformists had been particularly strong among the agricultural labourers of Emilia; but in some provinces the revolutionary syndicalists also achieved great success.[5]

In the postwar climate, the reformists were almost as alarming to their agrarian enemies as the revolutionaries. The talk of national revolution was much more alarming to the agrarians in the 'red provinces' than to the industrialists because of the extent to which they felt as if, locally, the revolution had already happened. In areas with a permanent surplus of manpower, like the plains of the lower Po Valley, the Socialist leagues could only maintain their cohesion by establishing a tight monopoly over the supply of labour. The conditions of production were closely regulated by the unions, who imposed a fixed labour quota on the employees. The Unions were backed by a network of co-operatives and by Socialist control over local government. This was a remarkable but precarious achievement; the monopoly of labour could only be upheld by a very severe discipline, which created many resentments. The programme of collectivisation was accepted only with reluctance by the intermediate classes of small tenants and sharecroppers.[6]

During 1914-15 the debate over intervention in the war split the extreme left. The defection of Mussolini and of the 'general staff' of the revolutionary syndicalists was a haemorrhage which deprived the left of many of its most active agents of subversion. These converts, as is well known, were to play an unique and vital role in the rise of Fascism. But the sentiment of the mass of the party was overwhelmingly hostile to the

3. L. Lotti, *La settimana rossa* (Florence, 1965), pp. 8-9, 59-69, 85-107.
4. Degl'Innocenti, *art. cit.*, pp. 502-506.
5. Lotti, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-29.
6. M. Missiroli, "Il fascismo e la crisi italiana", in *Il fascismo e i partiti politici italiani* (ed., R. de Felice, Bologna, 1966), pp. 316-328; P. Corner, *Fascism in Ferrara 1915-1925* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 85-103.

war. The equation between capitalism, imperialism and war had been deeply rooted in the working class by Libya. The minority of the peasants had a more instinctive but no less deeply felt hatred of war.

During 1915 and 1916 Socialist opposition to the War was confined within the limits imposed by the official policy formula: "neither support nor sabotage". From the winter of 1916 on, however, the evident growth of discontent created the opportunity for a more active agitation for peace. Can it be said that 1917, rather than 1919 or 1920, offered the Socialists their best chance of achieving revolution? At first sight there is some evidence for this view. With Italy's eventual victory, the revolutionaries lost the most persuasive of their arguments, the need for peace.

The erosion of morale suffered by the Italian army during 1917 was in no way unique. One regiment mutinied in July but discontent was far less severe than in the French Army, where as many as 40,000 soldiers mutinied during the summer and there were cases of 'fraternization' between troops and strikers. In August 1917 the most serious and prolonged proletarian insurrection of the period broke out in Turin. It followed a classic pattern, starting with riots provoked by a bread shortage and rapidly developing into a mass protest against the war. But though the revolt lasted 4 to 5 days it did not spread to other cities. Moreover even in Turin the workers failed in all their attempts to fraternize with the army.[7] The morale of the front-line troops was not affected.

The great rout of Caporetto in October 1917 had prevalently military causes. There seems to have been no serious clandestine Socialist organization among the front-line troops and though morale had been very low since the failure of the last big offensive in August, discontent was passive rather than active. But in the course of the rout defeatism spread rapidly. There was a general belief that the War was as good as over. Troops going to the front-line were abused as 'traitors' and 'black-legs'. However the breakdown of discipline was not accompanied as in Russia by attacks on officers or mass armed desertion.[8] The end of 1917 was nonetheless certainly a menacing period for the Italian State. In many areas, the peasants were reported as openly saying that they would be glad of a quick Austrian victory to end the War. Benedetto Croce heard the women of Naples grumbling that 'with the Germans at least we would have bread'.[9] In spite of this, the dangers of revolution were not really very great. There was an absolute absence of leadership on the part of the Socialist party: neither at the time of the Turin riots nor after Caporetto did its leaders carry out their earlier promise to head a mass movement to 'impose peace'. By the end of 1917, moreover, there were 200,000 Allied troops in Italy.

At a deeper level, the mutual hostility of peasant soldiers and factory workers was a powerful obstacle to revolution. The factory workers, well off and exempt from military service, were an object of hatred to many of the less fortunate peasants. Both Turati and Gramsci testify to the fact that in the eyes of the peasant soldiers and their women the worker of the city was a privileged *signore*. On the other hand, if ideological hostility to the War was widely diffused among the proletariat, it was not sharpened by extreme material suffering as in the Central Powers or Russia. It seems that thanks to full employment the consumption of working-class families actually increased.[10] After Caporetto there was even a brief revival of national feeling: many workers voted patriotic addresses, and the reformist leaders spoke out in favour of defence.

The events of 1917 already showed up two or three central weaknesses in Socialist strategy which were never to be satisfactorily resolved during the *biennio rosso* (1919-1920). First, there was the problem of co-ordination; a spontaneous mass movement in any one centre could easily be crushed if there was no immediate response elsewhere. Yet, except in the occupation of the factories in September 1920, there was little or no

7. A. Monticone, "Il socialismo torinese ed i fatti dell'agosto 1917", in *Gli italiani in uniforme 1915-1918* (Bari, 1972), pp. 89-144; P. Spriano, *Storia di Torino operaia e socialista* (Turin, 1974), pp. 416-431.
8. P. Melograni, *Storia politica della grande guerra* (Bari, 1969), pp. 369-373, 423-433.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 471.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 360-369.

conscious attempt to co-ordinate action on a national scale. Even the occupation of the factories was initiated not by the party but by the metallurgical union (FIOM). Once the occupation was in force, power passed to the factory councils, a potentially revolutionary institution; but the leadership of the PSI refused to take responsibility for the extension of the movement to other industries.[11] No serious attempt was made by the party at this or any other time to co-ordinate action in the factories and cities with agitation on the land.

The problem of co-ordination was peculiarly difficult and important in a country like Italy, where the centre of government was removed from the main centre of industry. The Bolshevik seizure of power was greatly facilitated by the concentration of industry in and around the two great cities of St. Petersburg and Moscow. If the centre of Italian government had been in Turin or even Milan the chances of revolution would surely have been much greater. Instead, Rome was a city without a true industrial proletariat and there was very little prospect of a victorious Socialist insurrection there.

A second problem: the revolutionary leadership of the PSI did not control the working-class movement as a whole. The party at the height of its influence had about 200,000 members; the Confederation of Labour (CGL), still under reformist leadership, had 2 million. It is true that the union leadership was under powerful pressure from shop-floor militants; but the unions' role in the resolution of conflict was still of primary importance. The reformist parliamentary leaders retained a position of prestige and influence. The refusal to break with the reformists and to organize a revolutionary take-over of the unions was, of course, the main foundation for the criticism of the *massimalisti* by Lenin, and in Italy by Bordiga and Gramsci.

A third problem raised in 1917 and never resolved was that of the army. After the successful conclusion of the war, this problem clearly became much harder. However, the possibility of a revolution against war was not wholly ruled out. The endeavours of the Nationalists, the generals and D'Annunzio to embroil Italy in new conflicts kept the issue of war and peace alive. The enormous force of retrospective resentment which the Socialists exploited was heightened by the fear of new imperialist wars. The tension with Yugoslavia, intervention in Albania and in Turkey, the abortive plan for an expedition to the Caucasus; all these necessitated keeping a large army on foot. But as the Nitti government demobilised the mass army in late 1919, Socialist chances really became less good. For demobilisation increased the significance of the 'hard core' of professional soldiers, and of the only nominally demobilized ex-officers, NCOs and *arditi,* on whom the reaction could rely. It has been suggested that the Socialists could have allied themselves with D'Annunzio and his programme of a 'national revolution'; but such a policy would, it seems to me, have been even more certainly suicidal than the one actually pursued.[11] The ordinary Socialists would have found an agreement of this sort quite incomprehensible and repugnant; at the time they hated men like D'Annunzio as the embodiment of the worst kind of patriotic mythology. Moreover, if such a movement had been successful, it seems very unlikely that the Socialists would have ultimately gained by it. They can be reproached with many errors, but at least a deliberate attempt to overthrow democracy in circumstances which would have made a military dictatorship highly likely was not one of them. Rather, the Socialists may have failed to exploit to the full the opportunities offered by resistance to military subversion. A clever and flexible revolutionary leader might well have turned Nitti's appeal for the support of 'the workers and peasants' against D'Annunzio to some advantage. The type of intransigence practised by the Socialist party consistently precluded the possibility of exploiting divergences and weaknesses in the ruling class.

Italy's victory in the War made a strictly orthodox Leninist analysis inapplicable. The most representative leader of the *massimalisti,* Serrati, recognised this in two articles in *Avanti* in January 1919. He admitted that in a victorious parliamentary democracy the slogan of the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' was likely to be counter-productive.[12]

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11. See P. Spriano, *L'occupazione della fabbriche* (Turin, 1964).
12. R. Vivarelli, *Il dopoguerra in Italia e l'avvento del fascismo 1918-1922* (Naples, 1967), Vol. I, p. 313.

This did not prevent the party's official commitment to the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' at the Bologna congress of October 1919. Serrati's deviations from strict Leninism were attacked by the new intransigent fraction of the extreme left led by the Neapolitan Amadeo Bordiga. As criticism of Serrati and the official position of the *massimalisti*, Bordiga's ideas had an undeniable cogency. He recommended abstention in the 1919 elections as the only way to concentrate the forces of the party and the working class for a serious attempt to achieve revolution. 'The proletariat must not be deceived and lulled to sleep by the electoral contest'.[13] The intransigents complained that the party's strategy of encouraging movements of a quasi-revolutionary type such as the international general strike of July 1919 and then dropping them as soon as they threatened to have more than a merely demonstrative value was bound to lead to 'ruin and disillusionment'.[14] The intransigents had drawn one important lesson from the Russian Revolution: that of the necessity of action and the danger in a situation of crisis of sitting back and expecting history to do your work for you. Gramsci, whose Marxism unlike Bordiga's had been greatly influenced by the voluntarist and idealist philosophies current before 1914, gave dramatic form to this perception when he wrote an article on the Bolshevik Revolution with the paradoxical title of 'the revolution against Das Kapital'.[15] The strictly determinist interpretation of Marxism which he was attacking can be typified by the statement Serrati made in October 1919 in self-defence: 'We, as marxists, interpret history: we do not make it'.[16] This was only too true.

However one should, I think, avoid the temptation to analyse the difference between the *massimalisti* of Serrati and the intransigence of Bordiga or Gramsci in exclusively intellectual terms. Serrati's determinism was an apologia for indecision, but it is fair to recognise that this indecision was rooted in the structure and history of the Italian working-class movement. It was Serrati's identification with Italian Socialism as a whole and its history, and his admiration for its achievements, that led to his stubborn refusal to break with the reformists.[17] This attitude also had its realistic side. The expectation of the intransigent 3rd Internationalist fraction that the logic of their position would convince the majority of the party was not fulfilled. Moreover even if the intransigents had carried the majority of the party with them, as they might well have done with slightly more subtle tactics, would it have made any lasting difference? Spriano points out that the victories of the Communist fraction in the German USPD and in the French Socialist party were only temporary, because the new Communist parties were unable to hold a large percentage of their members.[18] Moreover the Socialist electorate and mass base was probably somewhat to the right of the party membership, at least by January 1921.

What made the social crisis in Italy during 1919-20 particularly severe was the combination of new and old grievances and forms of protest. In the North a class-conscious proletariat engaged in frequent strike action, and evolved with great success the new tactic of factory occupation. On the other hand, the series of 'cost-of-living incidents' in June and July 1919 were not so far removed in character from the traditional bread riot. In the South, the land occupations and assaults on town halls remained as in the 19th century the prevalent form of action.[19] This diversity no doubt made the problem of coordination harder: but the example of Russia may suggest that it at the same time created or at least exemplified a more dangerous situation than that prescribed by a more homogeneous form of social action. The diversity of forms of protest cannot in itself explain the failure of revolution.

The Italian Socialist party did possess some advantages which the Bolsheviks lacked. Its strength was much more widely distributed and it had a stronger base among the

13. A. De Clementi, *Amadeo Bordiga* (Turin, 1971), p. 77.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
15. A. Gramsci, *Scritti giovanili (1914-1918)* (Turin, 1958), pp. 150ff.
16. P. Spriano, *Storia del partito comunista italiano* (Turin, 1967), Vol. I, p. 31.
17. F. De Felice, *Serrati, Bordiga, Gramsci e il problema della rivoluzione in Italia 1919-1920* (Bari, 1971), pp. 46ff., 70-73.
18. Spriano, *Partito comunista*, pp. 92-93.
19. See C., L., and R. Tilly, *The Rebellious Century* (London, 1975), pp. 122-129, 170-171.

agricultural proletariat and the peasantry. In the postwar period it successfully mobilized the sharecroppers of Tuscany and Umbria as well as the labourers of the Po Valley. This reflected in part Italy's strong urban traditions and the interdependence of town and country. However, in spite of the greater permeability of the countryside, a second look will show that there were other differences from Russia which were much less favourable. In Russia the peasants, when they briefly had a chance to express themselves, followed the Social-Revolutionaries; the populism of the Social-Revolutionaries was not immune to the possibility of Socialist influence. Instead, in Italy, the ideology of the other major political forces in the countryside was strongly hostile to Socialism.

First of all, there were the *Popolari,* with their backing from the Catholic Church. It is worth noting that this new party, in only a year of activity had acquired a membership of 255,000, considerably superior to that of the PSI.[20] In some areas, such as the rich province of Cremona in S. Lombardy or parts of Tuscany, the agrarian action of the *Popolari* was in practical terms as radical as that of the Socialists. Their demands that tenants should share in the direction and control of enterprises were particularly menacing. On such issues the Catholic peasant leagues were indeed sometimes more intransigent than the Socialists precisely because they did not envisage a social revolution and were therefore more determined on securing an immediate shift in the balance of power. More typically, however, the Catholic rural organizations acted as a stabilizing force in social as well as political terms. With the help of the cheap credit provided by their extensive network of local banks, they encouraged and assisted the aspirations of the peasants towards individual ownership and independence. The general advance in the numbers of peasant proprietors in Italy in the postwar period was most marked in the strong Catholic areas of NE Lombardy and the Veneto.[21] At the level of political leadership, there was next to no chance that the Socialists could succeed in dividing the *Popolari* and winning over a part of them for a revolutionary programme. Traditional ideological hostility between the parties frequently outweighed even class antagonisms. In some areas of Catholic strength the Socialists refused at first to believe that the Fascists could be the more dangerous enemies, and the two parties were hardly ever able to co-operate locally even in defence until it was too late.

In the South the influence of the ex-combatant organisations was a similar block. Here, no doubt, there were more opportunities for Socialist penetration, since the ex-combatants were unable to create any effective national political organisation. Without doubt Socialist errors here minimized the chances of success. The organised ex-combatants were not at first wholly hostile to the Socialists, in spite of the latter's opposition to the War. Serrati, however, denounced the ex-combatant movement as 'a fraud designed to break the electoral resistance of the working masses and to falsify its political expression'.[22] The PSI in theory (though not in practice) continued to exclude all those who had supported entry into the war from membership, and another error was the foundation of its own splinter group of ex-combatants, (which excluded officers by statute).[23] This precluded the much greater gains to be made by infiltrating the official movement.

Over and above this failure, there is the question of Socialist land policy. Although in some areas, such as Tuscany, local leaders did make compromises which enabled the party to broaden its base of support in a durable fashion, the official policy of the party remained rigidly tied to the programme of collectivisation. Serrati condemned in absolute terms any compromise with the principle of private ownership.[24] This rigidity became more and more dangerous with the very successes of the peasant movements during 1919-20. These, by inducing landlords to sell up or public authorities to grant land, opened the way for a great expansion of individual ownership. The *Popolari,* as we have seen, took full advantage of this tendency, which the Socialists instead opposed.

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20. J. Petersen, "Elattorato e base sociale del fascismo negli anni venti", in *Studi storici,* July-Sept. 1975, p. 635.
21. G. Bandini, *Cento anni storia agraria italiana* (Rome, 1963), pp. 113, 165.
22. De Felice, *Serrati.*
23. G. Sabbatucci, *I combattenti nel primo dopoguerra* (Bari, 1974), pp. 78-83.
24. De Felice, *op. cit.,* pp. 95-97.

Finally, in the list of the reasons for the failure of revolution, there is the question of the revolutionary institution. I have already largely dealt with the question of the party as a revolutionary instrument. Many even of the *massimalisti* themselves, it should be added, had not lost the habits of conciliation and compromise, in spite of their abstract fervour; they were managers of protest rather than true revolutionaries. On the other hand, the alternative model of the party proposed by Bordiga was, I think, inadequate for an opposite set of reasons. Bordiga's insistence on the need for the homogeneity of the party and for the existence of a unitary political will towards revolution was not balanced by any perception of how such a party could bring the more or less spontaneous movements of the masses under its leadership and direction. His single-minded obsession with the problem of power blinded him to the importance of the achievement of intermediate objectives as a means both of sustaining revolutionary tension and weakening the morale of cohesion of the governing class.

Gramsci, no doubt, was better aware of these problems, but his role should not be overestimated. He should be seen as the theorist rather than the effective leader of the movement of the factory councils. His direct influence during 1920 was largely limited to Turin, and was even there contested. Gramsci himself seems as far as we can judge to have been sceptical about the chances of revolution.

However, the experience of the factory councils was of critical importance in the one indisputably serious and near-revolutionary episode of the *biennio rosso*, the occupation of the factories (September 1920). What was impressive about this movement was its simultaneity and co-ordination; it took place in all the major cities of North and Central Italy. The occupation of the factories was not undertaken as a deliberte revolutionary move. It was initiated by the reformist Metallurgical Workers' Federation (FIOM), led by Bruno Buozzi. But the situation created by the occupation was one which a determined radical initiative could have exploited.

The dispute between Gramsci and Bordiga on the relationship between the factory councils and the party, and the associated dispute on the interpretation of the October Revolution, was inconclusive. Bordiga was right in pointing out that the factory councils could control production but not seize power; however his dogmatism precluded a solution to the problem of the revolutionary institution. Angelo Tasca, the maverick of the *Ordine Nuovo* group, condemned the half-hearted experiment of the party in the creation of 'Soviets' on the Russian model. He suggested that instead in the geographically based *Camere del Lavoro* the proletariat in fact already had an institution which if properly used could assume power.[25] During the cost of living riots of June 1919 the *Camere* played a remarkable role, controlling prices and bringing disorganized looting under control. Their potential as a 'dual power' was considerable. The fact that they were not formally controlled by the Socialist party was in many respects an advantage, since they could, at least in some cases, command the support of other revolutionary groups.

The only model of revolution which had any chance of success in Italy would, it seems to me, have been somewhat different from the Bolshevik. It would have been a kind of chain reaction provoked by the local seizure of power and the action of the *Camere del Lavoro*. It would have had perhaps greater chances of success if it had not excluded the possibility of reformist mediation and compromise. In September 1920 the bourgeoisie was sufficiently alarmed to surrender a share of power to the CGL:[26] if the CGL had been able to accept, would not a revolution have become more rather than less likely? All this is speculation.

One reason, one may note, why reformists like Turati were reluctant to break with the majority of the party and join government was the experience of Germany. Turati had no desire to become an Italian Scheidemann, and feared that if he did join the government circumstances might force him into the position where he had to take responsibility for repression.

25. Spriano, *Partito comunista*, pp. 59-60.
26. Spriano, *Occupazione*, pp. 187-191.

I shall now turn to consider the passage from revolution to counter-revolution. The anarchist Luigi Fabbri described Fascism as a 'preventive counter-revolution'; however, in the course of the essay he wrote under that title, he made the important point that the employers, particularly in agriculture, who backed Fascism, were not so much moved by fear of a general revolution as by the erosion of their own authority and property rights which had already taken place. 'The bosses felt they were no longer bosses'.[27] In the red provinces of Emilia, controlled by the Socialists through an interlocking structure of unions, co-operatives and communal governments, there was some objective basis for this feeling. Elsewhere, as in Tuscany, the landlords interpreted a comparatively modest shift in the balance of power towards their tenants as quasi-revolutionary because of the unexpected rapidity with which their authority had been challenged. In both cases, the agrarians became convinced that only a thoroughgoing counter-revolution, a movement that would put the clock back not merely to 1918 but to 1900, would make their enterprises socially and economically viable.

The attitude of the industrialists was more complicated. Many of the large industrialists in particular would seem to have held a view closer to that of Giolitti than to that of the true counter-revolutionaries. The threat of Fascism, that is to say, would make possible a working agreement with the moderate trade union leaders. As the reaction gathered pace and concurrently the economic crisis, which began in mid-1920, deepened, the industrialists became more intransigent. But to the end the industrial establishment remained hesitant and committed to a gradual and painless restoration of pre-war 'normality' rather than to outright counter-revolution. It is important to note, however, that in the provinces many medium and small industrialists backed the Fascists just as wholeheartedly as the agrarians.

Is it correct to describe Fascism as a counter-revolution? The description has been questioned. Indeed, it would not be correct to describe Mussolini himself as a conscious counter-revolutionary until 1922. At the time of the conflict over the Pact of Pacification in summer 1921 he still seems to have envisaged some kind of role for Fascism within the existing political system. However, the outcome of that crisis showed that the driving force of the movement *was* counter-revolutionary. It is a telling fact that the areas of Fascist strength were closely correlated with the areas of Socialist strength or active labour agitation.

In an article in his new review *Gerarchia* (Hierarchy), entitled *Da che parte va il mondo?* (Which way is the world going?), Mussolini openly identified with the historic 'wave of reaction', which, he postulated, was sweeping Europe. 'Are we', he asked rhetorically, 'moving right in the sense that all the exaggerated extremism of the immediate post-war period is being wiped out, or are we going right in the sense that we are undertaking a much broader and more radical revision of our values? Is it merely the events, the myths and the history of the last two years that are affected, or is it a whole century of history. . .?' He answered with the claim that the reaction was a secular scope, and that 'this reaction is our revolution'. However, what Mussolini repudiated was 'the soulless, drab egalitarianism of democracy'.[28] He did not promise any return to the past in the sense of pre-industrial values. The dynamic of capitalism was accepted, though not its social and political consequences. It would not be possible to extend this generalization to the whole of the Fascist movement. There were ideological tendencies within Fascism, particularly among the agrarians, which expressed a more integral hostility to the modern world. There was also a more wide-spread current of resentment of 'plutocracy', or large-scale capitalist enterprise, among the rank and file of Fascism. But this resentment did not envisage any alternative to industrial capitalism as a system. Even corporativism, with its promise of a more ordered society, was a relatively unimportant element in the chaotic aspirations of early Fascism. More typical was the vision of a rejuvenated system of free enterprise, in which political authority would underwrite the severe dictates of production.

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27. L. Fabbri, "La controrivoluzione preventiva", in *Il fascismo e i partiti*, pp. 178 ff.
28. *Italian Fascisms* (ed., A. Lyttelton, London, 1973), pp. 59-67.

The victory of Fascism depended upon an uneasy alliance between the urban middle classes and the agrarians. The former were driven to action both by fear of proletarian revolution and by the deterioration in their economic position relative to the working class produced by inflation. Psychologically, the revolutionary threat and the economic threat fused to produce a feeling that the existence of the middle classes was menaced. The shortcomings of Socialist strategy, particularly towards the intellectuals, greatly assisted the Fascists in overcoming or perverting democratic sentiment. Some Fascists sincerely believed that they were fighting to preserve freedom from th dictatorship of the proletariat. More important still was the patriotic identification of the middle classes with the nation. At the time of Caporetto Italy had come near enough to total defeat to inspire a version of the 'stab-in-the-back legend'. Fascism offered a chance to settle old wartime scores, to punish the agitators who had conspired against national glory and fulfillment. Victory crystallized these sentiments, which may have wavered somewhat in the dark days of the war.

The Fascist reaction in the countryside seized upon and exploited the latent weaknesses of Socialist and trade union power. In the Po Valley agricultural labour was abundant and prevalently unskilled. The unions had succeeded in disguising and mitigating unemployment, but once their monopoly of labour was broken, the Fascists could turn the unemployed against those who remained in the unions. On the other hand, they were also able to exploit the incompatibility between the Socialist programme of collectivisation and the peasant's aspiration to individual ownership. In Emilia, the skilled tenants and even the *obligati fissi* (skilled labourers on yearly contracts) resented the dominance exerted by the day labourers through their control of the unions.[29]

In the towns the Fascists were able to seize the initiative from the Socialists by a radical innovation in the 'répertoire of violence'. The greatest novelty of Fascism was in the importation of military method and style into civil conflict. In a disorganized society, this was devastatingly effective in the short term. The German historian W. Sauer has rightly complained that 'the military are apparently not a category for social analysis':[30] the decisive importance of the ex-officers for Fascism (in Italy there were 150,000) hardly needs emphasis. What should instead be stressed is that in early 1919 even among the officers the Fascists were only a minority. But the frustrations of the return to civilian life combined with socialist hostility brought many ex-officers into the movement during 1920-1921. The official directive of the Fascist central committee in 1920 that wherever possible officers should be chosen as secretaries of the *fasci* shows what a crucial function they performed.[31] They provided the cadres for civil war which the Socialists largely lacked. University and secondary school students also provided Fascism with an invaluable source of leaders and of active recruits with leisure to devote to the movement. It has been calculated that by the end of 1921 12 or 13% of the total student population had joined the *fasci*.[32] Students and ex-officers together did much to create the image of Fascism as a young, virile and dynamic force, quite different from the stuffy and cautious conservatism of the past.

The Fascist reaction, if it had some military co-ordination, was nonetheless a highly local and fragmented affair in political terms. It logically reproduced in a kind of mirror image the pattern established by its enemies. However, it had two decisive advantages which enabled it to translate local victory into national victory, as the Socialists had failed to do. The first and most important was the benevolent neutrality of the state, and indeed he active complicity of many of its agents. By the time the old Liberal political class had come to recognize the full measure of the Fascist danger to their position, it was too late. The Fascists had already penetrated the state apparatus and were in a position to neutralise its action.

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29. See P. Corner, *Fascism in Ferrara 1915-1925* (London, 1975), pp. 144-69.
30. W. Sauer, "National Socialism: Totalitarianism of Fascism?", in *American Historical Review*, (1967), p. 441.
31. A. Lyttleton, *The Seizure of Power* (London, 1973), p. 53.
32. Petersen, *art. cit.*, pp. 659-660.

Their second advantage was the ability of Mussolini, who alone gave the reaction a national image and a political formula. The ambiguity of his policy, his constant alternation between violence and compromise, disoriented his opponents. The March on Rome succeeded because he had shrewdly sized up the psychology of the governing class, and saw that they would prefer surrender to all-out conflict. Mussolini understood, as perhaps no previous counter-revolutionary leader had done, how simultaneously to employ violence to disrupt state authority and to hold out the promise of its integral restoration. The image (somewhat removed from the reality) of the Fascist party as a disciplined militia helped to project the myth of a new society of energetic but obedient men of action. Thus the Fascist counter-revolution succeeded in creating the illusion that it could satisfy both the demand for order and the demand for change.

Résumé

Il existe plusieurs façons de définir ce que l'on entend par « situation révolutionnaire ». La définition la plus large recouvre tous les cas où la possibilité d'une révolution prochaine est envisagée à la fois par les dirigeants politiques et par la majorité de la population. Il est en effet plus facile et moins arbitraire de s'interroger sur ce que la perspective d'une révolution représentait pour les acteurs politiques d'une époque que sur le caractère plus ou moins favorable de « circonstances objectives », car la connaissance, les attentes et les motivations des acteurs sont les éléments majeurs de toute situation historique. De ce point de vue, la situation en Italie, à la fin de la première guerre mondiale, était effectivement révolutionnaire. Les gestes posés par ceux qui ont participé aux luttes politiques d'alors ne peuvent être compris qu'en rapport avec le projet de faire la révolution ou d'empêcher qu'elle se produise.

L'impérialisme italien de la fin du XIX^{e} siècle constitue un des principaux facteurs d'explication des origines de cette crise. L'entente entre les libéraux et l'aile réformiste du Parti socialiste avait su mettre un frein aux guerres coloniales, mais les pressions de la bourgeoisie industrielle et financière amenèrent Giolitti à reprendre à son compte la politique impérialiste, dans le but de raffermir le prestige et l'autorité de l'État. Les conséquences économiques de la guerre de Libye (chômage, hausse du coût de la vie) nourrirent l'idéologie anti-militariste et anti-impérialiste de la classe ouvrière italienne et provoquèrent la rupture du consensus politique autour de Giolitti, par suite de la défaite, au sein du P.S.I., de la fraction réformiste au profit des maximalistes.

Si les maximalistes étaient convaincus de la possibilité et de la nécessité de la révolution, leur était-il toutefois possible de la faire? Et quel aurait été le moment le plus propice: l'année 1917, alors que l'exaspération était à son comble et que les émeutes dues à la rareté du pain se transformaient en luttes politiques pour la paix? Ou les années « rouges » 1919 et 1920, ponctuées de luttes économiques de masse, de grèves et d'occupations d'usines?

Les victoires comme les échecs du maximalisme s'expliquent en partie par le caractère composite de sa base sociale et par la diversité des revendications et des formes de lutte, entre le nord et le sud, entre la ville et la campagne, entre les ouvriers de métier et le prolétariat industriel. Il faut tenir compte, également, des faiblesses de la stratégie socialiste, mises à jour dès 1917.

L'absence totale de leadership de la part du parti se manifesta, par exemple, à l'occasion des émeutes de Turin et de la déroute de Caporetto, en 1917, qui auraient pu être prolongées dans un vaste mouvement pour la paix, de même que lors de la grève générale de juillet 1919, mouvement abandonné aussitôt lancé, les dirigeants du parti refusant d'y voir une forme de lutte presque révolutionnaire. À plusieurs reprises, les soulèvements spontanés furent aisément réprimés un à un, à cause du manque de co-

ordination à l'échelle nationale. Le mouvement ouvrier lui-même échappait à la direction révolutionnaire des maximalistes, la C.G.I. et les leaders parlementaires réformistes conservant toute leur influence auprès d'une bonne part des ouvriers syndiqués. Les maximalistes se coupèrent également de couches importantes de la population en se montrant, à tort, intransigeants à l'égard des anciens combattants qui s'étaient prononcés en faveur de la guerre, comme à l'égard des paysans que le projet de collectivisation des terres effrayait. Cette intransigeance empêcha constamment le parti d'exploiter les divergences au sein de la classe dominante et permit aux forces de droite, particulièrement les mouvements d'anciens combattants et les *Popolari,* de consolider leur pouvoir et d'utiliser à leur profit le mécontentement populaire.

Les occupations d'usines, en septembre 1920, et la formation des Conseils d'usines constituèrent l'épisode quasi révolutionnaire par excellence du *biennio rosso.* Mais, là encore, la direction du P.S.I. manqua d'initiative, tout comme elle n'avait pas su tirer parti de la formation et des actions des *Camere del Lavoro,* dès juin 1919, pour mettre en place des institutions révolutionnaires. Il convient de préciser, cependant, que le manque de détermination dont souffrait la direction du parti était profondément enraciné dans la structure et l'histoire même du mouvement ouvrier italien. De plusieurs points de vue, les conditions générales et particulièrement les conditions idéologiques, en Italie, interdisent de penser qu'une victoire semblable à celle des bolcheviks russes aurait pu s'y produire.

D'un autre côté, la montée des forces contre-révolutionnaires et la victoire du Fascisme s'explique, pour une bonne part, par le sentiment, partagé par la classe dominante rurale et la bourgeoisie industrielle, que leur existence même était menacée par la révolution et la dictature du prolétariat; au-delà de ce sentiment, il y avait encore le fait qu'elles s'identifiaient à la nation italienne, que seul le Fascisme pouvait protéger contre les agitateurs subversifs. La réaction fasciste tira parti, également, des faiblesses des socialistes et des syndicats, dans les milieux ruraux, et sut donner l'impression qu'elle pouvait satisfaire à la fois aux exigences d'ordre et aux aspirations vers le changement.

Rise of Fascism in Italy, 1918-1922: Revolution, Counter-revolution, or Re-arrangement?

Alan Cassels

"Anybody who thinks for five minutes will realise that as soon as war ceases and rejoicings subside – or even before – millions of soldiers and war workers will be asking, 'What about me ?' . . . What applies to them applies with equal urgency, though in a different form, to industrialists and business men . . .," so wrote a British cabinet minister in 1918.[1] This general anticipation of a brave new world was excited by a concatenation of events: by Russia's Bolshevik revolution, by America's entry into the First World War and insistence on the conflict's moral purpose; and not least by the flood of wartime propaganda which tried to keep up morale by promising that the slaughter of 1914-18 would be sanctified by some postwar reformation.[2] Italy was not immune to the global euphoria, and indeed Italians coined the phrase *diciannovismo* to express the buoyant expectancy of 1919. "Radical reforms were inevitable and no one dared openly oppose them," wrote Angelo Tasca, himself an actor in the revolutionary movement whose account still conveys more convincingly than any other the atmosphere of the heady days of 1919 when "republic, political and economic democracy, common ownership of land," all seemed just around the corner.[3] Even those whose principles predisposed them to uphold the status quo were reconciled to change of some kind. Orlando expected the Great War to surpass 1789 as a revolutionary catalyst, while Salandra called the war's end "the hour of youth." "Let no one think," he added, "that a peaceful return to the past will be possible after this storm."[4] Nor must it be supposed that this sense of an irresistible revolutionary tide vanished overnight. As late as September 1920, Luigi Albertini's fatalistic counsel at the height of the sit-in strikes was to turn the reins of government over to the PSI and CGL.[5] Superficially, as in Germany and Austria at this time, the old guard appeared ready to abdicate, and power was there for the taking by the socialists. Here, then, is that *perception* of imminent revolution that Mr. Lyttleton at the start of his paper advances as the major criterion for calling postwar Italy genuinely revolutionary.

In what I found was a wonderfully lucid exposition Mr. Lyttleton has concentrated on the prospects of this revolution from below and the reasons for its final abortion. Then, towards the close of his presentation, he touched on the rise of Facism in the service of the counterrevolution, but very properly and in my opinion most significantly he also raised the question whether Fascism can be dismissed merely as a blind reactionary force.

1. C. Addison, *Four and A Half Years: A Personal Diary from June 1914 to January 1919* (London, 1934), Vol. II, p. 582.
2. For the genesis of these wartime expectations see A.J. Mayer, *Wilson versus Lenin: Political Origins of the New Diplomacy* (New Haven, 1959). See also M. Ferro, *La Grande Guerre* (Paris, 1969), chaps 16-18; A Marwick, *War and Social Change in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1974), chaps. 2-3.
3. A Tasca, *Nascita e avvento del fascismo* (Bari, 1965), p. 22. Cf. P. Nenni, *Storia di quattro anni* (Rome, 1946), chap. 1, "Il diciannovismo."
4. Quoted in Tasca, *Nascista e avvento*, p. 18.
5. P. Spriano, *L'occupazione delle fabbriche, settembre 1920* (Turin, 1964), pp. 201-6.

The implication to me is that Fascism may have been that "revolution from above" that, as Mr. Lyttleton has said, the liberal state had continuously promised but equally continuously had failed to deliver. In other words, it might be said that there were two currents for change in Italy; one, a leftist upsurge with the familiar goals of political egalitarianism and economic justice; and the other which is not usually called revolutionary because it did not envisage the overthrow of the existing class system (at most it suggested replacement by a more virile social hierarchy), but which nevertheless aspired to a fundamental reform of the institutions of state. To elucidate this argument I would like in my remarks to reverse the emphasis of Mr. Lyttleton's paper; that is, I shall make some brief observations on the Socialist *rivoluzione mancata*, and then elaborate more on Fascism's role as the agent of the alternative "revolution from above."

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First of all, apropos the postwar challenge to the liberal state from the left, one must applaud the perspective which traces the sources of disaffection to epochs before and during World War I. Presumably, our colleagues elsewhere in this colloquium examining at this moment the revolutionary situations in Germany and Austria have likewise seen fit to cast their eyes back to the problems of national integration in Wilhelmine and Hapsburg society. The appreciation of Italy's revolutionary wave as antedating 1918 puts a familiar question – namely, when was the most propitious moment for the left to strike? – in a slightly novel context. Specifically, I am intrigued by the conjecture that the point of maximum revolutionary potential may have occurred in 1917 when a fusion of traditional working-class militancy with anti-interventionist sentiment and war weariness was possible on the Russian pattern.[6] However, this would still have left outside a revolutionary coalition the new "proletariat of the trenches," predominantly peasants radicalized by the war. Mr. Lyttleton has nicely demonstrated the gulf fixed between the Socialists, many of whom foolishly reviled the rank-and-file soldiery as warmongers, and the latter who, in turn, abused their detractors as cowards. In this squabble can one discern the roots of that lack of co-ordination between town and country radicalism which bedevilled revolutionary efforts after the war?[7] As for balancing the two years of the *biennio rosso* one against the other as auspicious to revolution, the conventional wisdom has not been seriously challenged. The year 1919 with its (to some degree) spontaneous summer riots against price rises and the general strike of July 20 against Allied intervention in Soviet Russia and Hungary betokened a depth of popular radicalism which went largely unrecognized and untapped by the organized left at the time.[8] In contrast, the factory occupations of September 1920, containing though they did the germ of a wider revolutionary action, never really threatened to escalate into full-scale class warfare. The testimony of Giolitti and Gramsci from opposite political poles on the improbability of revolution at this juncture is impressive.[9]

Maybe because we have read so much written from a quasi-Marxist position, we are accustomed to be highly censorious of the vacillating and do-nothing Socialist leadership in '19 and '20.[10] It was good, therefore, to be reminded this afternoon to think historically; that is, to throw our imaginations back to the postwar Italian environment, to face up to

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6. For an appraisal of revolutionary sentiments at this time, see R. De Felice, "Ordine pubblico e orientamenti delle masse popolari italiane nella prima metà del 1917", *Rivista Storica del Socialismo*, Vol VI (1963), pp. 467-77. Se also L. Ambrosoli, *Nè aderire nè sabotare 1915-1918* (Milan, 1961); P. Spriano, *Torino operaia nella Grande Guerra* (Turin, 1960).
7. I. Bonomi, *La politica italiana dopo Vittorio Veneto* (Turin, 1955) p. 108; C. Seton Watson, *Italy from Liberalism to Fascism* (London, 1967), pp. 512-16.
8. R.Vivarelli, *Il dopoguerra in Italia e l'avento del fascismo*, Vol. 1 (Naples, 1967), pp. 412-18, 435-54.
9. Spriano, *L'occupazione*, pp. 172-73.
10. For example, N. Poulantzas, *Fascisme et dictature* (Paris, 1970), part 4, chap. 3; P. Spriano *Storia del partito comunista italiano*, Vol. I (Turin, 1967), chaps 1-7 *passim;* Tasca, *Nascita e avvento*, pp. 23-29, 93-97, 115-130; G.A. Williams, into. to P. Spriano, *Occupation of the Factories*, Eng. trans. (London, 1975), pp. 11-18.

the Socialist options as they actually existed, and to recognize that the line proposed by the intransigents presaged as many pitfalls as the policy of compromise adopted by the PSI executive. Mr. Lyttleton's sympathetic treatment of the Socialist leaders is not misplaced and offers a healthy antidote to more polemical approaches.

By common accord, Italian historians now stress the militancy of certain rural areas in the aftermath of World War I;[11] our speaker today has referred to the feeling that in 1919 revolution had already occurred in the so-called red provinces. But agrarian radicalism attracts our attention not only as the cynosure of an unconsummated general revolution, but also as the instigator of the backlash which transformed Fascism from a phenomenon on the lunatic fringe into a credible mass movement. This happened because over the winter of 1920 the *squadre* were given license to smash the hold of the Federterra by conservative elements in the countryside who were inflammed, paradoxically, by the psychological climate arising from the factory occupations in Turin, Milan and Genoa. On this topic there is room for some debate. Normally, the rural groups behind *squadrismo* have been identified as the most reactionary and biggest landowners, which is why D'Annunzio denounced Fascism as "agrarian slavery."[12] On the other hand, Renzo De Felice for some time has been insisting that Fascism was more the creature of a rising rural middle class, mobilised partly by the reformist activities of the *Popolari*.[13] Unfortunately, in the absence of firm statistical evidence, the argument can only be conducted at present in a speculative manner.

Rich landowners and ambitious rural bourgeois, whichever might have been the *eminence grise* behind Fascism in 1921, were alike foes of socialism, and it was the advance into the countryside which nullified the leftist image of "Fascism of the first hour." The road was cleared for Mussolini's embrace in 1922 of laissez-faire economics, the monarchy and anything else that would endear him to Italy's frightened conservatives – a policy which has been delicately defined as "electric functionalism."[14] But if it is beyond doubt that came to power in alliance with the counterrevolution, the question still remains, why did the Italian power structure turn to Fascism rather than to some other, more traditional authoritarian force? Mr. Lyttleton has advanced two cogent reasons: one, the military organization that Fascism could bring to counterrevolutionary action, and second, the power of Mussolini's charisma and political *fingerspitzengefühl* or intuition. Without denigrating either of these factors, I propose now to suggest a third, namely, that Facism offered the sort of limited change that respectable Italy would not merely tolerate but positively willed.

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As an earnest indication of their sincere desire for change, as well as to buy off revolution from below, Italy's old power brokers and the *ceti medi* at large accepted the radical Nitti as premier in June 1919. In retrospect, Nitti's ministry appears as the last credible effort of the old regime to reform itself.[15] However, it is worth noting that his successor Giolitti, the architect of the Thermidor of 1920-1921, paid at least lip service to the spirit of reform in his Dronero programme, in his appointment of the ex-syndicalist Labriola to the newly created post of minister of labour, and in his overtures to bring Turati within the cabinet.[16] In the last resort, though, the failure of Nitti and Giolitti simply to make the old

11. Largely as a result of the work of A. Serpieri, *La guerra e le classi rurale italiani* (Bari, 1930), and L. Preti, *Le lotte agrarie nella Valle Padana* (Turin, 1955).
12. Quoted in Tasca, *Nascita e avvento*, p. 300.
13. R. De Felice, *Mussolini: il rivoluzionario* (Turin, 1965), chap. xiv, *passim*, and *Mussolini: il fascista*, Vol. I. (Turin, 1966), chap. i, passim; G. De Rosa, *Il Paritito popolare italiano* (Bari, 1969), pp. 17-20.
14. E. Ragioneri, intro. to P. Togliatti, *Lezioni sul fascismo* (Rome, 1970), p. xv.
15. A. Lyttleton, *The Seizure of Power* (London, 1973), pp. 33-34, Seton-Watson, *Liberalism to Fascism*, pp. 559-60.
16. N. Valeri, *Giovanni Giolitti* (Turin, 1971), pp. 280-88.

transformist mechanism function any longer, let alone to amend it, meant that sooner or later outside help would be enlisted to effect those changes deemed necessary.

The urgency of that need, I submit, can be attributed directly to nationalist sentiment in postwar Italy. I feel compelled here to stress the self-evident point that the organizers of this colloquium have invited us to draw comparisons among the revolutionary situations in Germany, Austria and Italy, respectively – the first two of which emerged from the war defeated while the third, Italy, belonged to the triumphant alliance. It is not my intention for an instant to challenge the validity of a conceptual linking of postwar Germany, Austria and Italy; just the reverse, in fact. For the Italian nation at the war's end envinced what one might call a schizoid frame of mind, unsure whether it belonged with the victors or the vanquished. Caporetto had scarred Italy badly and had even given rise to a mini-*Dolchstesslegende*. The noisy celebration of the modest feat of arms at Vittorio Veneto emphasized rather than assuaged the Italian need for self-reassurance. After the war, the new popularity of the old nationalist theme that Italy was a proletarian or have-not nation, together with the widespread convicion that the Italian victory of 1918 had been "mutilated," disclosed a deep sense of disparagement.[17] In postwar mood Italy resembled less her victorious allies than the defeated countries, Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary, where fundamental social and political change was conceived in national humiliation. Indeed, the early leftist stirrings of *diciannovismo* recalled the revolutionary initiatives taken in Russia in 1917 and in Germany and even Austria and Hungary a year later – the same popular demand for a constituent assembly which augured rejection of a liberal parliamentary system, and the same upsurge of workers' councils with the hint of their metamorphosis into political soviets.[18]

On the other hand, the response of Italian patriots to an undistinguished war record followed by an inglorious peace settlement was to insist on a greater measure of efficiency and order at home to sustain a strong nationalistic policy abroad. In this way the suppression of the class war in Italy became equated with the nation's achievement of diplomatic "parity" with Britain and France. It was the recurring Italian dream of genuine national integration rooted in the *risorgimento*, sensed again at the opening of the Libyan war, and again during the "radiant May" of 1915. In 1911 the Italian Socialists had shattered the dream by denouncing imperialism and espousing *massimalismo*; in World War I the left had again been instrumental in denying Italy her *union sacrée* or *Burgfriede*. Now, after the war, for a third time the Italian nationalists demanded their alternate revolution.[19] On this occasion, despairing of the liberal state's ability to reinvigorate itself, they turned to Fascism. It was no accident that the changes which Fascism proposed to compass were drawn to a great extent from the nationalist store cupboard of ideas.

To speak plainly, I am referring to corporativism. Corporative institutions were seen as the means of bringing employer and employee together in a new harmony. And if the quarrel between capital and labour could be so resolved, a fresh basis for national unity, and by extension an energetic foreign policy, would be laid. In his address Mr. Lyttleton discounted Fascist corporativism as of minor account and, since, in the context of his remarks, he seemed to be alluding to Rossoni's syndicalist schemes, I can agree with him up to a point. Rossoni's vision of independent workers' syndicates negotiating from a position of strength within the corporative state was a vain fancy, certainly after the Fascist congress at Rome in November 1921 when the syndicates were brought firmly under party control – which, in turn, implied they would be sacrificed in due course to placate Mussolini's propertied allies.[20] (Parenthetically, however, I would observe that

17. For articulation of proletarian nationalism, see E. Corradini, *Discorsi politici, 1902-1923* (Florence, 1923). On Italy's postwar nationalist mood, see P. Alatri, *Le origini del fascismo* (Bologna, 1962); G. Rumi, *Alle origine della politica estera fascista* (Bari, 1968); Vivarelli, *Il dopoguerra*, esp. pp. 251-59.
18. Tasca, *Nascita e avvento*, pp. 20-25; J. Cammett, *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism* (Stanford, 1971), p. 71ff; Spriano, *Storia del PCI*, I, p. 41ff.
19. On Italian nationalist traditions, see F. Gaeta, *Nazionalismo italiano* (Naples, 1965). Cf. J.A. Thayer, *Italy and The Great War* (Madison, 1964), chaps. 7-12, *passim*.
20. E. R. Tannenbaum, "The Goals of Italian Fascism", in *American Historical Review*, Vol. LXXIV (1969), pp. 1191-95.

many younger Italian intellectuals, whose importance has been granted by Mr. Lyttleton, were initially attracted to Fascism precisely by Rossoni's syndicalist ideal.[21]) More relevant to our purpose, though, is the fact that corporativism had another side to it directly at variance with radical syndicalism.

This was the strain of corporativism preached most coherently by the Nationalist party theorist and future Fascist minister of justice, Alfredo Rocco.[22] To him corporativism was uncompromisingly hierarchical and peremptory; it was hostile to the liberal-democratic state because parliamentary democracy handed power to mediocrities, to those who responded to the lowest common denominator in the community. In contrast, corporations were to contain only the best minds, and the state was to be handed over to this veritable Paretian élite who, unhampered by majority opinion, would contrive to revivify a faltering Italy. In this prescription the corporative state was an authoritarian instrument for an imposed revolution. Notwithstanding, this had a considerable appeal for Italy's productivist school which set great store by technocratic management and Taylorite economic rationalisation.[23] Not a few members of the Confindustria stood ready to entrust some economic decision-making to boards of experts for the sake of efficiency.[24] At the other extreme, a young radical like Curzio Malaparte envisaged a "corporative army" in which the mobilized masses would be directed by a civilian officer élite.[25]

This constituency seeking national regeneration through some form of *dirigisme* might have rallied behind D'Annunzio, but his corporativism, especially in the latter part of the Fiume regency, allowed too much worker power to please the bourgeoisie.[26] By comparison, the corporative notions peddled by Fascism, infinitely flexible like the rest of the Fascist programme, always seemed more adjustable to nationalist and productivist opinion. As early as 1918 *Popolo d'Italia* began to address itself to "combattenti e produttori," an acknowledgement of subventions received from arms makers who were doing well out of the war and had a vested interest in promoting nationalist propaganda.[27] After the war Fascism continued to beat the productivist drum with rhetoric about *"largo alle competenze"*; amid the North Italian industrial turmoil in August 1920 Mussolini declared his interest to be that of "the productivists who are concerned above all with production and its increase"; and Massimo Rocca persuaded the PNF to endorse his proposal for establishing technical councils of experts in the principal industries.[28] Mr. Lyttleton referred earlier to the Fascist "vision of a rejuvenated technocracy, in which political authority would underwrite the severe dictates of production." What I am seeking to underline here is that this connoted the élitist corporative state of the nationalists who urged it as the *sine qua non* of reversal of Italian fortunes abroad.

A final perspective on the corporative revolution, which must assuredly be relevant in an international colloquium, is that provided by C.S. Maier's enormously important new book. In his *Recasting Bourgeois Europe* Maier demonstrates how in the postwar era the liberal and conservative élites of Germany, France and Italy by and large turned to "intermediate associations" to buttress their threatened hegemony. The crucial capitalist decisions of the early 1920's, it is argued, tended to be made outside the traditional legislative assemblies; the process went furthest in Germany perhaps because business

21. M. Ledeen, *Fascist International* (New York, 1972), pp. xx, 64ff; R. Zangrandi, *Il lungo viaggio attraverso il fascismo* (Milan, 1964), pp. 442-45.
22. P. Ungari, *Alfredo Rocco e l'ideologia guiridica del fascismo* (Brescia, 1963).
23. C.S. Maier, "Between Taylorism and Technology", in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. V, No. 2 (1970), pp. 39-45.
24. M. Abrate, *La lotta sindicale nella industrializzazione in Italia* (Turin, 1967), p. 203; Lyttleton, *Seizure of Power*, pp. 355-56; R. Sarti, *Fascism and the Industrial Leadership in Italy* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 8-9.
25. A. De Grand, "Curzio Malaparte: The Illusion of the Fascist Revolution", in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. VII, Nos. 1-2 (1972), pp. 77-81.
26. P. Alatri, *Nitti, D'Annunzio e la questione adriatica* (Milan, 1959), pp. 421-24, 439-40.
27. De Felice, *Mussolini: il rivoluzionario*, pp. 402-18; A. Morandi *Storia della grande industria in Italia* (Turin, 1960), p. 149.
28. R. Sarti, "Fascist Modernization in Italy", in *American Historical Review*, Vol. LXXV (1970), pp. 1029-45; B. Mussolini, *Opera omnia*, ed. E. and D. Susmel, Vol. XV (Florence, 1954), p. 169.

groups there had even less use for the new Weimar parliamentary democracy than their Italian and French counterparts had for their own tired parliaments. This usage of direct confrontation and parleying among the major economic power blocs in society approximated the projected gathering of capital and labour in Fascist Italian corporations. But there was a critical difference, summed up in the distinction between the words "corporatism" and "corporativism." The former implied the ruthless pursuit of self-interest by large economic aggregations without regard for, indeed at the expense of, that national harmony which was the very target of the latter. Maier calls his section on Fascist Italy in the mid-'20's "Corporativist State in Corporatist Europe," a subtle discrimination where corporatism served to uphold existing property arrangements, theoretical corporativism preached dynamic change, in social spirit if not social structure.[29]

* * *

Was Fascism, then, an agent of counterrevolution or a revolution in itself? Croce is reported to have said that when the history of Italian Fascism came to be written, it would be necessary to describe not just Fascism's crimes but also the positive aspirations it embodied.[30] In this connection, De Felice's most recent volume of Mussolinian biography has stirred up a fresh round of controversy, in the Italian press and the *Times Literary Supplement* for example, by affirming his portrait of the Duce as a radical figure, who at one point actually achieved a kind of populist consensus among the Italian people.[31] Of course, the latest work by De Felice concerns the 1930's when Mussolini and Hitler first came face to face, and in this inescapably comparative context Italian Fascism, set against the yardstick of truly reactionary Nazism, must of necessity appear progressive and enlightened.[32] More to our point, however, this view is an extrapolation of that expressed a decade ago in De Felice's first volume, *Mussolini: il rivoluzionario,* which, taking the story up to 1920, leaves a puisant impression of the radical component of early Fascism.[33] And what we are considering today is Fascism as the movement it was before the march on Rome, not the regime it became afterwards. The later Fascist state patently subverted the ideals of *fascismo-movimento.* Not only were the syndicalists of the left to be disillusioned, so too were the patriotic technocrats and productivists who found the Fascist corporative state in practice nothing but a cloak to cover the pursuit of narrow corporatist interests; allegedly, Mussolini himself in due course was to lament "the pressure of these psuedo-corporativists."[34] For some time before Mussolini became premier Fascism was plainly drifting rightwards, yet I would contend that until it was seduced by the lure of office, Fascism retained enough inherent radical possibilities to pose as a viable alternative to the postwar socialist revolution that never was.

Nonetheless, I confess to considerable unease in applying the label revolutionary, even to early Fascism. I have tried to emphasize the mood of Italian nationalism as the catalyst behind the call for change from the top which Fascism answered. And Italian nationalism was an unequivocally authoritarian and conservative force; Mussolini's liaison with Italian nationalists from 1914 onwards is the backbone of Vivarelli's well-

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29. C.S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 545-78.

30. L. Valiani, "La storia del fascismo nella problematica della storia contemporanea", in *Rivista Storica Italiana,* Vol. LXXIX (1967), pp. 461-62. For similar sentiments, see F. Chabod, *L'Italia contemporanea* (Rome, 1964), p. 88.

31. For a synopsis of Italian press commentary on R. De Felice, *Mussolini: il Duce: Gli anni del consenso* (Turin, 1974), and R. De Felice, *Intervista sul fascismo,* ed. M. Ledeen (Bari, 1975) see Istituto Italiano di Cultura (New York), Newsletter, No. 49 (Dec. 1975) pp. 3-9; D. Mack Smith review of these works in (London) *Times Literary Supplement,* October 31, 1975, and ensuing correspondence, Nov. 14 and 28, December 19, 1975, January 9 and 16, 1976.

32. On this distinction between Italian Fascism and German Nazism, see A. Cassels, *Fascism* (New York, 1975).

33. See especially pp. 656-62.

34. C. Silvestri, quoted in R. Dombrowski, *Mussolini: Twilight and Fall,* Eng. trans. (London, 1956), pp. 153-54.

known rebuttals of the De Felice version of revolutionary fascism.[35] What the nationalists and the efficiency experts wanted was not so much a revolution as a rearrangement of society.

On the other hand, at the beginning of this discussion we agreed to regard as revolutionary a situation in which revolution was apprehended by the citizenry at large – Mr. Lyttleton's subjective as opposed to objective circumstances. Certainly, early Fascism was revolutionary in this sense for it held out the prospect of sweeping changes and traded on the nationalists' desperate appetite for modernization. Whether the promises of reform were imprecisely formulated and whether they were ultimately fulfilled is immaterial. Fascism was part of the postwar revolutionary scene in Italy, not only as the famous dike against the red tide, but as a positive contributor to the expectations of change.

Résumé

M. Lyttleton a très brillamment exposé les perspectives de la « révolution par le bas » qui fut tentée en Italie et les raisons de son échec. Il s'est également demandé, avec raison, si l'on pouvait se contenter d'écarter le problème du Facisme en le qualifiant simplement de force réactionnaire aveugle. En effet, n'y avait-il pas, en Italie, deux voies possibles vers le changement: d'une part, l'insurrection de gauche, avec ses objectifs habituels d'égalitarisme politique et de justice économique, et, d'autre part, une voie que l'on n'a pas coutume de qualifier de révolutionnaire, car elle n'impliquait pas le renversement du système de classes, mais qui s'orientait néanmoins vers une réforme fondamentale des institutions politiques? Il y aurait donc peut-être lieu de considérer le Fascisme comme un agent de la « révolution par le haut ».

Mises à part les questions concernant le moment le plus propice à la révolution et les contradictions au sein du Parti socialiste, traitées de manière fort pertinente par M. Lyttleton, il y aurait avantage à approfondir le débat sur le sort de la révolution en fonction du rôle des milieux ruraux. Le radicalisme agraire doit retenir l'attention des historiens non seulement à titre de point de mire d'une révolution avortée, mais également comme instigateur du contre-coup qui transforma le Fascisme en mouvement de masse digne de confiance, à compter du moment où les bandes fascistes s'attaquèrent aux éléments conservateurs des campagnes, au cours de l'hiver 1920. Que ces bandes aient représenté les intérêts de l'aristocratie foncière ou ceux d'une bourgeoisie rurale montante, le résultat est le même, l'une comme l'autre étant farouchement opposées au socialisme.

Il ne fait aucun doute que c'est en s'alliant aux forces contre-révolutionnaires que le Fascisme a pris le pouvoir. Mais on peut se demander pourquoi la structure de pouvoir italienne a adopté le Fascisme pluôt qu'une forme plus traditionnelle de gouvernement autoritaire. A ceci, M. Lyttleton apporte deux explications, auxquelles pourrait se joindre une troisième: le Fascisme proposait le type de changement restreint que l'Italie bien-pensante était non seulement prête à tolérer, mais qu'elle voulait réellement.

La voie suivie par l'Italie au lendemain d'une guerre dont elle ne pouvait tirer aucune gloire est à mettre au compte du nationalisme tout autant, sinon davantage, que de l'impuissance des gouvernements d'alors à procéder aux réformes nécessaires tout en préservant l'ordre social. Le type de corporatisme proposé par les fascistes convenait à la fois aux nationalistes et aux partisans du « productivisme », qui y virent un moyen d'instituer des rapports harmonieux d'un nouveau genre entre patrons et employés et de régénérer ainsi l'unité nationale essentielle à une politique extérieure énergique. Théoriquement, le corporatisme prônait un changement dynamique, sinon dans la structure sociale, du moins dans la mentalité sociale.

35. R. Vivarelli, "Benito Mussolini dal socialismo al fascismo", in *Rivista Storica Italiana,* Vol. LXXIX (1967), pp. 438-58. See also Vivarelli, *Il dopoguerra,* chap 3, *passim.*

Le Fascisme fut-il alors un agent de la contre-révolution ou une révolution en soi? Ce n'est pas sans raison que, les premiers temps, il est apparu comme un mouvement radical. En fait, avant de glisser vers la droite et de succomber à la séduction du pouvoir, le Fascisme conservait suffisamment de potentiel radical pour faire figure de contrepartie réalisable à la révolution socialiste qui n'eut jamais lieu. Ce qui ne suffit pas que l'on puisse, sans hésitation, qualifier ce mouvement de révolutionnaire. Toutefois, si l'on se rapporte au sens large que M. Lyttleton attribue à l'expression « situation révolutionnaire », il est certain que le Fascisme fut, à ses débuts, révolutionnaire, car il offrit des promesses de changement fondamental et exploita la soif de modernisation des nationalistes. Il importe peu que ces promesses aient été assez mal formulées ou qu'elles soient plus ou moins demeurées lettre morte. Le Fascisme fit partie de la scène révolutionnaire en Italie, au lendemain de la guerre, non seulement à titre de digue contre la marée rouge, mais en apportant une réponse positive aux espoirs de changement.

Le cas de l'Italie / Session on Italy

Discussion

A. MacLeod. I wanted to ask a question on the position of the Communist Party. We notice, for example, that in both France and Italy, the Communist Party is created *after* what a lot of people consider to be a revolutionary situation. I was wondering whether you have comments on that and whether you think this question of the founding of the Communist Party has anything to do with the revolutionary situation which never was, and also the rise of fascism.

A. Lyttleton. I mentioned Livorno only really by implication, and the main reason why I did not discuss the role of the Communist Party is that I agree, myself, with this analysis: that the Communist Party was actually founded at the time when the counter-revolution was setting under way and some months after the moment when we could last speak about a revolutionary situation. I think the foundation of the Communist Party in these circumstances certainly rather assisted the victory of fascism simply because it further divided and weakened the working class at a time when it needed unity. It could have had a different effect if the policy of the Communist Party had not been so rigid.

I should perhaps mention here the movement known as the *Arditi del Popolo.* This was a movement of the working class's *own* resistance to fascism; it had origins among the anarchists and among also, curiously enough, the legionaries of D'Annunzio. Yet, the Communist Party condemned it and told its members not to have anything to do with the movement. I think that one effect the Communist Party could have had in helping to stem the tide of counter-revolution would have been if it had taken a more aggressive attitude to the question of working class self-defense. But since, in fact, it broke the *Arditi del Popolo,* the one consistent move made to organize working class self-defense, its effect was fairly disastrous.

A Cassels. One very quick point of comparative history: You asked about the belated construction of the PCI in 1921. It seems to me that the Italian Socialist leadership was trying to avoid what had happened in Germany a year or two earlier, and to keep the Socialists together. Whether it was the right line to pursue or not, I wouldn't like to say, but I think there was a direct cause-and-effect relationship between German and Italian Socialism.

A. Mayer. Professor Cassels, there is one thing that bothers me about the way in which you have discussed the nationalism in Italy after the War, and in particular, this notion of the mutilated victory. I think that the Italians made out rather handsomely in that drastic war and the peace conference, and the thing to be explained is why his whole idea of the mutilated victory began to take on the way in which it did. You made it appear as if it was not a class and status specific, which is something which I find rather difficult to believe, in a sense that I would maintain that those who went nationalist in 1919-1922 were very heavily imbedded in the matrix of the resurgent conservatism, and I'm being very kind when I say this, that was so evident in Italy at the time.

This, then leads me to the second question about revolution from above, what was to be changed from above? On the political level, on the economic level, on the social

level, on the cultural level? If it is to be counterposed to revolution from below, which I would assume would imply a rather more holistic type of change undertaken in a limited period of time, and perhaps with the expenditure of considerable violence, what is it that you really mean when you propose yours as a counter-thesis in a way, another kind of revolution except from above?

A. Cassels. Well, I mean what the Fascists meant, so you could re-pose your question "What did the Fascists mean by proposing a revolution?" That is difficult to say, which is why your question is valid.

Let me preface this with a couple of remarks is response to your prefatory comments. I didn't mean to imply at all that merely because the Italians felt that their victory was mutilated, it was in fact mutilated. The mutilated victory was an illusion, but nonetheless powerful for that. And second, you remarked that the nationalists in 1919 came from within the matrix of the Italian power structure. Yes, this was exactly my point that there were individuals who felt that the State was theirs but was likely to be taken away, and that therefore they must prevent it from being taken away by the Left and recover it for themselves perhaps more definitively than ever before.

The third point concerns what the Fascists intended to do with the State when they took it over. Towards the end of my comments, I found that I was facing the question you have posed, and I was having difficulty answering what was the revolution from above, so I used the phrase "a spiritual and not a social revolution." This is a way of getting around your question, to talk about it as almost a spiritual or cultural revolution and you may say, "What on earth do you mean by that? You are even more vague than before." Perhaps a better way of looking at this is to indicate simply what parts of the old pre-1922 structure were either overthrown or pushed into the background in the next twenty-one years. Insofar as the old liberal State served the nationalists' purposes then the remnants of that old structure were kept. I could use the example here of the Italian foreign ministry which remained, at least until the appointment of Ciano in 1936, relatively unrestructured. On the other hand, the Italian monarchy was down-graded; the Fascist Grand Council intervened or claimed to intervene in the matter of the succession. Was there a revolution after 1922? Well, in certain institutional ways, there was.

C. Maier. What is interesting about Italy is its fragmented social base. There is no real constituency either for technocracy or for a major fascist restructuring of social and economic institutions. Its program must rest upon a very limited base, and this seems to be one of the aspects we can isolate to compare Italy with the other countries under the scrutiny of the conference as well as those not under scrutiny. Now I want to reverse Arno Mayer's question. I am a little confused as to what a revolution from below would have looked like. Suppose these had been some sort of breakthrough, what do you see as its institutional trajectory in terms both of social change and political change?

A. Lyttleton. I think a revolution, if there was any conceivable kind of revolution, would have taken a path in which it spread by a series of local uprisings, especially a general seizure of the land by the peasantry. Had the Socialists gone with this program, there could, in spite of its political backwardness, have been a very general agrarian revolutionary movement in the south. The problem was of course . . . . what happens next? They would have had an anarchic situation with very weak central authority, because the revolution would have brought out in the open the sort of latent conflicts which always existed between the small peasants and the labourers. After all, the small peasant farmer, even only if at harvest time, also had to pay the cost of labour, and that's the simplest reason why he might join the fascist forces.

L. Greenspan. (McMaster U.) From the discussion I couldn't help thinking of the term "New Deal". Italian fascism now looks more like the American New Deal than it does like any form of revolution. That being the case, I have two questions: 1) the gap between the fascist program and fascist ideology and rhetoric seems even more colossal than it seemed previously. 2) In the history of political thought, why would the fascists need

this anti-liberal rhetoric and philosophy, since the program that they were prepared to carry out, the revolution from above, could also be carried out with liberal democratic rhetoric?

A. Cassels. It is an assumption, isn't it, that it could be carried out by democratic means? It seems to me that the historical answer is that the anti-democratic strains in Italian society were there long before 1918, and that Fascism did not invent them. It's not a question of the Fascists needing them in the sense of making them up artificially; they picked up on what was already there.

F. Krantz. (Concordia U.) Neither paper talked specifically about class structure and class dynamics, and I wonder if it pays to remember Trotsky's saying, that while we may not be interested in the dialectic, it's interested in us. Can it not be argued that the problem of the Socialists generally and of the CP itself as it emerges, is that these parties and the forces they represent are objectively weak? Italian social structure and productive development are relatively backward, and the left cannot make efficient contact with the peasantry in the South. The internal debates within the left wing of the Socialists as it turns into the Italian Communist Party indicate fundamental divisions about strategy. Cannot these be related to what might be termed "objective factors" characterizing the class structure in Italy? When we look at the emergence of the fascists and their ability to appeal to multiple groups, are we not saying that in fact (and for reasons needing careful examination) fascist ideology it related more congruently to the realities of the Italian situation than the socialist movement could possibly have done?

A. Cassels. Your request, which I think reiterates something that has been asked earlier this afternoon, for a clear-cut appraisal of particular class structures across the length and breadth of Italy is very difficult to satisfy. The direction that fascist study, that is to say, studies of fascism, is taking at the moment is regional. There is growing recognition that the appeal of the Socialists in one area was one thing while it was entirely different in another; and that was even more true of fascism. That is why it is so difficult to talk about agrarian revolution; is one talking about Tuscany or Apulia?

F. Krantz. This makes my point. The continuing regional disparities reflect differences in social structure and organization; they reflect a relatively weak development of productive forces, which in turn impedes the development of a truly national bourgeoisie *and* a cohesive, strong working-class movement.

A. Lyttleton. Well, yes but no. Where I agree with you is that the existence of regional disparity is a key to the question you are asking. Italy is a highly dualistic country. In all countries there is a certain element of dualism, but it is much stronger in Italy. The *South* was in a different age in many respects from the progressive part of northern Italy. This posed a particular difficulty for revolutionary strategy, clearly, in that what was an appropriate strategy in terms of the productive forces in one region of Italy, was quite inappropriate in another, and this was a contradiction which the Socialists failed to solve.

At the same time, I think one does get back to subjective factors here because, while adopting a revolutionary strategy that was in a way modeled on the Russian, the Italian Socialist Party failed to perceive any of the lessons about how to have a revolution in a more backward country. One thing which influenced this very strongly was that Italian Socialism did penetrate agriculture in a very big way, but it did so, of course, in the few regions where there was a modern advanced system of capitalist agriculture. In those regions a classic socialist analysis with collectivization as the end of policy and the whole thing depending on the growth of capitalist relations in the countryside did seem very applicable, and it worked very well as capitalism developed in the Po Valley, so Socialism and revolution grew stronger. But, of course, this same strategy was quite inapplicable in the South. So, I think a sort of contradiction between modern and backward sectors does a very great deal to explain the incoherence of Socialist strategy and in that sense, I agree that there was an objective basis to it.

Shades of 1848: War, Revolutions and Nationality Conflict in Austria-Hungary, 1914-1920

Istvan Deak

War, famine, inflation, massive strikes, an influenza epidemic that was worse than the war, the break-up of the Dual Monarchy, the collapse of the front, the birth of new states and complete political re-organization, democratic- communist- and White counter-revolutionary upheavals, military occupation and new armed conflicts: the peoples of the Monarchy truly had their share of troubles between 1914 and 1920. During that time much changed, but probably much more stayed the same. In the end, the social structure and the economic system of the area were not very different from what they had been in the beginning. In 1920, as in 1914, Germans, Magyars, Slavs, Romanians, and Italians were governed by well-entrenched bureaucracies; the old ruling classes, with some exceptions, had not been dispossessed; the economy remained capitalistic. Lenin's fervent expectation that the Dual Monarchy would follow the path chosen by Russia had proven illusory. There had been Bolshevik experiments, but they had failed miserably. And yet, as Lenin had clearly perceived earlier, the domestic difficulties of the war-time Monarchy had not been very different from those of Tsarist Russia.

If Austria-Hungary experienced such grave troubles during the war, what made her fight on, nevertheless, to the very end? Having fought on until November 1918, why did she then collapse so suddenly and why did the national revolutions succeed immediately? If these revolutions had occurred simultaneously, then why did later developments become so dissimilar – with the Bolsheviks acquiring power in Hungary, but not in the other Successor States? Finally, why was Hungarian Bolshevism suppressed so quickly?

These strange, and seemingly contradictory, developments were largely due to ethnic and national conflicts which had had their rehearsal in 1848, and which came to their logical conclusion in 1918. At least, that is what I shall try to show.

That the troubles of the Habsburg Monarchy during World War I were not quite unlike those of Tsarist Russia and that, logically, Austria-Hungary ought to have collapsed well before she did, should be relatively easy to prove.[1]

Like Tsarist Russia, the Habsburg Monarchy entered the Great War woefully unprepared. Austria-Hungary had operated with proportionately the lowest peacetime defense budget of all the European great powers. In 1911, when military preparations began in earnest, the Monarchy's defense budget was less than one-fourth of that of Russia and a bit over one-fourth of that of Great Britain. Even by 1914 the army had

1. Austria-Hungary's military, armament and economic problems in World War I are best summed up in Gusztav Gratz and Richard Schüller, *Der wirtschaftliche Zusammenbruch Österreich-Ungarns* (Vienna, 1930), and by the same authors, *The Economic Policy of Austria-Hungary during the War in Its External Relations* (New Haven, Conn., 1928). Also, Leo Grebler and Wilhelm Winkler, *The Cost of the World War to Germany and Austria-Hungary* (New Haven, Conn. 1940), and David Mitrany, *The Effect of the War in Southeastern Europe* (New Haven, Conn., 1936).

not trained all able-bodied men of military age. At the same time, many trained reservist could not be accommodated and equipped. The army lacked machine guns and barbed wire and the artillery park, although partly modern and excellent, was too small and in part completely outmoded. Too much reliance had been placed on the cavalry as an offensive weapon. The bravura style of fighting insisted upon by the high command turned the first months of the war into a carnage. Losses were horrendous then and later. Of the 8,300,000 men called to the colors during the war, at least 6,200,000 became casualties: the highest ratio among the warring countries. It is no exaggeration to say that, towards the end of the war, the Austro-Hungarian army was made up of men who had been wounded earlier, who had been seriously ill or frostbitten, or who had returned from Russian POW camps. Military discipline was inordinately harsh. Training was generally petty, brutal and old-fashioned. Desertion was wide-spread, especially in the last years of the war. Army medical care was not much better than in Russia, and typhus, dysentery, cholera, malaria and frostbite claimed almost as many victims as the fighting.

The social gap separating officers from men was enormous. Moreover, the newly promoted officers and NCO's who replaced the professionals killed in the first months of the war were often unable to communicate with the men whose language they had had no time to learn. Soldiers in the same regiment, indeed in the same platoon, could not understand each other and ethnic hostility existed in even the smallest units.

It was barely possible to provision the army. The country went to war with 3,366 artillery pieces; by 1918, there were 9,585 cannons, still a pitiful figure. Towards the end of the war, the majority of soldiers were dressed in rags; they walked on paper soles and received a starvation diet. Austria-Hungary's soldiers were incomparably less well-fed and clothed than their German or Entente counterparts and, by 1918, they were worse off than the Russian soldiers had been before the February Revolution.

With a number of notable exceptions, the Austro-Hungarian generals were ruthless and inept. In the first year of the war, they unhesitatingly sacrificed their best manpower. Later, they unhesitatingly sent untrained, physically unfit or aged conscripts to even the most exposed sectors. The General Staff worked poorly. Relations between the military and civilian authorities were usually abrasive. Ignoring the advice of the civilians, the military command treated entire ethnic groups as inimical. Russian Orthodox or Uniate priests were hanged without much ado in areas under army control – which meant a large part of Austria but not of Hungary.

True, Francis Joseph was more liked and respected than the Tsar and a revolt against the old Kaiser was unthinkable. But the Kaiser died in November 1916 and his successor, although today a candidate for beatification by the Roman Church, was a vacillating as Nicholas II. Charles' immediate advisers, many of whom had Entente connections and who secretly negotiated with the French government, were as suspect to the patriots as were Prime Minister Stürmer and others in Russia. Yet Charles and his advisers did not satisfy the pacifists either, for their secret negotiations ended in open scandal. Empress Zita who had two brothers in an enemy army, probably aroused as much mistrust as the Tsarina.

An efficient economic administration was never established, largely because the Dual Monarchy, instead of creating a single economic unit, fostered the perpetuation of two. There was little division of labor between Austria and Hungary, and the two countries eyed each other with growing hostility. The decline in grain and textile production was catastrophic. By 1918 the Viennese were offered six ounces of flour a day, and the Hungarians had no clothing. While Hungary had far more grain than Austria, and the Austrians had more textiles, the Hungarians refused to feed the starving Viennese, and the Austrians did not send clothing to Hungary. Black marketeering and corruption were much more common than in Germany or in the Entente countries.

Industrial production rose in the first year of the war – as it did in Russia – but then came a precipitous decline. Coal output in Austria declined throughout the war.

The Hungarians did better but, by 1917, they lacked the rolling stock to bring coal to the factories. Iron and steel production revived in 1916 to optimum prewar level. By the end of the war it fell to two-thirds of that level because of transportation problems and weakened labor. The productivity of labor declined all through the war.

Inflation hit Austria-Hungary harder than it hit pre-revolutionary Russia. By the end of the war, the real income of the industrial workers declined to less than half of the prewar level. Yet the most gravely affected were not the workers but the civil servants, the private employees and the pensioners. The result was the gradual radicalization of these formerly apolitical and loyal groups.

Like the Tsarist cabinet, the Austrian cabinet governed by decree. The Vienna *Reichsrat* was not convoked until May 1917 and when it finally met, proceedings consisted chiefly of the Slavic deputies denoucing the war and the Monarchy.

The Hungarian cabinet governed constitutionally, but that meant little to the minority nationalities and the workers who had practically no political representation. The Budapest parliament was in session during the war, but in the first two years it angered the lower classes by refusing to vote for political reform; in the last two years it angered the upper classes and the Magyar patriots by the violent anti-war and anti-German outbursts of many deputies. But not even this rebellious parliament could bring itself to vote for universal suffrage and other political reforms.

Austro-Hungarian censorship was as harsh, ineffective and inconsistent as the Russian. The public was never told of setbacks at the front but the papers were free to publicize the defeatist and destructive speeches of Czech, South Slav or Hungarian deputies. Such a state of affairs was inconceivable in Germany or in the Entente countries.

As if all this had not been bad enough, the Monarchy's old problems remained unsolved during the war, with each unsolved problem potentially guaranteeing the destruction of the old order. Until October 16, 1918, nothing had been done to solve the nationality problem and, even then, the Emperor's manifesto offered federalization only to Austria, not to Hungary. By that date it was too late. The oppression of the minority nationalities in Hungary continued unabated during the war. Universal suffrage was not introduced; the lower classes were not represented in the Budapest parliament. Nor did the increasingly restive Hungarian bourgeoisie and intelligentsia have any real political power.

All this should be enough to show that, despite the remarkable economic and cultural progress achieved before 1914, the situation during the war was not much better in the Dual Monarchy than it was in pre-revolutionary Russia. The regime was falling apart, almost everyone was dissatisfied, and the masses suffered great hardships. The ethnic problem was worse, or at least more complicated, than in Russia. Yet it was this very ethnic problem which permitted Austria-Hungary to fight on as long as she did and later to avoid the triumph of Bolshevism. In order to understand all this we must now cast a brief backward glance at the events of 1848.

In that year all the peoples of the Monarchy revolted against the reactionary imperial bureaucracy: their goal was national freedom, political equality, and social and economic reforms. The new-found fraternity of peoples lasted only a few weeks since the goals of the different nationalities and of the different social classes quickly proved to be mutually exclusive. The programs of the Slavs and the Romanians frightened the Magyars and Germans; the demands of workers and peasants frightened the bourgeois and the landowners. As a result, in the spring and summer of 1848 more and more rebels drifted back into alliance with the Court. Faced with rising German liberal nationalism, the Czech leaders were the first to return to unconditional dynastic loyalty. Soon came the turn of the German-Austrian bourgeoisie, of the South Slav and Romanian leaders, and of the peasants of almost all nations. Only Hungary held out for a long time, partly because she had no choice, – the imperial cabinet being intent on completely abrogating the constitution of March 1848 – and partly because the Hungarian revolutionaries were

the most militant. Ultimately, Hungary was defeated by the peasants fighting both in the regular Habsburg army and in their own militia units.

It is often forgotten, or not sufficiently realized, that the Hungarian revolution in 1848 was a civil war in which most soldiers and armed civilians decided which side they would join. Because of the confusion in government circles and in the army high command, it devolved upon the officers and enlisted men to make their own choice. Accordingly, throughout that nineteenth century war, officers' and soldiers' councils in Hungary deposed their commanders and hoisted either one of the two flags: that of the Emperor or that of Kossuth. By opting for the Emperor, the soldiers repudiated the legally constituted Hungarian government; by opting for Kossuth, the soldiers repudiated the Emperor.

And it is also forgotten, or not yet understood, that the Habsburg army alone was strong enough to defeat the Hungarians. Calling in the Russians was due to lack of self-confidence on the part of young Francis Joseph and Schwarzenberg. By June 1849 Haynau was stronger than Görgey. In that month, that is before the massive arrival of the Russians, Haynau defeated the Hungarian general in a series of crucial encounters. Kossuth's appeal for a crusade against the invaders fell on deaf ears while the Emperor's army never lacked volunteers. When the Austrian and Russian armies came, the population submitted meekly. The major victories of the last campaign in Hungary were won by Haynau and not by Paskievich. Truly, Hungarian independence was crushed by the other peoples of the Monarchy, and not by the armies of the Tsar.

The years after 1914 were, in many respects, a continuation of 1848-1849. Issues that had remained unsolved during the Springtime of the Peoples were solved during and immediately after the World War.

In August 1914, the Hungarians went to war against Russia who, in 1848-1849, had done so much to prevent the Hungarians from realizing their national goals. For a while, the Slavic peoples of the Monarchy marched side by side with the Austro-Germans and the Hungarians, partly because they, too, were caught in the spirit of August 1914 which seemed like another Springtime of the Peoples, partly because such nations as the Croats, the Ukrainians and the Poles had their special reasons to dislike at least one of the Monarchy's enemies, and partly because all the nationalities and all the lower classes hoped that they would be rewarded after the war for their loyalty.

But, as in 1848, international and inter-class harmony in the Habsburg Monarchy proved illusory. It soon became clear that the victory of the Central Powers would benefit no nation of the Monarchy, except perhaps the Germans. It also became clear that victory would only strengthen the control of the bourgeois and landowners over everybody else. If the armies went on fighting nevertheless, it was because every nationality hoped that, in the end, it would somehow be able to assert itself over the other nationalities; because people still felt some nostalgic respect for the dynasty that in the past had given them domestic peace and relative prosperity; because – as I have stated earlier – the enemy could not be trusted, and because the peoples of the Monarchy were frightened of one another. Therefore they sought the protection of the dynasty as long as this protection was available. Still, preparations were made, all through the war, for the final showdown with the other domestic nationalities of the Monarchy.

When in 1916 the Romanians invaded Transylvania, the Hungarians were outraged by Prime Minister Tisza's alleged neglect of Hungarian national security. The anti-Tisza coalition that emerged as a result of the crisis, and that was to come to power in October 1918, immediately demanded the partial return of Hungarian troops from the front for the defense of the national frontier. In the summer of 1848, the Hungarian left-wing and nationalist opposition had raised the same demand against the Batthyány government's policy of leaving Hungarian troops in Italy to fight His Majesty's enemies. As Leo Valiani puts it in his excellent book, *The End of Austria-Hungary*:[2]

2. New York, 1973, pp. 133-134.

> They [the Hungarian opposition] believed in it [the need to recall Hungarian troops to Hungary] because of a historical precedent they had all learned to venerate in their schooldays, namely, the initial success of the struggle for independence in 1848-49 (the defeat of the Austrians until the arrival of the Tsar's army), brought about by Kossuth's successful appeal to Hungarian troops in Cisleithania to return to their country, then threatened by Austrian invasion and the Serbian and Romanian revolt. Thus, when the Romanian invasion dramatically demonstrated the dangers to which Hungary was exposed and the grievous dependence on Germany into which she was stumbling, immediate concern about the outcome of the war worked hand-in-hand with historical memories that had always been assiduously cultivated. The result was that the influential and widely read liberal democratic Budapest press began shifting its position from support of Tisza's position to policies close to [Mihály] Károlyi's.

No matter that Leo Valiani takes at face value two of Hungary's historical myths: one, that Kossuth's appeal to Hungarian troops in Cisleithania had been successful, and two, that the Austrians had been defeated until the arrival of the Tsar's armies. The truth is that, except for a few hundred adventurous hussars, Hungarian troops in Cisleithania had stayed put and continued to play a major role in subduing both the Lombard revolutionaries and Piedmont. Austria had not – let us repeat – been decisively defeated by the Hungarians in the Spring of 1849. Indeed, the Austrians had rebounded very quickly. What counts here is that, in 1916 and thereafter, the Hungarians acted on the basis of their own historical myths. In October 1918, the nationalist-leftist coalition government of Károlyi immediately recalled the Hungarian troops. Again, in the words of Leo Valiani:[3]

> . . . on the eve of the final Italian offensive, the first troops of the Habsburg army to munity on the Italian front were the Hungarians. Several Magyar units decided to go home and to fight, if necessary, for the independence and the integrity of the fatherland only.

The conclusion is clear. Up to the end of October 1918, Hungarian soldiers stood fast on the Italian front as they had done in 1848-49. They defended the Habsburg cause which they rather uneasily identified with the Hungarian national cause. At the end of October, upon hearing the rumor of a Romanian invasion of Transylvania, and of a Serbian invasion of Southern Hungary the Magyar troops left the front in the belief that they were about to re-enact the heroic deeds of Hungarian soldiers in 1848-49. They went home to fight Hungary's traditional enemies: the Czechs, the Serbs, and the Romanians.

The same rules apply to the Monarchy's Slavs and Romanians. Their leaders were busy preparing for the final showdown; Slavic and Romanian soldiers went on fighting as long as there was some hope that the Empire would protect them against the Hungarians and that their efforts would be rewarded by the Emperor. After the Hungarians had left the front, they broke rank also to face the Magyars (and Germans) at home. After all, the Slavs and Romanians also nurtured bitter historical memories: the ingratitude of Francis Joseph after 1848-49, the return to power in Hungary of the Magyar nobility, and the Compromise Agreement of 1867 in which the Emperor had finally abandoned the Slavs and Romanians.

1918-19 allowed most Slavs, and the Romanians, to achieve the nationalist goals which they had failed to achieve in 1848-49. That there was hardly a trace of Bolshevik sentiment among these people is easy to understand. Their nationalist programs had been blessed by the great Western democracies; their own leaders had come from the bourgeoisie and none belonged to the extreme left; and the peasants among them had been promised land, by their national leaders, from the estates of the German and Hungarian nobility. In the years following 1848-49, the Habsburg government had satisfied

3. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

at least the economic (if not the nationalist) demands of the Slavic and Romanian peasants by ratifying the abolition of servile dues. Now the Czechoslovak, South Slav and Romanian governments satisfied the economic demands of their peasants (but not the nationalist goals of Croats and Slovaks) by offering them land. Fortified in their nationalist sentiments and in their expectation of land tenure, the soldiers of the Successor States were determined to fend off an eventual Hungarian, or German, campaign of revenge.

In Hungary, the revolutionary Károlyi government made what seemed a most generous offer to the nationalities, just as the Hungarian revolutionary government in 1848 had made, what seemed to it, a most generous offer to the Croats and the other minorities. Both Károlyi and Kossuth promised equal rights to all, but in the question of ethnic self-government Károlyi went further than Kossuth. The latter had offered complete autonomy only to the Croats; Károlyi promised complete economy to all the ethnic minorities. Subsequently, both Kossuth and Károlyi were flabbergasted by the ingratitude of the minorities.

For a very short time after October 1918, it seemed as though the international fraternity that pervaded the Spring of 1848 would be repeated and would prove lasting. The new Hungarian democratic regime embraced the same Wilsonian principles that were embraced by the Slavs and the Romanians. Briefly, as in 1848, both camps swore to the same flag: this time not the flag of Emperor Ferdinand but that of President Wilson. Unfortunately for all, the new Emperor of all the peoples proved no less elusive, unreliable and contradictory than the Habsburg ruler of olden times. Furthermore, the Entente generals proved as brutally contemptuous of Wilson's program as the Habsburg generals Jelasic and Windisch-Graetz had been of Ferdinand's constiution. Encouraged by the French commanders, the Czechoslovak, South Slav and Romanian armies advanced mercilessly into Hungary and, in defiance of the armistic agreement, organized their own administrative machinery there – something that the Serbs and Croats had done in 1848.

When such developments had taken place in 1848, Kossuth had made himself dictator; he had created an army, had fought a war, and later had proclaimed the independence of Hungary and the ouster of the dynasty. Unfortunately, Károlyi was no Kossuth. He did not set up a dictatorship; he was unable to organize national resistance; he did not break with Wilson and the Entente powers. Instead, in March 1919, he handed over power to a coalition of left-wing socialists and communists. Kossuth had used the radicals to his left to whip up the national enthusiasm of the lower orders, yet he had remained moderate enough in his social policy not to exasperate the vital landowning nobility. Károlyi let the radicals do the job that he himself ought to have done but for which he lacked the will, the taste, and the stomach.

The Hungarian Soviet Republic immediately began to organize for national defense. It repudiated the Entente, and like Kossuth in the Spring of 1849, it launched a revolutionary appeal to the peoples of Europe. As far as help from abroad was concerned, the result was again disappointing. Kossuth had had a few thousand foreign volunteers; Béla Kun had only a few hundred. Soviet Russia, itself embattled, was no more helpful an ally to Kun than Piedmont or the Republic of Venice had been to Kossuth.

At home, the Bolsheviks' campaign of national defense appealed to the patriots of all classes, but the Soviet Republic's doctrinaire socialist experiments, its failure to distribute land, and its wild anti-clerical propaganda alienated the population. Moreover it soon became clear that not even Béla Kun was determined enough to completely ignore Entente orders. When, in July 1919, Clemenceau demanded that the Hungarian Red Army withdraw from Slovakia, Kun complied with the request. After that humiliation, the Hungarian nationalists deserted the Soviet Republic. Within a few days the Bolshevik regime melted away. In July 1919, as previously in July 1849, the people had enough of the war, and of the spectacle of their leaders fighting among themselves. In August 1919, Béla Kun and his comrades fled abroad as Kossuth and his associates had done in August 1849.

Because the Hungarian war of national defense had been fought in the name of the Soviet system, Czechoslovaks, Romanians and South Slavs automatically became anti-Bolsheviks. Hungary's Bolshevism gave her neighbors the opportunity to avenge 1848 and 1867.

In the same summer of 1919, the Austrian Communist movement was also definitely suppressed. In October 1848, the task of suppressing the Vienna radicals had been left to Windisch-Graetz. This time there was no imperial general to do the job; the crushing of Vienna radicalism had to be accomplished by the moderate revolutionaries. In this endeavor the Austrian Social Democrats enjoyed the blessings of the Entente which, from a safe distance, assumed the role of the former Habsburg dynasty. Subsequently, the Austro-Germans were unable to unite with the German Reich even though this had been their nationalist goal for a century. In 1848 German unification had been prevented by the Kaiser and by the Czech and Croat nationalists. After 1918 unification was forbidden by the Entente and the Czechoslovak and South Slav governments. And even though the failure of the Anschluss had been due to foreign intervention, the German nationalists in Austria were never to forgive the Social Democrats for the latter's inability to fulfill the old German nationalist dream.

By the fall of 1919 order had returned to the former Habsburg Monarchy. In Cisleithania after 1919, just as after 1849, the bourgeoisie reigned in harmony with the imperial bureaucracy. In Czechoslovakia and Austria, countries that had long experience with parliamentary democracy and capitalist industry, neither the social order nor the methods of government changed substantially. In Transleithania after 1919, events also followed the established pattern to a certain degree. After the Revolution of 1849, the imperial government had first experimented with liberal centralism in Hungary; later it had put the Hungarian landed nobility back into power. Now it was the Entente that allowed the return to power of the old Hungarian ruling class, following an unsuccessful experiment with democracy. But this time, unlike the 1860's, the Hungarian ruling class was no longer liberal, not even theoretically. Rather, it was frankly terroristic and reactionary. Moreover, this class no longer controlled the nationalities. In their frustration, the Hungarian noble counter-revolutionaries vented their anger on the Jews and the poor Magyar peasants. The two eastern Successor States, Romania and Yugoslavia, more or less conformed to the former Transleithanian model. They tended to be authoritarian and they mistreated their minority nationalities.

No doubt, there were many other reasons why things went as they did in Austria-Hungary, but the nationality conflict was decisive. Ever since 1848 nationalist prejudice consistently overruled social and class considerations. The Hungarian Soviet Republic came into being, partly because the poor had hated the rich, but even more because the nation had seen no other way to defend itself against its neighbors. But once the Hungarian Soviet Republic had been created, Communism became a lost cause in the former Dual Monarchy. Again, as in 1848-49, Slavs and Romanians helped a great power to defeat the Austro-German and Hungarian national and social revolutions.

Nationality conflict has been standing in the way of progress for the last hundred and fifty years of central European history. The catastrophic events of 1848-49 and 1918-19 were repeated in 1938-44, in 1956, and in 1968. Each time a neighboring great power, threatened in its hegemony over central Europe, succeeded in turning the small nations of the area against one another. Whenever German-Austrians, Hungarians, Yugoslavs or Czechoslovaks have endeavored to experiment with new political and social ideas, or attempted to achieve genuine independence, fellow-nations have always been ready and willing to abort the experiment or to destroy the independence. Mutual envy and lack of synchronization among these small nations have proven the most powerful weapons in the hands of imperialistic great powers. The tragedy of central Europe is indeed as old as nationalism.

Résumé

Les phénomènes étranges et apparemment contradictoires qui ont marqué l'histoire de l'Empire austro-hongrois et des Etats qui lui succédèrent soulèvent plusieurs questions complexes. En dépit de l'inconséquence de la monarchie austro-hongroise dans la préparation comme dans la conduite de la guerre, qu'est-ce qui l'a amenée à mener le combat jusqu'à la fin? Après avoir tenu si longtemps, pourquoi l'empire s'est-il effondré si brusquement et pourquoi les révolutions nationales et sociales ont-elles immédiatement triomphé? Pourquoi ces révolutions ont-elles évolué dans des sens diamétralement opposés, malgré qu'elles se soient produites en même temps et dans des circonstances analogues? Pourquoi les bolcheviques ont-ils pris le pouvoir en Hongrie, mais dans aucun autre Etat de l'Empire, et pourquoi ce seul régime bolchevique victorieux s'est-il effondré aussi rapidement? Enfin, pourquoi ces cinq années de révolution ont-elles si peu transformé la structure sociale et le système économique de cette région de l'Europe et laissé la plupart des anciennes classes dominantes, des bureaucraties et des capitalistes fermement retranchés dans leurs positions traditionnelles?

Les réponses à ces questions résident dans la série de conflits nationaux et ethniques qui ont constamment assombri l'histoire de l'Europe centrale, pendant si longtemps. Les évènements de 1917 à 1922 ont, en quelque sorte, connu leur répétition générale en 1848.

Comme en 1848, chaque nationalité a pris les armes pour le compte de la dynastie, dans l'espoir de se voir accorder un traitement de faveur. Ce fut seulement lorsque les nationalités rivales se révélèrent, les unes aux autres, plus menaçantes que l'ennemi commun que chaque groupe ethnique rompit les rangs pour se défendre lui-même et ainsi condamner l'Empire à sa perte. Comme en 1848, alors que les offres de compromis des Hongrois avaient été rejetées par les autres nationalités, la Hongrie, en 1918-1919, s'est retranchée dans une guerre défensive infructueuse, sous la bannière du bolchevisme au lieu du leadership de Kossuth. En Autriche, la révolution fut écrasée, non par l'armée impériale, mais par des sociaux-démocrates modérés et l'unification allemande fut évitée, comme en 1848, mais par suite de l'intervention d'autres agents: l'Entente au lieu du Kaiser, la Tchécoslovaquie et les Slaves méridionaux au lieu des nationalistes Tchèques et Croates. Dans toute cette région et durant toute la période de 1917 à 1922, le nationalisme domina les préoccupations sociales et les luttes de classes, mettant ainsi en évidence le dilemne récurrent et tragique de l'Europe centrale.

Commentaire / Commentary

Le cas de l'Autriche-Hongrie

Mikos Molnar

Mes commentaires, cinq points en tout, tentent plutôt de compléter l'exposé de Istvan Deak que de le discuter. D'autant plus qu'en ce qui concerne son exposé, je ne le trouve pas seulement brillant et suggestif, mais aussi convaincant, ce qui est chose assez rare dans le cas d'un rapport de quelque quarante minutes sur un sujet aussi vaste et aussi complexe.

Cependant, la démonstration comparative qu'emploie Deak comporte aussi des inconvénients. A quelques endroits, Deak n'a pas pu résister, je crois, à la tentation de procéder par analogie, au risque peut-être de simplifier certaines choses. A la page de son exposé par exemple, nous lisons « . . . Franchet d'Esperey proved as brutally contemptuous of Wilson's program as the Habsburg General Jelasic had been of Ferdinand's constitution. » [Professor Deak agreed with Professor Molnar and changed the final version of his text as it appears on page 92 of this volume. Editor's note.] En réalité, je crois que c'est un mythe: Franchet n'était pas si brutal qu'on le dit; il a même outrepassé ses compétences de général commandant en chef, en entrant en négociations avec un gouvernement non reconnu, le gouvernement du Comte Károlyi; et il s'est vu brutalement rappelé à l'ordre par Pichon, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, et Clemenceau, dans deux télégrammes de Pichon, datant du début de décembre 1918, où on reproche au général précisément de discuter avec les représentants d'un « prétendu Etat hongrois. » On reprochait même à Franchet – ce qui est un comble – de ne pas avoir exigé de Károlyi la signature « des délégués de l'Etat austro-hongrois munis de pleins pouvoirs réguliers. »[1] C'était à un moment où cet Etat austro-hongrois n'existait plus. Si je révèle ce détail, c'est précisément pour aborder tout de suite l'un des points qui pourraient peut-être apporter quelques compléments aux conclusions, par ailleurs profondément justes, de notre rapporteur.

Ce premier point, c'est la politique des grandes puissances – sujet immense – que Deak a eu raison de reléguer au second plan, vu que c'est l'aspect le plus connu de la question.

Il suffit de faire allusion aux ouvrages de Valiani,[2] aux travaux d'Arno Mayer[3] qui est parmi nous, aux travaux de Zsuzsa L. Nagy,[4] de Tibor Hajdu,[5] pour ne citer que quelques-uns des ouvrages récents. Donc c'est un aspect très connu, et il serait très difficile d'y apporter des éléments vraiment nouveaux. L'ouverture récente des archives françaises, italiennes et hongroises, ne fait finalement que confirmer, il me semble, l'image d'une France intransigeante et en effet brutale vis-à-vis de la Hongrie (de

1. *Archives du Ministère de la Guerre.* 20 N 217.
2. Leo Valiani, «La politica estera dei governi rivoluzionari ungheresi del 1918-1919 », dans *Rivista Storica Italiana,* LXXVIII, fasc. IV, 1966.
3. Arno J. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking. Containment and Counterrevolution at Versailles, 1918-1919* (A. Knopf, New York, 1967). 918 p.
4. Zsuzsa L. Nagy, *A párizsi békekonferencia és Magyarorszag,* 1918-1919 (La Conférence de la Paix et la Hongrie) (Kossuth, Budapest, 1965).
5. Tibor Hajdu, *A Magyarorszagi Tanacsköztarsasag* (La République des Conseils de Hongrie) (Kossuth, Budapest, 1969).

toutes les Hongries: aussi bien la Hongrie du Comte Károlyi, que la Hongrie de la République des conseils et que la Hongrie de la droite). Donc, est confirmée cette image d'une France intransigeante, d'une Angleterre réservée, d'Etats-Unis malléables et d'une Italie – voilà un point encore mal élucidé – faisant finalement un double jeu vis-à-vis de la République des conseils. L'image d'ensemble demeure; mais dans une question de si décisive importance que la politique des grandes puissances (de cette Entente qui a fait naître la République des conseils et qui lui donna aussi le coup de grâce), même les détails insignifiants peuvent avoir un certain intérêt. Je voudrais en mentionner, très rapidement, deux ou trois. A propos de la politique et de la position de l'Italie, on peut aujourd'hui établir avec certitude que l'Italie (pas le gouvernement, officiellement) a fourni des armes à la République des conseils de Hongrie. Il y a un rapport des services de renseignements français à ce sujet dans les archives du Quai d'Orsay et il y a également plusieurs passages dans les procès-verbaux du gouvernement des conseils où il est question précisément de contrebande d'armes à travers l'Autriche.[6] Tout porte à croire que l'Autriche laissait passer ces armes, mais les armes elles-mêmes venaient essentiellement d'Italie. Le deuxième point concerne la France elle-même, à savoir qu'il y avait deux considérations dans la politique française qui expliquent beaucoup de choses que nous savons d'ailleurs. Les milieux politiques français, aussi bien que les milieux militaires, semblaient être convaincus (jusqu'au mois de mai en tout cas, jusqu'à la volte-face de l'ataman N.A. Grigoriev en Ukraine) du danger ou de l'éventualité d'une jonction entre l'Armée Rouge soviétique et l'armée de la République hongroise des conseils. C'est ce qui a amené Foch à insister devant le Conseil des Quatre sur la nécessité d'occuper Budapest. Plusieurs documents aux Archives du Ministère de la Guerre ainsi qu'aux Affaires étrangères confirment qu'au-delà du cas hongrois c'était bien une éventuelle percée de l'Armée Rouge d'Ukraine qui préoccupait les militaires français. Je reviendrai sur ce point à propos des relations de la Hongrie avec la Russie.

Un autre facteur qui motive et explique, ne fût-ce que partiellement, la politique française: c'est l'Allemagne. Tant que l'Allemagne n'avait pas signé le traité de Versailles, rien n'était sûr. L'éventualité que la droite utilise la gauche et la révolution justement pour empêcher la signature du traité de paix était une chose que tout homme politique français devait envisager. En tout cas, il y a, sur ce point également, des rapports selon lesquels Ludendorff lui-même semblait « flirter » avec l'idée de jouer la carte de la révolution pour empêcher la signature du traité de paix.

Le deuxième point que je voudrais très rapidement mentionner est la politique de la Hongrie des Soviets vis-à-vis des nationalistes et ses voisins. Etait-il possible de trouver un *modus vivendi,* un compromis comportant certainement d'immenses concessions de Budapest vis-à-vis des pays voisins, pour survivre? Voilà la grande question à laquelle, il me semble, il est impossible de donner une réponse tranchée. Quoi qu'il en soit, le gouvernement hongrois des conseils avait une attitude assez ambiguë, aussi bien vis-à-vis des problèmes des nationalités, ce qui en restait, que vis-à-vis des pays voisins. Les recherches ne sont pas assez poussées sur ce plan-là et il faudrait encore vérifier jusqu'à quel point les déclarations de Kun concernant le désir de son gouvernement de négocier sérieusement avec les gouvernements tchécoslovaque et roumain, étaient sérieuses. En tout cas, il y a une affaire à propos de laquelle certains doutes planent sur la sincérité des intentions du gouvernement hongrois des conseils. Il s'agit de la République soviétique de Slovaquie, proclamée à Eperjes (Presov) le 16 juin à la suite de l'occupation de cette région par l'armée rouge hongroise. Quant aux objectifs proprement territoriaux de Budapest, ils apparaissent, tout compte fait, justes du point de vue du principe national. Comme il s'agissait de la Slovaquie orientale, peuplée autant de Hongrois que de Slovaques, l'idée de rattacher ce bout de la Slovaquie à la Hongrie n'était pas contraire au principe

6. A Forradalmi kormanyzotanacs (Le Conseil de gouvernement révolutionnaire). Procès-verbaux des séances, Archives de l'Institut d'histoire du parti, 601 f. 1-35. Séance du 2 avril 1919, intervention du commissaire du peuple Jozsef Pogany.
Une pièce dans les Archives fédérales suisses à Berne rapporte aussi l'information, démentie par Rome, concernant les « envois d'armes d'Italie aux bolcheviks hongrois ». Lettre du chef de la Division des Affaires étrangères au ministre suisse à Rome.

wilsonien des nationalités. Cependant, les méthodes et les moyens employés par Kun et ses camarades ne pouvaient que provoquer la suspicion et les protestations de Benes et d'autres, surtout Benes qui écrivait plusieurs lettres à ce sujet à Clemenceau pour le mettre en garde contre les agissements de Budapest. C'était en effet sous la pointe des baïonnettes que le gouvernement des conseils voulait apporter la liberté à la population slovaque et magyar de cette région, en instituant sur-le-champ un « conseil révolutionnaire » formé d'hommes de paille. Antonin Janousek et les autres dirigeants de cette République des conseils slovaque étaient sinon des Hongrois, en tout cas des Slovaques ayant des liens très proches avec la Hongrie. Un bordereau d'expédition, qui se trouve aux Archives nationales hongroises dans les dossiers du Ministère des Affaires étrangères hongrois, semble même indiquer que le Ministère des Affaires étrangères des conseils slovaques avait une annexe à Budapest même (peut-être même dans le bâtiment du Commissariat du peuple hongrois des Affaires étrangères). Ce bordereau d'expédition indiquait tout simplement: « expédié sur place ».

Reste la question de savoir qui était l'instigateur de cette aventure slovaque. Encore une fois, je ne parle ni des expéditions militaires ni des revendications territoriales et nationales, mais seulement de l'institution d'une République des conseils en Slovaquie. Est-ce que c'était sur l'instigation de Moscou ou bien s'agissait-il d'une initiative hongroise? C'est tout probable la deuxième version qui est juste parce qu'il se trouve dans la correspondance de Tchitcherine avec Béla Kun un télégramme dans lequel Tchitcherine pose la question à Kun: « Qu'est-ce que c'est que cette république des conseils slovaques, nous n'en savons absolument rien? » En fait, en politique étrangère, Kun avait ses idées à lui. Il avait généralisé trois principes: 1) faire son « Brest-Litovsk » avec l'Entente, idée qu'il ne cesse de répéter; 2) lâcher du lest, c'est-à-dire renoncer au principe de l'intégrité territoriale; mais en revanche, 3) sauver le reste. Le sauver précisément en créant une république fédérative des conseils de Hongrie, (le nom officiel de la république des conseils de Hongrie depuis le mois de juin était bien République fédérative des conseils) devant comprendre, en plus de la Hongrie proprement dite, son « Ukraine », c'est-à-dire l'Ukraine subcarpatique (la Ruthénie), le Burgenland, ainsi que la République slovaque comme république alliée.

Quant aux relations entre Budapest et Moscou, une source absolument fondamentale n'a pas encore été mise à la disposition de tous les chercheurs. Il s'agit de la correspondance de Tchitcherine, commissaire du peuple aux Affaires étrangères avec Kun, son homologue hongrois. Cette documentation comprend, selon les historiens hongrois qui ont eu accès à elle, à peu près deux cents pièces. De ce nombre, une vingtaine seulement ont été publiées et, par recoupements, on peut encore avoir accès à une dizaine d'autres. Donc, le gros de cette documentation reste encore inconnu. Néanmoins, on peut savoir un point essentiel en ce qui concerne le fond de cette correspondance. C'est que tout au long des mois d'avril et mai, c'est-à-dire les débuts de la République des conseils de Hongrie, Tchitcherine n'a pas eu de cesse d'encourager Béla Kun et de lui promettre une aide non seulement financière, qui est bien parvenue à bon port à Budapest, mais également une aide militaire. Et effectivement, au mois de mai, semble-t-il, l'offensive de l'Armée Rouge en Roumanie a été assez efficace pour arrêter l'avance roumaine vers la Hongrie, l'armée roumaine devant être concentrée sur son front de l'est au lieu de poursuivre son expansion vers l'ouest, vers la Hongrie. En revanche, après cette offensive du mois de mai, tout semble arrêté. Rien ne se passe du côté des Soviétiques en faveur de la Hongrie, à cause probablement de la politique très individuelle, très autonome, d'Antonov-Ovseïenko. Quelle que soit la raison du silence sur le front est, tout le monde est au clair sur la situation: aussi bien Foch que Clemenceau et que Kun lui-même. Celui-ci n'a plus d'illusions en ce qui concerne l'aide militaire soviétique. Il sait d'ailleurs aussi que les Allemands vont signer le traité de Versailles. Avec cela, les deux derniers grands espoirs de la République des conseils de Hongrie s'évanouissent: on ne peut pas compter sur la Russie, on ne peut pas compter sur l'Allemagne. Je crois que c'est ce double aspect de la question qu'il faudrait creuser pour voir précisément pourquoi, après les deux notes comminatoires de Clemenceau, les Hongrois ont cédé et ont promis de retirer les troupes hongroises, contrairement aux Hongrois de 1848-49.

Il y a encore un point à propos des relations avec la Russie soviétique que je voudrais mentionner, un aspect très peu connu de la question: c'est qu'il ne suffit pas de creuser dans les relations entre Budapest et Moscou, mais aussi entre Budapest et Kiev, et la république ukrainienne, Très tôt – fin mars, début avril – une négociation a eu lieu entre Kun et Kallagan, ambassadeur d'Ukraine. Il s'agissait de créer une alliance entre les trois républiques: Hongrie, Ukraine, Russie, afin que « les trois républiques constituent un territoire uni ». « Et demain », continue Kun dans son rapport devant ses collègues commissaires du peuple, « je prendrai contact par radio, non seulement avec Lénine mais aussi avec Cholubovitch. Vinitchenko arrive demain ici à Budapest, et nous commençons les négociations. »[7] Malheureusement je ne connais pas la suite. Dans les documents que j'ai eu l'occasion de consulter, il n'en est plus question.

Un tout dernier point: la République des conseils de Hongrie était la dictature du prolétariat. Elle ne l'était que dans une certaine mesure; mais je ne veux pas entrer ici dans la question de l'appréciation de la nature de cette dictature. Quel fut le statut réel du prolétariat et de ses organes, les conseils? Quels furent les véritables rapports entre les commissaires du gouvernement d'un côté, et les conseils élus? C'est une grande question, mais quels que fussent ces rapports, ces conseils participaient en tout cas au pouvoir, et le poids de la guerre et de la production reposait bien exclusivement sur cette classe ouvrière hongroise, classe ouvrière pas très nombreuse comme vous le savez. C'est effectivement la classe ouvrière qui devait faire tous les sacrifices, qui devait se battre dans l'armée, tenir bon sur le front de la production, et ainsi de suite. Outre les conditions extérieures, le sort de la République des conseils dépendait certainement de cette classe ouvrière et de la question de savoir jusqu'à quel point les ouvriers consentiraient encore à faire des sacrifices. Il semble que l'écroulement commence à l'intérieur précisément par le découragement et la déception des ouvriers. On n'a pas le temps de développer cette question. Je cite un discours de Béla Kun prononcé le 1er août devant le conseil d'ouvriers et de soldats de Budapest: « Le prolétariat de Hongrie n'a pas trahi ses dirigeants; il s'est trahi lui-même. » Plus loin: « J'aurais préféré une autre fin; j'aurais aimé voir le prolétariat combattre sur les barricades . . . déclarer qu'il préférait mourir plutôt que d'abandonner son pouvoir. » Plus loin encore: « Maintenant je vois que notre tentative d'inculquer aux masses prolétariennes de ce pays une conscience de classe révolutionnaire a été vaine; ce prolétariat a besoin de la dictature la plus inhumaine et la plus cruelle de la bourgeoisie pour devenir révolutionnaire. »[8] C'est le dernier discours de Béla Kun. Je finis sur cette note.

Summary

Professor Molnar points out that he found Professor Deak's paper not only brilliant and suggestive, but also convincing. He emphasizes that his comments will implement Professor Deak's conclusion and that his only criticism concerns Professor Deak's use of analogies which, Professor Molnar fears, tend to simplify certain problems.

Professor Molnar then speaks on four essential points. He first discusses the politics of the Great Powers. Second, he discusses the politics of Soviet Hungary towards its nationalities and its neighbours. His third point concerns the relations between Moscow and Budapest and the evaporation of Bela Kun's hopes that he could count on Russia or Germany in the immediate aftermath of the war. As his final point, Professor Molnar stresses that the government of Bela Kun was instituted as a dictatorship of the proletariat and, he asserts, collapsed because of the discouragement and deception of the workers.

7. *Ibid.*, Séance du 27 mars 1919.
8. Cité dans Böhm Vilmos, *Két forradalom tüzében* (Dans le feu croisé des deux révolutions) (Népszava ed., Budapest, s.d.), pp. 356-357.

Le cas de l'Autriche-Hongrie / Session on Austria-Hungary

Discussion

J. Boucek. (Carleton U.) It is a daring enterprise to compare the periods 1848 and 1918. In the seventy years between these two dates many things happened. In 1918 the political, economic, social and cultural structure of Austria-Hungary looked completely different than in 1848. (At that time, it was actually the Hapsburg Monarchy; it wasn't Austria-Hungary). So what I want to contest is the statement that there is much similarity between 1848 and 1918. I regret very much the destruction of the Hapsburg monarchy; I believe had it not been for that, the world would be much happier! But this destruction was probably inevitable, and I must say – please, this might be taken against me – the federalization of Austria-Hungary in 1918 couldn't have taken place due to Magyar opposition. Unfortunately, if it would not have been for what, maybe we could have seen a federated Hapsburg monarchy until now, and Eastern Europe would be today in a much happier situation.

What I would like to emphasize is that Hungary of 1918 was condemned to fall apart due to completely different reasons than stated by Professor Deak; it was mainly the misapplication of the principle of self-determination. I agree that President Wilson's beautiful idea of self-determination of nations is until now being misused, but in a way, I think that nobody could have saved the Hapsburg Monarchy from the fate she met.

I. Deak. May I first reply to Professor Molnar's very useful and heavily documented remarks. With regard to General Franchet d'Esperay I apparently fell victim to a Hungarian myth which puts all the blame on Franchet d'Esperay. Perhaps if I had said "Colonel Vix," or the "Franch generals in the Czechoslovak and Romanian armies," I would have come closer to the truth. And yet, I still feel that no matter whether it was Franchet d'Esperay, or Vix, or the French government, or Foch himself who took the measures I was talking about, they all resembled Jelasic of 1848 fame in so far as they saw and interpreted the new constitutions in their own light.

Jelasic never claimed that he was violating the law; on the contrary, he marched into Hungary because that was, in his eyes, his obligation under the laws of the Empire. In the same way, there was a vast discrepancy between the original interests of President Wilson and the way the French interpreted these intentions. One must add that Wilson himself changed enormously in the course of 1918: what he had said in the Winter of 1917-1918 bore little relation to what he said and did in the Fall of 1918.

The trouble was that the Hungarians, and the Central European peoples in general, were very poorly informed. And even if they had been better informed, it would have been of little use, for they heard and understood only what they wished to hear and understand. Which brings me to the business of Hungary eventually entering the United States as one of the States. Such a total lack of realistic thinking was characteristic of the period. To carry my game of analogies one step further: in 1849 Kossuth, too, toyed with the idea of Hungary joining the Union. But his emissaries reached Washington only after the Hungarian War of Independence was over. It was characteristic of the Hun-

garians' poor perception of international developments in 1918-1919 that they kept insisting on the validity of Wilson's Fourteen Points at a time when the American president himself paid no attention to his own Points.

Now as to the statement made by the professor from Carleton University – I believe his statement to be a clear illustration of a Central European dilemna: how can Central Europeans address one another without being influenced by their own nationality. I tried to avoid being nationalistic; I did not defend any Hungarian politician. Instead, I tried to point out that the nationality question played a major role in Central European history, and if I made these comparisons, then it was only in order to show that nationalism was a very old phenomenon. This does not mean, of course, that I have the explanations, that I know why nationalism arose. I don't even know who manipulated it, and yet, somebody had to stuff nationalist ideology down the throat of peasants and workers.

The fact is that, both in 1848 and 1918, a large number of people, not only intellectuals, but masses of peasants and others, acted on the basis of nationalist ideologies. Unfortunately, I could cite many evidences of horrifying racial massacres that occurred in 1848, especially in Transylvania and in South East Hungary, in the so-called Banat region. Peasants who had formerly lived together quite peacefully; who had intermarried across religious and ethnic boundaries, in 1848 began to kill each other, not in the name of class struggle, but in the name of nationalist ideas. This is what we must try to understand and what we must investigate.

G. Ranki. I think it's a very tempting attempt for a historian such as Professor Deak who is working so widely on the problem of the Hapsburg Empire to try to compare 1848 and 1918. His lecture, as always, was a masterpiece showing how you can approach the problem, if you do it within a very limited time. However, I think there are some questions which might be raised concerning this comparison. Now I would like to raise only three points.

First, when you are making a comparison between 1848 and 1918 – and due to the limits you neglect so many things – as far as I remember, you mentioned only twice the Compromise of 1867 – then you are omitting one of the very important turning points which gave different aspects to all the events which occurred between the two revolutions.

Second, the change in the socio-economic forces is important during the two periods. If I just refer to the Hungarian population, there is a Hungarian agricultural population in 1848 of almost 85% or 90%, whereas in 1918-1919, 50% of the population is involved in agriculture. So, the social forces involved in the two revolutions are entirely different, or partly different. Of course, you are right saying that there is a link between the two periods, namely, the so-called agrarian question or peasant question. It is true that it is a very important question even if I am not quite in agreement with Professor Carsten's statement of this morning, saying that in the period from 1918 to 1919 the question of the land holding was the most important, I would say that the really dominant forces in the revolution of 1919 in Hungary were more the urban and proletarian elements, and intellectual (profession people) and working class elements; and only one of the aims of this revolution was to eliminate those classes which were dominant from 1848, and had an important role in the revolution of 1848. So I wouldn't disregard the changing socio-economic structure or the socio-economic process. You may stress the relative importance of the nationality question, even myself I would not deny its importance, but this is only a part of the story, not the entire question.

Finally, the problem of international relations. In this case, you ought to mention all the plans which came about after 1916-1917. You should examine all the preparations and the general aspects of the problem; should the Austrian-Hungarian Empire be maintained or should it be broken-up, as was the general policy of the French or English governments supported someway by American policy during the last phase of the War. And, just one short remark, related to the different socio-economic forces involved. When you compare Kossuth in some way (of course, in a historic way) to Béla Kun,

you cannot forget (you remember it quite well, you have written about it) that Kossuth was reluctant (when they made up the contract in September or October of 1848) to help the revolution of Vienna, because he thought the Hungarian revolution was a fight for national independence and by helping the revolution in Vienna, they were crossing the frontier of illegitimacy.

As was mentioned by Professor Molnar, the conception of Béla Kun was entirely different; he wanted to push the revolution in Vienna; he helped to make a putsch in Vienna, and he always said that the Hungarian revolution was not a national revolution. The conception was so-called proletarian internationalism. It has been said that the Hungarians had to transfer the revolution from the East to the West and this is, as well, a very important difference when making a comparison between the revolutions of 1848 and 1918.

G. Bassler. I just have a very brief question directed to both of the speakers. When you talk about political experimentation and differences and similarities between 1848, 1918-1919, I think you cannot bypass the councils entirely. I was surprised that none of the speakers mentioned the workers and soldiers councils at all. And as far as I am informed, they played a quite prominent role in Austria at least, while on the other hand in Bohemia, they did not exist at all. Why this complete difference? Why were there no Councils at all in Prague and why did they play a prominent role in Austria?

Otto Bauer, in his history of the Austrian revolution, points out that the Austrians had the first real workers councils outside Russia. In 1918, the Austrians had the workers councils before the Germans and some historians have pointed out that one should also look at Austria as a model for the German Council movement. Bauer points out, among other things, that in Austria these councils played a far more profound role, especially on the local level even though they did not claim the role of controlling the government as the councils did in Germany. I think this deserves comment and investigation.

I. Deak. I cannot answer all your criticisms, most of them quite justified. I admit that the same game of comparisons could be played with the Compromise Agreement of 1867 on the one hand, and 1918 on the other. But such a game would, in my opinion, still uphold my thesis that the role of nationalism was crucial. Just one more remark. When you state that Kossuth did not influence the Vienna revolution and that he held back of the Austro-Hungarian border, whereas in 1919 Béla Kun did send money to Bettelheim, the Hungarian Bolshevik emissary in Vienna, there I could really take issue with you. The Hungarian progressives of 1848 also represented an international ideology, an ideology that was far more successful than the Bolshevik ideology in 1918.

1848 was the last ecumenical revolution; Young Hungary was part of Young Europe; both the Vienna and the Budapest revolutions began as a result of the Paris events; the Vienna upheaval was greatly influenced by Kossuth's March 3 speech, and the Hungarian upheavals were influenced by the Vienna events. Kossuth was quite right in saying that, for a few days, in March 1848, he held the fate of the Monarchy in his own hands. The cities of the Monarchy exercised enormous influence on each other: it was as if a ping-pong ball had been flying back and forth between Vienna, Pressburg, Budapest, Prague, Berlin and Paris. Compared to the mutually supportive role of these cities in 1848, how miserable appears the effort of the Hungarian Communists to bring about a revolution in Vienna in 1919.

Deuxième jour / Second Day

Ateliers / Workshops

Problèmes agraires / Agrarian Problems

Problèmes politiques / Political Problems

Problèmes d'ordre idéologique / Ideological Problems

Problèmes dans l'industrie / Industrial Problems

La situation révolutionnaire / Revolutionary Situation

Structural Crisis in Agriculture in Postwar Years

G. Ranki

In order to place the problem in a wider perspective and explain more of its characteristics may I refer to the well-known fact that it is hardly possible to sum up the agricultural developments of many countries with such different economic structures as Italy, Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The difficulties of the task were increased by the fact that the chosen period is certainly a focus on revolutionary events, and in some ways an independent period concerning political history, but on economics it is too short, and for this reason almost meaningless. It is really a very transitory one in which, if we don't intend to restrict ourselves to a mere description of what really happened in agriculture during these stormy years, we must have a look at both the period which preceded it and which followed it.

The outbreak of the first world war interrupted several decades of rapid economic expansion. It is true that the main feature of this expansion was industrialisation, but we ought to keep in mind that agriculture still occupied more than two fifths of the European population. It is true that German agricultural population was well below this proportion (28.7%), however the Austrian was around it, the Italian and more so the Hungarian surpassed it significantly. Germany with a very rapid economic, particularly industrial, progress created a growing demand for agricultural products which – in spite of protective measures on one hand, and fast production and productivity growth on the other – was not able to cover domestic consumption by its own production. Germany was divided concerning its land tenure system. Peasants were predominant west of the Elbe, while the Junkers or nobility held a large part of the land east of the Elbe in Estate. In all Germany 22% of the land belonged to estates over 250 acres, but in the West only 8%, while in the East 40%.[1] After the turn of century the proportion of local production and imports was the following:

	Wheat		Barley		
1900-1908	75.7	24.3	69.8	30.2	
1911-1922	69.8	30.2	50	50	[2]

In 1913 Germany produced no more than two thirds of her food and fodder requirements.

The Western half of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was dependent on agricultural imports as well. Here a great part of the arable land belonged to modernised large estates. About for thousand estates (of over 500 hectares) i.e., 1.2% of the total owned 23% of the land. Inside this region Bohemian and Moravian land tenure was characterised by the existence of grant estates. More than 28% of the land in Bohemia and almost 26% in Moravia belonged to estates of over 2000 hectares. On the other hand, almost three million peasant farms (under 100 hectares), more than 99% of all estates, occupied only two thirds of the land. It is a fact that even Austria increased its agricultural production

1. H. Heaton, *European Economic History* (New York), p. 441.
2. J.H. Clapham, *Economic Development of France and Germany. 1815-1914* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 213.

as well. Production of wheat increased by 27% (1890-95 11.9 million q., 1905-09 15.5 million q.), barley 23% (from 13 to 16.3 q.) and oats about 30% (from 17.1 to 22.3 million q.). Yields were, however, well below the German average.[3] However a large part of its consumption was dependent on imports from Hungary. According to some estimates about one-half of the bread consumed in Austria was imported from Hungary, and in every other aspect we come to almost the same conclusions. Meat consumption in Vienna consisted of almost 70% Hungarian imports.[4] Hungary in the prewar years was the second largest flour exporting country (23.7% of world export) and it ranked among the first ten as well in wheat exports. These exports were almost entirely oriented to Austria after the turn of century. Hungary since the beginning of 19th century – when the serfdom system still prevailed – has had a certain amount of surplus in agricultural products. However its importance among agricultural exporters was certainly the result of those rapid economic developments which took place in Hungary from the last decades of the century up to World War I. The very characteristic of this development was that first of all it was based on agriculture, however, later on it embraced the other sectors as well and led to an industrialisation process, which was interrupted by the war.[5] Hungary's agriculture was one of those areas where, in spite of capitalist features, several elements of the feudal system were preserved. More than 32% of the land owned by estates belonged to less than the 3400 largest estates (above 570 hectares) whereas 2.3 million peasant farms possessed only 52% of the territory of estates.

The industrialisation of Western Europe – of Austria and Germany especially – expanded external markets significantly, and the rapid progress of railway construction eased the problem of reaching the markets by linking up the best farmlands with the transport system. Hungarian agricultural exports grew by leaps and bounds; at the end of the 1870's they averaged between half and three-quarters of a million tons per year, but by the eve of World War I the export of grain alone had jumped to over one and a half million tons. The internal market expanded too, though at a slower rate.

This advance was temporarily interrupted by the agrarian crisis which broke out in the mid-70's, largely as a result of the appearance of cheap overseas grain on the European market. Once the transport problem was overcome, American produce reached the Western European market in great quantities, where, because of its lower production costs, it sold more cheaply, driving out Hungarian foodstuffs.

Hungary's leading class possessed enough influence to introduce a protective system around the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy which ensured the products of Hungarian agriculture a secure position in the Monarchy's internal markets.

Production of main crops

	1864-66		1911-13
Wheat	17.2	million tons	49.1
Maize	13.4		48.5
Potato	7.3		54.9
Sugar-beet	2.0		43.3

The annual increase in production of non-animal crops reached 2%, for animal products the rate of growth was 1.7% per year.[6]

Italy remained up to the First World War an agricultural country as well. In 1911 about 55% of the active population was still engaged in agriculture.[7] But in spite of its political unification achieved in the 1860's, the land tenure system rested very much upon the historical heritage, mingling the more commercialised and capitalistic farms

3. K. Kinklage, *Die Landwirtschaftliche Entwicklung in die Habsburgermonarchie* (Wien. 1975), p. 450.
4. W. Red Weber, *Österreichs Wirtschftsstruktur Gerstern – Heute – Morgen* (Berlin, 1961), II, p. 580.
5. I.T. Berend, G. Ranki, *Hungary. A Century of Economic Development* (London, 1974).
6. L. Katus, "Socio-economic Researches in East Central Europe", in *Studia Historica*, 1962.
7. Svimez, *Un secolo di statistiche italiane: Nord e sud, 1861-1961* (Rome, 1961).

of the North with the share-cropping of the Middle, and the large feudal estates with huge amounts of landless agricultural labourers in the South. (With 4.5 million landless agricultural labourers, Italy ranked first in Europe and Hungary, with its 4 million was second.) Roughly 5 million possessed some land, but almost 90% did not have more than one hectar, which was certainly too small to provide a living.[8]

Italy was mainly a silk producer, but also produced wine and olive-oil and, until the turn of century, it supplied it with wheat, but after that it needed some imports. Wheat production rose to approximately 50 million quintals in the prewar years but it was hardly sufficient to feed the population and almost 14 million q. of imports seemed to be necessary.[9]

In spite of large differences among the countries looked at we may conclude with this brief assessment of prewar developments:

1. Prewar development witnessed a rapid economic growth which included everywhere the agricultural sector as well. The favourable cycles of Kondriatev (roughly between 1890-1914) contributed to the expansion of cultivated territory, to increased yields and to the growth of agricultural production.

2. Even partly before, partly during this *belle époque* in the last decades of the nineteenth century the arrival of cheap overseas American wheat export, via an improved transport system, had caused a severe agricultural crisis in Europe. The crisis opened the first phase of the dissolution of the formal division of labour between Eastern and Western Europe based on agricultural deliveries by the former and industrial exports by the latter. The immediate effect was the removal of Hungarian agricultural products from the German market and a severe setback for Italian agriculture.

3. Particularly in those countries where agriculture remained more important in relation to occupation, income and export, the agricultural growth did not reduce the inherent social tensions connected with the old fashioned land tenure system and with overpopulation in the agricultural areas.

4. Finally agricultural development and export surplus was created while all the important parameters showed a kind of underdevelopment, one side structure of cultivation low yields, low standard of mechanisation, backward agricultural technology i.e., output-capital was low.

The effect of the World War is well known. None of the belligerents were really prepared in economic terms for such a long, modern war. The food problem soon assumed large dimensions, particularly in Germany, in Austria and in Hungary where the consequences of the withdrawal of men and horses from the countryside and the lack of fertilizers spoiled the harvest. All three nations, cut off by the blockade, proved unable to cope with supply problems.

Germany, even before the war, badly needed imports, so it became quite evident that in spite of an effective rationalisation system and the exploitation of some of the conquered territories, it could not provide for its own needs because of the fall in agricultural production.

The exhaustion of agricultural production caused by the war was expressed in the diminution of the yields (wheat 38%, barley 29%, potato 17%) and the fall of the livestock production from between 10-25%.

The peace settlement of 1919 gave to the neighbouring countries a fifth of the German rye lands and a smaller part of the wheat and barley areas. Germany lost about one eighth of its agricultural productive capacity well over the loss of its population. Germany had to rely more than ever on imports of agricultural goods (plus fertiliser since the potash of Alsace-Lorraine went to France) without having sufficient export trade.[10]

8. F. Chabod, *L'Italia contemporanena, 1918-1948* (Torino, 1961), p. 32.
9. L. Di Rosa, *La revoluzione industriale in Italia e il Mezzogiorno* (Bari, 1973), p. 154.
10. W. Conze, *Deutsche Geschichte von 1890-1913* (Thübingen, 1964). G. Castellan, *L'Allemagne de Weimar* (Paris, 1972), p. 165.

In Austria agricultural production was down in 1918 to approximately 50% of prewar levels, and it remained at that level into 1920.

Crop production in Hungary decreased from 71 million quintals in 1913 to 42 million quintals in 1918. Production of maize declined in the same years from 48 to 24 million quintals. Calculated on the 1920 territorial basis, total agricultural production was one-third of its pre-war level in 1919. The improvement in 1920 resulted in an increase to 50-60 percent of the pre-war level.

In the newly re-established Poland the agriculture losses were even heavier. In the First World War it was the Polish territories which suffered the heaviest war dislocation. At the end of the War about 4.5 million hectares of arable land remained uncultivated. About 2.4 million hectares of forest were felled. The war also destroyed 638 thousand ploughs and other agricultural implements, 76 thousand harvesters and 35 thousand mowing and sowing machines. The losses of livestock were especially serious. This was partly in connection with the decline of crop and fodder production which included emergency slaughtering. All in all, two million cattle, one million horses and 1.5 million sheep were lost. War exhaustion also affected the more advanced Czechoslovakian agriculture, which was saved from military action. In 1920 Bohemian and Moravian cattle, horse and pig stocks were 7, 10 and 20 percent less than that of 1910, respectively.

The decline of agricultural production in the immediate post-war years, however, was not simply an agricultural problem. It had direct, serious social consequences and it affected the entire economy, particularly in those countries where the fall of agricultural production paralysed crucial export activities. In Germany and in Austria the social tensions, partly as a consequence of fall of agricultural production and a lack of food, were first of all urban phenomena. Revolutionary movements were concentrated in the capital and in the large cities, and the peasants or the land problem had a lesser significance in the events. In Italy and most parts of East Europe social contradictions were so exacerbated during the War that radical redistribution of land became an urgent matter. "The peasant as food producer or soldier must be induced to fight firm and fast by promises of land as a reward," wrote Heaton.[11] During the war the peasants – as soldiers – were organised and controlled. After the war in most of the East European countries peasant parties became stronger, in some cases they were able to take over their governments.

Social and national conflicts went together. The collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the emergence of the so-called successor states entirely altered the circumstances of economic growth.

The countries of Southeastern Europe before and after World War I

	Area (in square kilometers)		Population (in thousands)	
	1914	1921	1914	1921
Austro-Hungarian Monarchy	676,443[a]		51,390[a]	
Austria		85,533		6,536
Hungary		92,607		7,600
Czechoslovakia		140,394		13,613
Bulgaria	111,800	103,146	4,753	4,910
Rumania	137,903	304,244	7,516	17,594
Serbia	87,300		4,548	
Yugoslavia		248,987		12,017
Poland		388,279		27,184

Source: Based on national statistics.
[a]With Bosnia-Hercegovina

11. C.H. Heaton, *Economic History of Europe*, p. 472.

Within the framework of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy the successor states, having broken away from the old economic unity, mostly possessed a one-sided productive capacity. Thus, owing to the narrow national market, in Czechoslovakia and in Austria industrial exports, and in Hungary agricultural exports, were a precondition for the functioning of the economy. Conversely, Czechoslovakia and Austria had to import agricultural products and many industrial raw materials and investment goods. This dependence on foreign trade was true as well for the new Poland.

All this demanded first of all the return to pre-war production levels in order to hasten economic recovery. The social factors involved, however, gave the problem another outlook as well. It became almost inevitable that something be done to correct the often glaring inequalities in the distribution of land. On the one hand the question was posed by the victory of the Russian revolution and the aims of the states to avoid the same revolutionary process; on the other hand the given land tenure system not only created the problem, but it contained a part of the possible remedy as well. The strengthening of the new independent states was seen as a way to ease social problems. Through state power it became possible to introduce some kind of land-reforms, directed against those landlords (German, Hungarian) who were representatives of the former ruling nations, and whose expropriations had not only social, but national, aspects as well.

In Yugoslavia, the royal regent proclaimed agrarian reform and the distribution of land in his first manifesto issued as early as the end of 1918. Consequently, all property of above 50 hectares was distributed: 2.48 million hectares of land were repartitioned among 650,000 peasant families in the interwar years. Before World War II, farms of over 50 hectares amounted to only 9.7 percent of the total land area. In Croatia and Voivodina this radical reform abolished the Hungarian type of large estates; it also did away with the feudal system of landed property in Montenegro and in Bosnia-Hercegovina, and established a uniform agrarian structure, with the domination of a peasant economy throughout the country.[12] In Romania, the agrarian reform law was passed on December 15, 1918. There were no great discrepancies in the agrarian structures of the various parts of the new Romania, since big estates had predominated in the old Romania as well as in the newly annexed Bessarabia and Transylvania. The land reform law fixed the upper limit of landed property at 100 to 500 hectares, depending on the area in question: the most radical reform was carried out in Bessarabia and Transylvania. 6.3 million hectares in all were expropriated, of which 3.8 million were allotted to nearly 1.4 million peasant families. After the reform, the proportion of farms of 100 hectares was reduced to 27 percent of all landed property. Peasant economy thus became preponderant.[13]

Compared with the radical redistribution of land in Yugoslavia and Romania, land reform was more moderate in Poland and Czechoslovakia. In Poland, where the land reform law was passed on July 10, 1919, 2.65 million hectares were parcelled out between 1919 and 1938, but this affected little more than 10 percent of the 25 million hectares of arable land, and roughly one third when the effects of other measures (the so called "consolidation" of already existing peasant farms with additional parcels of land) are taken into consideration. While 734,100 new peasant farms were created from the 2.65 million hectares, and the size of 859,000 farms was increased with the allottment of 5.4 million hectares of land, only one quarter of the land belonging to large estates was expropriated, and thus about 20 percent of the arable land was left in the hands of the big landowners. The land problem, therefore, was far from being solved, especially since the number of landless peasants increased at a more rapid rate than their numbers could be reduced by the long drawn-out process of the division of the land into lots. During

12. O. Franges, *Die Sozialökonomische Struktur der Yugoslawischen Landwirtschaft* (Berlin, 1937). S. Dimitrijevic, *Privredni renvitan Jugosloviji 1918-1941* (Gandine, Belgrade, 1966). M. Eric, *Agrari reforma in Jugoslaviji 1918-1941* (God, Sarajevo, 1958).

13. I. Evans, *Agrarian Revolution in Romania* (Cambridge, 1924). D. Mitrany, *Land and the Peasant in Romania* (New Haven, 1930). V. Madearu, *Evolutia Economiei Romanesti Dupa Razboiul Mondial* (Bucharest, 1940).

the interwar period, a yearly average of no more than 133,000 hectares was parcelled out, while the average yearly increase of the agrarian population reached 250,000.[14]

In Czechoslovakia, the land reform of 1919 and 1920 promised to be quite radical. All properties of over 150 hectares of arable land, and all those with a total of 250 hectares, were declared subject to expropriation. Up to 1931, however, no more than 300,000 hectares were taken away from estates of over 100 hectares. By 1937, about 1.3 million hectares of arable land had been parcelled out, approximately two-thirds of this going to establish, and one third to complete dwarf peasant holdings. At all events, if arable land alone is considered, the area occupied by large estates did not exceed one-sixth of the land. With all land considered, Czechoslovakia remained a country of big estates: almost 40 percent of the total land area belonged to farms of over 500 hectares.[15]

In view of the land reforms in the neighboring countries, the fact of the domination of big estates could not be ignored in Hungary either, not even by the strongly conservative political system set up after the suppression of the revolution. In fact, the victorious counterrevolution itself had tried to turn the peasantry against the Soviet Republic, which had omitted the distribution of land, by including among its slogans the promise of land reform. However, political life was dominated so strongly by the class of big landowners, that the land reform law passed in 1920 cannot be compared even to the most moderate of its counterparts in the neighboring countries. The law specified no general maximum upper limit for the size of estates. It was, in fact, the most moderate land reform of the area, affecting only 6% of the arable land. From the 700,000 hectares made available for the implementation of the reform, exactly 250,000 landless peasants were allotted not quite one hectare of land per head. On the evidence of statistics from 1935, 43.1% of the land remained in the possession of the big landowners.[16]

The demand for, and the possibility of, land reform was posed in Italy as well. In 1918 and after, the cry the land to the peasants (*Terra ai contadini*) was a very popular slogan. The pressure for land reform increased following the immigration restrictions imposed by the United States. The problem of the landless labourer with the growing imbalance between offer and demand, became more serious than ever. The agitation for land and for better salaries went together, labour unions were created or strengthened, and in 1919 over 500,000, in 1920 over 1 million agricultural labourers went on strike, sometimes with the attempt to expropriate – at least partly – the landlords' land. Finally however mostly the *mezzadristi* (the tenant farmers) were able to win better terms, since they were granted larger fraction of the yield. After the seizure of power Mussolini actually struck land reform from the agenda, even though between 1919 and 1924 half the wheat consumed in Italy was imported.[17]

Long term effects of land reform on production are very difficult to estimate. First of all because they did not have any independent effects, but land reform became a part of a very complex economic, social and political situation. Certainly its social and political effects were important and it influenced the economy in an indirect way, its direct economic role is so involved with other factors, that we are unable to draw any non-ambigious conclusions from it.

Which were the most important other factors?

The changes mainly originated in the war years and their immediate aftermath i.e., the severe decline of European agricultural production. The food shortage and increasing demand pushed prices up steeply. The price of wheat, which increased slightly in the decades preceding the War (1913 = 100, 1918 = 75) shot up after 1914 (1920 = 250). Exploiting the possibilities offered by the special boom, overseas agricultural production (which had previously shown a fairly fast growth as well) radically expanded. The area

14. C. Madajczyk, *Burzuazyjno-obnarnicza reforma rolna w Polsa 1918-1939* (Warszawa, 1956).
15. R. Olsowsky, *Prehled hospodarskeho Kyvoje Ceskoslovensko leted 1918-1945* (Prague, 1924). J. Vozenilek, *Pozemkova reforma v Ceskoslovenske republice* (Prague, 1961).
16. I. Berend, *Agriculture in Eastern Europe 1919-1939*, Oxford Papers 35 (Oxford, 1973).
17. E. Santarelli, *Storia del movemento e del regime fascista* (Roma, 1967), p. 174.

under grain was greater by 132% in Canada, by 68% in Australia, by 27% in Argentina and by 22% in the United States in the post-war decade than in the pre-war years. The wheat export of the above mentioned four countries more than doubled, while the export of rye, maize and other main crops exceeded the pre-war level by four to five times. Cattle and sheep stocks of the four countries grew by 10 and 20% respectively, but meat exports, thanks to some new technical innovation (cold-storage ships) and the immense development of transportation, increased even more rapidly: by 41% in the United States and by 122% in Argentina.

Thus, the European market was glutted with overseas agricultural products. This happened when European production dropped to a nadir and traditional export countries of Eastern Europe were unable to supply even themselves. The export capacity of Eastern Europe, in spite of recovery from war exhaustion, never again achieved its pre-war level. Russia and the Danube countries exported an average of 6.1 million tons of wheat between 1909 and 1913, whereas the average exports between 1926 and 1930 reached only 1.5 million tons.

In 1919-1920 Europe needed to purchase 6.3 million dollars worth of food.[18]

It was not only a question of production, but also the demand for consumption as well. The trend of grain consumption rose during the war another 25% over the consumption during the preceeding two decades. However, in most grain importing countries (Western Europe) the point where no more increase was necessary, had already been reached, and when the post-war recovery period ended (particularly in Germany) demand for imports declined, with the consequence that prices fell by almost half in 1923 (1920: 250, 1923: 130).[19]

The instability of agricultural prices (before the war prices had remained relatively stable) was particularly damaging since agricultural output is adjusted less easily to changing market conditions than that of other industries.

All these difficulties created a latent agricultural depression that characterised the interwar period as a whole. This latent agricultural depression was not felt up to 1925.[20] When the afterwar turmoil was partly over, there was a feeling that recovery could be reached (prewar production level) and that the prewar economic order could be restored as well. However, this was not the case. A new situation had been created by the very large increase of agricultural productivity in overseas countries, by large scale mechanization and by marginal land brought to cultivation with high results and these changes made the new situation quite grave.

The structural crisis of the European agriculture was "the expression of a reduced productivity and competitiveness in relation to overseas exporters".[21] The adjustment of European agriculture to the new situation was a painful process which employed different methods, and showed different results. First of all it had to be taken into consideration that prices would be determined by the offers of the overseas producers. Certainly as long as European production was well below of prewar level (1910-13: 38 million tons, 1920-23: 30 millions tons[22]) the problem was still concealed. When, however, European production surpassed the prewar level the wobbling division of labour between the agricultural East and the industrial West in Europe, now became completely apparent. Europe's trade, as a consequence of territorial changes and as an effect of financial problems and alteration of terms of trade, improved or worsened according to importers or exporters of food-stuff.

Western European countries were able to try and adjust partly by switching over from East-European imports to imports from overseas. This switch had long-term effects

18. *Europe's Overseas Needs 1919-1920 and How they were met* (League of Nations, 1943).
19. I. Svennilson, *Growth and Stagnation of the European Economy*, p. 82.
20. P. Timoshenko, *World Agriculture and the Depression* (1957), p. 122.
21. I. Svennilson, *Growth and Stagnation of the European Economy*, p. 84.
22. W. Abel, *Grises agraires en Europe XIII-XIX siècle*, p. 393. Overseas average: 1910-1913: 31 million tons; 1920-1923: 41 millions tons.

on East-European agriculture. The Western European countries also adjusted by raising protective tariffs, by increasing yields, by promoting agricultural intensification and by trying some structural modernisation. Germany was one example of a country where agricultural production reached the prewar level only in 1925,[23] and barely surpassed it later on. Protective tariffs were used for maintaining German farmers' incomes.[24] These protective measures did not harmfully restrict overseas imports, but they did contribute significantly to the East European difficulties.

Italy was a more complex case. About one-quarter of Italy's imports and exports were agricultural products. But the exports were citrus fruit and wine, which enjoyed a higher price and better terms of trade. Imports were mostly grain. Italian grain production increased but not significantly. The failure of agricultural reform and the postwar inflation, however, exacerbated the contradictions between North and South and intensified the underdevelopment of the latter.[25]

In East European exporting countries, where even in the prewar period, the main road of agricultural advance was extensive development, the interwar market and price conditions in general stopped further expansion.

Between 1920-1923 the aim of reaching pre-war levels was helped by the inflation which on the one hand served as a protective barrier against imports because of monetary depreciation, and on the other hand, devalued all the farm incomes of landlords and peasants, and contributed to some kind of relative income shift. (General income level was still well below that of pre-war incomes.)

In spite of the fact that the main features of interwar agricultural development appeared later, some of these characteristics can be observed already during this period.

First of all the tremendous importance of labour due to rural overpopulation. Deprived of emigration possibilities and faced with postwar industrial bankruptcy (and later on with relatively slow industrial growth), the European economy could not use large amounts of labour. A couple of calculations are available, which presuming a French or European average agricultural productivity proves that between 25 and 50% of labour employed in East European agriculture were really not needed. The other side of the coin, the use of cheap labour for labour intensive crops (horticulture) became a tendency of the later years.

Second, the inability to recognize and to adapt themselves to new circumstances. Agricultural advancement was still supposed, as it had been before the World War, to depend on an expansion of the amount of arable land, which tended to preserve low yields and the onesided structure of cultivation. In this sense the years between 1918 and 1923 were those years when steps could still have been taken to avoid a structural crisis. While this did not happen, the one sided approach to the agricultural problem was certainly enough to overcome the production difficulties, but was inadequate to surmount the problem of new market and price relations. In this sense at the very moment when the prewar production level was reached, the structural crisis had to come to the surface.

Third, even if we suppose that the new tendencies and the approaching structural crisis had been recognized, did the East European states have sufficient means to prevent it?

We have seen that before the World War the economic growth of these countries was partly focused on agriculture. We do not yet have enough evidence either to maintain or to assume that capital was taken from agriculture and invested in other sectors (as it was, for instance, in Japan). It was not the case in Hungary, where a large amount of mortgage credits from the banks (outside and inside as well) went to agriculture. It is

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23. D. Petzina, *Grundniss der Deutschen Wirtschaftsgeschichte 1918-1945.*

24. Peasants made up 17% of prewar German population, with 13% in income. G. Castellan, *Zur Sozialen Bilanz der Prosperität 1924-1925.* H. Mommsen, D. Petzina, B. Weisbrod, *Industrielles System* (Düsseldorf, 1973).

25. *L'Economica italiana dal 1861 al 1964* (Milano, 1963).

rue that postwar inflation present in all the countries involved – devalued all former lebts, and thus gave tremendous support to the landowners and the farmers. It is also rue that agriculture might have taken advantage of the shortage of food, the unbalanced lomestic price system and the quasi monopoly situation. The fall in agricultural income vas surely less than that of those living on salaries. But, on the other hand, because of he shortage of capital, no agricultural credit was available. Thus, better price relations iad as much effect on rural consumption as on investment. Fertilizers or other means for land improvement and increasing yields were not available, since capital could not ie raised to introduce modern technology or mechanization into the agricultural sector.

Reparations, and inflation contributed to the fall of the stock of capital and in this sense they created a serious obstacle to eventual agricultural modernization.

Fourth, short term aims and long term strategy were contradictory in social as well as economic terms.

The balance of payments problem – a difficult one after the War – forced all countries:

1. to hasten the growth of traditional export goods, and
2. to avoid all shifts in agricultural production from export orientated to import orientated.

The tendency was to take advantage of the very high prices in the first postwar years, but this was only partly possible due to the slow recovery process.[26] The high prices also caused the agricultural sector to concentrate on traditional products. However, when this brought its first fruit, prices had started to fall, particularly in the traditional agricultural goods. A discrepancy might have been felt between crop prices and husbandry prices, no one had begun to cope with this situation.

Finally, the nationalist economic policy conceived by the East European countries; their onesided attempts to completely sever their former economic ties in order to go as far as practicable in establishing economic independence, had a one-sided effect on agriculture as well as industry.

Measures were contemplated – if still not introduced – which certainly helped to preserve the inefficient structure of national agriculture, and to impede any attempt to create a favourable regional specialization, which might have helped to overcome the structural crisis. (On the other hand, it led in former importing countries to an attempt to increase domestic production, including wheat).

The exclusive nationalistic character of these protective policies also prevented proper specialization between different countries so that national advantages and disadvantages tended to be neutralized in the same way as between different parts of the same country. National wheat farming, milk and butter production, or wine-growing were protected against competition from abroad even if domestic conditions for this kind of production were unfavourable. In no other field was economic nationalism such a striking success to the detriment of general European efficiency. Yet in no other field of comparable importance to Europe as a whole were natural conditions so different and the potential advantages of trade over national frontiers so great; not the least of these advantages could have been derived from increased exports from the east towards the west, and from the south towards the north of Europe. In a period when transport by road and the technique of canning and freezing were great innovations, the advantages of intra-European trade in agricultural products were increasing. These possibilities were, however, far from being exploited to the point which would have offered advantages for the European economy as a whole. The contrast with the enormous cross-country trans-

26. C.f., *Agricultural Production in Continental Europe during the 1914-1918 War and the Reconstruction Period* (Geneva, 1923).

port of grain, dairy products, fruit and vegetables within the wide United States market is striking.

From a productivity point of view, the protection of agriculture before the war thus suffered from a double weakness. On the one hand, it was never able to restore the prosperity of the farmer to a level which would have given a stimulus to rapid modernization. On the other hand, it prevented – by maintaining incomes derived from less efficient production – an increase in productivity through elimination or regional specialization.

Political change and national independence did not bring economic independence. The small states of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire became really dependent to a greater degree on international economic relations than the former Austro-Hungarian Empire a larger economic unit had been. This sort of dependence was certainly greater in agricultural countries with less possibilities to export a variety of products. None of the countries (including Germany and Italy) were really able to elaborate a programme to adjust their economies to the international possibilities. Little was done to raise agricultural production, to change its structure or to organize agricultural credit. The rise of industrial prices as a consequence of national economic policies that intended to accelerate industrialization, laid an actual burden upon agriculture. The years 1918-23 witnessed a slow recovery process, but one without radical social change or far sighted programmes which would have helped them to overcome the approaching structural crisis.

Résumé

Pour comprendre le caractère transitoire de l'état de l'agriculture, en Italie comme en Allemagne et dans l'Empire austro-hongrois, au cours de la période de 1917 à 1922, il convient d'en examiner l'évolution, avant comme après ces années tumultueuses.

Au cours des décennies précédant la première guerre mondiale, l'agriculture avait connu une modernisation relativement rapide, en Europe de l'Est comme en Europe occidentale. Toutefois, son importance quant à la production totale variait grandement d'un pays à l'autre: en Allemagne, par exemple, où la croissance industrielle se fit rapidement, l'importance relative de l'agriculture déclina radicalement, tandis qu'ailleurs elle conservait un rôle de premier plan, particulièrement en Hongrie, qui se classait parmi les plus grands exportateurs de produits agricoles. Cette période du développement économique des régions agricoles se caractérise, d'une part, par une forte croissance de la production, reposant avant tout sur des marchés extérieurs (principalement l'Autriche et l'Allemagne) et par la survivance d'importants éléments de féodalisme, d'autre part. Celui-ci subissait cependant un certain nombre de transformations, dues au passage du grand domaine féodal traditionnel à la grande propriété capitaliste.

La guerre fit subir un sérieux recul à l'agriculture européenne: insuffisance de la main-d'oeuvre masculine dans la production agricole, réquisition des chevaux par l'armée, diminution du cheptel, etc. Globalement, la production agricole baissa au point d'atteindre, au lendemain de la guerre, 50% du niveau de 1913. Cette baisse affecta différemment les pays touchés, selon leur structure économique et sociale. Dans les pays où la production agricole constituait l'élément le plus important du produit national, la chute de la production provoqua de fortes tensions sociales: les contradictions éclatèrent entre les classes aux intérêts opposés, de même qu'entre les objectifs économiques immédiats des gouvernements, visant à accroître rapidement le niveau de la production, et des demandes sociales telles que la distribution de terres aux paysans, la mise en place de structures sociales plus saines et une répartition plus équitable des revenus et des richesses.

Le système fondé sur la grande propriété seigneuriale demeura partiellement prédominant en Allemagne, de même qu'en Autriche, où les revendications en faveur de

éformes agraires n'occupaient pas le premier plan. En Italie, par contre, une telle éforme devint une des plus importantes préoccupations sociales. La Hongrie connut ne réforme très modérée, visant davantage à apaiser les paysans qu'à transformer la tructure sociale. Seule la Tchécoslovaquie procéda à une réforme plus globale, mais on pas radicale et, comme ailleurs, son adoption correspondait à des objectifs nationaux.

Au lendemain de la guerre, la situation du marché mondial, l'envahissement des roduits d'outre-mer et les mouvements de prix placèrent les régions agricoles dans une ituation nettement désavantageuse par rapport aux régions industrielles. En conséquence, es tentatives d'aplanir les difficultés causées par la guerre n'eurent pas d'effet perma- ent. Ni les marchés intérieurs, mieux protégés par des tarifs douaniers élevés, ni les narchés extérieurs ne créèrent un dynamisme économique capable de relancer la crois- ance de l'agriculture ou de faire en sorte que celle-ci contribue de manière importante la croissance à long terme de l'économie des pays étudiés.

Tableaux — Tables

Number of Cattle and Pigs
(in 1.000)

	Cattle						Pigs					
Year	Cz.	Pol.	Hun.	Rom.	Yug.	Bulg.	Cz.	Pol.	Hun.	Rom.	Yug.	Bulg.
1913*	4,608	8,664	2,150	—	—	—	1,294	5,487	3,322	—	—	—
1920	4,212	—	2,148	4,370	—	1,877	976	—	3,320	2,514	—	1,090
1921	4,377	—	—	5,521	4,960	—	986	—	—	3,132	3,373	—
1922	—	—	1,828	5,746	4,058	—	—	—	2,473	3,147	2,887	—
1923	—	—	1,819	5,549	3,870	—	—	—	2,133	2,925	2,497	—

*In the 1920 territory. Czechoslovakia 1910; Hungary 1911.

Average Yields (in quintal) hectare; 1909-1913 = 100*

	1909-1913	1920-1924		1909-1913	1920-1924	
	q/h	q/h	index	q/h	q/h	index
	Wheat			Rye		
Bulgaria	10.6	8.5	80.2	9.9	7.9	79.8
Czechoslovakia	15.0	14.7	98.0	14.7	13.8	93.9
Hungary	12.6	11.1	88.1	11.7	9.9	84.6
Yugoslavia	8.8	9.1	103.4	8.2	7.3	89.0
Poland	12.4	10.6	85.5	11.2	10.1	90.2
Romania	12.9	8.5	65.9	9.2	7.6	82.6
	Barley			Oats		
Bulgaria	10.7	8.7	81.3	7.7	7.0	90.9
Czechoslovakia	—	14.8	100.0	—	13.4	100.0
Hungary	13.6	10.4	76.5	12.8	9.9	77.3
Yugoslavia	10.0	7.7	77.0	6.9	7.7	111.6
Poland	11.8	11.6	98.3	10.2	11.3	110.8
Romania	10.2	7.9	77.5	9.4	8.0	85.1
	Maize			Potatoes		
Bulgaria	11.3	8.8	77.9	39.7	35.1	88.4
Czechoslovakia	15.0	16.2	108.0	90.0	98.1	109.0
Hungary	17.2	13.7	79.7	79.7	58.3	73.1
Yugoslavia	13.8	13.5	97.8	41.0	45.9	111.9
Poland	10.8	10.6	98.1	103.0	116.0	112.6
Romania	13.1	10.7	81.7	85.5	79.4	92.9
	Sugarbeet					
Bulgaria	181.7	129.7	71.4			
Czechoslovakia	260.0	238.4	91.7			
Hungary	246.0	172.0	69.9			
Yugoslavia	195.0	152.8	78.4			
Poland	255.0	193.4	75.8			
Romania	205.5	159.6	77.7			

*The Chechoslovak figures of 1909-1914 = Bohemia 1901-1910;
the Yugoslav figures of 1909-1913 = Serbian 1909-1914;
1909-1913 otherwise calculated in 1920 territory.

Les problèmes dans l'agriculture / Agrarian Problems

Discussion

V. Knapp. (SUNY-Potsdam) I have two questions. The first question deals with Hungary before 1914. You said that Hungary was exporting food prior to 1914, and I would like to know where that production was largely coming from, the estates or peasant plots? I think I know the answer to begin with, but I still would like to ask.

And secondly, you mentioned that after 1918, the emphasis was upon regaining 1914 levels of agricultural production. One of the solutions that was suggested was the redistribution of land. It's often thought that if the peasant plots could be increased, I presume this is the idea behind redistribution, that agricultural production would thereby be increased. Was that true? Was there a need for more land, would the need lay in the area of increasing the size of peasant plots for greater productivity, or did the answer lie in agricultural knowledge, that the peasants simply did not have sufficient knowledge of agronomy to increase production no matter what the size of their plots were?

G. Ranki. To the first question, you already gave the answer, or partially, because certainly the larger portion of export came from the large estates, particularly the wheat, etc.. But there was a new tendency, particularly after the turn of the century, to have a more commercialized peasant farm systems as well, particularly in husbandry and dairy products, etc.. Exact calculations are yet not available, but according to all the estimations, certainly the most important export quantities – wheat and grain – were coming from the large estates.

As for the second question, I think the problem is very complex. I wouldn't say that land distribution could have contributed very much in the inter-war period to the acceleration of productivity and of agricultural production. The question of land redistribution was not only a question of economics, but also a social problem. In the sense that by the distribution of land, even if the production had not been raised, their income distribution would have been much more equal, or rather more equal that had been the case.

Now concerning that problem of the peasants whether they had the knowledge to achieve a higher productivity. My answer would be yes and no. The illiteracy gate in Hungary was well below the level in Russia or in the Balkan countries. Among the Hungarians, before the First World War, there was only 20% illiteracy, and during the inter-war period, there was well below 10%. So in this sense, the general outlook of the Hungarian peasants was certainly better. The other question was whether the peasants had the means to produce more and cheaper. Did they have the money, did they have the credit? Between 1924 and 1929, for instance, Hungarian agriculture had access to some credits, more of course, for the large estates than for the peasants. According to our calculations about 15 or 20% of the so-called agricultural credit really went to improve land, to mechanization, to increase fertilization, etc.. A larger part went either to raise the consomption level or to permit the peasants to buy land because they didn't have enough. Of course, I am aware of the fact that in economic terms where you are buying land, this has some effects as well on the market, but certainly the agricultural credit, even if it was

not very high, was badly misused. So I think the question of agricultural credit was certainly more important concerning the productivity question than was the knowledge of the peasants at this itme.

L. Hertzman. I should like to ask Prof. Ranki to comment on the phenomenon of immigration from agricultural Europe. On the one hand, I wonder if he could comment about the immigration of peasants and farmers with capital, and on the other hand, of the other agricultural people who had no property or capital. In particular, to the four overseas areas, the four overseas producers that you mentioned.

G. Ranki. You must make a very strong distinction between the immigration problem in the pre-war and in the post-war periods. Because, in the pre-war period, the immigration problem was very important. I mentioned this in the case of Italy, but I should have mentioned it in the Austro-Hungarian case as well. For instance, between 1900 and 1914, over one million people left Hungary and went to the United States or a small part to Canada. They went mostly, according to the work which has been done on this problem, for only a couple of years in order to raise some money. There were, as I mentioned, almost four million labourers and even if the demand though industrialization had increased, the factories could not absorb all this labour force. They came for a couple of years and, since it helped the Hungarian balance of payments, the money sent back to Hungary was quite important: about one hundred million dollars was sent back every year by these immigrants. Some of the immigrants returned, particularly after 1907 when there was a kind of depression in the United States, and they bought some land, they became a kind of rich peasant, etc.. But a larger number remained in the United States and before the First World War that was a very important phenomenon, but after the First World War it almost ceased. There was a political immigration after the collapse of the revolution in the counter-revolutionary era, and there was in the 1920's a small amount of immigration of qualified workers and miners.

C. Wojatsek (History, Bishop's). I was interested in that part of the lecture in which Prof. Ranki dealt with the land reform in the successor states, especially in Czechoslovakia. The land reform in Czechoslovakia had a political meaning. The Czechoslovaks wanted to change the ethnic composition of the purely Hungarian region. In that sense, the land reform in Czechoslovakia was used for chauvinistic reasons, not to increase the agricultural production.

G. Ranki. I am partly in agreement with you because I mentioned that there was a nationalistic aim in this land reform. But if you are treating the question fairly, then you must take into consideration that one of the aims of these land reforms was to change somewhat the structure as well and not only to locate more Bohemian settlements and settlers in this area.

A. Liebich. In the light of the discussions which were held yesterday, how would you evaluate the revolutionary impact of the demands, the immediate short-term demands, of the European peasantry in the period from 1917-1922? In other words, how revolutionary was the peasantry in this immediate post-war period?

G. Ranki. I think in some way in 1918 almost everybody was revolutionary because almost everybody was looking for change. There was a war and there was an entire change of psychology. For instance, the Eastern European peasants who, before the war, had never left their local environment, their country, or their village, saw cities and new areas, and so there was a kind of profound psychological change. And then of course, there was a lot of demand, there was a lot of expectation. Concerning the immediate effect in March 1919 when the revolution took place, I think it was much more an urban phenomenon that a rural one. So I would say that there was a revolutionary movement. There was a revolutionary feeling for change, a feeling for the coming of a new life, a better life; but, without important social tension in the urban areas, without the leading effect of the urban intellectuals and the working class, this movement in itself was not a decisive factor in the advance of these years between 1917 and 1922. It came out quite clearly that after 1920-1921, in almost every country, except Hungary, peasant parties became very important, but they were not very revolutionary.

olitical Crisis and Partial Modernization: he Outcomes in Germany, Austria, Hungary, nd Italy after World War I

harles Maier

On March 1, 1919, Vittorio Emanuele Orlando told the Italian Chamber of Deputies hat a vague wave of unrest threatened European society "like a blind whirlwind of estruction and disordered violence."[1] Our task at this colloquium must be to search out he order that Orlando and many others could not perceive. I have construed my own andate for this workshop as one of suggesting a comparative analytical framework esigned to elicit discussion rather than one of offering a systematic political narrative or the countries under discussion. I thought further that my most useful contribution ould be to emphasize the structural or long-term characteristics that made it difficult o impose a social-revolutionary outcome upon the crisis created by World War I. It lso makes sense to overstep the strict chronological limitations of the conference; for he short-term crisis and the scope it permitted for change are revealingly illuminated by ollowing the longer-term fate of revolutionary initiatives. Hence it seems crucial to etermine not merely the limits of revolutionary change, but also the limits of counter-evolutionary success, or of liberal compromise. *The premise is that we must consider ot thwarted revolutions alone, but unsuccessful political solutions in general.* The very ifficulties or contradictions that lead to revolution often tend to doom the very revolutions hey produce. "Unsuccessful", of course, is a relative term: in important ways the German nd Austrian revolutions did succeed; they installed democratic republics that without he world depression of the early 1930's might well have survived. Still, both revolutions id fail to bring about the socialist transformations that many of their supporters originally ought; they also failed to inculcate a democratic spirit in wide masses of the population; nd finally they failed to disarm their future right-wing opponents. Thus we can at least onsider their limited successes fragile and ephemeral.

The following analysis relates the vulnerability of revolutionary outcomes as well s the tensions within pre-revolutionary regimes to long-term crises. This is not to claim hat each society would have faced upheaval without the exhaustion, privation, and nnuring to violence that developed during the First World War. It is to insist, however, hat each society would have had grave political difficulties without the war, indeed that he pressures within domestic structures probably contributed to the international pressures uilding up for war. Thus the causal model here relies less on the war – or upon the later ole of the Western allies – than does a full chronicle of events. It is useful to think of evolutionary situations arising when long-term structural difficulties of representation r fiscal viability are augmented by failures of legitimacy. The very concept of a revo-utionary situation is a thorny one; for a revolutionary situation can only be finally judged n a *post hoc* basis. Likewise, legitimacy is a condition that can be tested only after the act. Like Hegel's Owl of Minerva, the Mandate of Heaven is deemed to have departed fter the real world has darkened. Nonetheless, despite the perils of circular reasoning,

1. *Atti Parlamentari,* Camera dei Deputati: Discussioni, Legislatura XXIV, p. 18075.

it is hard to dispense with notions of legitimacy and revolutionary situations.[2] In the case of the historical circumstances under consideration here, the outcome of the war – whether outright defeat or frustrated, "mutilated" victory – became the major corrosive solvent of legitimacy. Claims of governance, staked upon military or diplomatic triumphs, emerged fundamentally discredited. Nonetheless, the outcome of the war and the international constellation have been treated fully already, especially by Arno Mayer, also by Roberto Vivarelli, in the sensitive older work for Germany by Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, and by many others.[3] It makes more sense here to reflect upon the longer-term difficulties, the political systems that the war and its outcome so fearfully burdened.

By the long-term crises, I mean to suggest a stalemate of political or social forces that preludes coherent policymaking or even just civic peace. For the countries considered here, it is useful to relate the stalemates to the notion of partial modernization. Modernization theory is often a methodological shambles.[4] Nonetheless, Germany, Italy, Austria, and to a lesser degree Hungary, were all characterized by the differential degree to which different social groups and areas of life had emerged out of traditionalist relations into the associative bonds conditioned by the capitalist marketplace, or by industrialization and urban growth. During World War I, Thorstein Veblen and Joseph Schumpeter pointed out such differential modernization in the German-speaking countries, where advances of technology and production had not yet eroded "atavistic" social ideals based upon military prowess.[5] In Italy, the labor and entrepreneurial organization of the hydroelectric age existed alongside the clientelistic fabric of the Bourbons. Hungary remained more of a traditionalist enclave that we can cite to establish a contrast, but Budapest and other centers still provided poles of modernization. In general, it was precisely the overlapping phases of national development that posed difficulties, both for those yearning for stability and those wagering on revolution.

In the last analysis revolutions arise as crises of representation. They are the upshot of a deficient system of political representation, whether monarchical, bureaucratic, or parliamentary; they signify that the usual methods of mediating among interests or considering the deep aspirations of social groups have failed. The revolutionary situations of 1917-1922, in particular, derived from ramshackle systems of representation that were seriously handicapped by the contradictory demands posed in societies partially traditionalist, partially modern.[6] The same contradictions, however, were to paralyze revolutionary initiatives and rightist responses as well. Coherent politics itself became impossible, leaving only the choice of superseding inadequate representation with force – or with a new use of the capitalist marketplace as a political surrogate.

1. *The Vulnerability of the Old Order*

In alternative formulations of the problem of representation, most analysts of revolution have suggested that major overturns in the legal order and the distribution

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2. For a recent exploration of the theme of legitimacy, see Jürgen Habermas, *The Legitimation Crisis of the State* (Boston, Beacon Press, 1975), pp. 68ff., 92-94, 95ff. But still see, Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (5th ed., Tübingen, 1972), pp. 16-17, 122-124.
3. Arno J. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking: Containment and Counter-revolution at Versailles, 1918-1919* (New York, 1967); Roberto Vivarelli, *Il dopoguerra in Italia e l'avvento del fascismo (1918-1922)*, I: *Dalle fine della guerra all'impresa di Fiume* (Naples, 1967); Albrecht Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, *The World War and German Society. The Testimony of a Liberal.* (New Haven, 1936).
4. A shambles, not because the great transitions from traditional to industrial society (Compte, Spencer), the advent of rationalization and bureaucratization (Weber), the replacement of ascriptive, particularistic, diffuse value orientations by functionally-specific and universal orientations (Parsons), or political mobilization (Deutsch) has not taken place, but because the criteria invoked have often failed to sort out the intellectual "interests" and ideologies of post World War II non-Marxists in the United States from more universal perspectives. For a reasoned, partially critical, partially receptive survey of the massive literature from the viewpoint of the historian, see Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Modernisierungstheorie und Geschichte* (Göttingen, 1975).
5. Thorstein Veblen, *Imperial Germany and the Industrial Revolution* (New York, 1915); Joseph Schumpeter, "Imperialism", in *Imperialism and Social Classes* (New York, 1955).
6. For concepts close to this, see Eugene N. Anderson and Pauline R. Anderson, *Political Institutions and Social Change in Continental Europe in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967), chapters VIII, X, and XI.

of privileges express a fundamental discordance between the state and civil society, to use the concepts of the left, or between the *pays légal* and the *pays réel*, to borrow the terms of the right. Naturally, many societies exist for centuries with great discrepancies between a ruling elite recruited on hereditary principles and a "common people" who challenge the political system only under the harshest duress of privation. The gulf between *pays légal* and *pays réel* threatens the legal order only when political mobilization follows disruption of a traditional economic order, the incursion of outside and more highly developed powers, or the actual mobilization of a national war. As Samuel Huntington has formalized earlier insights, when the pace of political mobilization outruns the capacity of the political system to provide new institutional cadres, a raw and often violent search for adequate representation often follows.[7]

Prolonged mass war is naturally a primary catalyst of such political upheaval. Peasant conscripts are uprooted from their fields, moved to remote frontiers, subjected to harsh discipline and danger, exhorted with civic rhetoric and sometimes (as was the case in Italy) with extravagant promises of the new order they would inherit upon victory. "Land to the peasants", for instance, was not solely a Leninist slogan, but one of Italian nationalist propagandists as well.[8] At the same time, the steady toll of casualties, the economic privation at home, the discrepancy between official war aims and the reality of a turnip winter, scarce fuel, inflation and the black market, acts as a political education. In the Habsburg realms all the social frictions were compounded by the chronic national tensions. The Magyar ruling elite might stake its fate on the alliance with the German ruling class – "The monarchy lives and will endure," Stephen Tisza insisted as late as September 1918 – but Yugoslavs and Czechs, above all, were working to destroy that illusion.[9]

Even before and even without national confrontations, however, grave social crises beset the countries under discussion and exposed the inadequacy of representative institutions. The most conspicuous troublesome force was the organized working class, especially the socialist parties of Central Europe and Italy. In the 1912 elections in Germany, the Social Democrats won more than one quarter of the Reichstag seats even while the sharply skewed three-class suffrage in Prussia restricted their strength to a handful in the critical Prussian Landtag. In Austria, the so-called *kaiserliche und königliche* Social Democratic Party was regarded as a less menacing political formation; for if it had an imposing organization, under Viktor Adler, Otto Bauer and Karl Renner, it remained loyal to the basic Viennese mission within the Harbsburg realms. Indeed, Karl Renner's version of Austro-Marxism, it has been suggested, amounted to using the Emperor to subdue the Magyar magnates.[10] The Italian Socialist Party had yet to reach its impressive strength of 1919-1920; nonetheless, with the prevailing precariousness of public order in Italy (as in its Mediterranean analogue, Spain), any socialist threat seemed alarming. Even in Hungary, the Socialists were increasing strength in a rapidly growing and industrializing Budapest, although ideologically they incorporated many different currents that lacked a revolutionary focus.

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7. Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven and London, 1968), chapters 4 and 5. I have formulated similar concepts in a paper presented to the Research Institute for International Change of Columbia University in a conference program during spring 1975: "Beyond Revolution? Resistance and Vulnerability to Radicalism in Advanced Western Societies", to be published during 1977.
8. See Antonio Papa, "Guerra e Terra, 1915-1918", *Studi Storici* X, 1 (1969), pp. 3-45; cf. Luigi Einaudi, *La condotta economica e gli effetti sociali della guerra italiana* (Bari and New Haven, 1933); also Arrigo Serpieri, *La guerra e le classi rurali italiane* (Bari and New Haven, 1930).
9. Cited in Oscar Jaszi, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Hungary* (London, 1924), p. 4.
10. The comment is Seton Watson's, cited in A.J.P. Taylor, *The Habsburg Monarchy 1809-1918* (London, 1948), p. 205. For the Austrian Socialists see Adam Wandruszka, "Osterreichs politische Struktur. Die Entwicklung der Parteien und politischen Bewegungen", in Heinrich Benedikt, ed., *Geschichte der Republik Osterreich* (Vienna, 1954), pp. 426ff.; also Hans Mommsen, *Die Sozialdemokratie une die Nationalitätenfrage im Habsburgischen Vielvölkerstaat* (Vienna, Europa-Verlag, 1963), pp. 299ff., 313ff., 327-228, 357-360. On the German Socialists the most useful work in English is still Carl Schorske, *The German Social Democratic Party, 1905-1917* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955); and for Italy, see G. Arfé, *Storia del socialismo italiano, 1892-1926* (Turin, 1965).

Yet the growth and power of the socialist parties represented only one aspect of the problem of incorporating or integrating the urban working class into a working system of political brokerage and mediation. Socialist Party strength did appear alarming – especially in the Wilhelmian Reich, where anti-socialism (along with imperialism) was diligently cultivated as the only political doctrine that might unify a majority sufficient to govern the awkward Prussian-German dualist institutions. But socialist weakness was at least as much a threat to the containment of conflict and disorder as socialist strength; for the working class seemed almost to outrun Socialist, and certainly reformist Socialist discipline. As war approached and the hothouse economic growth of 1901-1913 was punctuated by recession and expansion, the European proletariat grew more volatile, more prone to radical or syndicalist appeals. The German record of economic growth needs no elaboration here, but it should be recalled that Italian industrial development leapt forward during the Giolittian period as pig iron tonnage climbed from 24,000 tons in 1900 to 427,000 in 1913, steel from 116,000 tons in 1900 to 934,000 in 1913, and kilowatt hour production increased ten-fold.[11] Likewise in the decades before World War I Austria had become sixth in the world production of pig iron (though steel lagged); coal output had quadrupled since 1870; machine production had more than quadrupled since 1890 and metal working in general had achieved almost as great an expansion.[12] Under certain conditions economic growth facilitates stability, as in the 1950's; but the rapid expansion from Hamburg to Genoa before 1914 was more destabilizing because of its uneven distribution and the restricted diffusion of its rewards. The result was that Social Democratic policies oscillated wildly: the parties because forums of conflict between reformists who controlled solid trade-union bases, whether in textiles or traditional heavy industry, and new syndicalists and radicals, who were making important inroads among the intellectual leadership or in the heavy industries springing up around the metropolises. Nor was the task of integration made easier for the reformists by the resolute opposition they encountered from conservative bourgeois forces. The European Right did not really want the integration of labor; it repulsed social-democratic moderates by pursuing nationalist and militarist prescriptions, then by seeking block-like confrontations of Rights against Left, finally by trying to halt the expansion of the suffrage.[13]

Only in Italy, where the removal of literacy requirements proposed in 1911 seemed destined to give the vote to a mass of quiescent peasantry, did the ruling elites easily concede universal male suffrage.[14] True enough, in Austria the dynasty instituted a broad suffrage in 1906 – in part because it sought to impose one in Hungary to curb the Magyars who resisted the German-language privileges of the army, in part because the Christian Socialists and even the Social Democrats seemed more loyal to the dynasty than the liberals, and finally because the Austrian parliament could be bypassed no matter how it was elected. Yet where suffrage reform would have counted more – in Hungary – the Emperor retreated and traded real change for a Hungarian concession on the army issue. As late as 1917, the Hungarian left had to plead with the Emperor to force though universal suffrage against the diehard opposition of the oligarchs.[15] Likewise in Prussia,

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11. Rosario Romeo, *Breve storia della grande industria in Italia* (Rocca San Casciano, 1963), tables pp. 203ff.
12. See Richard L. Rudolph, "Quantitative Aspekte der Industrialisierung in Cisleithanien 1848-1914", in Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch, general eds., *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918:* Band I, *Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung*, Alois Brussatti, ed. (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1973), pp. 233-249, and in the same volume, Nachum Th. Gross, "Die Stellung der Habsburgermonarchie in der Weltwirtschaft", esp. 14-28; and Herbert Matis and Karl Bachinger, "Österreichs industrielle Entwicklung", pp. 105-232, for a general survey.
13. See Charles S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe: Stabilization in France, Germany, and Italy in the Decade after World War I* (Princeton, N.J., 1975), pp. 22-39.
14. Giampiero Carocci, *Giolitti e l'età giolittiana* (Turin, 1961), pp. 138ff.; Brunello Vigezzi, "Il suffragio universale e la 'crisi' del liberalismo in Italia (dicembre 1913 – aprile 1914)", *Nuova Rivista Storica*, 48, 5-6 (1964), pp. 529-570.
15. C.A. Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire 1790-1918* (New York, Macmillan, 1969), pp. 758ff. Robert A. Kann, *Die Nationalitätenproblem der Habsburgermonarchie* (2nd ed., 2 vols., Graz-Köln, 1964), 1. Bd., pp. 135-138, 2. Bd., pp. 225-232. (This is a revised translation of the author's book, *The Multinational Empire 1848-1918* (2 vols., New York, 1950), Joseph Redlich, *Austrian War Government* (New Haven, 1929), pp. 40-41. Oscar Jaszi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1929), pp. 360-364.

the three-class suffrage was transformed only during the Max von Baden government in October 1918, and the Prussian House of Peers was still debating the reform as the revolution swept away their electoral bulwark.[16] Thus throughout middle Europe, resistance from the privileged strata above joined the turbulent pressures from labor below to set confining limits to democratic reforms. The consequence was that the major social forces of an urbanized society were only haltingly worked into an adequate structure of representation.

At this point, however, we must clearly confront the ambiguity inherent in the concept of representation. Did the real difficulty for an adequate representation of interests consist of a limited suffrage? Or did it not rather derive from the fact that the demands posed by working-class organizations simply exceeded the willingness of those who held power to make sufficient concessions? True enough, where introduction of a broad suffrage seemed blocked, the issue of voting rights itself became a major claim of working-class parties, namely in Germany and the Habsburg realms where political democratization was an urgent demand. But working-class aspirations and bourgeois concepts of good social order were hard to reconcile even where democratic suffrages existed: witness British difficulties in the years before 1914. And at the very moment the suffrage was widened in Italy (albeit primarily for the benefit of the peasantry), the Socialist Party embarked upon a course of radicalization. To a great degree, therefore, the crisis of representation arose not merely because aspirations were not voiced, but became they could not be granted within a system of parliamentary liberalism or bureaucratic brokerage.

Is it legitimate to term this a crisis of representation? I would argue yes, because most political and economic participants ask more than the mere opportunity to voice their demands. When claimants demand responsiveness or representation they usually envisage a substantive outcome in their favor and not merely a hearing. Without the expectation that a given mode of bargaining will yield at least partial victories some of the time, the procedural mode of bargaining seems flawed and unjust. Thus a system of registering claims that is not simultaneously a system of mediating or partially granting claims is inadequate as a system of representation, at least in the sense used here. Contrary to the juridical postulates of continental liberalism as of 1900, the score of the game had eventually to affect the rules of the game. Thus even where broad suffrages and parliamentary government existed (and both remained under grave handicaps in Central Europe), a crisis of representation was possible. It was certainly probable in the countries considered here, where both lagging parliamentary government and the rivalry of major social groups with mutually exclusive aspirations made compromise political and economic settlements agonizingly difficult.

Less dramatic but even more intractible than the challenges presented by the urban proletariat were those arising in the countryside. In partially modernized societies, the agrarian sector remained decisive; and as a key elite, the major landowners gravely handicapped democratic development. Their continuing power depended upon the maintenance of high grain tariffs, often preserved in coalition with the most conservative segments of the business communities. Bismarck's original alignment of rye and iron survived the political challenge of the early 1890s to be reinstituted under Chancellor Bülow at the turn of the century. In Italy, neither conservatives such as Sonnino nor democratic liberals such as Giolitti could dispense with the electoral solidity provided by a clientelistic South. Thus even as Giolitti sought to open his coalition to the Left in the North, he appeased the *Latifondisti* and the vote they controlled.[17] In Hungary, the old gentry, regrouped under the Tisza dynasty, exploited dualism to emerge as a class

16. Cf. Reinhard Patemann, *Der Kampf um die preussische Wahlreform im ersten Weltkrieg* (Düsseldorf, 1964).
17. For the Italian situation, cf. Carocci, *Giolitti e l'età giolittiana;* for the German: Hans-Jürgen Puhle, *Agrarische Interessenpolitik und preussischer Konservatismus im wilhelminischen Reich 1893-1914* (Hannover, 1974); Hans Rosenberg, *Grosse Depression und Bismarckzeit* (Berlin, De Gruyter, 1967), chap. 5. Cf. also the paper by Peter Gourevitch, "International Trade, Domestic Coalitions, and Liberty: Comparative Responses to the Great Depression of 1873-1896", in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (August 1977).

of office-holders (instead of county bosses) ready to challenge any reform that might give the 'non-historical' nationalities a crack at the civil service. And while the magnates ceded political preeminence, they nonetheless increased their control of Hungary's farmland, forcing the urban classes of the Dual Monarchy to consume dear bread by virtue of the decennial tariff, and virtually restoring a *de facto* serfdom by the agrarian labor act of 1907. The cost was highest for the masses on the land. Proportionally, Hungary lost more emigrants in the decade before the war than any other European country; and for her 2,8 million agricultural holdings, six sevenths comprised less than a third of the arable land, while a mere 4,000 large estates claimed another third, and this not counting the vast forested domains. The mass of small and wretched peasants would be especially vulnerable when the trading unity of the Danube regions splintered after 1918 and agricultural prices collapsed, making Hungary the forelorn land of "three million beggars".[18]

Consider, then, the difficulties for an effective representation and mediation of interests that arose because of the harsh contrasts of the countryside. The diehard forces of the Right included in Italy *latifondisti* of the South, or bitterly anti-labor landlords of the Po Valley – the newer agrarian capitalists often harsher than the old paternalist nobility – and to the North, Prussian Junkers and Magyar landlords remained entrenched by virtue of tariff protection and their respective rigged suffrages.

The continuing influence of the agrarian elites contributed conversely to the continuing subjection of the working classes on the land, with their misery further handicapping an evolutionary adjustment of institutions. Agricultural labor (as distinct from a peasantry) remained important in East Elbia and the Po Valley. In the Prussian East it presented no political threat, with the exception of the post-revolutionary months of 1918-1919, when influential Junkers contemplated secession from Berlin rather allowing the SPD to propagate among their tenants. The landlords of the Po Valley had enjoyed less pliable a workforce and, in turn, organized a harsh resistance against the imposing agricultural labor unions, mobilized as early as 1902, and to culminate in the Fascist squads of 1920-22.[19]

Nor were landlords and laborers the only source of potential strife. Sharecroppers and dwarfholders also posed deep problems. Peasants of the Mezzogiorno waged a stubborn jacquerie in the 1860's, the 1890's and again in 1919-1920.[20] In the North of Europe the relatively precarious peasantry would gravitate toward right-radical solutions when farm prices dropped. Adequate capitalization remained difficult; and even when possible, high indebtedness and falling prices made farming a persistent theatre of distress. Whether landless laborers or beleaguered dwarfholders, the agrarian population could be reconciled to a liberal capitalist representative system only with difficulty, if at all. That left the middle-range peasantry of northwest Germany, or Bavaria and German Austria. Their freeholds formed a healthier economic base than the miniscule properties in Hungary or South Italy; eventually their "populism" might have become a buttress of a democratic order and they could have followed a democratic trajectory, as had the peasantry of the Third Republic. But they were never de-Catholicized; their political loyalties remained traditionalist at best and certainly not liberal; and under the circumstances of defeat, inflation, and later depression, they were destined to remain counter-revolutionary.[21]

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18. C.A. Macartney, *October Fifteenth: A History of Modern Hungary 1929-1945* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1956), pp. 66-68. Cf. also, Jaszi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*, pp. 298-337, and Jaszi, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Hungary*, pp. 6-7; Ivan T. Berend and György Ranki, "Ungarns wirtschaftliche Entwicklung 1849-1918", in *Die Habsburgermonarchie*, Band I, pp. 487-499, 523-524; Peter Hanak, "A Hundred Years of Ausgleich", *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, VIII, Nr. 27 (autumn 1967), pp. 23ff.
19. See Renato Zangheri, *Lotte agrarie in Italia: La Federazione dei Lavoratori della Terra 1901-1926* (Milan, 1960); Luigi Preti, *Le lotte agrarie nella Valle Padana* (Turin, 1955); Anthony Cardoza, "Agrarian Elites and the Origins of Italian Fascism: The Province of Bologna, 1901-1926", (Diss., Princeton, 1976), among other titles.
20. For the problems of the South see Friedrich Vöchting, *Die italienische Südfrage* (Berlin, 1951).
21. For a classic case study, Rudolf Heberle, *From Democracy to Nazism: A Regional Case Study on Political Parties in Germany* (Baton Rouge, La., 1945).

To summarize, then, the major social forces remained in profound transformation. The urban working class developed imposing unions and parties but oscillated uneasily between reformism and radicalism. In the countryside the very backwardness of the working population threatened social order, first because of the dangers of peasant radicalism, second because of the opportunities for continuing landlord domination on the national level as well as local. The opportunities for clientele politics, patronage, Hungarian "electoral geometry," bypassing parliament on great issues of military and foreign policy (whether the Austro-Hungarian issue of 1905-06, or the Italian entry into war a decade later) and the persistence of manipulated suffrages – all these retrograde influences hindered the adjustment of bureaucratic or parliamentary forms to social development. In short, the quasi-liberalism of each country was already under grave tension without the strains of war.[22]

2. *The Failure of the Revolutionary Forces*

As we know from 1848, 1918, and many other junctures, revolutionary situations do not guarantee revolutionary outcomes. The talent of the revolutionary leader lies in judging which situations are indeed revolutionary, or indeed in making them revolutionary by destroying the minimal consensus that any given level of institutional mediation demands. Lenin was supremely gifted in this regard; on the other hand, for the socialist or democratic legatees of power in 1918, the revolutionary outcome was not really desired. And not only the embarrassed moderates of 1918, but the radicals failed to resolve the underlying difficulties of a new representative order. Most of them were unprepared to impose governance and social change by force; on the other hand, where could they find an enduring basis for representational consensus?

The major institutional innovation suggested by the left was that of "councils". The established forces of the Left, especially in Germany, deeply distrusted the councils and labelled them as Bolshevik. In fact, the studies by Kolb, Oertzen and Carstens indicate that most of the council movement incorporated a deep, albeit improvised, thrust for representative and democratic institutions and the management of the immediate problems of demobilization.[23]

The alternative between council rule and elected legislatures, which all bourgeois spokesmen and many social democrats posed as fundamental, probably did not appear so mutually exclusive to the council enthusiasts. The debates and the vote at the Berlin Congress of *Räte* in mid-December, which stipulated that a constituent assembly would be summoned by genuine elections, was a fateful decision; but many who supported it felt the councils and the constituent assembly were complementary, not antagonistic.[24] The leftwing of the Independent Socialists feared the outcome, but they did not control a

22. As an aside it might well be pointed out that similar deficiencies marked the American polity: a labor-force with inadequate political representation, the persistence of extensive clientelism, a South that retained peonage and a one-party rule as complete as East Elbia or Hungary. Why, then, no equivalent structural burdens on American liberalism? The question must be answered if the analysis offered here is to retain validity. Several responses seem appropriate. First, there was no challenge after the 1890's to the racist entrenchment in the American South. The national forces of reform concentrated only on urban ills or the larger farmholds – even enlisting the Southern ruling groups for their electoral coalitions. Second, ethnic conflicts were divorced from a territorial base and never appeared as challenges to a basically Anglo-Saxon national awareness. (The exception –admittedly important – was on the urban level; but the urban contests did not destroy national consensus.) Third, the conflicts between executive and parliament that still afflicted continental liberalism represented no problem at all in the United States: the state was a minor machine for the usufruct of broad coalitions, not a major bureaucratic-military presence with its own claims to press against the forces of civil society.

23. Francis L. Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe 1918-1919* (London, 1972), esp. chaps. 2, 4-7; Eberhard Kolb, *Die Arbeiterräte in der deutschen Innenpolitik 1918-1919* (Düsseldorf, Droste, 1962); Peter von Oertzen, *Betriebsräte in der Novemberrevolution* (Düsseldorf, 1963).

24. Besides the above, see Richard Müller, *Vom Kaiserreich zur Republik* (2 vols., Berlin, 1924-1925), II, pp. 214-216; Erich Matthias and Suzanne Miller, eds., *Die Regierung der Volksbeauftragten. Quellen zur Geschichte des Parlamentarismus und der politischen Parteien* (Düsseldorf, 1966), I. Reihe, VI/1, 1xxx-1xxxi, cvii-cviiii; *Allgemeiner Kongress der Arbeiter– und Soldatenräte Deutschlands vom 16. bis 21. Dezember 1918 ... Stenographische Berichte* (Berlin, 1919), pp. 105-142.

majority. An analogous renunciation of council power came in Austria at the Conference of *Räte* in Vienna on March 1, 1919, called on demand of the Linz workers' counsels. At this meeting Friedrich Adler, the assassin of Baron von Stürgkh and darling of the Left, invited the Communists to joint the hitherto socialist-dominated *Räte,* and to transform the councils into a working-class parliament, with deputies elected, and not appointed by virtue of party membership. This invitation was to mean cooptation into a reformist phalanx, which quickly limited any major left wing challenge to the moderating function of the Austrian *Räte* movement. (Likewise Julius Deutsch integrated the troublesome Red Guard into the new *Volksarmee* and utilized the military councils as disciplinary bodies).[25]

These developments indicated that the council movement itself was not of any dogmatic piece; most adherents were advocates of a fundamental democratization and only a few really envisioned a proletarian dictatorship. Unfortunately, curtailing their supposed Bolshevik functions usually entailed emasculating their democratic role. The more radical or vanguard role of Councils remained confined to three situations where success was unpromising: in Munich, which was surrounded by a "white" hinterland; in Hungary where the councils were the instrument of a brief proletarian dictatorship and likewise rested on an insufficient base either of popular appeal or of adequate force; and finally in Italy where they remained a Gramscian project in Turin: more cells of a future utopia than a real revolutionary potential.

As the Turin *consigli di fabbriche* of 1920, the Ruhr workers' councils of the spring of 1919, and the Austrian workers' councils all indicated, the *Räte* were intended as nuclei for transforming the economic order as well as the political. From workers' councils the emphasis passed to factory councils: in contrast to the former, the latter were instituted less to claim political rule than to seize economic hegemony. For many on the Left this difference was not significant, since the productive order was primary. The theory of "Bonapartism", or of the continuing counter-revolutionary vitality of the bourgeois state *per se*, would be developed only as a painful lesson learned in the wake of Fascism. For Gramsci in Turin the councils were to make of the factory a revolutionary fatherland *in nuce*; for Max Adler, the democracy they incarnated promised a political and economic transformation simultaneously; likewise for German *Räte* enthusiasts, factory councils appeared a rainbow-bridge to general socialism and not merely a way of changing authority relations in the plant.[26] Nonetheless, despite the messiaic hopes lavished on factory councils in 1919, it was clear that moderates and relative conservatives might channel workers' control into a workplace cooptation that fell far short of its founders' hopes. Thus when the SPD leadership agreed to "anchor" the councils in the Constitution after the Ruhr turmoil and Berlin strikes of March 1919, they initiated almost a year of negotiation out of which the councils emerged with clearly circumscribed representational rights: the most contested being the prerogative to examine company ledgers. Hard-fought though this gain might seem, was it likely that trade union CPA's would serve as the vanguard of revolution?[22] Although the Turin leadership, forced the CGL as a whole to take up the cause of the councils at the time of the Occupation of the Factories in September 1920, the national labor leadership settled for the promise of mild legislation for workers control somewhat on the German model. By the end of its trajectory, moreover, the council idea became the property of corporatist and right-wing socialists or bourgeois "planning" advocates, who transformed the idea of workers' delegations into boards incorporating management and labor and perhaps state representatives together on a parity basis. At the end of the revolutionary enthusiasm thus lay the very conservative and manipulative notion of "industrial relations".

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25. Carsten, *Revolution,* pp. 101-112; Charles A. Gulick, *Austria from Habsburg to Hitler* (2 vols., Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1948), I, pp. 72ff., 148; Otto Bauer, *The Austrian Revolution* (London, 1925), chap- X, pp 137-145; L. Jedlika, *Ein Heer im Schatten der Parteien. Die militärpolitische Lage Österreichs 1918-1938* (Graz and Cologne, 1955), pp. 9-15.
26. For Turin, Paolo Spriano, *Torino operaia nella grande guerra (1914-1918)* (Turin, 1960), pp. 297 ff., cf. Antonio Gramsci, *L'Ordine Nuovo* (Turin, 1955), pp. 123-135, 176-186; Max Adler, *Démocratie et conseils ouvriers,* Yvon Bourdet, ed. and trans. (Paris, 1967); discussion and further citations in Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe,* pp. 138-150.

Thus the councils could not serve as a durable answer to the problems of representation; except where briefly supported by dissident populist peasants, as in Bavaria, they became increasingly confined to urban centers. Even there, they were caught between radical designs and cooptive reality, between legislative claims and plant jurisdiction. But if the alternative to the councils was to be mere parliamentary pluralism and a reliance on socialist party strength, then the democratic conquests of 1918-1919 would be vulnerable to the shifting moods of a non-socialist electorate and to the power retained by the bureaucratic, military, or economic elites that pluralist institutions left in being.

In fact, socialists sought to enhance pluralist or party power by a policy of territorial reboubts and economic enclaves. By 1919-1920 they pushed for socialization measures in Germany, Italy, Austria, and France and England, too, not merely for the sake of an ultimately socialist society, but just to reduce the economic bases of bourgeois strength. These efforts largely failed, however: frustrated in England during the 1919 controversy over coal socialization, in France with the 1920 defeat of railroad nationalization plans, in Austria and Hungary with the failure of land reform and the fiasco of the Alpine-Montan Gesellschaft, in Germany with the 1920-1921 inability to socialize the coal industry. Socialist efforts to secure regional supremacy looked toward the same end: power in Emilia Romagna, Munich, the Ruhr, and more durably in Vienna or Berlin would permit local experiments in profundly altering labor relations, as in Italy, or in instituting welfare are municipal services, as in Prussian and Vienna. But socialism in one province proved difficult to maintain. It often set the socialist leaders within the region at odds with members outside, as was the case in Turin and Bologna. It certainly made the conservative forces of the country look on the socialist regions as sink-holes of corruption, as in Germany. Finally it over-estimated the political autonomy that the political stronghold might retain against outside incursion or against the central government. The counter-reaction against socialist strongholds began with the fascist assault on the socialist organizations of Venezia, Giulia, Bologna, Ferrara and Mantua in late 1920 – an attack abetted by the government's willingness to suspend elected town councils dominated by the Socialists – continued with von Papen's reduction of the Prussian State government in July 1932, and culminated with the Battle for Vienna in Fabruary 1934: a sequence that might also be said to have put an end to a line of Socialist strategy beginning with the Paris Commune of 1870.[27]

If, then, pluralism was a precarious victory, if economic or territorial strongholds could not be durably held, what then was left for the socialist forces? Ultimately their most durable victories for the working class were dependent upon negotiations outside the political arena and in the marketplace. The social achievements they secured were achieved through compacts with their economic antagonists directly. The major labor victory of the German Revolution was the eight-hour day and the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* agreements connected with it. The major victory of the Austrian working class was the formal decision to index wages, which industry and labor representatives agreed on in November 1919. In an era of inflation this amounted to a form of labor-management cooperation at the expense of the urban middle classes.[28] In its own way, the index wage symbolized the political achievement of the Austrian labor movement as validly as the Karl Marx Hof. Unfortunately for the working class, however, the gains of inflation and high employment remained vulnerable to the business cycle. (But, then, the Karl Marx Hof was not indestructable either.) Labor victories in the Italian countryside – the Bianchi arbitration and the Paglia-Caldo labor contract of 1920 – represented similar achievements. To be sure, none of these direct contracts would necessarily last longer than the socialists' parliamentary power. Still, they indicated the most promising future tack of the working-class movement. To see their ultimate significance we must, however, first look at the achievements of the Right.

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27. I have borrowed from my account in *Ibid.*, chap. 3.
28. Cf. Gulick, *Austria*, I, pp. 150-171; Emil Lederer "Die soziale Krise in Österreich", *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, 48 (1920-21), p. 687; J. van Walré de Bordes, *The Austrian Crown* (London, 1924), on the inflation; and Gustav Ortruba, "Bauer und Arbeiter in der Ersten Republik", in Gerhard Botz, et. al., *Geschichte und Gesellschaft. Festschrift für Karl Stadler* (Linz, 1974), pp. 57-98, on general economic conditions of labor and peasantry.

3. *The Fate of Counter-Revolution*

By mid 1920 the radical forces in Europe had spent themselves. The defeat of the Bolsheviks before Warsaw was parallelled by domestic setbacks for the Left in each of the countries under consideration. In the case of Hungary the counter-revolution was initially brutal and harsh; if we add pogroms and anti-semitic lynchings to the methods of Colonel Pinochet, we might envisage the quality of regime that was imposed. As Oskar Jaszi remarked, however, Hungary offered the social structure that could support a Horthy, in contrast to Germany, where his analogue Kapp, collapsed ignominiously.[29] In the rump Magyar state where Béla Kun's power had depended upon the bankruptcy of Hungary's "Wilsonians" in the face of the Entente, revolution had been almost artificially extended and was further undermined by the tactical errors of the ephemeral regime. The Károlyi and Kun regimes had not had the will or time to tackle the land question. While Bela Kun nationalized urban enterprises, he moved to collectivize, not to partition, the great estates: a change that was more nominal than effective.[30] The Horthy government was unlikely to solve the ulcerating language issue – rendered even worse after 1919, since Trianon Hungary incorporated a larger propertion of great estates and entailed domains than did the old crownland of St. Stephen. The major party to emerge from the parliamentary elections of January and June 1920 was Szabo's United Agrarian Laborers' and Smallholder Party; but this group was far less radical than its name implied, fixed primarily on preventing a Habsburg restoration. In the wake of King Charles' March into Hungary at Easter of 1921, the Smallholders agreed to join a United Party under the control of Horthy's rightist premier, Istvan Bethlen. In a superb piece of reactionary *trasformismo*, Bethlen won socialist tolerance, and secured the hegemony of the old ruling class with a new franchise decree, thus trading the simulacrum of Habsburg legitimacy for the substance of conservative hegemony. The only powerful force for dissent which might later arise was that of the right-radical army groups and quasi-fascist secret societies loosely grouped under Julius Gömbös. Consequently Hungary recovered a government that corresponded with the real division of social forces in the country, but only at the cost of an authoritarian freezing of the afflictions that beset the nation. In a perverse sense, the Horthly-Bethlen regime represented an effective answer to the problem of representation but only at the cost of perpetuating misery and backwardness.[31] A society that was less agrarian, less insulated from its neighbors, and less the repository of a dispossessed military and bureaucracy could not have indulged in so pure a reactionary enterprise.

In Germany and Austria, in fact, the upshot of the postwar crisis was political stalemate. The Kappist solution proved impossible for the German Right, and was quickly recognized as quixotic by the mainstream conservative forces. On the other hand, the Social Democrats could not easily preserve their influence over the government in the wake of the 1920 electoral setbacks. Nor could they simply be overriden within the limitations set by the parliamentary regime. Consequently even governments of the center and Right were forced to respect the social achievements of 1918 until economic distress eroded the trade-union strength that in the last analysis, was the foundation of social-democratic influence. Then, as at the end of 1923 or during the Great Depression, the conservative forces could extract concessions: the first time around, partial and reversible, the second time, total and irrevocable. Short of catastrophe, the German Republic generally settled into that situation Otto Kirchheimer trenchantly described when he said that the Right enjoyed social but lacked political guarantees, while the Left had the political and lacked the social.[32]

In Austria the political line-up was simplified: there the Catholics did not mediate between conservatives and socialists but were the conservatives. This situation approxi-

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29. Jaszi, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 48.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-85; also Istvan Deak, "Budapest and the Hungarian Revolution of 1918-1919", *Slavonic and East European Review*, xlvi, no. 106 (1968), pp. 129-140.
31. Macartney, *October Fifteenth*, I, pp. 27-36 on the Right and Gömbös, pp. 36-45 on Bethlen.
32. Otto Kirchheimer, "Weimar und Was Dann? Analyse einer Verfassung", (1930), now in: *Politik und Verfassung* (Frankfurt/Main, 1964), p. 15.

mated that of Bavaria, and in both Danubian, Catholic, freehold regions. the farmers became mainstays of resistance to the metropolises by virtue of their most characteristic formations, the *Einwohnerwehren* and *Heimwehr*.[33] By the summer of 1920, the Socialists in Austria, like their comrades in Germany, resigned from the coalition in which they had participated since early 1919 with the Christian Socials. The Christian Socials were unprepared for power at that point and a caretaker coalition cabinet under Michel Mayr prepared for elections in October that saw the Social Democrats drop from 41 to 36 per cent, and the Christian Socials increase from 36 to 42. But the real hegemony of the Christian Socials and the final confinement of the Socialists to their urban constituencies had to wait for Chancellor Seipel's negotiation of the Geneva Accords in November 1922. These stabilized the Austrian crown and temporarily removed economic policy from the purview of parliament. In both Austria and Germany, a year later, the price of winning domestic and foreign bourgeois support for monetary stabilization entailed decisive setback for the working class parties. Still, both nations persisted with political divisions that accurately mirrored the basic popular differences. Life the Left, the Right, too, could secure only partial victories so long as it did not completely renounce parliamentary means.[34]

Fascist Italy, in fact, suggested that the Right might well renounce parliamentary constraints when sufficiently aroused against leftwing claims (one cannot accurately say leftwing power). Italy, also, was too far along the road to industrialization and modernity, especially in the North (which, after all, was the arena for the fascist movement) to permit a Hungarian solution. The forces behind Mussolini did indeed have to resort to extra-parliamentary constraint to overcome the demands of the Socialists and Popolari; on the other hand, they could not rule entirely on the basis of counter-revolutionary violence but had to devise corporatist means of representing economic constituencies in policymaking. Italian Corporativism was in part a sham; but the very effort indicated that the revolt of the Right in a country that had undergone at least partial modernization required a new form of dictatorship.[35]

Let us draw these strands together. What the examples suggest in different ways is that the Right could not evade the difficulties of representation any more easily than the Left. If the four societies retained too many pre-modern elements for a victory of social democracy – such elements including pervasive military values, middle-class preoccupations with privileged status, peasant distrust of the city and urban market – so likewise (outside Hungary) the nations were too urbanized, possessed too extensive an organized working class, to permit pure reaction. Ultimately, the dilemnas of representation – the problem of bridging the gap between the organization of the state and the distribution of power in civil society, of overcoming the gulf between *pays légal* and *pays réel*, may have been impossible. It certainly remained impossible while national resentments, economic privation, and military free-booters all remained grave problems. In short, I am suggesting, no adequate representation of diverse interests consonant with functioning liberal government was likely.

The Right's answer to the dilemna was to cut the political Gordian knot and, if it remained discontented with only partial political influence, to rule by authoritarian means. In that case, however, even the forms of authoritarianism had to reflect the level of modernization the respective societies had achieved.

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33. For the most recent treatment see David Large, "Self-Defense Leagues in Central Europe, 1918-1927", (Diss., Berkeley, 1975).

34. Gulick, *Austria,* I, pp. 165-171; Walter Goldinger, "Der geschichtliche Ablauf der Ereignisse in Österreich von 1918 bis 1945", in Benedikt, ed. *Geschichte der Republik Österreich,* pp. 124-135; Félix Kreissler, *De la révolution à l'annexion: L'Autriche de 1918 à 1938* (Paris, P.U.F., 1971), pp. 110-146.

35. See Adrian Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power: Fascism in Italy 1919-1929* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973), chapters 12 and 13; Louis Rosenstock-Franck, *L'économie corporative fasciste en doctrine et en fait* (Paris, 1934); Dino Giugni, "Esperienze corporative e post-corporative nei rapporti colletivi di lavoro in Italia", *Il Mulino,* v, 1-2 (January-February, 1956); Gaetano Salvemini, *Under the Axe of Fascism* (New York, 1936), for insights into the corporativist system.

The moderate Left's answer in Germany and Austria was to renounce its socialist claims rather than endanger parliamentary pluralism. For most Social Democrats, pluralism was victory enough. What they tended to overlook was that in Central Europe liberal pluralism might not be defensible without socialist transformations as well, to remove the pockets of private power. Unfortunately for their protagonists, revolutions occur not because social forces inevitably topple an obsolete political structure, but because social contradictions accumlate within an institutional scaffolding that is constraining but yet resilient. Where the momentum of change can prevail, the result is a transformation such as the 1846 repeal of the corn laws or the 1832 Reform Bill. Where the momentum for change is sufficient only to paralyze legal structures, as in the countries under consideration here, one *may* have a 1789, but one can also end up with an 1848 or 1918.

If from 1920 on the Left lost badly, the Right's triumph was not absolute. Even when they resorted to authoritarian solutions, the Right at least pantomined the collective bargaining and negotiations between social "partners" the Left had earlier sought. There was an alternative to the dilemmas of representation, moreover, toward which both Left and Right could grope. This alternative, moreover, did not require authoritarianism so long as prosperity continued and nationalism was contained. It did require organized interests to retreat from the claims of the political, from the very effort at claiming sovereign power and seeking to wield it. It meant erecting a series of treaties in the market place as a surrogate for the exercise of politics, of reversing the very effort to confine conflict to the political sphere and to remove it from the economic that Anglo-Saxon liberalism had initiated in the seventeenth century. The *Arbeitsgemeinschaft*, the November 1919 agreement in Vienna on index wages, the union-landlord contracts in the Po Valley (and later the Palazzo Vidoni Pact achieved under Fascist pressure) signified a new alignment of *pays réel* and *pays légal* by credentialling, so to speak, the *pays économique* as the *pays d'état*.

As I have argued alsewhere, this development characterized fully modernized societies as well as the social amalgams discussed here. But the result paradoxically was easier to obtain in the partially developed lands under examination here. If "modernization" means anything in the parlance of theorists, it suggests the liberal atomistic model of Anglo-decentralized economic competition, the ability to purchase or sell, rent or hire, land and labor as free commodities (subject to certain criteria of health and welfare), the triumph of individualist values of expression and achievement, and the rights of association. For the United States, Great Britain, and to a lesser degree, France, the corporatist-pluralist organization of the marketplace *followed* modernization in the Anglo-American sense. But for the societies under scrutiny there was a shortcut to the political economy of the organized marketplace, whether through corporatist economies under stalemated republics or through the forced regimentation of fascism. The most durable outcome of 1917-1923, therefore, was neither the hopes of the Left nor the conservative utopias of the Right, but a less encumbered path to the contemporary capitalism of the West, as the countries of middle Europe straddled reactionary and post-liberal developments simultaneously.

Résumé

L'exposé qui va suivre a pour but d'analyser, à l'aide de la méthode comparative, les particularités d'ordre structurel – ou de longue durée – qui ont fait obstacle à l'application de solutions révolutionnaires à la crise engendrée par la première guerre mondiale. Il tentera également de proposer une explication au fait qu'il fut presque impossible, pour les forces contre-révolutionnaires, de maintenir en place un ordre politique libéral, alors même que s'estompaient les menaces révolutionnaires.

1. *La fragilité du vieil ordre politique.*

Toute révolution surgit, en dernière analyse, d'une crise de représentation politique. Les situations révolutionnaires de 1917-1922, en particulier, découlèrent de l'existence de structures de représentation désuètes et inadéquates, d'institutions incapables de concilier des intérêts qui se révélaient de plus en plus contradictoires, dans des sociétés partiellement traditionnelles et partiellement modernes. Tous les pays étudiés ici connaissaient alors le problème posé par les nouvelles forces ouvrières auxquelles le système de gouvernement n'accordait que fort peu de place. Dans chaque société, exception faite de la Hongrie, l'organisation ouvrière était massive et imposante, mais les partis sociaux-démocrates oscillaient, depuis le début du siècle, entre les tendances radicale et réformiste. Bien que les objectifs réformistes, prédominants à certaines époques, aient été susceptibles d'offrir des éléments de compromis à la société tout entière, ils firent l'objet des attaques des forces conservatrices, de même que des porte-paroles libéraux, plus enclins à se placer au-dessus des conflits qu'à chercher des solutions. Dans les vieux royaumes des Habsburg, les rivalités séculaires entre les ethnies contribuèrent également à réduire à l'impuissance le *Reichsrat* autrichien. Par ailleurs, les aristocraties foncières, en Hongrie et en Italie surtout, conservaient un rôle politique de premier plan, fondé sur le prestige et les privilèges administratifs et militaires et assorti de conceptions antidémocratiques.

Tous ces facteurs entravaient le fonctionnement des systèmes de représentation et se combinaient de manière à en compromettre même la transformation ou l'adaptation. Et c'est à ces tensions fondamentales que vinrent se greffer les problèmes conjoncturels engendrés par les guerres: polarisation idéologique, controverses autour des objectifs de la guerre, privations matérielles, détérioration des conditions de vie et expansion de la violence.

2. *L'échec des forces révolutionnaires.*

Toute situation révolutionnaire ne débouche pas nécessairement sur des changements révolutionnaires définitifs. Si la crise de légitimité des institutions était à la fois profonde et généralisée, dans les pays dont il est question ici, la révolution a tout de même échoué: les révolutionnaires (qu'ils aient conquis le pouvoir ou qu'on le leur ait cédé, comme en Hongrie) n'ont pas résolu les dilemnes de représentation que la société d'avant 1918 avait mis à jour. La gauche socialiste mit de l'avant, à titre de solution, les conseils ouvriers: mais ceux-ci disposaient d'une base insuffisante dans les couches non ouvrières de la population. Et, ce qui est plus grave, la contradiction entre un gouvernement de conseils ouvriers et une législation élue, dont tous les porte-paroles bourgeois et plusieurs sociaux-démocrates soulignaient le caractère fondamental, n'était pas aussi évidente aux yeux des partisans des conseils.

Le nationalisme également, servant de tremplin à la droite, s'avéra désastreux pour le sort de la révolution: il contribua à entraîner dans une orientation anti-démocratique plusieurs couches radicales de la petite-bourgeoisie – et particulièrement les jeunes soldats démobilisés – qui, dans d'autres circonstances, auraient rallié un front d'attaque contre le vieil ordre politique et social.

En fin de compte, les victoires les plus durables des forces socialistes, au profit de la classe ouvrière, furent d'ordre économique. Sur la scène politique, les conditions étaient mûres pour la contre-révolution.

3. *Le sort de la contre-révolution.*

La réaction politique (en Autriche et en Allemagne) tout autant que la contre-révolution (en Hongrie, puis en Italie) furent impuissantes à régler les problèmes de représentation. Les quatre sociétés étudiées comportaient encore trop d'éléments traditionnels pour qu'une victoire de la social-démocratie fût définitive; mais, en même temps, elles étaient trop urbanisées (sauf en Hongrie) et leurs classes ouvrières respectives étaient trop organisées pour que fût possible un gouvernement purement réactionnaire. C'est donc sur la base de cette impossibilité d'en arriver à une forme quelconque de consensus politique que s'établirent des coalitions et des structures politiques autoritaires et fortement hiérarchisées.

Problèmes politiques / Political Problems

Discussion

W. Hirsch-Weber (U. Mannheim). I have just one minor point: and it is that you said that the major achievement of the revolution for the workers in Germany was the 48-hour week; I do not think so. You see, shortly after the Revolution the 48-hour week was abolished, and only later it was granted again. I think at least of the same importance was the collective bargaining law, and it was felt as such by the unions and workers. The labour courts law was at least of the same importance, and of greater importance even was something which you said was conservative and that was the law of 1920 of the councils. One should distinguish between the two kinds of councils. The *Reichswirtschaftsrat*, which one might say was a conservative institution, was not felt as such by the unions. You know that all though the 1920's until '33, and again after '45, the unions asked for such a council and the social-democrats wanted such a council. In the twenties, they thought it was a first step towards socialization which could not be obtained in 1919.

But the *Reichswirtschaftsrat* is not the important thing. The important institution is the *Betriebsräte*, the workers representative's council in the factories which really changed labour relations in Germany, relations between the workers and the bosses. They were felt as paramount. When the Nazis destroyed them in 1933, it was the measure most resented by workers besides the destruction of political democracy. In 1945, spontaneously, they were built up again by the workers. And while certainly, there are sometimes frictions between workers and their councils, I would say that the *Betriebsträte* are the one most important result of the 1918 revolution in the camp of social-democracy in Germany. You know in 1946, the Allied Law No. 21 reinstituted them. We had a number of corresponding laws afterwards. Only by the law of 1972, the councils were given the same powers again, and now even more, that they had held according to the law of 1920.

C. Maier. Let me speak to that complex of issues. When I said that the 8-hour day and the *Arbeitsgemeinshaft* agreements constituted the major gain of the revolution, it was an over-simplification, and I'm grateful for your correction. Nevertheless, the eight-hour day was viewed as a symbolic centerpiece in a more ready and striking way than the complex new juridical relations of labour could be; and it became, as you doubtless know, the major point of contention during 1922 and 1923, at the end of which it was largely dismantled. So the eight-hour day served as a shorthand indicator for the whole new public-law status of labour in the Weimar Republic. And under the *Arbeitsgemeinshaft* I include the whole complex of demobilization ordinances of 1918 which were written into labour law and which became fundamental to the very stability of the Republic itself, as their dismantling during 1930-32 tragically revealed.

Nonetheless, I would disagree somewhat on the importance of the *Betriebsräte* and their role in German society. Perhaps "conservative" or "radical" are not the most appropriate adjectives to use. The real division was between the Social-Democrats (SPD) and the Independent socialists (USPD) who labeled the *Betriebsräte* a "sham". I don't particularly like to endorse the USPD argument, but I don't see the *Betriebsräte* as

producing fundamental change in the property and authority relationships within the Weimar Republic. I do think they set in motion an evolutionary development, which if uninterrupted would probably have led to roughly where labor is today in the Bonn Republic. I just don't evaluate the effect of the *Betriebsräte* or of *Mitbestimmung* in changing the relations of economic power in the society as significantly as you do, even though I do not wish to minimize the importance of co-determination in a welfare-state system which rests on social compromise between organized capital and organized labour. Let us remember the analogy of the half-full glass. The reformists are happy with the liquid that is available and the revolutionaries resent the empty part. They are both correct. Perhaps my argument rests on a certain implicit notion not of false consciousness, but partial consciousness.

I am not saying that the councils were a reform which the workers need not have defended to the hilt. They were important, just as the eight-hour day was an important keystone, and just as the position of the German Ministry of Labour was critical. All I am saying is that in achieving these reforms labor gained a parity position within the welfare institutions of an enlightened capitalist structure. I don't think they gained a decisive position of revolutionary or even working-class hegemony. This is not to underestimate their achievement. I don't want to underestimate the achievement of the Weimar Republic. I'm just saying that I think it's a reformist achievement, and not a radical one.

D. Skopp. Professor Maier, in your talk you stressed several times different descripters of motion: you used, for example, the term "integration"; you spoke of the "road to modernization"; and you also at one point mentioned "oscillation". I am fascinated by that last term, and I wonder if you are intending that we somehow substitute it, perhaps, as a more definable and measurable concept, rather than "revolution", which seems to be rather troublesome, at least as far as this conference is concerned. Can you tell us if "oscillation" is a motion that doesn't come to revolution, or whether revolution is at the fringes of the oscillation?

C. Maier. No. I don't really see revolution as sort of a political system in oscillation which falls off the end of the political earth by accident – that scenario would involve a different sort of breakdown. But the basic question before historians of revolution of this period, I think – no matter how awkward we find the concept of revolution – is what would have happened without the short-term crisis of legitimacy or without the strains of the War. Were the contradictions in these societies so unmanageable that they would have had to culminate in revolution? People ask the question of Russian society; we should pose it for Italian, Austro-Hungarian and German society. What I've tried to do in this paper is not to try to answer that question definitively, because I find it very difficult, but to highlight the structural afflictions these societies had, even before they entered the War because of their uneasy combination of both modern and pre-modern elements.

A. Lyttleton. I do wonder, however, if we shouldn't talk a little more about these specific problems of economic management and their impact. Three or four separate points: the first is the well-known question of growth as destabilizing, and I must say that in the case of Italy, the evidence seems to me to be actually the other way, or at least to show that if growth is destabilizing, so it stagnation, because in fact, the 1900's were a period of greater political stability, I would argue, than the 1890's when there was not much economic growth. So I think one has to make some further distinctions there. It does seem to me that growth is stabilizing in these countries in the short term, but leads, I agree to the accumulation of long term problems, which the political structures may be unable to solve.

On the economic problems of the post-war period, I think one thing which one has to bear in mind is the breakdown of the international economy as it was understood before the First World War. I would suggest that there was a kind of economic legitimacy which liberalism had before the First World War, which was very important politically, which liberalism completely lost after the War and this is connected with the breakdown of the international economy and the general assumptions of pre-1914 economics. I think

this is a very important factor in the breakdown of liberal order and in the difficulties also of what you describe as processes of establishing some new kind of stability. One aspect of this, again I'm commenting on Italy, which is important for example, is the new restrictive attitude of the U.S.A. to immigration. This was extremely important, I think, as a destabilizing factor.

The third economic point which I would like to ask is if you could expand a little what you said about the questions of inflation and deflation. The problems of economic planning, it seems to me, are forced on the attention of governments by the rather sharp economic crisis. One must also note that this was again connected with the decline of the international economy, and the destruction of the rather widely held assumption that it was the middle classes that would be the basis of stability for the State, and it was with inflation – even before the post-war inflation – that this assumption became in these countries untrue. There is also the question of the new forms of economic representation and coordination which were actually evolved during the War. I think this is very important. The War forced a new relationship between the major economic interests in the State. It is really during the War that the authoritarian models of representation and direction get an actual try-out. One could in some sense, again, see the fascist systems as an attempt to recreate the actually functioning war-time structures of economic management and representation.

C. Maier. Lyttleton said that growth may be conducive to stability in the prewar period as well as during the other periods in which I have also said it was. Let me reflect on it; perhaps that is true. The Giolittian period was an era in which one could believe a reformist co-optive strategy could work. The strategy runs into trouble precisely when growth ceases in Italy or at least, is interrupted; for instance during the banking crisis of 1908 and then again in 1911. My feeling is that probably one of the worse situations one can face in terms of stability, as Tocqueville told us for France, occurs when long-term growth conditions rising expectations but is then interrupted. Growth under conditions of economic oscillation provides a tremendously difficult problem of social management. What I should have stressed were the interruptions as well as just the growth itself, so I accept Lyttleton's correction.

Now, the breakdown of the international economy and the economic problems of inflation and deflation can be discussed together. It seems to me that we can distinguish two conjunctural swings in European development at this period. There is an inflationary one roughly from 1914-1924, and then a deflationary one from 1924 to 1931 and into the Depression. Each swing rests upon different configurations of international interests and class interests. The breakdown of the international economy, and the collapse of currencies, extending from the end of the War to 1924 – a period which in economic terms is a prolongation of the War – the breakdown of international capital flows, the earlier European investments abroad sending annual income to England and France, the resulting chaotic balance of payments situation: these aspects accompany the inflationary conjuncture. This period, moreover, gives opportunites to the working class, because if the working class can learn to bargain directly with industry and industry is willing to learn to bargain with the working class, both sides can protect themselves by participating in an inflationary wage-price spiral situation which passes costs along to consumers. Essentially, labour and capital together tax the middle classes through inflation. One gets economic pacification and order at the price of expropriating middle class elements.

Before 1925, however, there was a general turn-around in which the productive entrepreneurial forces of our countries abandoned their labour allies, and solved their problems by imposing heavy costs upon them. You can trace the change into the mid and late 1920's, in which period industry repents of its inflationary compacts and decides it can do better by resisting labour and holding wages down where possible. There ensues a period of partial middle-class revival, and the national income shares of property holders recover in the societies. This is a key aspect of the reconstruction of

the international economic system under United States auspices. That is, the United States proves briefly willing to solve Europe's balance of payments problem by remitting capital through investments, the Dawes Plan loan, etc.. This equilibrium is very fragile, it breaks down in 1929-31 because it is hostage to American prosperity; in part, it's also hostage to an American sense of responsibility for the wider Western balance of payments scheme, and it doesn't last.

Still, in the latter 1920's, one starts to come back to some of the pre-war notions that the middle class is going to be the bulwark of a recovered stability, that stability does rest upon international transfers being easily solved, but that on the other hand, it cannot rest on labour and capital acting together in opposition to the middle strata. Thus deflation, the deflationary economic cycle, and the economic stabilization of 1924 onward is associated with the new phalanx or new coalition which rests upon a much more traditional middle-class conservative alignment with economic élites. Yet within the terms of this mid-decade change, certain lessons remain valid from the earlier period and certain patterns of direct "social compacts" – to use the recent British term – are established and will prove durable, so that trends in the international economy and the cycles of inflation and then of relative deflation, all work together here.

G. Bassler. What I'm wondering is whether this character of the revolution, what we call a revolution, is not an indication that the long term forces were not that important in our understanding of the revolution. Should we not pay more attention to the short term problems arising from the War, such as the economic imbalance and the social dysfunction created by the War, rather than define the revolution by a trend which you could trace back and project into the future indefinitely? What I want to suggest is that the concept of demobilization, social-political-economic-military demobilization seems to be a more adequate formula, perhaps, for coming to grips with revolutionary situation of 1918-1919.

C. Maier. The question you've really posed is two-fold: one is the question I sought to answer: am I not under-emphasizing psychological factors, the questions of demobilization and violence, and the national aspirations? Yes, I am under-emphasizing them. I admit that, and I've tried to justify it by saying that a revolutionary crisis is created by a conjunction of long term difficulties. Society is always moving in and out of long term structural difficulties. Marx said – although you don't have to be a Marxist to see the validity of it – that the legal forms of organizing relationships of production usually lag behind the vitality of those forces of production themselves, so there's always a certain structural tension. Then, on top of the long-term problems come crises of legitimacy, which I think were provoked by the War and the violence and short term factors, and the two together produce a revolutionary crisis.

G. Feldman. I'll just make a point about problems of growth and stagnation in this period. All the people who have worked on the interwar period have argued that basically what you have is either a relative stagnation or an absolute decline of economic growth. I think this is a rather important point. Take for example a key growth industry like the new aluminum industry in Germany: it has a very nice start during the War when they're building all those planes and the rest, and then it suffers a significant decline because there isn't the capital to invest in this very critical industry, an industry that in many important respects substitutes for or becomes a competitor of the iron and steel industry. Instead, the iron, steel and coal industries that were in a state of relative stagnation even before the War are suddenly overexpanded because of the peculiar raw materials and production problems of the wartime and immediate postwar periods. You don't get a "normal" or "natural" economic and structural development.

The First World War, in fact, interrupts evolving structural changes in very significant ways. In the short run, in certain cases, it produces distortions by holding back certain growth industries while, at the same time, promoting certain industries that should have had a much less extensive development. This mid-investment of capital does, I think, relate to some of these political questions. The only trouble is that we

don't quite know how to relate to these things yet. I think this is one of the areas of research that needs further development. I suggest that all this talk about productivism at the end of the First World War and in the 1920's relates very much to a consciousness of this problem, and I would point out that labour leaders were aware of this too.

4. Mayer. I think that you are somewhat too facile in trying to get out from under the attack that you are using perhaps the concept of "modernization" too loosely: I would say that there are different varieties of modernization and on this I would stand with Barrington Moore. And what we are dealing with here are different forms of capitalist modernization, or perhaps one could even say conservative capitalist modernization.

And it seems to me that you tend to take too little account of the place, in the crunch 1917 to 1923, of political society and, in particular, of what Schumpeter called "the steel frame of government" and the kind of conditions of order that it provided for carrying on this new, momentary love feast between management and labour allegedly on the back of what you called the middle class for a while. It seems to me that, again, you seem to be sliding rather rapidly over the atavistic elements that do survive the War, even in the three countries with which you are concerned, and I would maintain that these are particularly well entrenched in certain sectors of what I call the political society of the steel frame. I think that leads me to the fourth point that there were perhaps momentary arrangements made between capital and labour in the heat of the moment, and the moment the heat was off – I think this has been to some extent also the line of argument of Jerry Feldman – a good many of the concessions that were made to labour after 1918 in Germany, in Austria and in other places, were rather rapidly taken back once it looked as if the situation had been restabilized.

And that then gets me to the last point: you did stress in the discussion, perhaps more heavily than in the paper, that the reinjection of the United States did become important as of 1922-23, Dawes Plan and all that, and that it seems to me points towards something you yourself on another occasion have argued and that is that this reinjection of American capital into the international capitalist economy made it possible during that brief indian summer, 1924-29, for an effort to be made to enlarge the pie and thereby to avoid certain political problems that come up.

C. Maier. Those emphases are well taken and I don't think that they involve a fundamental dissent from my views. Maybe the intonation is slightly different. On the question of modernization: I am not denying that what is involved is capitalist modernization; in fact, the kind of modernization I'm describing is really based on the triumph of concepts such as they are described in McPherson's book on "possessive individualism." And certainly these concepts imply capitalism. In these senses modernization involves a subjection of certain traditional areas of life to money. What Voltaire beheld in the English stock exchange when he went and saw Quakers and Jews and all people dealing very happily together was the powerful solvent of capitalism.

Now Barrington Moore is saying something else: he is arguing that those relationships, the breakthrough to capitalism, can be achieved under different auspices, depending upon the role of the agrarian élites in the society and their relationship with the peasantry. Moore offers two main archetypes of capitalist modernization – an Anglo-American one generated from below or by decentralized magnates and the future fascist one generated from above. Then, too, he has a socialist case of modernization. Now I'm really discussing the two Barrington Moore capitalist alternatives – liberal and fascist – as a unit together. I would agree that both involve a capitalist modernization, and I should have made that clear I thought it was implicit in the notion of market I used.

On the question of politics, we look at the fascist strikes in 1925 and then the negotiations in Rome, Turin, and Milan which culminate in the Palazzo Vidoni agreements, we get a good sense of how steely the frame of government remains. I do not mean to deny the role of government or the state. I just mean the change from a focus upon parliamentary mediation to a bureaucratic and social-group mediation – oftentimes the social groups negotiating through bureaucratic or ministral intermediaries.

Now the issue of the persistence of atavism, which is the last point, essentially comes back to the question that all the speakers have raised about the fundamental importance of psychology and national feelings, in short of loyalties that transcend rational calculations. No one looking at German behaviour from 1928-1933 could deny their importance, just to take one country. Nor could one when looking at the well-springs of action which motivated many of the fascists: the feeling of being put upon as a national community of having some spiritual values offended, or, in the case of successful revolution, such as the 1918 creation of Czechoslovakia, maybe seeing them realized. I don't mean to deny these feelings in the slightest; I agree that they persist.

A. Cassels. What I would like to do is to throw out a glittering generality, or at least a generalization anyway, and ask you to comment on it. It seems to me, talking in the broadest possible terms, that if we take "mobilization of the masses" to mean the raising of the level of consciousness of the masses until they reach the verge of political activity, this probably occurred in Italy in the second decade of the twentieth century. Adrian Lyttleton yesterday tried to direct our gaze back to 1911 for obvious reasons, and here we are talking about 1919-20. Now, what I'm asking you to do, then, is to make a comparison or contrast with what happened in Germany, because what it seems to me happened in Italy was a *primary* "mobilization of the masses" (if I may keep using that phrase). On the other hand, I don't think the same *initial* mobilization occurred in Germany, and I am impelled to make this contrast because towards the end of your paper you drew a distinction between the mode of "stabilization" in Germany which was largely a compromise and the sort of "stabilization" which occurred in Italy. There, it was still a compromise but of a more counter-revolutionary nature. I'm trying to direct our attention back, perhaps, to the question of the potential revolutionary quotient in 1919. Do you think we can do this by looking at this idea of "mass mobilization" in Italy and Germany?

C. Maier. What I meant by "mobilization" was a sense of people's community horizons expanding. This might occur within a national or class framework, but in either case it involved sensing loyalties would go beyond the family, the parish, maybe the region, either to embrace a national collectivity or a class collectivity. The conservative forces were backing the national-type of mobilization and the socialist forces were backing the class-type of mobilization. And I think that in Italy the Libyan War was indeed an initial watershed, but in terms of affecting the basic strata of the population, the peasantry, the First World War experience was probably absolutely crucial. The country took men who had never been outside their villages, or more than a few miles away, and stuck them into cold mountains, gave them a lot of new myths; I think this must have meant a fantastic change in the attitudes of these people.

A. Mitchell. It strikes me that you are asking the question: what difference did it make finally that there was a revolution, a revolutionary period or a revolutionary situation. I can only judge the German case, really, and when I look at that, (everyone can make his own shopping list) it seems to me that three things really did come out of this period which are important.

First of all, obviously, Germany became a republic and I feel it's important that it did become a republic. I think that did change a great deal. Secondly, I think it's terribly important that three-class voting was abolished in the state of Prussia. Of course, it didn't save Germany, so to speak, ultimately; but the potential for change was immense there, and the whole state of Prussia was redefined as a reult. One can almost say that it was unfortunate that the Weimar constitution in effect undercut that by limiting the power that the Socialists thereby gained in the state of Prussia. Nonetheless, I think that was important. And thirdly, it seems to me that there was a very great revolutionary potential – or I should say, *reformist* potential, actually – in the council movement. It does seem to me that it's important to see these matters in a long range and to ask the question "What difference did it finally make", and it seems to me that it did make some difference, that there was a revolution.

. *Baker* (U. of Waterloo). I'm interested in the general conceptual aspects of your aper, which I found to be extremely interesting and cogent. It seems to me that you ake a good deal of sense out of political and social developments, and the relation etween the two, in Western Europe in the period from 1850 or so to the present. But erhaps you don't go far enough. And maybe it's your liberalism, just self-confessed, at makes me ask this question.

Professor Arno Mayer said a moment ago that there are different roads to "modern- ation". There are also different theories of "modernization" or different "modernization eories". Perhaps I was misled by your title into thinking that there would be somewhat reater emphasis in your paper on just what that "modernization" consists of, where it erives from, what its dynamics are, and so on. It seems to me that what you've pre- nted is a structural-functionalist thesis that comes down to this. Around the time of he First World War Western European societies were heterogeneous, consisting of roups deriving from traditional occupations and industrial elements consisting mainly f a working class and a capitalist class. In the balance of forces of the time, no single roup or no likely coalition of groups could provide a clear-cut break-through, either o a modernistic future of its own choice, or to some real or imagined *status quo ante.* he traditional form of interest bartering that took place before the war was primarily ediated through the state. What the First World War did was to de-authorize, de- gitimize the state and to some degree the existing elite represented by the state. A asualty of that process was the effective working of parliamentary democracy and the ansference of a good deal of decision making to the peripheral bodies that you are lking about.

Now, this is fine as description, but I'm not sure that structural-functional descrip- on is the same thing as causal historical explanation. It describes how the groups or lasses interact, but not the dynamic forces at work within them, shaping the character f the whole society over time.

Let me, however, put the thesis to you that there is a Marxist notion of "modern- zation" which would explain a great many of the developments within the urban ndustrial population and which also would help explain the development of political rientations in the countryside in terms of the capitalist erosion of traditional relations. f one wants to understand what is going on in the country side, in the period just before he First World War, and in the immediate wake of the war, one cannot simply refer o the desire of the traditional elites to maintain their positions. I think one must explain vhat those positions were over time. To take Italy as an example, I don't think that the nterests of the agricultural elite in 1914 or 1919 were what they had been, say, 80 to 90 ears earlier, before the emergence of a national market, before the capitalization of elations in the country side, and so on. I can't take my critique much further except o raise this question: "What do you see as the basic process of 'modernization' at work ere?" Were there any imperatives at work within these various fragments you're talking bout that perhaps we should turn our attention in order to understand the developments f the post-war period?"

. Maier. That's a very good question. It's posed very well and elegantly and I'm almost orry that I didn't use your summary of what I said as my last paragraph; but since my ssay made itself that clear, I'm gratified.

Problèmes d'ordre idéologique

Miklos Molnar

L'exposé est divisé en trois parties: 1) la problématique et son contexte historique, 2) les modèles idéologiques qu'on peut envisager de discuter, 3) quelques thèmes choisis. Donc, une esquisse historique dans la première partie, une hypothèse de travail rapidement exposée dans la deuxième et une discussion de quelques thèmes choisis dans la troisième.

I

Toute tentative de définir le terme idéologie conduirait nos travaux à une impasse. Le seul moyen d'éviter les débats stériles et sans fin consiste à accepter, dans un esprit éclectique, cette acception très large du mot idéologie qui caractérisait les communications de la première journée. Cela dit, les problèmes de délimitation de notre thème ne sont pas résolus pour autant. Sous le vocable d'idéologie nous serons amenés à discuter aussi bien de philosophie que de mentalité collective, de stratégie révolutionnaire que de programmes d'action. Il s'avère en fait que, dans le feu de l'action, les groupes et les hommes ne respectent pas les critères établis par les historiens ou les spécialistes des sciences politiques. D'après certaines théories, toute idéologie est apparentée au mythe mosaïque du retour d'Égypte (il s'agit, bien entendu, des idéologies européennes), au mythe primitif de rédemption et d'émancipation du peuple. De plus, il est évident que l'idéologie est une forme de connaissance scientifique ou, tout au moins, systématique, des expériences du passé. Elle est, en même temps, un programme d'action collective ayant, bien entendu, un caractère prosélytique.

Ces quelques définitions éparses nous permettent de discuter sur une échelle très vaste. Dans la réalité historique des vagues révolutionnaires de la période considérée, c'est surtout le premier de ces caractères qui se perd. Même des idéologues tels qu'un Lénine ou une Rosa Luxemburg formulaient leurs idées par rapport aux situations concrètes et non point selon les aspirations, mystiques ou non, du passé. « À bas le gouvernement Ebert-Scheidemann! », « Boycottage des élections! », « Tout le pouvoir aux Soviets! », « Insurrection! », « Scission! », « Grève générale! »; voilà les slogans nus et simples dans lesquels s'expriment les idéologies respectives des leaders et, à plus forte raison, la mentalité collective de groupes de militants peu réceptifs aux théories subtiles. De ce fait, nous assistons aussi à la fragmentation des idéologies, à l'extrême. Il se trouve peu de textes englobant ne fût-ce qu'un aspect de la situation, aspect politique, économique ou autre. En fin de compte, écrivait Rosa Luexemburg à Clara Zetkin, « il faut bien prendre l'histoire comme elle se déroule ». Et d'ailleurs, à propos des mêmes prétentions idéologiques, elle écrit qu'elles sont « aussi vaines que la prétention de vider l'océan avec un verre d'eau ». Ces expressions sont, certes, propres à la position de Rosa Luxemburg et à son attachement à la spontanéité des masses qui constituent, pour nos débats, un problème en soi. Néanmoins, de l'avis presque unanime des leaders de cette époque, les doctrines élaborées, soit en temps de paix, soit pendant les cinq années de guerre, se sont brisées en morceaux dans la situation nouvelle et changeante de l'après-guerre.

Une autre difficulté de nos discussions réside dans le temps et l'espace que nous avons l'ambition, probablement démesurée, d'englober. Trop de vagues révolutionnaires et d'insurrections locales se succédèrent en l'espace de cinq ans pour en tirer des conclusions idéologiques: des mutineries de marins, des révolutions démocratiques bourgeoises, des mouvements pacifistes ainsi que d'autres, anti-militaristes et révolutionnaires, des coups de force de groupes, des révolutions de conseils, des insurrections nationales, et ainsi de suite. La variété des situations locales pose également des difficultés pratiquement insurmontables. Comment mettre en évidence le rôle de l'idéologie dans la révolution en Allemagne, sans tenir compte des différences entre le nord et Stuttgart, la Ruhr et la Bavière.

Il faut encore ajouter deux autres considérations à ces propos. Nous sommes en train d'explorer, ici, un domaine à la fois connu et méconnu. Des milliers d'ouvrages ont été écrits sur certains courants d'idées d'après-guerre dont, bien entendu, le bolchevisme, le léninisme en particulier. À un point tel que les courants privilégiés ont accaparé toute l'attention ou presque. Ce n'est que depuis quelque temps que d'autres familles de pensée et d'autres idéologues que les bolcheviks commencent à percer le mur du silence construit autour d'eux par les gardiens de l'orthodoxie ainsi que par l'historiographie bourgeoise s'intéressant toujours au vainqueur. Je fais allusion à Gramsci, par exemple, et aussi à Rosa Luxemburg; mais combien d'autres attendent encore, les Radek, les Kunfi, les Ervin Szabo, que leurs contributions à la formation des mentalités collectives soient mises en lumière et en valeur? Et combien de militants obscurs également? L'attention de l'historien n'est-elle pas, encore, retenue presque exclusivement par les idéologues « attitrés », au risque d'oublier ce qu'ils ont appris, ces idéologues eux-mêmes, des militants confondus avec la masse, cet immense réservoir d'idées? L'étude des journaux, des tracts, des procès-verbaux des meetings, des congrès, des correspondances constitue précisément cette catégorie de sources encore largement inexploitée qui rendrait possible – mais ce sera alors pour un autre colloque – de dépasser la notion étroite de l'idéologie faite par les idéologues et de la replonger dans les mentalités collectives.

Un autre point enfin, le dernier de cette première partie. La délimitation géographique de ce colloque n'est pas sans influencer nos travaux: « Allemagne, Autriche-Hongrie, Italie ». On n'avait encore jamais tenté, autant que je le sache, d'englober d'un seul regard toute cette « Europe du milieu » en ébullition après la guerre. Le mouvement en Italie, la révolution allemande et celle de Hongrie ont toujours été étudiés séparément. Les révolutions sur le territoire de l'ancienne Autriche-Hongrie ont fait l'objet, autant que je sache, d'un seul ouvrage d'ensemble, et même cet ouvrage est inédit; il s'agit de la thèse de Dominique Gros sur les Conseils ouvriers en Autriche-Hongrie.[1] Or, cet assemblage géographique auquel nous procédons – je ne sais pas si c'était voulu par les organisateurs du colloque ou bien si c'est dû au hasard – recoupe en fait une constance et une cohérence qui ne sont pas exclusivement géographiques, mais aussi historiques. Allemagne, Autriche-Hongrie, Italie: nous retrouvons, ici, la même zone d'effervescence (et, sur ce point en tout cas, je rejoins mon collègue Deak) qu'en 1848, ainsi que le même regroupement que dans la Triple Alliance de Bismarck, le même groupe de pays vaincus, l'Allemagne et l'Autriche-Hongrie en 1918, avec, en plus, cette Italie frustrée d'une partie de sa victoire et, enfin, les mêmes, toujours, qui allaient se retrouver dans leur « pacte d'acier » contre les Alliés de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale et se retrouver également dans la défaite.

Ce rappel des faits historiques n'autorise certes aucune conclusion, mais permet peut-être de mieux situer les révolutions de 1917-1922 et leurs idéologies dans un certain contexte historique de longue durée, plus exactement dans un siècle d'histoire marqué par la double revendication nationale et démocratique à laquelle venait s'ajouter, relativement récemment seulement et confusément d'abord, la revendication de la révolution sociale. Je ne cherche pas à créer de toutes pièces une unité ou une cohérence là où ça ne peut pas exister. Mais cette analogie des destinées historiques avait néanmoins créé

1. Dominique Gros, *Les conseils ouvriers. Espérances et défaites de la révolution en Autriche-Hongrie 1917-1920* (Université de Dijon).

s affinités idéologiques et politiques que nous devons avoir à l'esprit en étudiant les urants, en apparence si disparates, de l'après-guerre. Face à une Europe occidentale, les grands problèmes nationaux ne se posaient plus depuis longtemps, se trouve toute tte « Europe du milieu » avec ses conflits de nationalités, soit encore aigus comme, r exemple, en Slovaquie, soit en voie de se régler grâce à l'effondrement de l'empire Habsbourg, mais en provoquant en même temps d'autres frustrations (exemple: l'Auche allemande, la Hongrie), ou encore poussés jusqu'à un sentiment d'exaltation, mme en Italie. On observe le même phénomène en ce qui concerne les revendications mocratiques dans des pays comme l'Allemagne, l'Italie, la Hongrie, l'Autriche, tous à stance à peu près égale des modèles occidentaux de démocratie et faisant tous, en space de quelques mois, l'apprentissage d'un système libéral plébéien ne reposant sur cune tradition acquise. Faisons enfin remarquer que ce décalage, par rapport à l'Europe cidentale, se vérifie également sur le plan économique et social. L'Italie traînant toururs à cette époque-là (dans cette première après-guerre, et même dans la deuxième) les nséquences de ce que Gramsci appelait « la révolution agraire manquée », conséquence le-même du *Risorgimento* inachevé. Nous connaissons le grand débat autour de ces èmes jusque dans ses rebondissements récents ou relativement récents (dans les années 950) dans les travaux de Rosario Romeo.[2] C'est à ce propos, aussi, que Gramsci étudiait problème (combien important pour les autres pays considérés, également) des villes silence, « citta del silenzio », ne participant pas au développement industriel urbain, nsi que de l'idéologie anti-rurale qui leur était commune. En un mot, il s'agit, dans ut cela, des problèmes du XIXe siècle se prolongeant dans ce début de XXe et même -delà. Dans ce sens, les fondements idéologiques des révolutions de l'après-guerre nt ceux d'une révolution du XIXe siècle; il n'y a rien d'étonnant à ce que nos personages, quand bien même issus des mouvements sociaux, prolétariens et socialistes des asses ouvrières, n'aient pu y échapper. Que ce fût Lénine ou Gramsci, Béla Kun ou eorg Lukács, Radek ou Rosa Luxemburg, ils étaient tous, non seulement constamment nfrontés avec les problèmes restés en suspens au XIXe siècle, mais même, dans une rtaine mesure, des révolutionnaires-types du XIXe qui les avait vus naître.

II

Dans un premier projet, je voulais vous proposer d'abord une série de questions éologiques débouchant sur une tentative d'établir les principaux modèles. Mais, après expérience des débats de la première journée, je voudrais maintenant intervertir l'ordre prendre les modèles principaux, très vaguement décrits, comme point de départ, quitte vérifier, précisément, leur authenticité à travers une série de problèmes que je vais évelopper dans la dernière partie.

Quels modèles, alors? Le modèle bolchevique, bien entendu, pour commencer. Hier, ans le débat sur l'Autriche-Hongrie, nous avons entendu la thèse d'un collègue selon quelle la révolution allemande n'aurait pas eu lieu sans l'exemple et l'impulsion bolhevique. Que l'on partage ou non cette opinion, tout le monde concédera, je crois, que modèle bolchevique jouait un rôle absolument capital (Pierre Broué l'a dit aussi dans on exposé le premier jour), soit comme exemple à suivre, soit – et c'est presque plus nportant pour nous – dans l'optique de l'étude des idéologies comme, pour ainsi dire, ystème de références. J'entends par cela que, dans cette période après 1917, il était ifficile, presque impossible, de se réclamer d'un programme révolutionnaire sans le éfinir par rapport à la révolution bolchevique, sans se marquer, pour ainsi dire, du nodèle bolchevique ou s'en démarquer.

Le deuxième modèle dont l'existence paraisse être certaine est celui du spartakisme t, en particulier, du Luxemburgisme. Pierre Broué nous a mis en garde contre le fait e prendre pour spartakisme tout ce qui venait de Luxemburg. Il a certainement raison, nais, d'un autre côté, sur le plan proprement idéologique, même une Rosa Luxemburg eule, isolée ou enfermée dans sa cellule, est plus significative que tout le reste de on parti.

. Rosario Romeo, *Risorgimento e Capitalismo* (Bari, 1959)

Un troisième modèle pourrait se dessiner à partir d'un certain romantisme révolutionnaire, souvent anarchisant (mais pas obligatoirement). Ceux de Munich, auxquels on pourrait ajouter quelques petits groupes de Vienne et de Budapest, pourraient nous inspirer pour dessiner leur portrait-robot, surtout si des spécialistes de la révolution des soviets en Bavière pouvaient se joindre à notre atelier pour nous aider à y parvenir.

Un quatrième modèle, extrêmement discutable, est le modèle « conseilliste » (ce terme est un néologisme, mais qui entre maintenant dans plusieurs ouvrages). Est-ce qu'il existe un modèle « conseilliste »? En existe-t-il un, ou bien plusieurs? Le « conseillisme » de la période turinoise et « ordinoviste » de Gramsci constitue-t-il sur le plan idéologique le même modèle que le mouvement des conseils en Allemagne? Les conseils en Hongrie, qui déléguaient et, en même temps, partagaient leurs pouvoirs avec le gouvernement et le parti, étaient-ils le même phénomène idéologique que les conseils en Autriche? En Autriche, comme vous le savez, les conseils, une fois constitués, étaient disputés tout au long de cette période révolutionnaire entre plusieurs partis, mais surtout entre le parti social-démocrate, d'un côté, et les *Linksradikalen* et le parti communiste, de l'autre. À chaque élection, partielle ou globale, les partis se battaient pour se tailler une zone d'influence au sein des conseils. Donc, ils se situent sur un plan très différent de celui de Hongrie où les conseils gardaient une certaine autonomie vis-à-vis du gouvernement, tout en lui déléguant une partie de leur pouvoir.

III

En revanche, un modèle assez clairement défini et délimité se dégage, à mon sens, du *Nationalbolchewismus* allemand se situant idéologiquement aux confins de l'extrême-gauche et de l'extrême-droite. La liste n'est pas exhaustive, beaucoup s'en faut, mais je crois que notre atelier est là, précisément, pour corriger et pour compléter ces propositions.

Venons-en maintenant à la dernière partie, qui est un choix de problèmes: à vous de juger si ce choix est justifié ou s'il doit être également rectifié et complété. Les thèmes sont choisis sous trois gros titres: 1) les grandes options, 2) la révolution pour quoi faire? 3) problèmes du pouvoir et du parti.

1) Grandes options idéologiques. Au niveau idéologique le plus élevé, c'était la question du déterminisme opposé au volontarisme, la spontanéité du mouvement des masses opposée à la philosophie d'action des avant-gardes, le principe d'éducation opposé au putschisme qui préoccupaient nos révolutionnaires: Rosa Luxemburg versus Lénine, c'est sans doute la première illustration qui vient à l'esprit. Plus d'une fois, en effet, Lénine se voyait accusé de putschisme, de blanquisme, de volontarisme, même au sein de son propre parti; par exemple, au lendemain des thèses d'avril. À plus forte raison, il était accusé de cela par ses adversaires. Et vice versa: Rosa Luxemburg et le luxemburgisme sont entrés dans toute une immense littérature et apparaissent, surtout dans l'historiographie communiste officielle, comme la manifestation d'une politique à la remorque des mouvements spontanés des masses, comme une tendance coupable de sous-estimer l'importance du parti d'avant-garde. Même un ouvrage soviétique aussi récent que *l'Histoire du Komintern*, publié à Moscou en 1969,[3] et qui cherche plutôt à souligner ce qui unissait, au lieu de ce qui séparait Luxemburg de Lénine, ne manque pas de reprocher aux spartakistes d'avoir constitué trop tard le parti communiste et d'avoir négligé le problème de l'encadrement des masses dans le combat contre l'impérialisme allemand. Quant à l'opposition de Rosa Luxemburg à la fondation du Komintern dans l'immédiat, le même ouvrage obscurcit le problème en omettant le nom de Luxemburg. On parle seulement d'Eberlein, comme s'il avait pris l'initiative de s'opposer à la fondation du Komintern de son propre gré alors qu'en réalité il ne faisait que transmettre le « testament » de Rosa Luxemburg. Donc, le nom de Luxemburg est omis, ainsi que les arguments à l'appui de son opposition vis-à-vis de la fondation du Komintern dans l'immédiat. La biographie la plus récente de Luxemburg, écrite par Gilbert Badia, une

3. *Kommunistitcheski Internatsionala* (Moscou, 1969), pp. 46-47.

iographie de mille pages,[4] qui polémique beaucoup avec Nettl, l'auteur d'une autre rande biographie qui est parue il y a quelques années,[5] tente plutôt de rapprocher les eux grandes figures révolutionnaires que de souligner leur désaccord. Toutefois, Badia tablit, lui aussi, que Luxemburg prit toujours position « contre la prise du pouvoir rtificiellement provoquée » et contre les révolutions « organisées et dirigées selon un lan pré-établi », ainsi de suite. Tout cela pour souligner qu'en dépit des tentatives de approcher les deux figures, d'obscurcir et même de camoufler leurs différences, tout le ıonde est bien obligé d'admettre l'existence de ces oppositions.

Quelle que soit la vérité au sujet des divergences entre Lénine et Luxemburg, la uestion dépasse de loin le cadre d'un conflit entre deux personnages historiques. Il tait question hier, par exemple, de ce célèbre article de Gramsci intitulé « La révolution ontre *Le Capital* ».

Finalement, cet article de Gramsci participe au même débat que la grande polénique entre Rosa Luxemburg et Lénine. « La révolution contre *Le Capital* »: ce titre rovoquant va à l'encontre des thèses de Rosa Luxemburg, contre un certain déterminisme, contre ce que Gramsci appelle une « théorie de l'inertie du prolétariat ». Ainsi, ce débat a une importance qui dépasse de loin ces quelques personnages cités et, j'ajouterais, comporte une dimension philosophique remontant très loin dans l'histoire du nouvement ouvrier. C'est Georg Lukács qui s'est aperçu de cette dimension profondément historique du problème. Dans son ouvrage, *Geschichte und Klassenbewustsein*[6], il y a deux chapitres surtout qui s'occupent de ce débat. Dans les deux, il est question argement de Luxemburg et de Lénine. Le premier est intitulé « Rosa Luxemburg, marxiste » montrant que, dans ses premiers articles, Lukács souligne surtout ce qui était selon lui le grand mérite de Rosa. Il démontre cette dimension historique du débat avec un raisonnement trop complexe pour être reconstitué dans son intégrité, mais qui comporte aussi une allusion à la discussion de Rosa Luxemburg avec Bernstein tout au début du siècle, c'est-à-dire quinze ans avant les événements que nous sommes en train d'étudier au point de vue idéologique: « Déjà, contre Bernstein, écrit Lukács, Rosa Luxemburg avait souligné la différence essentielle entre une considération totale et une considération partielle, une considération dialectique et une considération mécaniste de l'histoire »[7] Et c'est à partir de cette vision totale des choses, ajoute encore Lukács, que Rosa Luxemburg est arrivée à la conclusion (intermédiaire, finalement, entre sa propre position de 1919 et celle de Lénine) que l'action d'une minorité blanquiste n'est qu'un « coup de pistolet dans l'histoire » – ce terme de « coup de pistolet » est devenu célèbre – tandis que la conquête du pouvoir par la grande masse du peuple conscient de son intérêt de classe mettra fin, véritablement, au capitalisme. Voilà donc quelques mots à propos de ce débat dont les dimensions historiques remontent jusqu'au XIXe siècle, jusqu'aux conflits au sein de la Première et, après la Deuxième Internationales.

2) La révolution pour quoi faire? Cette deuxième question, ainsi que la troisième, concernant les partis et le pouvoir, loin d'être de simples problèmes de programmes et de stratégies, ne sont finalement que les prolongements des controverses historiques ci-dessus mentionnées. Voyons le débat au niveau stratégique, d'abord.

L'égalitarisme, le rêve du « nouvel empire de mille ans », de la justice sociale absolue, n'apparaît pratiquement pas dans les idéologies élaborées de la période d'après-guerre. Les divergences en ce qui concerne le but et le sens de la révolution se manifestaient autour de deux axes: la forme politique et le contenu social de la révolution, d'une part, et, de l'autre, l'interdépendance de la révolution nationale et de la révolution sociale. Cette dernière question, cette interdépendance du national et du social-politique, ne pouvait laisser indifférentes aucune des tendances idéologiques en présence. Ces tendances sortirent toutes d'une guerre, d'une hécatombe qui, sans détacher la majorité du

4. Gilbert Badia, *Rosa Luxemburg, journaliste, polémiste, révolutionnaire* (Éditions Sociales, Paris, 1975), p. 50, 89 passim.
5. J.P. Nettl, *La vie et l'oeuvre de Rosa Luxemburg* (Maspero, Paris, 1972), 2 tomes.
6. Georg Lukacs, *Histoire et conscience de classe* (Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1960), 381 p.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 61-62.

prolétariat de la vieille social-démocratie, n'a pas manqué de démontrer aux yeux de tous le caractère meurtrier du militarisme et du social-chauvinisme. Même les sociaux-démocrates devaient se défendre contre de telles accusations et durent se déclarer hostiles au nationalisme et au militarisme.

Toutefois, à quelques rares exceptions près, nous retrouvons le nationalisme dans les idéologies de l'époque. Nous le retrouvons sous une forme ou une autre, ouvertement affiché ou camouflé, mais toujours présent. En Italie – peut-être est-ce la seule exception – le mouvement socialiste s'appuyait sur une solide tradition internationaliste et pacifiste. L'influence du nationalisme d'un Mussolini ou d'un D'Annunzio n'avait pas de prise dans le camp qui est resté fidèle au socialisme. Même Bissolati, qui était interventionniste en 1915, écrit à ce sujet Leo Valiani, abandonna en 1918 son mazzinisme hérité du *Risorgimento* pour dénoncer l'impérialisme nationaliste italien.[8] Cela s'explique aussi du fait, toujours selon Valiani, que le nationalisme italien, contrairement au nationalisme français, n'avait pas de fondements révolutionnaires jacobins. Ainsi, au lendemain d'une guerre qui, malgré tout, satisfit aux revendications nationales légitimes des Italiens, l'irrédentisme en Italie devint une tendance définitivement de droite, ne fut-ce qu'après un bref moment d'hésitation pendant lequel, par exemple, la Confédération générale du travail italienne a flirté avec l'idée de chercher une alliance avec D'Annunzio. Mais, répétons-le, c'était un moment passager sans beaucoup de conséquence et, finalement, la scission se faisait nettement: le nationalisme est devenu la base du programme de la droite, tandis que la gauche s'en est débarrassé.

Tout autre était, bien entendu, la situation en Allemagne, cette Allemagne vaincue, diminuée, humiliée. Aussi, jusqu'en 1933, se maintient en Allemagne, sous des formes variées, une sorte de *Nationalbolschewismus*. Retenons ici seulement les étapes de son évolution. Le bolchevisme national allemand est né d'une convergence d'hommes d'extrême-droite et d'extrême-gauche et avait son premier fief à Hambourg en 1919-1920. Ces chefs de file, Heinrich Laufenberg et Fritz Wolffheim, lancèrent, dès le mois d'octobre 1918, le slogan jacobin de la « transition de la révolution en guerre populaire ». En d'autres termes, au lieu de capituler, l'Allemagne devait, selon eux, reprendre la guerre en alliance avec la Russie soviétique contre l'Entente, tout-à-fait dans l'esprit de 1792 et dans le sillage de la pensée de Fouché et de Collot-d'Herbois. Dans le même esprit, les matelots insurgés de Wilhelmshaven répondirent à leur officier, qui s'inquiétait de la situation: « Si les Anglais viennent, nous demanderons tout de suite à messires les officiers de reprendre le commandement. Ici, l'ennemi ne passera pas ».[9]

De ce mouvement révolutionnaire de l'Allemagne du nord est né, finalement, le K.A.P.D., le parti ouvrier communiste allemand, opposé aux spartakistes, ainsi qu'à l'autre frange de la gauche, subissant notamment l'influence de la gauche hollandaise, Gorter, Pannekoek et d'autres. Toutefois, on ne peut pas prendre le K.A.P.D. comme identique au *Nationalbolschewismus*, d'autant plus que, plus tard, dès 1920, le K.A.P.D. prit ses distances vis-à-vis du bolchevisme national de Hambourg, notamment lors de son admission comme parti associé au Komintern en 1920. Ceux de Hambourg, les vrais national-bolchevistes, fondèrent alors leur parti sous le nom prestigieux de Ligue des communistes.[10]

Dans les lignes chronologiques de notre colloque, le dernier grand événement était la crise de la Ruhr. Il est inutile de revenir là-dessus, sauf, peut-être, pour ajouter qu'en même temps se tenait la dernière réunion du mouvement révolutionnaire nationaliste contre le Traité de Versailles: c'était la conférence d'Essen de janvier 1923 à laquelle participaient, en plus des Allemands, des Belges, des Italiens, des Français aussi, je crois.

L'immensité du sujet m'oblige à mentionner un seul autre exemple à propos de ce mélange de nationalisme et de bolchevisme, l'exemple de la République des soviets de

8. Leo Valiani, *Questioni di storia del socialismo* (Einaudi, Turin, 1975), p. 131.
9. Otto-Ernst Schuddekopf, *Linke Leute von Rechts. Die nationalrevolutionaren Minderheiten und der Kommunismus in der Weimarer Republik* (Kohlhammer, S. Stuttgart, 1960), p. 100, 107, 547.
10. Pierre Broué, *Révolution en Allemagne 1917-1923* (ouvrage fondamental) (Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1971), 988 p.

Hongrie. En effet, nulle part ailleurs l'internationalisme des communistes et des socialistes le fut mis à une telle épreuve qu'en Hongrie, du fait que le gouvernement révolutionnaire rit le pouvoir dans un pays diminué à un tiers de son territoire d'avant la guerre et xposé à la pression constante de l'Entente et de ses associés roumains et tchécoslovaques. 'ai omis les Serbes, parce que c'est une question à part. On a eu l'occasion d'en parler ier.[11] Aujourd'hui, je voudrais tout simplement que nous retenions le caractère ambigu le l'idéologie internationaliste d'un gouvernement de conseils qui se trouvait acculé à 'impératif de la défense nationale. Son ambiguité vient d'une situation historique pré- ise, elle n'en reste pas moins une ambiguïté.

La plus profonde parmi toutes les oppositions idéologiques concernait cependant 'objectif même de la révolution, c'est-à-dire sa forme politique et son contenu social- prolétarien. Le clivage entre toute la gauche, d'un côté, et les majoritaires et les centristes le droite, de l'autre, était net. Toute la gauche révolutionnaire se refusait de cautionner ne république purement social-démocratique dans laquelle, comme elle le prévoyait à uste titre, la bourgeoisie parviendrait à maintenir son pouvoir économique et, finale- ment aussi, politique. Le système qui allait naître de la lutte devait être, aux yeux de cette gauche, un socialisme vraiment prolétarien. Mais au-delà de cette unité, c'étaient es oppositions et, davantage encore, les confusions qui caractérisèrent la gauche révolu- ionnaire. Oppositions dans le sens qu'outre les tenants de la dictature du prolétariat dit « bolchevique », nous trouvons au moins deux autres tendances. Le luxemburgisme est relativement indifférent, ou, en tout cas, hésitant quant à la forme que devait prendre le nouveau pouvoir. Partisane certes du système des Soviets, Rosa Luxemburg était forte- ment opposée, comme on le sait, à la dissolution de la Constituante en Russie. Pour cette personnalité extrêmement forte du mouvement ouvrier, ce qui comptait était le contenu profondément démocratique de la révolution prolétarienne, et la forme l'intéressait moins. L'autre tendance, prenant ses distances vis-à-vis du bolchevisme, s'est manifestée dans tous les pays en question: c'était la gauche radicale, hostile non pas à la dictature du prolétariat, mais à toute structure bureaucratique, y compris le parti, susceptible d'usurper le pouvoir au nom du prolétariat. Choisi parmi mille autres exemples, un article d'Otto Rühle est significatif de cette tendance, « Die Revolution ist keine Parteisache » («La révolution n'est pas une affaire de parti »), article paru dans *Die Aktion*, au mois de mai 1920[12] C'est un exemple de ce radicalisme. Pour Rühle, le Parti communiste alle- mand n'est pas meilleur que les partis sociaux-bourgeois, tandis que le K.A.P.D., dit-il, n'est pas un parti politique que de nom. Le but de la révolution, selon Rühle, son contenu et sa forme ne font finalement qu'une seule et même chose: « le gouvernement des con- seils, le congrès révolutionnaire des conseils, la dictature communiste des conseils ». On pourrait citer, j'ai dit, des centaines d'articles dans la même veine, notamment de Pennekoek, de Gorter, de Karl Schröder.

L'idée d'organiser la révolution et le futur pouvoir ouvrier à partir de la base était donc commune à plusieurs tendances qui ne manifestaient pas toutes, cependant, une position égale vis-à-vis du parti et de la dictature du prolétariat de type bolchevique. On a déjà mentionné à ce propos le nom de Luxemburg, auquel on pourrait ajouter aussi celui de Gramsci, en dépit des fortes différences entre l'idéologie des deux personnages dans d'autres domaines. Toutefois le « conseillisme » de Gramsci, à la base de l'expé- rience turinoise surtout, était aussi une idéologie basée non pas (ou pas encore, à cette époque) sur le parti, mais, comme l'écrivait Caracciolo, cité par Robert Paris, sur « une floraison de nouveaux pouvoirs qui s'élèvent irrésistiblement des grandes masses travail- leuses ». Et, toujours selon Caracciolo, ce trait de Gramsci n'aurait pas été le caractère exclusif de sa période de l'*Ordine Nuovo*. « Ce refus de la priorité du parti, cette volonté de faire l'État ouvrier, l'État des conseils des producteurs, préside même », estime Carac- ciolo, « à la totalité de l'itinéraire de Gramsci ».[13]

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11. Istvan Deak et Miklos Molnar, *Rapports*.
12. *Die Linke gegen die Parteiherrschaft*. Herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Frits Kool, *Dokumente der Weltrevolution* (Walter Verlag, Olten und Freiburg in Breisgau, 1970), p. 337.
13. Antonio Gramsci, *Écrits politiques, II: 1921-1922* (Gallimard, Paris, 1975), p. 30-31, Introduction de Robert Paris.

Quand à l'idéologie de la République des conseils de Hongrie, elle offre un mélange assez confus de tous les éléments dont il était jusqu'ici question. Les partenaires socialistes et communistes unis dans le nouveau parti acceptaient le principe bolchevique de la dictature du prolétariat jusque dans son ultime conséquence: la dictature du parti. Néanmoins, pour une fois, la pratique s'est révélée moins radicalement bolchevique que l'idéologie affichée. En tous cas, je suis d'avis qu'on ne saurait pas affirmer que le parti ait entièrement repoussé l'arrière-plan les conseils dont l'élan l'avait hissé au pouvoir.

En dépit de la dualité permanente d'un système de commissaires à tous les niveaux, représentant le pouvoir central, d'un côté, et un système de conseils, de l'autre, le gouvernement révolutionnaire a souvent laissé des compétences larges aux conseils d'usines ainsi qu'aux conseils municipaux, dont celui de la capitale. Les procès-verbaux de l'Assemblée nationale des conseils de Hongrie, ce « parlement ouvrier », témoignent également, sinon de l'existence d'une authentique démocratie des conseils, tout au moins du poids indéniable de ce parlement populaire dans le processus de prise de décision.[14]

3) Enfin, les problèmes du pouvoir du parti et de l'organisation, qui constituent le dernier volet de la même problématique. La question du pouvoir et du parti n'est rien d'autre que le prolongement au niveau de la tactique et de l'action des grandes oppositions idéologiques. La plus importante controverse, on l'a déjà citée, est la controverse entre Lénine et Rosa Luxemburg, qui s'est manifestée à tous les niveaux: théorique, stratégique et, finalement, tactique, niveau de l'action. À ce niveau-là, c'est le problème du parti; il y a certes beaucoup d'autres problèmes non-négligeables, celui de la terreur, par exemple, mais on ne peut pas parler de tout. Ainsi, je voudrais en isoler un seul élément – le problème du parti et du pouvoir – et encore, présenter cela sous une forme condensée, sous une formule de Rosa Luxemburg elle-même. En effet, cette formule renferme, à mon sens, l'ensemble de la problématique. « La ligue Spartakus se refusera à accéder au pouvoir à la place des dirigeants actuels lorsque Scheidemann et Ebert auront fait leur temps. Si Spartakus s'empare du pouvoir, ce sera sous la forme de la volonté claire, indubitable, de la grande majorité des masses prolétariennes, dans toute l'Allemagne, et pas autrement que sous la forme de leur adhésion consciente aux perspectives, aux buts et aux méthodes de la lutte propagés par la Ligue ». Et vient ensuite la phrase-clé: « La victoire de Spartakus ne se situe pas au début, mais à la fin de la révolution ».[15]

En guise de conclusion, je voudrais encore revenir sur cet ensemble de la problématique, en m'appuyant sur un texte de Lukács. En effet, très peu nombreux étaient les idéologues, à l'époque, qui essayaient d'élever le débat au-dessus des considérations du moment, à un niveau d'abstraction théorique. Parmi eux se trouvait, sans aucun doute, Georg Lukács. De son grand ouvrage de l'époque, *Geschischte und Klassenbewustsein*, que j'ai déjà cité tout à l'heure, je voudrais retenir seulement deux aspects. Le premier: idéologie et organisation. En effet, c'est Lukács qui nous fait comprendre comment et pourquoi, à cette époque que nous étudions, toute l'attention semblait être accaparée par des problèmes d'organisation. Le lecteur s'étonne que les problèmes économiques, politiques ou proprement idéologiques de fond sont à peine touchés: toute l'attention semble être concentrée sur les problèmes d'organisation. Lukács donne à ce phénomène une explication sur deux plans.

Sur le plan historique, ce fait tient au passé de la social-démocratie et à la symbiose, pendant de longues années, au sein de la social-démocratie de la fraction majoritaire de droite, opportuniste, de la faction centriste, et enfin de l'aile gauche radicale. Pendant toute l'existence de la Deuxième Internationale, ces tendances se sont maintenues en une seule organisation; elles ont préservé l'unité du parti. Selon Lukács, la social-démocratie admettait alors assez facilement et volontiers de discuter des problèmes idéologiques à un niveau d'abstraction théorique, tant que l'opposition ne mettait en question cette unité et que le débat restait à un niveau théorique ne touchant pas à l'organisation, c'est-à-dire au parti. D'où aussi la conclusion de Lukács que ce fut précisément la nouvelle

14. *A Tanacsok orszagos gyülésének (1919 junius 14 – 1919 junius 23) naploja* (Procès-verbaux de l'Assemblée Nationale des Conseils) (Budapest, Atheneum, 1919).
15. Cité dans *Révolution en Allemagne* par Pierre Broué (Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1971), p. 222.

rganisation léninienne du parti qui portait le coup idéologique le plus dur à la social-émocratie: la création d'un parti radical révolutionnaire d'opposition qui fit crever 'abcès de l'unité factice. L'autre plan est l'explication théorique du même phénomène. elon Lukács, l'organisation est la médiation entre la théorie et la praxis. Je voudrais ire un petit passage à ce sujet: « Ce caractère de l'organisation, médiatrice entre la théorie t la praxis, apparaît le plus clairement dans le fait que l'organisation manifeste, pour la livergence entre les tendances, une sensibilité beaucoup plus grande, plus fine et plus ûre que tout autre domaine de la pensée et de l'action politiques. Alors que, dans la pure héorie, les conceptions et les tendances les plus diverses peuvent coexister en paix, leur pposition ne prenant que la forme de discussions qui peuvent se dérouler tranquillement lans le cadre d'une seule et même organisation, sans la faire obligatoirement éclater, les nêmes questions se présentent, quand elles s'appliquent aux questions d'organisation, omme des tendances rigides et s'excluant l'une l'autre ».[16]

À partir de cette explication théorique, Lukács, dans son deuxième article consacré à Rosa Luxemburg (vous vous souvenez, on a cité le premier, où il montre le côté positif de Luxemburg: Rosa Luxemburg, marviste), critique très vivement Rosa Luxemburg. Je résume sa critique en un passage très condensé: « Rosa Luxemburg se joint . . . à ceux qui désapprouvent, de la façon la plus nette, la dissolution de la Constituante, la construction du système des conseils, la dépossession de la bourgeoisie de ses droits, le manque de liberté', le recours à la terreur, etc. » écrit Lukács. Par la suite, il essaie de démontrer que spontanéité, maturation des masses, majorité consciente, toutes ces notions chères à Rosa Luxemburg et qui soutiennent son opposition au système bolchevique ne sont « qu'illusion d'une révolution 'organique' purement prolétarienne.[17] Il critique cette illusion à partir de deux constatations. Premièrement dans la praxis, la révolution prolétarienne n'est pas purement prolétarienne, parce qu'elle charrie avec elle bien d'autres couches de la population: petite bourgeoisie, paysannerie, lumpenproletariat et ainsi de suite. D'où le devoir d'une organisation de contenir cette masse qui déferle sur la cause purement prolétarienne. Donc, c'est le caractère mixte de la révolution prolétarienne qui est la base du premier raisonnement. Deuxièmement, la notion de conscience de classe est, idéologiquement, une notion historique de longue durée, qu'il ne faut pas confondre avec la conscience de classe du prolétariat en chair et en os, telle qu'elle se présente dans une situation donnée de l'histoire. Ainsi, toujours selon Lukács, la situation révolutionnaire des années de guerre et d'après-guerre, au lieu de trouver un prolétariat ayant une conscience de classe mûre, est plutôt un théâtre, une occasion de l'histoire pour développer cette concience de classe qui n'existe que comme une virtualité historique. « Ce qu'il y a de nouveau dans le processus de formation des partis communistes », écrit Lukács à ce propos, « c'est simplement la relation modifiée entre activité spontanée et prévision consciente théorique, c'est la disparition progressive de la pure structure retardataire (*post festum*) de la conscience bourgeoise réifiée et purement 'contemplative', la lutte constante contre cette structure. Cette relation modifiée repose sur le fait qu'à ce niveau de l'évolution il existe déjà, pour la conscience de classe du prolétariat, la *possibilité objective* de n'avoir plus une vue simplement retardataire de sa propre situation de classe et de l'activité correcte qui y correspond ».[18]

Voilà donc ce dernier point et qui prouve, à mon sens, qu'en fin de compte, Lukács, en tous cas cette deuxième partie polémique de son oeuvre, fournit une justification idéologique du concept de parti de Lénine. Que Lukács ait eu tort ou raison de justifier cette conception du parti de Lénine vis-à-vis, non pas seulement des adversaires centristes, mais aussi vis-à-vis des spartakistes et de Rosa Luxemburg, je ne pose pas la question. Nous ne sommes pas ici pour juger, mais pour apprendre. En tout cas, Lukács a eu un immense mérite.

À un moment où Gramsci s'alignait sur le Komintern, où Rosa Luxemburg était morte, où Levi était sur le point d'être chassé du parti, où Lénine était absorbé par ses

16. Georg Lukacs, *op. cit.*, p. 338.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 342.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 358.

tâches de chef d'État et de révolution, dans ce moment de l'histoire, quand les grands idéologues n'étaient plus, ou bien se voyaient absorbés dans les mouvements de tous les jours, Lukács a eu le mérite de situer la polémique à un autre niveau que des querelles de factions: au niveau de l'Histoire.

Summary

Professor Molnar divides his presentation into three parts: 1) the problem in its historical context, 2) certain ideological models and, 3) some selected topics. In the first section, Prof. Molnar defines ideology as a systematic form of knowledge based on past experience. An investigation of ideology, he asserts, must include not only a study of the philosophy, but also of the collective mentality, the revolutionary strategy and the plans for action. Such a broad inquiry is necessary, according to Prof. Molnar, in order to understand the fluid situation in the years 1917-1922.

In the second section, Prof. Molnar stresses the importance of four models as points of departure of further discussion. His first model, the Bolshevik model, played a fundamental role in the period 1917-1922 both as an example to follow and as a system of ideological reference. His other models include the Spartacist, the romantic revolutionaries and the "council" movement.

In his third section, the author elaborates on the question of ideological options. On the ideological level, he asserts that the options pose the questions of determinism versus volontarism, of spontaneous mass movements as opposed to the prepared action of elite groups and of the principle of education versus "putschism". Within this context Prof. Molnar concentrates most of his discussion on the varied approaches to these problems offered by Lenin, Luxemburg, Gramsci and Lukács and he concludes by applauding Lukács for having lifted these issues from the level of factional quarrels to a more important level, that of History.

Problèmes d'ordre idéologique / Session on Ideological Problems

Discussion

T. Hentsch. Je ne sais pas si ma question est vraiment reliée à ce que vous venez de dire, à la citation que vous venez de faire de Lukács, sur le problème de la transition, de l'organisation comme transition, médiation entre la théorie et la praxis, mais j'aimerais vous poser une question à propos d'une prise de position de Lénine, au IVe Congrès de l'Internationale, lorsqu'il s'effraie du caractère trop « russe » de certaines résolutions, notamment d'une résolution du Congrès précédent sur l'organisation, justement, du parti. Est-ce que vous savez ce que Lénine entend exactement, par cette expression: « trop russe »? Et il dit: « Nous n'avons pas su, – je ne sais pas exactement comment il le dit mais, – nous n'avons pas su transmettre aux ouvriers des autres pays, – je crois même qu'il dit « aux ouvriers occidentaux », – nos expériences ». Est-ce qu'il n'y pas là, un problème crucial, vu par Lénine, justement sur ce point de la médiation que constitue l'organisation du parti, l'organisation des masses?

M. Molnar. Je ne pourrais pas vous répondre de façon tout à fait concrète, car je n'ai pas en tête les circonstances et les raisons qui ont motivé cette intervention de Lénine, à ce moment-là, au Congrès. Ce que je sais, c'est seulement que Lénine était très partagé, lui-même, entre deux choses: d'un côté, il fut convaincu que finalement le modèle bolchevique est le seul qui ait fait ses preuves.

Cela se voit dans les vingt-et-une conditions et dans l'esprit qui a présidé à l'organisation du Komintern. Mais, d'un autre côté, je vois dans le Lénine de ces années, un homme tourmenté, en tout cas inquiet, précisément du fait que ce modèle russe qui est un modèle « semi-asiatique », « semi-barbare », prend une importance démesurée et s'impose par les faits, peut-être, et aussi par le zèle de certains personnages, à des organisations ouvrières des pays qui seraient probablement capables de développer des modèles plus évolués. À plus d'une reprise, n'est-ce pas, Lénine souligne le caractère arriéré, asiatique, peu développé du mouvement, non seulement de la Russie par rapport à une Allemagne industrialisée, mais aussi du mouvement russe. Il dit que « demain, quand la révolution allemande triomphera, nous devrons reprendre notre rôle marginal et c'est nous qui apprendrons la leçon de nos camarades allemands ». Donc, je crois qu'il était tiraillé entre ces deux sentiments: d'un côté ce sentiment que « c'est nous qui avons le modèle efficace, ils n'ont qu'à suivre », de l'autre côté cette inquiétude fondamentale. Lénine était un idéologue, un théoricien, – selon certains même un philosophe, j'en doute, peu importe, – donc, en tout cas, un homme tout à fait capable de mener un débat idéologique; mais dans les années après 1917, il était trop absorbé par ses tâches pour beaucoup réfléchir sur ce caractère de médiation de l'organisation entre la théorie et la pratique.

P. Broué. Les interventions de Lénine les plus pénétrantes sur ces questions se situent au lendemain de ses premières attaques, quand il vient précisément de prendre une certaine distance par rapport aux tâches immédiates. À cette époque, on trouve sous sa plume, non seulement de fréquentes références à la démocratie nécessaire, mais des réflexions sévères sur « le mensonge communiste », « la prétention communiste ». Son

intervention au 4e congrès de l'Internationale communiste est presque une intervention « de loin », en tout cas « de haut » qui reflète à la fois le recul qu'il a pris et les conclusions qu'il en tire. C'est en effet parce qu'il a pris du recul qu'il porte une appréciation. Son discours est clair; il dit, en substance: « Nous avons traduit nos résolutions dans toutes les langues, mais nous ne les avons pas traduites à travers l'expérience vécue des prolétariats de tous les pays, c'est-à-dire que nous n'avons rien traduit. »

M. Molnar. Il y a un ouvrage dont je me rappelle maintenant, de Levi, je crois, « Le dernier combat de Lénine ».

D. Lamoureux. Je pense qu'il faut aussi souligner le fait que, à cause justement de la victoire de la révolution russe et parce que c'était la seule révolution victorieuse à l'époque, on a eu tendance à fétichiser les formes organisationnelles de la révolution russe, au détriment de ce qui constituait l'essence de la théorie léniniste, en quelque sorte, c'est-à-dire les modalités de formation de la conscience de classe prolétarienne; et ça, c'est particulièrement visible dans les débats des premiers congrès de l'Internationale communiste, cette fétichisation formelle.

F. Pechatchek. Est-ce que c'est une observation légitime que de dire que, cinquante ans après la période que vous venez de décrire, rien n'a changé énormément?

M. Molnar. Je suis assez de votre avis, c'est un débat permanent qui remonte plus loin dans l'histoire que les mouvements de 1917 et de 1922 et qui subsiste de nos jours encore.

F. Pechatchek. C'est ce qui s'applique aujourd'hui?

M. Molnar. Dans la désintégration de la première Internationale, on trouve déjà les mêmes problèmes de spontanéité des masses, d'un côté, et cet esprit centralisateur qui met l'accent sur la nécessité de l'organisation et de l'encadrement des mouvements par une sorte de parti – ce n'était pas encore un parti constitué, mais une première ébauche de parti. Oui, c'est un débat éternel et sur lequel on a beaucoup écrit; mais je ne connais pas d'ouvrage, de grand ouvrage de synthèse, qui donnerait une explication approfondie de la question de savoir d'où vient, précisément, cette proposition qui renaît à chaque occasion historique, dans des circonstances différentes et sous des formes différentes, mais qui renaît quand même en ce qui concerne le fond.

Y. Brossard. Monsieur Molnar, vous avez dit, dans votre exposé, qu'après 1917, il était difficile de faire une révolution sans se référer au modèle bolchevique, soit pour s'en démarquer, soit pour s'y identifier. Alors je veux vous demander si vous ne croyez pas que la situation en Allemagne, entre 1919 et 1922, est une illustration et, jusqu'à un certain point, une cristallisation de ces deux attitudes, de ces deux positions possibles, face au modèle bolchevique. Est-ce que vous ne croyez pas que, jusqu'à un certain point, ça expliquerait l'échec du mouvement révolutionnaire en Allemagne, en ce sens que, d'un côté, nous avons eu les socialistes dits majoritaires qui, semble-t-il, sont partis avec l'a priori dogmatique de se démarquer de ce modèle bolchevique et que, d'autre part, nous avons eu les spartakistes et, plus tard, les communistes, qui sont partis eux aussi avec l'a priori de s'identifier, d'une façon non moins dogmatique, avec cette révolution; si bien que l'espèce de synthèse, pour ainsi dire, entre démocratie et socialisme, qui aurait pu permettre le succès de ce mouvement révolutionnaire, est impossible et, en même temps, cet échec, d'une certaine façon, porte peut-être en germe l'échec encore plus grand des années 1930, l'avènement du fascisme en Allemagne.

M. Molnar. Je ne suis pas, moi-même, spécialiste de l'histoire allemande et j'ai des doutes en ce qui concerne l'existence d'une opposition aussi tranchée. Pierre Broué pourrait éclairer notre lanterne sur ce point, beaucoup mieux que moi. Je vois plutôt le fait qu'il y a, d'un côté, un modèle assez bien défini, assez clair, ne fût-ce que du fait de l'expérience bolchevique qui durait déjà depuis un moment. Tandis que, de l'autre côté, il y a le modèle social-démocrate ancien, mais en ce qui concerne la gauche révolutionnaire non bolchevique, elle n'a pas développé qu'un seul modèle. Il y a là beaucoup de confusion.

P. Broué. Oui, je crois que tu as raison. J'ajoute que ce qui me frappe, c'est qu'au fur et à mesure que le temps passe – c'est-à-dire que la révolution allemande ne remporte

pas la victoire – les révolutionnaires allemands tendent à se rapprocher toujours plus du « modèle bolchevique » – je préfère dire: à prendre l'expérience bolchevique comme modèle. Par exemple, dans les discussions avec certains spartakistes, ces derniers, au début de 1919 – je pense au débat avec Thalheimer sur « le chemin de la révolution » – n'ont aucun complexe. Thalheimer dit en somme qu'ils sont d'accord avec les Russes de façon générale et ajoute: « Ceci dit, nous, nous ferons autrement parce que nous allons le faire dans des conditions adaptées à l'Allemagne ». Mais, six mois plus tard, il y a le putsch de Kapp, et c'est le même Thalheimer qui écrit la proclamation de la Centrale affirmant que « la classe ouvrière allemande ne bougera pas le petit doigt » . . . quelques heures avant la plus grande grève générale de l'histoire allemande. Désormais Thalheimer est beaucoup plus « petit garçon » en face de Lénine. Dans une discussion avec Frölich, peu avant sa mort, il disait: « Plus nous avons essuyé de défaites et plus nous nous sommes persuadés que nous ne savions rien, et en tout cas, que nous ne pouvions avoir raison contre les Russes, car eux, ils avaient vaincu . . . » Je préférerais, au lieu de marquer une opposition, tracer une courbe: peu à peu, cette opposition initiale, ces réserves, ces divergences, ces nuances, s'estompent devant l'exemple du succès dont on mesure de plus en plus l'importance – et la difficulté. Et je tracerais cette courbe en partant du début, des lendemains de la révolution d'octobre.

M. Molnar. Donc, c'est l'efficacité, l'esprit de l'efficacité qui, finalement, estompe les différences et diminue . . .

A. Donneur. . . . Avec, aussi, c'est frappant, une incapacité de voir les problèmes sur une très longue durée, avec un besoin d'une histoire se déroulant à un rythme extrêmement rapide, dans un court terme, et cela à cause de l'exemple de la victoire bolchevique. Au point de vue des contradictions des modèles, je pense que le modèle austro-marxiste est extrêmement intéressant. Dans le parti social-démocrate autrichien qui a rallié l'écrasante majorité de la classe ouvrière derrière lui, l'élément communiste est relativement faible, encore plus faible que l'aile spartakiste dans le Parti social-démocrate indépendant allemand (U.S.P.D.). Ce qui est frappant aussi, c'est les débats à l'intérieur du parti, où finalement il y a toutes les nuances: il y a une position sociale-démocrate, qui n'est pas aussi à droite que la droite social-démocrate allemande, mais correspond en tout cas, à la gauche de ce parti et à la droite des indépendants (Bernstein et Kautsky); il y a également l'équivalent de la gauche indépendante allemande et du centre gauche indépendant. Il y a donc toutes sortes de nuances dans les années 1920-1921; et cela continue finalement jusqu'à la défaite de 1934; à ce moment-là, Bauer lui-même dit que les bolcheviks avaient largement raison sur la prise du pouvoir et sur la forme de la dictature du prolétariat.

M. Molnar. Est-ce que tu vois, en Autriche, une tendance dont certains traits pourraient être empruntés pour dessiner un modèle national, bolchevique-national? Est-ce qu'il y a, en Autriche, quelque chose qui ressemble au *National bolchewismus* des Allemands?

A. Donneur. Non; je me trompe peut-être, mais je ne crois pas.

M. Molnar. Sur ce plan-là c'est plutôt la Hongrie qui fournit l'exemple, par la force des choses, parce qu'acculée à la défense nationale. Ça a créé, au sein du parti et même du mouvement des conseils en Hongrie, non pas un *National bolchewismus* sous cette forme aussi extrême qu'en Allemagne, mais quand même un esprit jacobin qui voulait combiner la défense nationale contre l'Entente avec la révolution mondiale. Je me rappelle une phrase de Béla Kun, qui n'est pas dans ses écrits publiés, mais qui figure dans les procès-verbaux des séances du gouvernement, où il est dit que par cette méthode, c'est-à-dire en élevant le drapeau de la révolution française, « nous parviendrons finalement à Vienne, puis à Berlin et enfin à Paris ». Je ne veux pas faire dévier la discussion sur ce point là. Je posais simplement la question parce que j'avoue mon ignorance en ce qui concerne l'Autriche et l'Italie. Alors je croyais que, peut-être, on pourrait compléter.

Y. Brossard. Puisque nous parlons de l'Autriche, ma question s'adresse à André Donneur: est-ce que, justement, en Autriche, cette dichotomie entre partisans du modèle réformiste et partisans du modèle bolchevique n'était pas beaucoup moins radicale et que,

par conséquent, ses conséquences ne furent pas beaucoup moins dramatiques aussi, en ce qui concerne l'évolution de la situation politique, des rapports de force en Autriche dans les années 1920.

A. Donneur. Mais ça aboutit, d'un autre côté, à une paralysie de ce qui aurait pu constituer l'équivalent de la faction révolutionnaire, du groupe de tendance révolutionnaire à l'intérieur du parti social-démocrate indépendant allemand. Ce groupe-là, en Autriche, reste paralysé à l'intérieur du grand parti. Donc, c'est beaucoup moins dramatique aussi! Mais il faut bien dire aussi qu'il y a d'autres aspects en Autriche qui sont extrêmement intéressants. Le fait, par exemple, qu'en Autriche, l'armée est une armée socialiste dans la première période, la *Volkswehr*. Et je conteste l'interprétation du professeur Carsten dans son intervention d'hier. Je pense que le contrôle central de la *Volkswehr* est entre les mains de Julius Deutsch, c'est-à-dire d'un des militants du parti socialiste qui est ministre de la guerre; ce qui est curieux, finalement. D'autre part, des conseils ouvriers sont organisés et jouent un rôle extrêmement important dans les centres où ils le peuvent, surtout à Vienne et n'oublions pas que Vienne, c'est deux millions sur huit millions d'habitants. Evidemment, la paysannerie ne joue pas un rôle important, car elle est petite. Ce qui frappe, finalement, c'est qu'il y aurait un modèle autrichien possible. Il y a une armée, il y a des conseils qui sont installés et cela ne se développe pas autrement que par ce compromis avec les chrétiens-sociaux qui aboutit finalement à une assemblée nationale, comme en Allemagne et en plus, à laisser le pouvoir aux chrétiens-sociaux et aux pangermanistes.

P. Pilisi. J'aimerais faire part de mes pensées sur deux points, soit: les aspects idéologiques et l'interdépendance nationale, éléments soumis par M. Molnar; et, d'autre part, un troisième aspect, le fédéralisme à cette période révolutionnaire, me paraît absolument important. Si on regarde du point de vue idéologique, surtout – je parle de l'Europe centrale et de l'Europe de l'Est, – on sait que, dès le début de ce siècle, les partis sociaux-démocrates se sont prononcés pour les fédéralismes régionaux, soit pour le fédéralisme balkanique, soit pour le fédéralisme danubien, par la voix de dirigeants tels que Popovici, Jaszi, Benev ou Hodza.[1] Et ainsi, dans son livre qui est paru au moment de la révolution bourgeoise social-démocrate hongroise, en 1918, O. Jaszi propose l'établissement des États-Unis danubiens. Alors à l'occasion des congrès des partis social-démocrates balkaniques, en 1910, auxquels participaient les partis bulgare et yougoslave, le congrès a décidé, au moins a pris position en faveur du fédéralisme régional.

M. Molnar. Quelle date s'il-vous-plaît?

P. Pilisi. En 1910. C'était au mois d'octobre, si je ne me trompe pas, à Belgrade, en Yougoslavie. Juste vers la fin de la première guerre mondiale, au mois de novembre, il y avait eu la réunion des sociaux-démocrates yougoslaves et roumains qui se sont prononcés pour le fédéralisme, alors, en Europe centrale. Or, en Russie, pendant la première guerre mondiale, les partis communistes (dont le parti hongrois constitué à Tomks, en 1916), affiliés au parti bolchevique soviétique, se réunirent sous la présidence de Lénine, en octobre 1918, et alors le programme commun de cette réunion fut de transformer la monarchie austro-hongroise en un fédéralisme socialiste; *la Pravda* confirme le tout le 2 février, aussi bien que le message de Sverdlov et de Lénine. Alors, du point idéologique, Georg Lukács, qui était à l'époque ministre de la culture et qui dirigeait également la revue internationale des communistes hongrois, l'*Internationale*, a soutenu les idées et projets fédéralistes.

Mais des dissensions idéologiques apparaissent au sein du mouvement communiste centre-européen. Ainsi, les communistes autrichiens étaient en faveur de l'autonomie municipale qui était plus proche, à peu près, de la Commune de Paris de 1871. La même position fut adoptée par les Ruthéniens, c'est-à-dire par les Ukrainiens de la région subcarpatique, alors que les autres, les Roumains et les Hongrois, pour des raisons

1. Cf. Renner, K. *Grundlagen und Entwicklungsziele der Österreichisten – Ungarischen Moharchie.* Wien – Leipsig, 1906.

différentes, étaient en faveur de certaines transformations fédéralistes. A mon avis, l'importance est capitale, parce que la République soviétique hongroise de 1919 était en même temps une république fédéraliste, n'est-ce pas? République fédéraliste qui voulait transformer l'ancienne monarchie en un fédéralisme des peuples où le prolétariat exercerait le pouvoir. Comme nous l'avons souligné, il y a des questions au sujet de la défense nationale, et les Yougoslaves et les Roumains, qui sont des communistes, luttaient dans les rangs de l'Armée Rouge hongroise contre la bourgeoisie tchécoslovaque, yougoslave et roumaine. J'aimerais souligner ici que, du point de vue de l'historiographie politique, l'aspect fédéraliste de la République soviétique hongroise n'a pu être relevé qu'après la mort de Staline; par exemple, le message de Lénine et de Sverldov a été découvert dans les archives du parti après la mort de Staline. D'ailleurs, ces idées influencent le mouvement communiste de l'Europe centrale, notamment à l'occasion de le révolution de 1956, quand Georg Lukács, ministre de l'État, déclarait: « nous avions déjà certaines idées sur l'intégration et sur la coopération socialiste, donc nous voulons retourner à ces principes ». Pour finir, j'aimerais souligner les effets importants de cette pensée fédéraliste parce que, après la deuxième guerre mondiale, comme Walter Lipgens souligne dans son livre, *Les plans fédéralistes des mouvements de la résistance entre 1940 et 1945*, les meilleurs politiciens communistes de l'Europe centrale, tel que Nagy, Patrascanu, Tito et Dimitrov, vont recourir à cet héritage et seront favorables à un projet, soit de fédération balkanique, soit de fédération danubienne, mais ils seront liquidés par Staline. Et même, dans certains aspects de la politique de Kádár, entre 1964-1969, on a un certain retour à cet héritage idéologique. Pour finir, j'aimerais souligner l'importance historique de cette expérience de la République soviétique hongroise, qui a préconisé l'interdépendance nationale, donc, au niveau de relations étatiques; seule la république autrichienne a reconnu cette république fédérale qui a assuré alors une partie d'autonomie à la Slovaquie occidentale, une autonomie pour la population allemande du sud et de l'ouest, pour la région subcarparique et pour la Slovénie. Maintenant, cette interdépendance nationale, dans les circonstances historiques, évidemment, n'a pas été réalisable; mais comment pourrait-on alors expliquer, au moins substantiellement, ces conflits autour de l'interdépendance nationale et, d'autre part, entre l'idéologie internationaliste et le fait national. Comme on le sait, cette République soviétique de Hongrie a précédé d'une certaine façon la structure du fédéralisme soviétique. Mais c'était quand même une expérience vécue, et ce fut la seule expérience vécue où un homme comme Georg Lukács eut des idées originales sur les structures fédérales d'un empire multi-national.

A. Macleod. Peut-être qu'on pourrait élargir le problème sur cette question que vous avez soulevée tout à l'heure et qui me semble un thème très important: cette dichotomie entre le national et l'international. Elargir au-delà de la Hongrie, sans oublier que c'est un cas très important.

M. Molnar. Trois points me viennent à l'esprit à propos de cette question. Premièrement, en ce qui concerne le fédéralisme: peut-on le considérer comme une tradition incontestée du mouvement ouvrier socialiste? Non, absolument pas. Il faut quand même rappeler la méfiance, l'hostilité même, de Marx et d'Engels vis-à-vis du fédéralisme. La « république une et indivisible », c'était bien le slogan des communistes, tout au long du XIX siècle, face aux fédéralismes proudhonien, bakouninien, anarchiste, pour des raisons qui sont en dehors de notre sujet. Ce que les marxistes, à l'époque, craignaient, c'est que le fédéralisme suscite ou ressuscite cette idée d'organisation sociale à la Proudhon, à savoir cette fédération des communes, des provinces, des États, cette république universelle fédéraliste mondiale qui était tout à fait contraire aux conceptions de Marx. Donc, il faut avoir à l'esprit que le fédéralisme n'est nullement une tradition incontestée dans le mouvement ouvrier. Cela dit, cette idée a quand même prévalu dans la social-démocratie, entre les deux guerres: de grands partis et de forts courants cherchaient à résoudre la dichotomie du social et du national, précisément par l'issue du fédéralisme. Seulement, là, l'unanimité était loin d'être faite: d'abord, pour des raisons bien évidentes, la social-démocratie autrichienne était le porte-parole du fédéralisme. Mais vous connaissez très bien l'histoire de ce parti social-démocrate et de l'éclatement successif du *Gesamtpartei*, du parti autrichien « ensemble », par la dissidence des Tchèques et d'autres groupes. Donc, avant

la guerre, pas d'unanimité, parce que l'esprit d'indépendance nationale prévalait de plus en plus, même au sein des partis sociaux-démocrates sur l'esprit de fédéralisme et contre ce que Renner – vous avez cité Renner tout à l'heure, – proposait comme solution à l'intérieur, à savoir l'autonomie culturelle. Maintenant, venons-en à la troisième étape de cette évolution de 1910 à 1919. Je ne suis pas convaincu que l'expérience de la République des conseils de Hongrie soit une expérience concluante. Non seulement parce qu'elle était trop courte (en cinq mois rien ne pouvait se faire), mais aussi parce que ce n'était pas un véritable fédéralisme. C'était un camouflage, finalement, d'un objet politique territorial, dont je ne conteste nullement la légitimité, du point de vue national, parce qu'il s'agissait cette fois-ci, du côté hongrois, de se battre pour l'autodétermination des Hongrois. On n'est plus dans la monarchie où la Hongrie détient, sous la couronne de Saint Etienne, quatorze millions de Slovaques, de Slaves et de Roumains. On est dans la Hongrie de 1919 où au contraire trois millions de Hongrois habitent des territoires séparés de la Hongrie par la ligne de démarcation fixée par l'Entente. Donc, quand je parle de la nature non concluante de l'expérience hongroise, je ne conteste nullement la légitimité de l'objectif, du point de vue d'une politique nationale. Néanmoins, je suis d'avis que cette forme fédérative qu'avait envisagée le gouvernement des conseils de Hongrie en 1919, était destinée à camoufler l'objectif de maintenir dans le cadre de la Hongrie soviétique le maximum de territoires et de populations de l'ancienne Hongrie, y compris certaines régions mixtes. Donc, l'idée de fédération était censée donner une légitimité à la souveraineté hongroise dans les territoires mixtes, plus précisément en Slovaquie orientale et dans le Burgenland. En ce qui concerne la troisième province fédérée, parler de population mixte serait un euphémisme, parce que cette troisième région, c'était la Ruthénie, autrement dit l'Ukraine subcarpatique. Il y avait là quelques populations hongroises, mais la majorité était nettement ruthène. Alors dans l'idée d'incorporer la Ruthénie dans une république fédérative hongroise des conseils, je vois en tous cas un mélange d'objectifs nationaux et socialistes. Maintenant, en ce qui concerne la suite, le problème devient brutalement simple. Les dirigeants soviétiques – vous avez parlé des projets de confédération d'après la deuxième guerre mondiale – ont tout simplement laissé Tito, Dimitrov et peut-être aussi les Roumains, jouer un peu avec cette idée d'une confédération danubienne et, finalement, Staline a mis fin à cette tentative d'une manière absolument brutale: il l'a balayée, il l'a interdite. Pourquoi? La raison en est claire. Elle relève de toute autre chose que les obstacles du fédéralisme au XIXe siècle ou au début de 1919. Tout simplement, la politique de l'Union soviétique vis-à-vis de l'Europe de l'Est consistait à maintenir des relations exclusivement bilatérales, parce que c'est par les relations bilatérales seulement que le gouvernement soviétique était capable de maintenir le système de domination. Elle voulait à tout prix empêcher de créer des *Schwerpunkte*, des centres de gravité politiques dans son orbite. C'est purement politique, l'idéologie n'a rien à voir là-dedans.

A. Macleod. Est-ce qu'on pourrait peut-être aller dans une autre voie?

Y. Brossard. J'ai une autre question qui se réfère à une partie de votre exposé que vous avez appelée « les grandes options ». Vous y avez énuméré un certain nombre de couples antagonistes, pour ainsi dire; par exemple: Lénine contre Rosa Luxemburg, organisation contre putschisme. Je ne sais pas si, dans votre esprit, vous établissiez une correspondance ou une adéquation entre Lénine et organisation, Luxemburg et putschisme. Toujours est-il que ma question est la suivante (et elle s'adresse un peu à M. Broué, également): est-ce que vous ne croyez pas que, entre 1921 et 1923, la politique bolchevique – si on pense, par exemple, à l'action de mars 1921 et à l'octobre allemand – ressortait d'une façon particulièrement frappante au putschisme plutôt qu'à l'organisation? Si c'est le cas, il y a certainement des raisons à cela et ceux qui apporteront la réponse pourront les invoquer; mais le sens de ma question est celui-ci: il me semble, personnellement, que le 23 octobre la ligne générale de la politique des bolcheviks, en ce qui concerne l'Allemagne, apparemment du moins, relevait beaucoup plus du putschisme que de l'organisation.

M. Molnar. Je vois surtout après 1920 ce glissement de l'organisation au putschisme. Est-ce que nous sommes d'accord sur ce point?

Y. Brossard. . . . après le deuxième congrès, peut-être.

M. Molnar. Il est toujours difficile dans l'histoire de fixer à une date précise un glissement, une transformation qui s'opère dans les têtes, dans les idées; en général, ces glissements ne se font pas à partir d'une date précise mais . . .

Y. Brossard. Je disais « après le deuxième congrès » simplement en référence avec cette thèse ou cette opinion de certains, selon laquelle le deuxième congrès de l'Internationale communiste est en quelque sorte le dernier où un certain éventail d'opinions ait pu s'exprimer librement.

M. Molnar. Oui, mais ce n'est pas forcément la même chose. Écoutez: j'ai une réponse qui n'est pas forcément juste, mais que je vous soumets. C'est que, dans toute l'idéologie et la praxis bolchevique, on trouve un brin de putschisme du début jusqu'à la fin. Toute la conception du parti léninien comporte un élément putschiste, même si Lénine souligne toujours que nous ne saisirons jamais le pouvoir sans avoir au moins le consensus des grandes masses. Même si Lénine met toujours l'accent sur la nécessité de l'alliance avec non seulement la paysannerie, mais aussi d'autres couches. Par exemple, en 1906, il écrivait que « toutes les couches misérables de la population, les garçons de café, les débardeurs, les prostituées, doivent se joindre à nous ». Donc, même s'il y avait chez Lénine cet esprit d'entraîner la masse dans le sillon du parti, cet élément putschiste de coup de force par une minorité organisée d'avant-garde, est toujours présente. C'est ma première remarque. Maintenant, s'il y a en plus un glissement de l'organisation au putschisme, pour ainsi dire, le plus simple. J'attribue ce glissement au fait que, petit à petit, les bolcheviks se rendent à l'évidence que l'époque de l'offensive révolutionnaire est terminée. En tout cas, pour un temps, on entre dans une période de consolidation du capitalisme. Et je vois ce changement surtout après la défaite de l'Armée Rouge en Pologne, qui fut une terrible déception. C'est après qu'il y a le reflux et une prise de conscience de ce reflux, de la part des bolcheviks. Et c'est après cette phase qu'on voit vraiment un glissement net vers le putschisme, dont la manifestation la plus évidente fut l'affaire de mars organisée par Béla Kun. Non?

P. Broué. Je suis d'accord avec toi quand tu dis qu'il y a toujours une tendance à glisser vers le putschisme. Mais je ne suis pas du tout d'accord avec les périodisations qui viennent d'être proposées. Dans la première période, il y a un putschisme qui est beaucoup plus « spartakiste » que « bolchevique ». J'insiste: la majorité des spartakistes, surtout les jeunes, n'ont retenu comme leçon essentielle de la révolution russe que la fin, l'insurrection armée. Comme disent d'autres aujourd'hui, ils croient que la formule « le pouvoir est au bout du fusil » résume stratégie et tactique révolutionnaire; et ils l'appliquent, jusqu'au moment où, à force de subir ainsi de sanglante défaites, ils s'aperçoivent que tout n'est pas si simple. A ce moment-là, sous l'impulsion des Russes – et surtout de Radek – commence une campagne « anti-putschiste » qui est celle de Paul Levi dans le K.P.D.(S.) et qui coïncide avec celle de Lénine sur le « gauchisme » et la discussion internationale à ce sujet. Mais il y a un tournant brusque, qui aboutit à l'« action de mars », en 1921. On a beaucoup dit: « Ce sont les bolcheviks qui ont inspiré l'action de mars ». En fait, rien n'est prouvé. Récemment, un chercheur allemand, M.L. Goldbach, a publié les minutes de l'exécutif de l'I.C. qui s'est tenu à Moscou juste avant le départ pour Berlin de Béla Kun. Il n'y a pas trace, là-dedans, d'une quelconque mission confiée à Béla Kun de forcer le cours de la révolution en Allemagne. Je sais qu'on a, de divers côtés, émis l'hypothèse que Zinoviev aurait voulu à toute force rompre l'isolement de la Russie, peut-être lui faire l'économie de la N.E.P. qu'il n'approuverait pas de gaité de coeur, mais seulement du fait de l'isolement. Zinoviev aurait donc envoyé Béla Kun pour tenter un grand coup, un véritable pari, quitte ou double, pour rompre l'isolement. C'est une hypothèse séduisante, mais rien qu'une hypothèse. Indépendants de gauche et les bolcheviks, notamment Radek, disent à plusieurs reprises qu'il avait été correct de lutter contre le putschisme, mais que l'on tombait maintenant dans l'excès inverse, un « antiputschisme exagéré » pouvant mourrir attentisme et opportunisme. Cela ne suffit pas pour affirmer qu'ils ont « machiné » l'action de mars . . .

Je voudrais aussi souligner que dès le lendemain de l'action de mars, à l'initiative de Lénine et de Trotsky, il y a un retournement très net. La condamnation de la « théorie de l'offensive », le « savon » que Lénine passe aux délégués allemands, les attaques et les féroces plaisanteries adressées à Béla Kun (« Kun et ses « kuneries » »), sa critique féroce de Maslow qu'il accuse de prendre plaisir à la « chasse aux sorcières centristes », c'est aussi, et bien plus que les « hypothèses », la tradition bolchevique de la lente et patiente « conquête des masses », qui est à l'opposé du putschisme . . .

C'est ce souci qui prévaut dans la politique du front unique ouvrier et, au moins jusqu'en juillet 1923, il y a le souci constant de la part des bolcheviks d'éviter en Allemagne toute action isolée, toute action de minorité, tout ce qui rappelle les pratiques putschistes de « minorité agissante ». Et sans doute assistons-nous alors, en juillet 1923, à une rechute dans l'« anti-putschisme » exagéré, au moment où Moscou – par la main de Radek – déconseille aux communistes allemands le maintien de leur manifestation antifasciste du 21 juillet, interdite en Prusse. Vient ensuite la préparation de l'octobre 1923, qui constitue une tout autre question. Pour me résumer, je ne crois pas à la périodisation proposée, et il me semble que la courbe que je viens d'esquiser rend beaucoup mieux compt du développement historique.

Socio-economic Structures in the Industrial Sector and Revolutionary Potentialities, 1917-22*

Gerald D. Feldman

It is curious indeed that historians, both Marxist and non-Marxist, have by and large shied away from investigating in any depth the relationship between socio-economic structures in the industrial sector and revolutionary potentialities in their work on the upheavals of 1917-22. Marxists are understandably embarrassed and troubled by the failures of Marxist revolutionary efforts everywhere except in the major non-industrialized country of Europe, Russia. Among the early or gradual industrializers, England, France, and the United States, revolution was never even a remote possibility. As for the late industrializing, partially modernized states of direct concern to us here, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy, revolution from the left was aborted or failed. Non-Marxists of an historicist bent undoubtedly derive considerable intellectual comfort from this historical record in their analyses, although the relationship between the failure of revolution and the success of right wing authoritarianism or fascism in these partially modernized or late industrializing states would also seem to require some investigation. Like the Marxists, however, such historians tend to concentrate on political problems. "Progressive" historians of a somewhat unclear ideological persuasion – that is, those ranging from left liberal to new left – have tended, insofar as they have troubled themselves about the matter, to sidestep the task of forging truly potent linkages between socio-economic structures and revolutionary developments and to concentrate instead upon the lost opportunities for social and political reforms that might have embedded the democratic and Socialist upsurge of 1917-1922 more securely in the postwar world. In the German Federal Republic, where this sort of approach is particularly popular and well advanced, there has been a systematic effort to demonstrate that Germany might have chosen a "third way" between Bolshevism and bourgeois parliamentarianism. Insofar as it has dealt with socio-economic structures, as has been the case in an article published by Reinhard Rürup, Eberhard Kolk, and myself on the development of a mass movement in Germany between 1917 and 1920, such historians have made every conceivable effort to escape the suspicion of socio-economic determinism.[1] In the process, however, I fear that they have also narrowed the historiographical prospects and possibilities of a more extended consideration of socio-economic developments. I will begin this discussion, therefore, by summarizing in some detail the basic arguments and conclusions of our essay which are relevant to our workshop topic, and I will then go on to a critical analysis of our conclusions with the object of suggesting how another type of *Fragestellung* and a more comparative perspective might deepen our understanding both of the 1917-22 situation and the problems of contemporary history. In the course of my summary, I shall expand it to include comparative references to Austria-Hungary and Italy where appropriate.

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1. Gerald D. Feldman, Eberhard Kolb, and Reinhard Rürup, "Die Massenbewegungen der Arbeiterschaft in Deutschland am Ende des Ersten Weltkrieges (1917-1920)", *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, Vol. 13 (1972), pp. 84-105.

I

The fundamental thesis of our discussion of socio-economic conditions was that the very conditions that promoted the development of a mass movement in Germany between 1917 and 1920 were very often the same ones that limited, constrained, and even destroyed its revolutionary potential and that fed the forces of counterrevolution. Thus, while the unrealized possibilities and lost opportunities of the revolutionary period had to be investigated, it was no less essential to recognize the socio-economic parameters within which the mass movement developed if this mass movement and its potential were to be assessed realistically.

Of course, the ambivalent character of the socio-economic preconditions for the development of proletarian mass movements were evident even before the war. On the one hand, reformism seemed to be making steady progress, particularly in Germany, but also in Austria and Italy, where the parliamentary power of reformist Socialists had increased, as had the strength of their trade unions. Governments and even some employers seemed to be accepting the unavoidability of coming to terms with Socialist political movements and trade unions. On the other hand, in the years preceding the war, there was increased labor militance in the form of wildcat strikes and severe labor unrest, growing right wing organization and militance, particularly in the shape of employer organization and lockouts but also in the form of political mobilization of a fascistoid variety, and increased political violence. Despite the economic improvements of the prewar period, inflationary tendencies promoted a levelling in the increase of real wages, while labor militance during prosperity called forth increased employer militance during the recession of 1913-14. Thus, prewar development at once established the pre-conditions for a proletarian mass movement with revolutionary goals and also provided the breeding ground for revisionism and the spread of trade union consciousness. In Germany, these contradictory tendencies were embodied in the classic Kautskyite position, with its combination of Marxist revolutionary rhetoric and gradualist practice.[2]

Wartime developments served to deepen these contradictory tendencies. The composition of the labor force in Germany, as in Austria-Hungary and Italy, underwent significant changes, a destabilization of the traditional labor force and of traditional labor relationships which promoted the proletarian mass movement. The wartime labor force was marked by the employment of large numbers of women and young people and by the increased employment of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. The portion of women in the German labor force increased from one-fifth in 1913 to one-third in 1918. Even more important than the changes in the composition of the labor force were the changes in location or density. There were dramatic increases of employment in some areas and serious reductions of employment in others, and the sudden concentration of workers in large plants, often at some distance from their homes. was bound to encourage radicalism by tearing up old roots under particularly trying circumstances. At Krupp, for example, the number of workers increased from 34,000 in 1914 to 100,000 in 1918, while at the machine factory of Thyssen in Mülheim/Ruhr, the number of workers increased from 3,000 to 26,500. Similarly, there were large new concentrations of workers at centers of chemical production such as Leverkusen and Merseburg. By contrast, the number of workers employed in textiles, foodstuffs, and other consumer industries dropped substantially. These developments had their counterparts in the great industrial centers of Vienna, Budapest, Pilsen, and Turin, and it was no accident that the metal, machine, and automobile works in these cities, and the new plants in Mülheim/Ruhr, Hamborn, and Merseburg became centers of radical activity even before the revolution broke out. Similarly, the enormous engineering and electrotechnical works in Berlin

2. There is an immense literature for Germany which cannot be cited here, but there is important new material and an excellent bibliography in Klaus Saul, *Staat, Industrie, Arbeiterbewegung im Kaiserreich. Zur Innen- und Aussenpolitik des Wilhelminischen Deutschland 1903-1914* (Hamburg, 1974); on Austria, see Charles A. Gulick, *Austria. From Habsburg to Hitler*, 2 vols. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1948), pp. 15ff. There is a useful discussion of labor-management relations in Italy in Richard A. Webster, *Industrial Imperialism in Italy 1908-1915* (Berkeley, 1975), pp. 167-190.

provided a breeding ground for revolutionary shop stewards and the great demonstration strikes of 1917-1918. Needless to say, it was not the war alone that created radical centers, and the archetypical radical center was one that combined a prewar radical tradition with a large influx of unskilled, semi-skilled, young, and female workers during the war. These workers were prepared to follow the lead of the highly paid, exempted skilled workers who capitalized upon both their indispensability and their self-conceived role as the vanguard of the working class. The engineering plants of Berlin, Mülheim/Ruhr and Hamborn, Budapest and Turin typified this combination of characteristics.[3]

As might be expected, the destabilization of the labor force described above imposed a severe test upon institutions. Communities found it extraordinarily difficult to feed and house the new concentrations of workers in the centers of war industry. Managerial personnel did not easily master the technical, social, and disciplinary problems involved. Lastly, the trade unions were poorly structured both in personnel and in organizational character to assimilate the influx of new members that began everywhere in 1917 and reached massive proportions at the end of the war. There was a serious shortage of functionaries, and a long history of craft traditions and craft organization not easily adapted to the mass factory and to the new impulses in the direction of the industrial rather than the craft union. Union and party leaders, above all at the higher levels of the SPD organizations, approached their task of bringing these new elements into the fold with mixed feelings and tended to resolve the dual task of promoting militance and discipline in favor of the latter.[4]

As is clear from the character and the number of strikes during the last two years of the war, however, the workers frequently took matters into their own hands or followed the leadership of militant opposition leaders. There can be no question about the fact that the most important trigger of militant worker action during the war in Germany, as in Austria-Hungary and Italy, was the food shortage, which had two aspects. First, there was the absolute food shortage, a shortage that wore the workers down physically and mentally, reduced productivity and promoted psychic irritability. Second, there was the manner in which the organization of the food supply totally undermined the authority of the regime and sapped the willingness of the workers to hold out against the external enemy and heed the wishes of the trade union leaders. The disorganization of the food supply and the triumph of the black market cast grave doubts upon the competence and efficiency of the civilian and military bureaucracy, and thus undermined governmental legitimacy. The blatant inequities of the war economy drove home in as unmistakable a fashion as possible the class character of these societies. The intensification of political demands and the visible war weariness of the terrible winter of 1916-1917 arose directly from the shortage of the basic necessities of life. As a consequence, there was an increasing tendency on the part of these governments to make concessions to labor and to look to the trade unions in their efforts to control the workers and buttress their own legitimacy. In Germany, this took the form of the Auxiliary Service Law of December 1916, which gave a substantial role to the unions for the first time in the adjudication of disputes over wages nad working conditions; in Italy, it was embodied in the committees of industrial mobilization of August 1915 in which the CGL and FIOM assumed a similar role;; in Austria, it was realized by the decree of March 18, 1917, establishing a system of complaint commissions. In this

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3. Much can be learned about the shop stewards in these plants from the autobiography of the German leader, Richard Müller, *Vom Kaiserreich zur Republik,* 2 vols. (Berlin, 1924-1925), and the Hungarian Wilhelm Böhm, *Im Kreuzfeuer zweier Revolutionen* (Munich, 1924). On Turin, see John M. Cammett, *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism* (Stanford, 1967), pp. 35ff., and Gwyn A. Williams, *Proletarian Order. Antonio Gramsci, Factory Councils and the Origins of Italian Communism 1911-1921* (London, 1975). The latter makes extensive use of Paolo Spriano, *Torino Operaia nella Grande Guerra* (1914-1918) (Turin, 1960), a matter of some importance for those who, like myself, do not read Italian. See also Williams' translation of Paulo Spriano, *The Occupation of the Factories, Italy 1920* (London, 1975).

4. On these problems, see Peter von Oertzen, *Betriebsräte in der Novemberrevolution. Eine politikwissenschaftliche Untersuchung über Ideengehalt und Struktur der betrieblichen und wirtschaftlichen Arbeiterräte in der deutschen Revolution 1918/19* (Düsseldorf, 1963), esp. pp. 271ff.

sense, the food shortages and other wartime privations and the failures of governmental administration provided the point of departure for both the social patriots and bourgeois reformers, on the one hand, and the political radicals of the left, on the other hand.[5]

While the radicals scored increasing successes with the workers, the vitality of the mass movement and its revolutionary potential were continually being sapped by the wartime boom and the practice of diminishing worker militance through nominal wage increases and special food subsidies. The inflationary wage-price spiral in the industrial sector was harmful to the radical cause in that it tended to fragment the mass movement and to cut it off from potential allies. The mass movement between 1917 and 1920, with the important exception of Italy, was largely proletarian and it failed to break through to other classes, and even in Italy the agrarian and industrial mass movements of the left did not connect. While dissatisfaction with the war and with economic conditions extended to groups other than the workers, the evidence suggests that the demands of the workers found very little resonance among the peasantry and middle classes. From a purely economic standpoint, the war had promoted a levelling of economic conditions, but with the exception of important groups among the white collar workers, at least in Germany where they have been studied somewhat, concern over status, over proletarianization, proved more potent than concern with class conditions. In concrete terms, the food supply problem increased the gap between the urban proletariat and the peasantry in Germany, Austria, and Hungary, while the relative increase of trade union power during the war and the domination of the industrial sector in the economy called forth resentment from the peasantry and middle classes. The organized workers and industrialists were often lumped together in their minds as war profiteers, a situation more conducive to right wing than left wing radicalism. Thus, the proletarian mass movements remained limited in their revolutionary potential because they were sociologically isolated and caught up in the inflationary wartime boom.[6]

The revolutions that broke out in Germany and Austria were a response to political conditions and defeat rather than to socio-economic conditions, but the latter were extremely important in helping to define the character and course of the revolutions, just as they informed the policies of Italian Socialists. In Germany and Austria, the traditional Socialist leadership was clearly in the ascendant in the early phases of the revolution and, as studies have shown, controlled most of the Soldiers and Workers Councils. In the view of these Socialist leaders, and here one can also include the Italian Turati, the problems of demobilization and transition to a peacetime economy and the isolation of the industrial proletariat, both nationally and internationally, were far too serious to permit revolutionary experiments. In Germany, there had been anxiety over the demobilization in Socialist and bourgeois circles since 1916, an anxiety that had mounted with the Russian revolution and the growing chances of defeat. The Socialist leaders feared that "Russian conditions" would be created if there was an unorganized demobilization or a demobilization organized by the bureaucratic incompetents who had run the war economy. Thus, they allied with the industrialists, who share their anxieties, and pursued policies designed to maximize employment through generous contracts to industry, working hours reduction, and welfare payments. This *Arbeitsgemeinschaftspolitik* was less explicit, highly developed, and private in Austria than in Germany, but there too union-employer collaboration served the function of mitigating unemployment and defusing the problems arising from the demobilization. In Italy, Turati and the Socialists did not have the responsibility for the demobilization or conversion to a peacetime economy and they did not deal with as cooperative or chastened a group of industrial leaders, but they too warned against social revolution on the grounds

5. For Germany, see Gerald D. Feldman, *Army, Industry and Labor in Germany, 1914-1918* (Princeton, 1966), and Jürgen Kocka, *Klassengesellschaft im Krieg, 1914-1918* (Göttigen, 1973). On Austria, see Rudolf Neck, ed., *Arbeiterschaft und Staat im Ersten Weltkrieg 1914-1918*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1968); on Italy, Williams, *Proletarian Order*, pp. 57-58.

6. See the above studies for evidence on this and also Adrian Lyttleton, *The Seizure of Power. Fascism in Italy 1919-1929* (London, 1973), pp. 49-50.

that it would lead to intolerable shortages of food and raw materials, particularly coal, economic isolation, and chaos.[7].

How valid were these anxieties? The question is still in need of considerable study, but for the case of Germany, we argued that, ironically, just as the subjective expectations concerning the demobilization had a counterrevolutionary effect, so also did the reality of the demobilization itself for the simple reason that it did not live up to the above-mentioned dire expectations. The army largely dissolved itself, and unemployment remained at remarkably low levels given the difficulties of the period. Indeed, a new economic boom followed the war boom thanks to shortages in the civilian sector and the government pump priming policies, and the workers, particularly in the large industries, were continuously bought off by wage increases. In 1919-20 real wages allegedly rose in Germany to within 10 percent of prewar levels, and the policy of bribery through wage concessions is particularly important in heavy industry and in the investment goods industries, where revolutionary ferment was most serious. This is not to say that wage increases were the object of the mass strikes in the late winter and early spring of 1919, but it is to say that industry and the government pursued a deliberate policy of undercutting the mass movement with economic concessions. It is interesting to note that during 1917-1919 industrial strike activity concentrated in large-scale industry, but in 1920 there is a decisive shift of strike activity to smaller plants and smaller industries, which could not afford to maintain the inflationary pace set by big business. Similar inflationary policies were pursued in Austria, where the Socialist government pursued an inflationary policy even more consciously than its German counterpart and even experimented with wage indexing. Thus, the Socialists who came to power in Germany and Austria chose to permit their fears of economic chaos and their desire to restore order to stand in the way of more radical solutions to the economic and political problems of their societies. They found it more agreeable to experiment with galloping inflation than with socialization or worker control.[8]

In Austria, this timidity undoutedly was reinforced by the economic confusion attendant upon the breakup of the Hapsburg realm, the great dependence upon outside help, and the strength of the peasantry. Viewed more broadly, however, Austria also illustrates what is so clear in the German case – namely, the limitations upon a mass revolutionary movement in an industrialized and highly organized society in which there are numerous defensive perimeters against the kind of collapse into anarchy that makes it possible for a determined revolutionary leadership to seize and maintain power with the support of a significant mass movement. Furthermore, the big industrialists, whose self-confidence had been heightened rather than diminished by the war experience, proved remarkably resilient and imaginative, as demonstrated in their shrewdly conducted *Arbeitsgemeinschaftspolitik*, while the SPD and trade unions were quick to offer structures for the absorption of the masses.[9]

Indeed, as the enormous growth of the trade unions and the SPD after 1917 demonstrates, one of the chief ways in which the proletarian mass movement expressed itself in its initial phases was by entry into the traditional organizations of labor. This massive joining of organzations was a form of political expression that not only reflected the concrete feeling on the part of the workers that there were real economic gains to be made from such membership, but also an urge on the part of the masses to become more active and to push the traditional organizations into a more active role. It took some time for the masses to become disenchanted with the traditional organizations and to realize that the leadership was neither organized nor inclined to pursue a truly radical

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7. See Gerald D. Feldman, "German Business Between War and Revolution: The Origins of the Stinnes-Legien Agreement", in Gerhard A. Ritter, ed., *Entstehung und Wandel der modernen Gesellschaft: Festschrift für Hans Rosenberg zum 65. Geburtstag* (Berlin, 1970); Gulick, *Austria*, I, pp. 151ff.; Gaetano Salvemini, *The Origins of Fascism in Italy* (New York, 1973), p. 162.
8. *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, Nr. 12 (Berlin, 1972) pp. 283ff.
9. Gerald D. Feldman, "Economic and Social Problems of the German Demobilization, 1918-19", in *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 47 (March 1975), pp. 1-47.

course. This disenchantment, however, took place only after the period of optimum political opportunity – November-December 1918 – had passed, and the mass movement did not have effective organizational alternatives since the councils had lost much of their potency, the USPD was too weak, and the KPD was too isolated and divided. So long as the traditional labor leaders remained in control, as in the case of the Mine Workers Union, the mass movement was weakened in its militancy by insufficient organization and economic concessions. When new leadership did take over, as in the case of the Metal Workers Union in June 1919, the change came too late to achieve meaningful results. It is no accident that the revolutionary shop stewards were so relatively successful in organizing and driving the masses because they operated within a series of concrete structures that could compete with already existing organizational forms. They were union leaders in a mass factory within large urban centers. As a rooted opposition within the union organizations and as a natural set of leaders within the large plant, they were in a position to organize both the elite cadre of radical skilled workers and the large mass of semi-skilled or unskilled workers who taken together constituted the most revolutionary components of the mass movement. It is possible that they may have played a much more revolutionary role than the councils, since many of the latter played so responsible a role in organizing the food supply and acting as labor exchanges that they helped further in the stabilization of the economic situation.[10]

The conclusion we drew from the argument developed here was that while it should be clear that the socio-economic preconditions for the development of a revolutionary mass movement were present and were necessary for its development, the ultimate explanation for the course and failure of the movement had to be found in the political sphere. Not objective economic conditions but rather the subjective appreciation of them was fundamental in the failure of the Majority Socialists to undertake a thoroughgoing democratization of society and economy. The arguments used against the socialization of the coal mining and other key industries – for example, poor condition of the mines due to wartime exploitation, high prices, influence of foreign capital, low productivity, poor financial condition – were all arguments that could have been used for socalization. It was the failure of the Majority Socialists to undertake socialization that led to the "wild socialization" in the coal mining industry and the potash industry in the Ruhr and Central Germany in April 1919. The disorder that the Social Democratic leadership feared and that drove them to pursue an *Arbeitsgemeinschaftspolitik* did not develop until after the mass of workers felt that their hopes and possibilities had been disappointed or betrayed by their leaders. Only then, in the winter and spring of 1919, was there a goodly measure of revolutionary chaos, as the workers underwent an educative process (*Lernprozess*) in which they defined their aims and thus directed their hostility not only against the institutions of the old order, but also against the traditional labor organizations and leadership. While the economic conditions were most favorable for a revolutionary uprising in these months because of the relatively high unemployment, the political conditions had ceased to be favorable because of the consolidated alliance between the Majority Socialists and the forces of the old order. Thus, the unemployment and economic difficulties proved less important than the opportunities offered by the demand for goods and the inflation. The political situation promoted the degeneration of the revolutionary mass movement into a wage movement and allowed for an increasing political stabilization on the foundation of an inflationary economy. Events were to demonstrate that this inflationary economy was a time bomb for the workers in that it led to a disastrous diminution of their real wages in 1922-1923, on the one hand, and created the socio-economic preconditions for the establishment of a revolutionary mass movement of the right, on the other hand.

10. On the shop stewards, see Oertzen, *Betriebsräte*, pp. 71ff. On the role of the councils in organizing the food supply and other such matters, see the interesting case studies in Reinhard Rürup, ed., *Arbeiter- und Soldatenräte im rheinisch-westfälischen Industriegebiet. Studien zur Geschichte der Revolution 1918/1919* (Wuppertal, 1975).

II

In contemplating the argument just presented, particularly the distinction between objective socio-economic conditions and subjective perceptions of them, it seems to me that its fundamental function is to keep hope beating in the historian's breast, to keep alive the consideration of historical possibilites and the immediacy and tensions of the revolutionary period. This effort is to be applauded on moral, heuristic, and perhaps even aesthetic grounds, and I would not want to be misunderstood as advocating the kind of history that concentrates upon how the victors won and seeks to justify present circumstances by the past.[11] Nevertheless, I do think that we need to be sufficiently tough-minded to disengage ourselves from the historical moment with which we are dealing, place the revolutionary situation of 1917-1922 in a broader perspective, and recognize that if the subjective perceptions of historical actors inhibited their capacities to make the most of objectve possibilities, the subjective desires of historians may cause them to take excessive advantage of their hindsight and underestimate the objective content of the alleged subjectivism of their historical actors. Let me turn now, therefore, to certain suggestions and potential lines of research and investigation that point in directions somewhat different from those just discussed.

Viewed from a long-term perspective, the First World War and revolutionary situation we are considering occurred in the midst of a transition in capitalist industrial development marked by the triumph of large-scale manufacturing and industrial organization. One of the chief aspects of the upsurge of economic and industrial development in Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy before the war, a phenomenon in which they all participated to a high degree, was the development of large-scale plants employing masses of workers and new technologies. They were located in large urban centers like Berlin, Stuttgart, Vienna, Linz, Budapest, Milan and Turin, which became centers of "growth" industries – engineering, electrotechnology, and automobile production. The dilution of the labor force with semi-skilled and unskilled workers begins in these plants and antedates the war, and there is good reason to believe that these are the first workers to respond to the intensification of work arising from the increased mechanization, monitoring of work activity, and expanded piecework that characterized the prewar period. It was they who were subjected to the first experiments with "scientific management," and Taylorism seems to have been tried out even in prewar Hungary.[12]

As has been and remains the case throughout the history of industrialization, the development of new techniques and forms of production test the adaptability of the men and institutions called upon to deal with them. Trade unions were slow to make the change from craft to industrial unionism required by this transition to modern large-scale manufacture just as employers were slow to accept the implications of the depersonalization of labor-management relations for the old forms of managerial rule. The prewar increase of wildcat strikes, lockouts, and employer organization, while certainly triggered by economic conditions, may have been, on a deeper level, responses to these structural changes. The traditional trade union leadership may have had a rather poor understanding of the new conditions of labor because of its own craft traditions and experience. While striving to secure greater material gains for the workers, these leaders were informed by a productivist mentality and, in good Marxist fashion, viewed all

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11. Such a misunderstanding is suggested by the remarks of Robert F. Wheeler, "Die '21 Bedingungen' und die Spaltung der USPD im Herbst 1920. Zur Meinungsbildung der Basis", in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, Vol. 23 (April 1975), pp. 118-154, p. 118.

12. This discussion is strongly influenced by my attendance at the recent meeting of the International Round Table on Social History sponsored by the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme and the University of Pittsburgh, held at Pittsburgh on February 19-20, 1976. I wish particularly to acknowledge the unpublished paper of Dieter Groh, "Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Intensivierung der Arbeit und Arbeitskämpfen im organisierten Kapitalismus in Deutschland (1896-1914)". For the reference to Taylorism in Hungary, see I.T. Berend and Gy Ranki, "The Development of the Manufacturing Industry in Hungary 1900-1944", in *Studia Historica. Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Nr. 19 (Budapest, 1960), p. 42 On the Socialist reception of Taylorism in Germany, see the penetrating essay by Emil Lederer, "Die ökonomische und sozialpolitische Bedeutung des Taylorsystems", in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*, Vol. 38 (1914), pp. 769-784.

progressive changes in techniques of production and organization – Taylorism, for example – as ultimately rebounding to the benefit of the working class. The implications of these changes for the role of the unions and workers in matters of production were not understood, and it is possible that the tension between unions and workers and the increase of syndicalist tendencies before the war were the initial indications of phenomena that were to receive specification, perhaps exaggerated specification, in the wartime and revolutionary period. This would seem to be the context of the shop steward movement in these countries and the role which they played in the strikes of our period as well as the drive toward industrial unionsm, worker control, and industrial democracy expressed at the pinnacle of their development. The worker seizure of mines and the factory councils movement in Germany in 1919, similar happenings in Austria in 1918-1919, and the famous occupation of the Turin and other North Italian factories in 1920 were the consequential expression of these tendencies which now also found theoretical expression in the writings of Karl Korsch and Antonio Gramsci.[13]

The dreams of Gramsci and Korsch, the linkage they sought to establish between worker control and socialist democracy by employing the former at once as the bridge to the latter as well as its most fundamental realization, were to be frustrated. The frustration suggests that the learning process of the radicalized workers in the new industries had overshot the mark in that goals were developed which could not be realized under the existing circumstances. It did, however, constitute a challenge to the traditional trade union concentration on bread and butter issues, as well as to the sort of productivism that left employer expertise unchallenged. The radical challenge was everywhere defeated, and despite all the recent enthusiasm of historians for the competence demonstrated by the workers in the occupied mines and plants, it is difficult to see how these actions could have succeeded. In the last analysis, the worker control movement and seizures of plants were isolated because they were uncoordinated by any national movement, lacking in any broad economic plan, and viewed with hostility by major segments of the societies in which they occurred. Even in Italy, where there was a left wing movement of importance in the countryside, there was no coordination with the workers in Turin any more than there was collaboration between the workers in Turin and Milan. Furthermore, the industrialists were either prepared to buy off the workers, as in Germany, or forced to do so, as in Italy, where Giolitti continued to play the role of mediator and arbitor that he had played before the war. Indeed, the events of 1917-1920 may have finally taught the reformist trade union leaders the lesson that they had lost direct contact with the factory floor. After much initial resistance to factory councils, they came to realize their value and, as in Germany and Austria and Italy, began the process of appropriating them for their own purposes. In this sense, the worker control movement, while failing in its immediate and somewhat apocalyptic ends, may have served to mediate the modernization of the European trade union movement by forcing trade union leaders to accept new organizational forms and confront more directly the problem of labor's role in production.[14]

But if Gramsci was not really in tune with the realizable potentialities of the situation at this time, was Robert Michels any closer when he argued that the outcome of the Turin factory occupations, especially the vague plans for worker control through worker-employer collaboration in pricing and production policies, was pointing the way toward an alliance of organized management and labor at the expense of the consumers? That is, did the real future lie not in the fierce proletarian productivism of Gramsci's *Ordine Nuovo* but rather in the collaborationist productivism typified by the *Arbeitsgemeinschaftspolitik* of Hugo Stines and Carl Legien? Certainly not in Italy, where such interest as there was in Whitleyism in CGL circles and among some employers never really got off the ground, but where the occupation of the factories served to demonstrate to the

13. On Korsch, see Oertzen, *Betriebsräte,* pp. 242ff. and p. 306; on Gramsci, see Williams, *Proletarian Order,* pp. 103ff., and Cammett, *Gramsci,* pp. 65ff.
14. On the German factory councils, see Ludwig Preller, *Sozialpolitik in der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart, 1949), pp. 249ff.; for Austria, see Gulick, *Austria,* pp. 137ff.; for Italy, see Cammett, *Gramsci,* pp. 116-122.

bourgeoisie that the bourgeois state was unable to protect them by suppressing the left, be it in the manner of Karl Renner, Julius Deutsch, and Otto Bauer, be it in the manner of Friedrich Ebert, Philipp Scheidemann, and Gustav Noske. In Italy, Mussolini's "productivism" became increasingly appealing because Italy was an importer of raw materials producing for a home market and could not make use of inflation in the manner of the Germans and Austrians. The harsh deflationary policies and high unemployment of Great Britain and the United States after 1920, however, could not be pursued under Italy's turbulent social conditions without the assistance of a repressive state. The Italian industrialists were dynamic and modern in their technology but too recently organized and wedded to managerial absolutism to choose the temporizing path of their German and Austrian counterparts.[15]

Defeat in war, the strength of the Socialist reformists, a more politically experienced and organized group of industrialists, and economic conditions conducive to the utilization of inflation for purposes of social pacification enabled Germany and Austria to experiment with significant new techniques of crisis management which, of course, had already been prepared for by prewar developments. In both countries trade unions and employer organizations collaborated in mitigating the ill effects of demobilization and unemployment and in pursuing, at times consciously, at times tacitly, inflation as a means of reviving production and the economy, recovering export markets, and maintaining employment. Indeed, the Austrians were even more sophisticated in their utilization of inflation and devices for dealing with wage problems than the Germans, as demonstrated by Karl Renner's indexation scheme, which dated back to an old idea of Adolf Braun, and which was implemented in 1919. As is well known, the economic knowledge upon which these inflationary practices were based was anything but sophisticated, and the inflationary booms in both countries disintegrated as domestic price levels reached world market levels in 1922-1923 and the outside world responded with import barriers and began to recover from the postwar depression.[16] Can we only conclude then, particularly in view of the hardships of the subsequent stabilization for the working class and the political developments which followed, that the reformist Socialist policies and their collaborationism with the employers were utter failures with no longer-term significance than their immediate failure?

I believe that such a view would be myopic. To begin with, it is important not to exaggerate the significance of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaftspolitik* and collaborationism. Indexation was undertaken in Austria against the wishes of the employers, and the Social Democrats and trade union leaders in Germany quickly abandoned a total reliance upon their alliance with the employers and increasingly looked to the government and parliament for the protection of worker interests and the promotion of a modern social policy. This period, especially in Austria and Germany, was one of dynamic experimentation in the sphere of social policy that was not simply a function of crisis management but rather was the consequential implementation of prewar Socialist reformist tendencies. The creation of the welfare state can hardly be taken for granted as an historical event, and here too the revolutionary upheavals of 1917-1922 served to mediate long-term developments. In this period, Germany and Austria took the lead in experimenting with inflationary pump priming to maintain employment and stimulate economic revival, state mediation and arbitration of labor disputes and collective bargaining, and social welfare programs and policies on a unique scale.[17]

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15. Robert Michels, "Ueber die Versuche einer Besetzung der Betriebe durch die Arbeiter in Italian", in *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*, Vol. 48 (1920/1921), pp. 469-503. The ending of this article is to be compared with that of its republication in his *Sozialismus und Fascismus in Italian* (Munich, 1925), pp. 249-251. See also Roland Sarti, *Fascism and the Industrial Leadership in Italy, 1919-1940. A Study in the Expansion of Private Power under Fascism* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 7ff. For the argument, see Charles Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe. Stabilization in France, Germany and Italy in the Decade After World War I* (Princeton, 1975), pp. 173ff.
16. On the Austrian inflation, see Gulick, *Austria, pp. 144ff.* On the German inflation, see Peter Czada, "Ursachen und Folgen der grossen Inflation", in Harald Winkel, ed., *Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik*, No. 73 (Berlin, 1973), pp. 9-43, and my forthcoming "Iron and Steel in the German Inflation, 1916-1923", to be published by Princeton in 1977.
17. See Preller, *Sozialpolitik*, and Gulick, *Austria.*

They also paid a high penalty for taking the lead and, like the radicals defeated in the revolutionary upheavals, seem to have undergone a learning process that overshot the mark. In both Germany and Austria stabilization brought with it a battle over the so-called social costs, as employers regrouped around traditional economic doctrines and insisted that neither they nor their societies could afford the luxuries of the welfare state. In both countries, this counterattack received support from preindustrial groups which resented the inflationary cartel of employers and unions. In Austria, where the isolation of the workers was most blatant, the agrarian sector actually reasserted its dominance both economically and politically, and it was as ghastly as it was appropriate that the workers were to experience military defeat in February 1934 in that most tangible symbol of their social welfare achievements, the housing projects of Vienna. In Germany, it was also of more than symbolic significance that the collapse of the last Great Coalition Cabinet in March 1930 came over the issue of unemployment supports.[18]

There is perhaps too strong a tendency in our present historiography to belittle or neglect this other, less dramatic but no less real legacy of the revolutionary stiuation of 1917-1920. The three late industrializing states we have been considering not only provided the foundation for radical proletarian movements articulating the most advanced demands for a worker control that went beyond traditional notions of socialization, but they also pioneered, so to speak, in modern methods of socio-economic crisis management and the welfare state. Italy first demonstrated that for reasons of social structure, political tradition, and economic condition, these states were resistant to the radical left wing solutions but unable or unwilling to sustain welfare solutions. Fascism or right wing authoritarianism thus provided an unhappy way-station in this lengthy and difficult process of adaptation and control of the industrial system among the late and rapid industrializers. Since 1945, cooperation among industrial interest groups on the basis of inflation accompanied by growth and the expansion of the welfare state has been the rule, although not necessarily a successful one. This does not mean that the other, more radical tendencies toward worker control will not once again gain ground under different conditions perhaps more conducive to their success. From the perspective of longer-term socio-economic development, however, it is useful to be cautious about who was being "objective" and who was being "subjective" in the crisis of 1917-1922.

Résumé

L'historiographie recèle bon nombre de lieux communs qui ne reçoivent pas toute l'attention qu'ils méritent; l'un de ceux-ci constate que les grandes révolutions marxistes se sont toutes produites dans des sociétés non industrialisées, tandis que, dans les nations industrialisées, les mouvements de masse n'ont pas abouti à des changements révolutionnaires. Cette généralisation est certainement applicable à la période de 1917 à 1922, alors que, de tous les mouvements révolutionnaires de gauche, seule la révolution russe fut victorieuse. Mais peut-on affirmer dès lors que les révolutions sociales de type marxiste sont impossibles dans des sociétés industrielles avancées? Avant d'en arriver à une telle conclusion, il convient de soumettre à un examen très rigoureux les rapports existant entre, d'une part, le développement industriel, du point de vue de la croissance industrielle comme des transformations sociales qu'elle implique, et le potentiel révolutionnaire au sein d'une société, d'autre part. Au point de départ, l'hypothèse la plus raisonnable serait la suivante: les divers degrés du développement industriel et leurs caractéristiques sociales

18. See Gustav Otruba, " 'Bauer' und 'Arbeiter' in der Ersten Republik. Betrachtungen zum Wandel ihres Wirtschafts- und Sozialstatus", in Gerhard Botz, *et al., Geschichte und Gesellschaft. Festschrift für Karl R. Stadler zum 60. Geburtstag* (Linz, 1973), pp. 57-98 for the econmic inferiority of the Austrian workers. Gulick and Preller provide good introductory discussions of the battles over social costs.

correspondantes forment, en quelque sorte, des paramètres pouvant servir à évaluer avec assez d'exactitude les possibilités politiques propres aux situations révolutionnaires de 1917-1922.

Dans cette démarche, l'analyse comparative des cas de l'Allemagne, de l'Autriche-Hongrie et de l'Italie se révèle extrêmement pertinente. Ces États connurent tous une industrialisation tardive. Tous subirent les bouleversements de la guerre et de l'après-guerre, au point de devoir faire face au moins à l'éventualité d'une révolution sociale de gauche. Enfin, dans les trois cas, les mouvements révolutionnaires issus de la gauche furent réprimés, tandis que se renforçaient ou triomphaient le « proto-fascisme » ou le fascisme proprement dit.

En général, le niveau d'industrialisation atteint et les impératifs économiques de la guerre ont à la fois entraîné et freiné le développement de situations révolutionnaires; par ailleurs, plus un pays avait atteint un niveau avancé d'industrialisation et d'organisation ouvrière, plus grandes étaient ses chances de faire échec aux solutions radicales de cette crise, qu'elles fussent de droite ou de gauche. D'une part, la concentration massive de travailleurs dans de vastes usines, l'adjonction de travailleurs non qualifiés, de jeunes et de femmes à la main-d'oeuvre, l'extrême dépendance de celle-ci par rapport à un approvisionnement suffisant en biens de stubsistance et sa vulnérabilité à l'endroit des privations de guerre, l'existence d'agitateurs ouvriers expérimentés en liaison avec des organisations ouvrières bien structurées, tous ces éléments eurent pour effet d'accroître le potentiel révolutionnaire. D'autre part, l'organisation du prolétariat contribua aussi à freiner et à mater les mouvements révolutionnaires, car les syndicats ouvriers assumèrent la direction des flambées révolutionnaires, contrôlèrent les grèves politiques en les transformant en luttes économiques et négocièrent toujours des ententes avec les autorités gouvernementales et les organismes patronaux. Les ouvriers eux-mêmes étaient fréquemment en conflit avec leurs propres organisations, mais ils n'avaient guère de solution durable à proposer pour les remplacer. En gros, plus le secteur industriel de l'économie était développé, plus son prolétariat était organisé, plus les organismes ouvriers, patronaux et gouvernementaux pouvaient s'orienter vers une « gestion de la crise ». Ceci se vérifie d'abord dans le cas de l'Allemagne, qui peut être confronté aux situations qu'ont connu l'Autriche-Hongrie et l'Italie.

À ces éléments s'ajoutent le fait que la bourgeoisie industrielle sortit renforcée de la période de guerre, parfois même prête à promouvoir une nouvelle idéologie « productiviste » susceptible de contrecarrer les revendications socialistes, et le fait que les mouvements révolutionnaires ayant pris naissance dans le secteur industriel souffraient d'un isolement relatif par rapport aux travailleurs des autres secteurs. Enfin, il convient de s'arrêter également aux problèmes d'inflation et de déflation; il semble clair, en effet, que les politiques inflationnistes mises en oeuvre en Allemagne et en Autriche ouvrirent la porte à une stabilisation sociale provisoire, ce qui fut impossible en Italie.

Problèmes dans l'industrie / Session on Industrial Problems

Discussion

R. Wheeler. I want to raise a basic question that has interested me for some time. It concerns what has been termed "buying off the workers," and while I realize this is only one aspect of what you were talking about, I think it is a very important one. How, for example, do you deal with something like the metal workers' situation during the war? These people were supposedly the best paid workers in Germany. Their rations, for example, were also better than most. Yet, they were among the most "radical" workers in Germany, the backbone of the 1917 and 1918 strike movements. So to draw a straight relationship between "buying off", i.e., giving the workers a better deal so that they will behave as business and government desire, does not seem to work here. It appears to me that we have to explore other possibilities, for example, the question of "rising expectations". If people are a little better off, perhaps they think more about a broader range of needs and wants, and become more politically aware and active. By contrast workers who are totally suppressed, under the heel so to speak, and must worry about basic survival, are not as politically conscious and involved.

G. Feldman. That's a very important question really and one that needs a great deal more investigation, and what I'm going to say is based upon a certain amount of limited archival research in these problems and what I've read. First, on the question of labour aristocracy. I think that is a theory which is in terrible trouble. It's quite clear that the labour aristocracy, that is, the highly paid metal workers and skilled metal workers in the large factories were often the most radical and militant and the most conscious of themselves as being the vanguard of the working class. They did not behave as "labour aristocrats" unconcerned with the condition of the other workers. In Germany, certainly, this is all the more the case because the metal worker's union in Germany already was an industrial union and thus included the unskilled as well as the skilled workers. So, I would basically agree with you that there is no consistent grouping of workers and that both highly skilled and semi-skilled workers join together. I think that the skilled metal workers, the shop stewards particularly, had tremendous authority, played an almost charismatic role in the plants and brought the workers out. They were all in contact on the shop floor. So I certainly don't think the labour aristocracy explanation holds up very well.

Regarding the second and broader question of bribery, I would point out that bribery can be a conscious or an unconscious thing and can be an overt or a covert thing. I don't think that overt bribery over the long run worked very well with a great many of the workers. That is, in the spring of 1919, at least in Germany, the workers don't seem to be very bribable. Maybe in Italy they turned out to be a bit more bribable, possibly in Turn where they seem to have been bought off with concessions below their maximal goals. I think we really have to get more data on what was going on during the Revolution, but I have for Germany at least some records of factory meetings, meetings between trade union leaders and workers, meetings among militants, police reports on these meetings, and meetings between management personnel and workers in the factories. What I have found is that everybody was terrible busy at "crisis management"; people interested in

pacification of the situation were really very active at this, trying to persuade the workers that the coal and increased production were absolutely necessary for recovery and engaging in all kinds of work stretching policies to maintain employment. That is, instead of discussing broad political and economic questions, they said, "Look, we have a terrible problem, we only have so much raw material, we've got to stretch it and make the most of it. Therefore, we're going to try to keep everybody on the job for at least part of the day and pay them as much as possible so they can eat".

A. Mayer. Like Charles Maier this morning, I think you might have to plead guilty to the charge of taking a functional view of these matters, and presenting us with some rather sanitized history. It is in answer to this question that I think you began to allow for such elements as manipulation, in particular of nationalism which was not exactly a new thing when arguing "Look, we all have to stay to the last, because otherwise the German economy will suffer even more than it has, let's pull together in the face of the foreign enemy".

But more important, I think you make too little of the exemplary force of repression of violence. I don't really think that the proper frame to use in analyzing the way in which the conflicts were negotiated, or if you want, reduced through negotiation, in the fever period of 1917 through 1920, is the framework of American labour management relations. I think this is reading back something that I don't really think was at work at the time. What I'm really trying to suggest is that it seems to me that there's a certain danger in making it appear as if labour and management just sat across a table of the nature that you find yourself standing at, which a green sort of table cloth over it, and then there'd be the give and take, you'd sort of exchange marbles as to give and take of labour management relations. I don't think it's the proper frame, I don't think it washes.

G. Feldman. Well, first of all, I just mentioned that I thought that the January 1918 strike was not handled by any kind of discussion at all. I think the perception of the Supreme Command was that they could crush the workers at this point, they so informed Berlin and told Heatling not to fool around. Hertling did not fool around, and it was crushed. I certainly would agree about that. I would also agree that the use of the *Freikorps* in the Ruhr and elsewhere in 1919 was not standard labour-management relations, at least not as I conceive of them. I think what you must recognize, however, is that the combination of these kinds of negociations and repression did have very significant consequences. Along with the beating down of the uprisings, you also have a continuous process of "crisis management" that is effective. That's all I'm trying to argue.

L. Walker. (U. of Toronto). My question relates to Arno Mayer's references to the repressive apparatus. It seems to be generally assumed here that the army will follow the commands of the government. As a student of the Russian Revolution, I think this assumption is misleading. An exceptionally important factor in the success of that Revolution was the refusal of the army to follow the instructions of the government, either in February or in October. In examining the failures of the revolutions in central and eastern Europe, it would be worthwhile to investigate this divergence. The issue of linkages between social groups which has been discussed here can also be illuminated by investigating the role of the army. In the Russian Revolutionary the army served by function of linking the workers and peasants and acted as a radicalizing agent for both. The peasants, brought into a more disciplined life-style and confronted with the war itself, were radicalized by this experience at the same time that they were brought into contact with more militant workers.

G. Feldman. Well, I'm sure Professor Carsten has said a great deal more about this that I have said or could say. I'll just make one comment about that, and then if [to Prof. Carsten] you want to say anything, I'd appreciate it. First of all, I'm talking about the situation in Germany at the end of the war as the army is being demobilized. The original purpose of the Ebert Government in coming to terms with the Supreme Command is

not to attack the workers but to solve the major logistical problems of getting the army home. The army reaches the Rhine, and much of it, above all its potentially pro-republican elements, go home, quite literally go home. So, when the generals in December are complaining that the Ebert Government is not doing enough to protect the army, the interests of the army and all the rest of it, one wonders what army they are talking about. The answer, I think, is that they had a rump army or guard regiments. The potential linkages between the old mass army of the West and the workers had disintegrated or were in the process of disintegration. Secondly, if General Groener and company needed the help of the Ebert Government to save the army, then what further justification did that army have for continued existence at that point? This was a question that the Social Democrats never really asked. What is critical, I think, in the suppression of the workers in the Ruhr and elsewhere, were the *Freikorps*. That is, you didn't have the regular army; what you had were the *Freikorps*, who were more than happy to be engaged in these particular activities.

L. Walker. The central point at issue here is whether the workers were bought off or whether they were suppressed. I would maintain that "crisis management" was only a possibility due to the existence of the repressive apparatus.

G. Feldman. Oh, I absolutely agree. I would never deny the efficacy of repression. I think it is very important, and I agree fully with Professor Mayer about that. However, it is hardly sufficient to explain the failure of the Revolution.

F. Carsten. I want to comment on the question of repression because that has been raised before. I think one has to clarify a difference here. In Germany there was repression on a very large scale, and repression which over-reached itself, which used brutality – brutal methods – which had exactly the opposite effect from the effect intended. Namely, it drove masses of workers to the Left. In Austria there wasn't really repression; one would have to put the word in inverted commas. There were one or two small scale communist attempts in Vienna in April and in June 1919, and they were "repressed" by the use of the *Volkswehr*, but it was hardly necessary because the attempts were so minute, and there was so little intention of repression that all one can say is that law and order restored, without any difficulty, because the attempt at Left-wing revolution had so few followers and such a small echo among the masses of the workers that hardly any repression was necessary. I think there again Germany and Austria differ very, very much.

C. Meier. First of all on repression, let me speak to Arno Mayer's point since he included me with Professor Feldman as a functionalist, an indictment to which I'll plead guilty. It does seem to me that the ruling classes, even when threatened, had a menu of alternatives. Their strength lay in the skill with which they served several courses at once or in quick succession. I don't think that one needs to claim that inflation has to be thought out in advance to see it as a mode of social bargaining or defense. It is a way of relatively protecting certain sectors in a period when the society as a whole is going to be generally improverished. It's a way often of sharing deprivation, and allocating the short-fall of expectations in a critical period. And thus, even if the real wages of workers are falling behind absolutely, as indeed they were, the very fact that they fall less quickly than the income of the urban middle classes, creates a radically new social situation in terms of what groups in the society are capable of effective political negociations.

In the last part of the paper, you linked the question of emerging welfare institutions and either the council movement itself or the domestication of the council movement, to the nations of Germany, Austria and Italy. Still, we should remember, after all, that a major stronghold of the council movement in Europe in 1918-1919 lay in England and Scotland. And certainly, these are not, by any definition we use, the area of arrested modernization.

G. Feldman. Well, first of all I agree that these tendencies are obviously not limited to central European States. I think, however, that in England and in the United States, you have governments with sufficient authority to engage in stabilization fairly early in the game. They can afford to do it politically, and they do it.

A. Mayer. I would like to make one brief comment to Charles, because it seems to me that the colleague who is sitting in the second row there, the young lady who is a specialist in Russian history, I think made the point and that is that the army was there and all sorts of other things became possible.

F. Krantz. (Concordia U.) I was at the session on ideologies this morning, and a few things said there might have some relevance to the kind of issue that Professor Mayer has raised. Professor Molnar, talking about Georg Lukacs' critique of what for him were the right-revisionists in the socialist movement, said that the strength of Lukacs' critique in his stress on totality, on understanding social relations and ideological dynamics within the framework of a totality. The totality being a certain kind of society. And we should keep in mind that the totality we're looking at here is not simply one society, one national entity, but a global structure, based on what is already a world economy.

Secondly, when you do class analysis, whether of the capitalist bourgeoisie or of the working-class, the class is not homogeneous: it is internally divided, there will be many – often conflicting – strata within it, frequently pulling at cross-purposes. Nevertheless, the dominant class exercizing power has a general cohesiveness: it controls institutions of power in many ways, it controls ideological processes through institutions, it controls political institutions, the place of work, access to food, and so on. Now I haven't heard the term "class", or perceived consistent class analysis, in this discussion. I'd therefore like to ask Professor Feldman, is class analysis applicable to the phenomena that he is talking about here? If it isn't, why not?

G. Feldman. On the question of class, I think that one of the things that the German employers, particularly big business, does most consciously is to say, that "Yes, we're part of some bourgeoisie, but really most of that bourgeoisie isn't worth a damn at this point". Now, there *is* a class interest, there's no question, there are propertied people and there's a class interest. But I don't think that there's very much of a solidarity among the propertied elements in German society at this time. I'm sure about the Italian case, I think that again there are considerable divisions for some time. I would say that, yes, certainly the employers constitute a propertied class, and they decide to ally with another class, organized labour, often at the expense, quite consciously, of groups both within their own ranks and the society as a whole. So class analysis is, I think, of limited use.

A. Lyttleton. There was one thing I missed in what you've said. When you said that the Italian workers, the Turin workers you specifically said, were bribable, were you referring just to the war years or to the post-war years also?

G. Feldman. Well, first I was referring to the war-years but also to the post-war years at least to the extent that a settlement is reached in Turin.

A. Lyttleton. I wouldn't really agree on this. I think that the point about the Turin workers, in particular, wouldn't have been true. I don't think the Turin workers could be bought off. It's well known, I think, that the Turin workers were, on the whole extremely dissatisfied, extremely disappointed at the solution that had been reached, and I think that can only be understood in the light of the socialist party's failure to lead a general revolutionary action. I don't think that proves that they were in fact to be bought off. After all, they had achieved some concessions, I mean the promise of some form of workers' control.

But I think one does have to go back to the war years, when one does see that the trade unions were really working pretty satisfactorily, all things considered, with the industrialists and government. And, except in Turin, in the one case of August 1917 when there was a very important rising, this agreement did obviate the need for any very large-scale repressive action during the war, where the industrial working class was concerned. In Turin there does seem to have been this greater sense of working class solidarity against the employers, which certainly did transcend the distinctions within the working class, and rather surprised the trade union leaders in this way. It's the trade union leaders, not the workers who weren't talking about economic realities; in 1924, two

years after the fascists had taken over, they were still confident that in the end, all this violence would disappear, and what you would have would be the rule of economic reality, whatever that might be and it's interesting to see that this is really one of the more disastrous forms of political error of the period.

Also, one curious feature of the Italian situation and which is, I think, interesting in a wider perspective because it's something which does not occur for the first time in post war situations, but was already very clearly present in the situation in 1913-1914, is that one of the things that produces the danger of a revolutionary situation is in fact the very temporary success of the industrialists' organization, industrialists' militancy and industrialists' counter-offensive. In 1920, though not in 1919, the industrialists did begin, particularly in Turin, to conduct a successful counter-offensive. This in turn, however, provoked a new revolutionary drive, expressed in the occupation of the factories. The problem was that it was very easy for the industrialists to win against the trade unions, because the trade unions were really basically weak. But strikes and lock-outs drove people onto the streets, and this created political and social unrest, which the government usually felt it couldn't manage.

And here one gets back to the wider context. Among the industrialists there was a greater rigidity about workers' representation than elsewhere and one of the reasons was undoubtedly that they also saw that the general conditions of public order, the general stability of the state was so rickety that, any concessions on their own home territory were very dangerous, because revolutionary forces in society would permeate whatever representative institutions were set up in the factory. Nonetheless, in a way, all the groups in industry saw the problems in narrowly industrial terms, and to some extent were surprised, even the industrialists, by the total success of the particular type of fascist counter-revolution. The *large* industrialists anyway, were rather skeptical about violence as a solution to their labour problems; they thought it was very probably useful in the short term, but that it might create more problems in the long term than it solved. But I think that the small and medium industrialists were quite different; the couldn't ride the inflation like the big industrialists, they were getting really killed by it, and they, from very early on, also with some of the war industries which were having great troubles of reconversion, saw violence quite early on, by the end of 1920 anyway, as the solution.

G. Feldman. But you would explain it by the absence of a really strong state.

A. Mitchell. Two questions quickly to pin you down a bit, Jerry. One concerns the question of the "third way." I wasn't clear after your paper whether or not you do in fact believe there was a third way between (I've forgotten how to put it) a radical solution on one hand and bourgeois parliamentarianism on the other. And the second question is: I wonder if you could be more precise about the two phases? You do seem to assume that there were two phases. When did the second phase precisely begin? When would you date the point at which there was in this revolutionary situation no longer the possibility of a radical type of revolution?

G. Feldman. As the first question, do I believe in a third way? Without wanting to define all the elements of a third way, I nevertheless would place myself in basic agreement with those who argue that a good deal more could have been done by way of curbing the military, of creating a democratic army, of taming the bureaucracy and eliminating some of its more objectionable elements. Socialization of the coal mining industry was quite possible. I think as a matter of fact that some of the industrialists expected it. Now, I think that viewed from this perspective, it is possible to be quite critical of the Majority Socialists for lacking imagination and for failing to have a clearer perception of what was possible in the situation. Over the long run, that is, viewed from another perspective – because I think you can use varying perspectives in historical investigation to deal with different types of phenomena and questions – one can raise doubts about the historicity of the third way. If you step back from immediate engagement with the questions of the revolution itself and its particulars, then I would simply say that in the aggregate, the political and social and economic forces making for the kind of solution which you

had were far more potent than the forces making for revolutionary change. This is historically demonstrable and is really quite intelligible when you analyse the development of all these forces in the prewar period and during the War.

To put the matter quite simply, I think that moral and political judgments are possible in history from a more immediate perspective, but that the greater your distance, the more you begin to ask another set of questions. Why did certain forces win rather than lose? I think you can pretty clearly demonstrate the reasons. I would also make one other concrete point in this connection. I never expected to spend so much of my career working on these German industrialists, who really are not a lovely lot, but you know, they really do demonstrate a remarkable capability and tenacity and imagination and skill and sense of themselves during this period. This simply has to be recognized when you pit them and their performance against almost all the people on the left, be they Majority Socialists, Independents or Spartakists. In terms of these characteristics, the industrialists really show up very well.

Yes, I do think a good deal more could have been done. I think, for example, it was absolutely ridiculous for Social Democrats to sit in a meeting in which groups of industrialists, so-called experts, were disagreeing with one another, and then not come to the conclusion, "Well, since they don't agree, maybe we ought to decide on the basis of our own interests." I think that kind of situation shows a real lack of leadership. As to when I think the turning point comes, well, I would say in January and February 1919. I think that when the *Freikorps* are sufficiently organized and the decision has been made and also carried out to have a constituent assembly, that you have a triumph of the forces of order that severely limits the chance for radical changes. Now, having said that, I would still argue that all through this period there were plenty of things that could have been done, particularly in connection with socialization, but also later at the time of the Kapp Putsch, where there was a real mass base again for doing something about the army. I think that there were various possibilities all along the way, but I would say that if one is talking in terms of more systematic changes, then the time allowed was very short.

L'Europe centrale à la fin de la première guerre mondiale: révolution bourgeoise ou révolution prélétarienne?

André P. Donneur

Y avait-il une situation révolutionnaire à la fin de la Première Guerre mondiale en Europe centrale? Telle est la grande question à laquelle les leaders du mouvement ouvrier international donnèrent à l'époque des réponses divergentes qui consacrèrent la division de ce mouvement. Pour Lénine, Trotski, Radek, Kun, Luxemburg et Liebknecht, une réponse positive ne fait uncun doute. Mais pour Otto Bauer, Friedrich Adler, Max Adler, Ledebour, Kautsky et d'autres, la réponse est loin d'être aussi claire. S'agit-il d'une situation qui permet le parachèvement de la démocratie bourgeoise par l'élimination des vestiges encore importants du féodalisme, ces socialistes en conviennent. Avec des analyses différentes, ils refusent cependant d'accepter la thèse des communistes selon laquelle les conditions objectives sont réunies pour que s'accomplisse une révolution prolétarienne.

Aujourd'hui encore les spécialistes des sciences sociales se posent la même question; c'est d'ailleurs, la raison de ce colloque! Et les réponses aussi divergent. Ainsi le professeur Broué, notamment dans *Révolution en Allemagne*, constate qu'à plusieurs reprises au cours de la révolution allemande (1918-1923), il y a eu situation révolutionnaire. Le professeur Carsten, par contre, prétend le contraire en se référant à l'Europe centrale de 1918-1919. Sous prétexte qu'effectivement la révolution prolétarienne a été écrasée en Hongrie et en Bavière, a avorté en Allemagne et en Italie, n'a même pas éclaté en Autriche, il est trop facile de répondre que l'histoire ou la critique des armes a démontré qu'en réalité il n'y avait pas situation révolutionnaire, cette expression étant prise, désormais, dans le sens d'une situation permettant la révolution prolétarienne. C'est aller vite en besogne et oublier les conditions subjectives de la révolution. Si la majorité des leaders bolcheviques avait considéré en octobre 1917 que les conditions objectives d'une révolution prolétarienne n'étaient pas réunies, on se poserait la même question sur la situation révolutionnaire de la Russie de 1917 et sur celle de l'Europe centrale en 1918-1923. Il serait alors aussi facile de donner la même explication *ex post* selon laquelle l'histoire ou la critique des armes a démontré qu'une telle révolution n'était pas possible.

Il faut donc considérer le problème dans son ensemble, en examinant si tant les conditions objectives que subjectives d'une situation révolutionnaire existaient en Europe centrale. Les limites mêmes fixées à ce travail ne permettent pas évidemment de pousser dans le détail l'analyse; cependant, il est possible d'énoncer quelques propositions qui se veulent surtout des points de départ d'une discussion. Nous allons donc préciser quelles sont les conditions d'une situation révolutionnaire, et nous appliquerons ensuite cette grille d'analyse à l'Europe centrale de 1919 à 1923. Pour des raisons de limites d'espace et de temps, nous n'étendrons que tout au plus brièvement notre propos à l'Italie, qui a d'ailleurs des particularités qui la séparent de l'Europe centrale. Nous nous référerons tant aux écrits des leaders socialistes et communistes de l'époque qu'aux travaux des spécialistes contemporains. Et il est bien inutile de dire que nous n'avons pas l'illusion de mettre fin par cette monographie à un débat de plus d'un demi-siècle, mais nous espérons contribuer modestement à celui d'aujourd'hui.

Causes générales d'une révolution

Tout d'abord, il faut préciser ce que nous entendons par révolution. Toute révolution est, selon nous, le renversement ou la tentative de renversement, par l'action d'une classe et de ses mandataires, d'un ordre social et son remplacement par un autre, nouveau et progressiste par rapport au premier. Cette définition appelle quelques précisions. Premièrement, révolution implique un changement ou une tentative de changement, mais un changement d'une nature fondamentale qui substitue à un ordre social dominé par l'appareil d'État d'une classe sociale un nouvel ordre social dominé par une autre classe ou, à la limite, un ordre social sans classe. Deuxièmement, ce changement est le résultat d'une action collective, et non d'une prise de pouvoir technique par un petit groupe: telle prise de pouvoir est un coup d'état; un coup d'état, d'ailleurs, se déroule dans un ordre social donnée et ne provoque pas de changement fondamental; il peut avoir lieu dans n'importe quel ordre social ayant un appareil d'État. Troisièmement, l'ordre social nouveau doit être progressiste par rapport à l'ancien, sinon il s'agit d'une contre-révolution. Enfin il s'agit d'un changement ou d'une tentative de changement, puisqu'une révolution peut échouer.[1]

En abordant l'étude des conditions d'une situation révolutionnaire, il nous faut distinguer entre causes très générales d'une révolution et conditions spécifiques d'une situation révolutionnaire. Il n'est pas de notre propos de nous embarquer dans l'esquisse d'une théorie générale de la révolution. Sans nier l'intérêt d'étudier les causes lointaines d'une révolution, nous voudrions faire remarquer, cependant, avec Rosa Luxemburg que la « révolution » est un concept qui n'a « de sens et de contenu que par rapport à des situations politiques bien déterminées. »[2] Il faut noter, d'ailleurs, que bien des théoriciens de la révolution ont commis l'erreur de lui donner des causes très générales, indépendantes des situations concrètes ou tout au moins ayant un rapport très subjectif avec ces situations.

C'est ainsi que les théoriciens du comportement vont chercher l'explication des situations révolutionnaires dans la tête des hommes, dans leur interprétation de la situation et non dans les conditions concrètes. Même si l'appréciation intelligente des conditions objectives est d'une importance capitale dans une situation révolutionnaire, ces conditions objectives existent toutefois indépendamment des individus. Mais, pour un théoricien du comportement comme Ted R. Gurr, qui a cherché à expliquer d'une manière générale et subjective le phénomène révolutionnaire, c'est dans les « privations relatives » des individus, définies comme l'écart entre les valeurs et biens que les gens ont en leur possession et ceux auxquels ils aspirent, qu'il faut chercher les dispositions plus ou moins intenses des individus à la violence collective. Ces dispositions prennent un contenu politique à la fois par l'étendue et l'intensité des justifications tant normatives qu'utilitaires de cette violence politique, définie comme un comportement consistant à user de violence à l'égard des acteurs politiques, tenus pour responsables des privations. Lorsque le potentiel de violence politique ainsi déterminé se combine à des déséquilibres tant dans le contrôle coercitif du régime que dans celui de son soutien institutionnel, la violence politique augmente et les conditions d'une révolution existent. En clair et en résumé, c'est au départ l'insatisfaction des masses qui déclenche le processus révolutionnaire. C'est tout au plus une description et non une explication.[3]

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1. La nature, le cadre et les limites de cette brève monographie ne nous permettent pas de développer le cheminement du raisonnement qui nous a conduit à cette définition. En effet, l'objet de ce travail est de s'interroger sur la question de savoir s'il y avait ou non situation révolutionnaire en Europe centrale de 1918 à 1923 et non de disserter en long et en large sur ce qu'est une révolution.
2. Rosa Luxemburg, « Grève de masse, parti et syndicats » (1906), dans *Oeuvres* (Paris, Maspero, 1971), Vol. I, p. 100.
3. Ted. R. Gurr, *Why Men Rebel* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1971) surtout les pp. 317-359. En outre, comme le remarque Jean G. Padioleau, (« Les modèles de développement », dans *Revue française de sociologie*, XXI, 1971, pp. 242-243), le modèle de T. Gurr présente des incohérences logiques internes, puisque ses variables psychologiques de privation des individus reposent sur des données agrégées à un autre niveau, soit national, et que le modèle englobe également des variables d'une autre nature soit d'environnement, et institutionnelles.

D'autres auteurs ont cherché des explications très générales des situations révolutionnaires dans les conditions socio-économiques. Ainsi Mancur Olsen estime que dans les sociétés qui ont une croissance économique rapide, des individus perdent une partie ou même la totalité de leurs revenus. Cette croissance économique rapide accroît donc les inégalités entre « perdants et vainqueurs ».[4] Pour James C. Davies, il y a généralement situation révolutionnaire quand une période prolongée de développement économique et social est suivie d'une courte période allant dans le sens inverse.[5] C'est dire en termes clairs que les crises économiques créent une situation révolutionnaire. Ce n'est pas inexact, encore que très partiel. Tout d'abord, s'il y a crise économique, il est possible que les gouvernants et en général les dirigeants de l'appareil d'État soient en mesure de juguler en partie les effets de la crise et empêcher ainsi la formation d'une situation révolutionnaire. Deuxièmement, il est d'autres crises dues à la guerre. Dans ces périodes, comme par exemple celle de la guerre de 1914-1918, les privations de toute sorte, qui impliquent une dégradation des conditions économiques pour les masses populaires, sont supportées au début de la guerre. Mais la longue durée de ces privations prépare le terrain de conditions révolutionnaires en Russie, en Allemagne, en Autriche-Hongrie... Le rationnement, les famines larvées ou l'aggravation des conditions de travail ne sont certainement pas la marque d'une période privilégiée de développement économique et social!

En fait, les théories ou pseudo-théories que nous venons d'évoquer à titre d'exemples restent très en-deçà, quant à leur valeur explicative, des travaux déjà anciens des classiques du « socialisme scientifique ». Récemment, E.J. Hobsbawn constatait que « le marxisme est incomparablement supérieur comme approche de l'histoire » à la théorie dite de la modernisation, qui n'est pas un modèle explicatif, mais « un euphémisme descriptif » comme « les citoyens âgés » ou « une figure plus pleine » et a « pour objectif de purger la réalité » de ses significations plus concrètes.[6] Cette remarque s'applique tout à fait à l'étude de la révolution en général et des situations révolutionnaires en particulier.

Pour qu'il ait révolution, au sens où nous l'avons défini, il faut qu'un certain nombre de conditions soient réunies. Il y a des conditions générales pour une révolution prolétarienne qui sont, selon Marx et Engels, un développement des forces et production au sein du système capitaliste, une croissance et une concentration du prolétariat qui doit par ailleurs avoir une conscience de classe et une organisation solide.[7] Ces conditions sont nécessaires, mais restent très générales et ne sont pas celles plus spécifiques d'une situation révolutionnaire.

Les conditions générales posent trois problèmes d'ordre différent. Premièrement, la vieille idée, « *menchevik* », selon laquelle la Russie n'était pas mûre pour la révolution prolétarienne parce que les forces de production n'étaient pas assez développées au sein du capitalisme et que le prolétariat était très minoritaire. On connaît la réponse: l'industrie et le prolétariat étaient très concentrés et la paysannerie pauvre avait intérêt à une révolution; d'autre part, la révolution russe ne devait être qu'un maillon de la révolution prolétarienne européenne. Deuxièmement, le triomphe de révolutions « prolétariennes », dans des pays à dominante agraire comme la Chine, indique que ces révolutions sont d'un autre type que les révolutions prolétariennes des pays industriels que prévoyaient Marx et Engels. C'est là d'ailleurs l'explication que les dirigeants chinois eux-mêmes ont donné de leur révolution, peu après la victoire.[8] Troisièmement, dans l'analyse de Marx

4. Mancur Olsen, « Rapid Growth as a Destabilizing Force », dans *When Men Revolt and Why* édité par James C. Davies (New York, Free Press, 1971).
5. James C. Davies, « Towards a Theory of Revolution », dans *When Men Revolt and Why*. Je remercie aussi mon assistant de recherche, M. Carlos Enriquez, qui a recueilli les matériaux sur M. Olsen et J. Davies.
6. E.J. Hobsbawn, « Vulnerable Japan », dans *The New York Review of Books* (17 juillet 1975), p. 27.
7. Pierre Broué, *Révolution en Allemagne, 1917-1923* (Paris, Minuit, 1971), pp. 13-14.
8. Fernando Claudin, *La crise du mouvement communiste: Du Komintern au Kominferm* (Paris, Maspero, 1972), pp. 649-652.

et d'Engels, il ne suffisait pas que les forces productives soient assez développées pour que la révolution prolétarienne soit possible; il fallait encore que le capitalisme soit dans une impasse, c'est-à-dire ne puisse plus développer de nouvelles forces productives. Et Marx ainsi qu'Engels constataient à plusieurs reprises cette impasse. Or le capitalisme se restructura grâce à l'impérialisme, dans lequel Lénine voyait une nouvelle impasse, condition de la révolution. La première guerre mondiale, la crise de 1929 et la seconde guerre mondiale montrèrent les capacités du capitalisme de se restructurer encore.[9] Nous devons donc constater que le capitalisme ou plus précisément sa classe dirigeante a des capacités de surmonter ses propres contradictions infiniment plus grandes que les grands théoriciens du socialisme ne le pensaient. Il n'en reste pas moins que ces restructurations ne se sont pas faites sans des crises sérieuses qui précisément pouvaient être, pour le prolétariat, des situations révolutionnaires.

Conditions objectives d'une situation révolutionnaire

En ce qui concerne les conditions spécifiques d'une situation révolutionnaire, c'est certainement Lénine qui, parmi les dirigeants du mouvement ouvrier, a été le plus systématique dans la définition d'une telle situation. Et ce qui est intéressant, c'est que cette tentative de définition de Lénine a eu lieu avant la révolution bolchevique d'octobre. Donc ce n'est pas une justification *ex post*. Pour qu'une telle situation existât, Lénine estimait que trois conditions devaient être remplies. Première condition: « l'impossibilité pour les classes dominantes de maintenir leur domination, crise du *sommet*, crise de la politique de la classe dominante, et qui crée une fissure par laquelle le mécontentement et l'indignation des classes opprimées se fraient un chemin. Pour que la révolution éclate, il ne suffit pas, habituellement, que *la base ne veuille plus v*ivre comme auparavant, mais il importe encore que *le sommet ne le puisse plus* ». Donc, crise au sommet. Deuxième condition: « aggravation particulière de la misère et de la détresse des classes opprimées ». Troisième condition: « accentuation marquée, pour les raisons indiquées plus haut, de l'activité des masses, qui se laissent tranquillement piller dans les périodes *pacifiques*, mais qui, en période orageuse sont poussées tant par la crise dans son ensemble que par le *sommet* lui-même vers une action historique indépendante. Sans ces changements objectifs indépendants de la volonté non seulement de tels ou tels groupes et partis, mais encore de telles ou telles classes, la révolution est, en général, impossible. L'ensemble de ces changements objectifs constitue une situation révolutionnaire. »[10]

Voilà donc la définition que donne Lénine des trois conditions. La première condition (la crise au sommet) se retrouve, en effet, me semble-t-il, dans toutes les révolutions, tant bourgeoises – voir l'état de désarroi qui règne en France dans les couches dirigeantes à la veille de la révolution en 1789, – que prolétarienne – voir la Russie de 1917, – ou agraires – voir l'état de décomposition du Kuo-min-tang en 1945-1947 en Chine. Il peut même arriver que cette première condition seule ait permis aux dirigeants du prolétariat d'obtenir le pouvoir sans « lutte consciente », dans les circonstances « où le pouvoir lui est échu comme un bien dont personne ne veut plus. »[11] Rosa Luxemburg donnait la Commune de Paris comme exemple de cette prise de pouvoir exceptionnelle. *A fortiori,* il paraît clair qu'en Hongrie, en 1919, on est en présence d'un tel phénomène: le geste du représentant du « sommet » en décomposition, le comte Károlyi, se rendant à la prison offrir le pouvoir, quasiment sur un plateau, aux dirigeants du prolétariat avec Béla Kun à leur tête, est une image frappante de cette crise du sommet qui remet son pouvoir. Cependant, la question de savoir si réellement les dirigeants de la classe dominante sont dans l'impasse n'est pas toujours si claire dans l'action. Il est évident que certaines sectes révolutionnaires entretiennent l'illusion qu'il y a impasse des dirigeants bourgeois même en période tranquille, lorsqu'il est clair qu'il n'y a pas crise. Et cette *maladie infantile du communisme* a un nom, donné par Lénine lui-même, le *gauchisme*.[12]

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 112-113.
10. V.I. Lénine, *Oeuvres* (Moscou, Éditions en langue étrangère, 4e édition), Tome 21, pp. 216-217.
11. Rosa Luxemburg, « Réforme ou révolution? », dans *Oeuvres* (Paris, Maspero, 1971), Tome I, p. 78.
12. V.I. Lénine, dans *Oeuvres, op. cit.*, Tome 31.

Mais quand il y a réellement crise – et c'est un point dont Lénine et les dirigeants socialistes de gauche et communistes, tout au moins la plupart, n'ont peut-être pas mesuré réellement la portée en 1918, – il ne faut pas sous-estimer la capacité du sommet de temporiser, de faire des concessions, puis, une fois la vague révolutionnaire émoussée, de reprendre les choses en main. Comme les dirigeants du capitalisme ont su le restructurer, ils ont su produire également des justifications super-structurelles auxquelles les masses ne sont pas restées insensibles: « patriotisme, nationalisme, racisme, individualisme »[13] et, plus subtilement, néo-libéralisme, réformisme, même un certain gauchisme libéral de type « nouvelle culture », société des loisirs, etc. C'est là qu'interviennent nettement les *conditions subjectives* de la révolution, notamment la capacité politique des masses révolutionnaires et de leurs dirigeants, sujet que nous développerons plus loin. Dans la décomposition du « sommet », un des éléments capitaux est l'état de l'armée. Un texte d'Otto Bauer est intéressant à ce point de vue. Otto Bauer, qui pense évidemment au récent écrasement des socialistes autrichiens, note avec lucidité, à propos de la répression du soulèvement des mineurs des Asturies, en octobre 1934: la classe ouvrière « ne peut vaincre dans la lutte armée contre l'appareil d'État, si les forces armées ne se désagrègent pas elles-mêmes au cours des combats, . . . passant du côté des insurgés. »[14] Certes, on peut trouver excessive cette affirmation récente de Malraux dans une interview où il disait que « si l'on vous met deux bataillons de chars, la révolution prolétarienne ou rien, c'est la même chose » et, farfelue la conclusion qu'il en tire, soit que « la révolution d'octobre est la dernière révolution de XIXe siècle. »[15] Pourtant, cette assertion contient une part de vérité, en ce sens qu'une force armée compacte, bien tenue en mains, a la capacité d'écraser un mouvement prolétarien insurrectionnel. Mais en plein XXe siècle, par exemple, l'expérience de Cuba, à la fin de 1958, a montré que des forces armées, pourtant habituées à la répression, pouvaient se décomposer rapidement dans une situation révolutionnaire.

L'aggravation ou la régression des conditions de vie des classes laborieuses, la deuxième condition d'une situation objective que Lénine énonçait, joue certainement un rôle important. Cette aggravation peut avoir des causes directement économiques, ou résulter de la guerre, ou encore des deux à la fois. Mais elle crée un terrain favorable à la révolution. À ce point de vue, l'analyse que Rosa Luxemburg a fait de la révolution russe de 1905 me paraît très intéressante. Remontant de grève en grève, elle voit dans la grève de Saint-Petersbourg de 1896 le premier prodrome de la révolution; cette grève avait été provoquée par les fileurs et tisserands qui, après avoir supporté des journées de travail de treize à quinze heures et des salaires aux pièces très bas, s'étaient mis en grève devant le refus de leurs patrons de payer les trois jours chômés et imposés pour le couronnement de Nicholas II. Cette grève fut réprimée brutalement. Mais en 1897, les ouvriers du textile se mirent en grève; celle-ci aboutit à un succès: la journée de onze heures fut proclamée dans toute la Russie et les organisations ouvrières se développèrent. En 1902, la grève éclatait au Caucase à cause de la crise industrielle et commerciale ainsi que d'un chômage considérable. Ce fut une défaite, mais de nouvelles vagues de grèves générales eurent lieu en 1902-1903. Dès décembre 1904 enfin, les grèves générales, que l'éclatement de la guerre russo-japonaise avait temporairement interrompues, reprenaient pour aboutir, le 22 janvier 1905 à Saint-Petersbourg, à la fusillade sanglante du défilé de travailleurs qui mit le feu aux poudres de la révolution.[16]

Cette analyse de Luxemburg présente aussi un intérêt en ce qui concerne la troisième condition, que Lénine énonçait, soit que les masses de travailleurs habituellement tranquilles se mettent en mouvement. Il ne s'agit plus d'une avant-garde, mais de la majorité substantielle, sinon écrasante, des travailleurs qui entre en lice. Novembre 1918 et la grande grève de mars 1920 en Allemagne me paraissent typiques de ces mouvements vraiment globaux, comme aussi les grandes grèves de juin 1936 ou de mai 1968 en

13. F. Claudin, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
14. Otto Bauer, « Entre les deux guerres mondiales », dans Yvon Bourdet, *Otto Bauer et la révolution* (Paris, EDI, 1967), p. 261.
15. Olivier Todd, « Malraux par Malraux », dans *Le Nouvel Observateur* (3 nov. 1975), p. 99.
16. Rosa Luxemburg, « Grève de masse, parti et syndicats », *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 103-105.

France. Dans ces périodes, le rythme de l'histoire s'accélère; c'est alors, comme disait Marx, que certains jours équivalent chacun à vingt ans. C'est alors aussi que les conditions subjectives, que nous examinerons plus loin, sont déterminantes.

Une condition objective, que Lénine ne mentionne pas dans son analyse et qui me paraît extrêmement importante, est le facteur extérieur, c'est-à-dire l'intervention étrangère. Cependant, on sait l'importance considérable que Lénine accordait au développement de la révolution en Europe, surtout en Europe centrale, pour trois raisons. L'une est d'ordre général: en socialiste internationaliste, Lénine voyait la révolution dans une perspective internationale. D'autre part, pour le marxiste qu'il était la révolution devait aussi éclater dans les pays de capitalisme avancé, même si, à cause du mûrissement plus rapide de la crise provoquée par la guerre et la situation de la Russie, elle avait commencé dans ce pays. Enfin, pour Lénine, pour se consolider et pour accomplir ses tâches, la révolution russe avait besoin d'une Europe socialiste sinon totalement, du moins en tout cas dans sa partie centrale; une Europe capitaliste pourrait chercher à étouffer au berceau la jeune Russie soviétique, ce qu'elle tenta d'ailleurs effectivement.

Mais ce facteur externe n'était pas décisif pour Lénine ou pour Liebknecht, Luxemburg, Trotski ou Radek, au moment où la situation était mûre pour la révolution. Au contraire, pour Otto Bauer, cette condition extérieure était capitale. Son analyse est moins convaincante que celle de Lénine, puisque, au contraire de celui-ci, il posait cette condition *ex post*, après que la révolution autrichienne ait déjà passé un cap révolutionnaire (novembre-décembre 1918). Toujours est-il que Bauer considérait qu'une révolution prolétarienne était impossible dans le seul cadre d'un petit État, à cause de sa dépendance économique à l'égard de l'étranger capitaliste et même de l'intervention étrangère.[17] Sans abonder dans la thèse d'Otto Bauer, reprise aussi par Fredrich Adler et les dirigeants de l'Internationale « Deux-et-demie », qui sera créée à la fin 1920 et durera jusqu'en 1923,[18] on peut retenir une condition objective pour le mouvement révolutionnaire des petits États: bénéficier d'un soutien externe, sinon pour conquérir le pouvoir, en tout cas pour s'y maintenir contre les menées extérieures, c'est-à-dire contre les impérialismes. Dans le cas hongrois (1919), il est extrêmement clair que cette condition extérieure manquait.

Conditions subjectives

On peut énoncer ou trouver dans les écrits des dirigeants socialistes et communistes au moins deux, peut-être trois, conditions subjectives. La première condition est, selon Lénine, que « la classe tout entière, les grandes masses » appuient l'avant-garde du prolétariat ou tout au moins aient une attitude de neutralité bienveillante qui les rendent complètement incapables de soutenir son adversaire... Or, pour que vraiment la classe tout entière, pour que vraiment les grandes masses de travailleurs et d'opprimés du capital en arrivent à une telle position, la propagande seule, l'agitation seule ne suffisent pas. Pour cela il faut que ces masses fassent leur propre expérience politique.[19]

La deuxième condition subjective est précisément la présence d'une organisation d'avant-garde, capable de prendre la direction de ce mouvement révolutionnaire. Cette organisation d'avant-garde est généralement un parti, mais d'autres organisations peuvent prendre la tête d'une révolution. Sans remonter à la Révolution française qui, à ses débuts, n'avait pas de parti structuré, plus récemment la révolution cubaine a vu une organisation fort différente d'un parti diriger un mouvement révolutionnaire. Au contraire, des partis se réclamant du prolétariat ont pu être des freins à la révolution: ce fut notamment

17. Otto Bauer, « La marche au socialisme », dans Yvon Bourdet, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-129.
18. André Donneur, *Histoire de l'Union des partis socialistes pour l'action internationale, 1920-1923* (Genève/Sudbury, Ontario, IUHEI/Librairie de l'Université Laurentienne, 1967), pp. 94 et 404-405.
19. V.I. Lénine, *op. cit.*, Tome 31, p. 89, cf. sur ce sujet: *Les principes du marxisme-léninisme* (Moscou, Éditions en langues étrangères, sans date), p. 497.

le cas en Europe centrale dans les années 1919-1920, comme en France en 1936, 1944 et 1968 ou en Espagne en 1936. La valeur d'un parti ou d'une organisation révolutionnaire en général réside, selon Trotski, dans « son aptitude sans égale à s'orienter rapidement, à changer de tactique, à renouveler son armement et à appliquer de nouvelles méthodes, en un mot à opérer de brusques virages. »[20] Saisir rapidement la situation, s'y engager sans aventurisme, mais sans s'embarrasser de considérations routinières et de schémas si préconçus que, quand les conditions objectives de la révolution sont là, on est incapable de les voir, voilà nous semble-t-il une des caractéristiques d'un parti ou d'une organisation révolutionnaire. De même, autant ce type de parti ou d'organisation est éloigné de l'aventurisme des sectes, autant, également, n'est-il pas paralysé par les obstacles comme ce fut le cas pour de nombreux partis qui ne finirent par voir que les empêchements à la révolution. Témoin, comme nous le verrons, le parti social-démocrate autrichien en 1918-1919.

La troisième condition subjective que nous posons, et qui est peu débattue finalement à cette époque par les dirigeants du mouvement ouvrier, est plus discutable. Il s'agit de la présence de dirigeants révolutionnaires de qualité. Discutable, parce qu'on peut considérer que les situations créent ou suscitent l'apparition de tels leaders; en réalité, l'expérience nous montre que ce n'est pas toujours le cas. Dans le court terme, dans des périodes où les jours valent des années, pour reprendre cette image de Marx, les décisions pèsent lourdement et la qualité de ceux qui les prennent également. Certes, les chefs sont les produits des organisations qu'ils dirigent. C'est d'ailleurs pour cette raison que l'on accorde tant d'importance à la présence de partis ou d'organisations révolutionnaires, mais les qualités personnelles – esprit de décision, clairvoyance, capacité de maintenir la cohésion de l'organisation tout en la dirigeant – jouent indubitablement. L'erreur largement répandue, même si souvent combattue et réfutée, serait évidemment de faire dépendre la révolution uniquement de l'action d'individus. Des explications psychanalytiques ont été jusqu'à prétendre que l'activité des dirigeants révolutionnaires ne serait que le moyen de résoudre leurs problèmes personnels en les portant sur la place publique. Ainsi, E. Victor Wolfenstein réduit l'action revolutionnaire de Lénine, Trotski et . . . Gandhi (!) à la résolution de leur prétendue ambivalence à l'égard de leurs parents, leurs pères spécialement, et à l'absence d'une conception solide de leur propre ego; leurs « sentiments d'agressivité » à l'égard de leurs pères auraient été transférés vers les autorités publiques.[21] La valeur de telles pseudo-théories, dont les fins idéologiques sont transparentes, est limitée même quant à l'explication du comportement des individus. Il n'est, tout d'abord, pas évident que seuls les parents déterminent la formation individuelle; d'autres facteurs sociaux entrent en ligne de compte. Il serait aussi intéressant de savoir si, en appliquant les mêmes critères d'analyse à des chefs conservateurs ou modérés, on ne trouverait pas des tensions individuelles ou supposées telles de même type. Enfin, il est significatif que les chefs de la révolution américaine n'ont pas été choisis comme sujets d'étude. La biographie de Benjamin Franklin par exemple offre tous les matériaux nécessaires à de telles billevesées.

Par contre, il me semble important de souligner que des dirigeants capables de mener une action ont, durant les heures décisives, une importance très grande.

Situations révolutionnaires en Europe Centrale (1918-1923)

Si l'on essaie d'appliquer cette grille d'analyse, fort imparfaite soit-elle, à l'Europe centrale, il nous faut déterminer quelques points de repères. Véritablement, on est en présence d'une grande vague révolutionnaire qui déborde d'ailleurs largement le centre du continent, objet de notre étude.

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20. Léon Trotsky, *Cours nouveau* (1923) (Paris, Union générale d'éditions, 1972), p. 83.
21. E. Victor Welfenstein, *The Revolutionary Personality: Lenin, Trotsky, Gandhi* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1967). Je tiens à remercier mon assistant, M. Carlos Enriquez, qui a recueilli les matériaux sur cet ouvrage de Welfenstein et qui m'a suggéré la remarque sur les révolutionnaires américains.

On ne retrouvera pas de vagues d'une ampleur comparable avant les mouvements de résistance des dernières années et de la fin de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. Encore qu'à cette dernière époque, les appareils d'État seront mieux préparés à résister à la vague révolutionnaire.[22]

Durant la période de 1918 à 1923, il y a eu au premier abord plusieurs moments où les conditions objectives d'une situation révolutionnaires étaient réunies. L'Allemagne était incontestablement l'endroit où de telles situations furent multiples. Tel est le cas en novembre 1918, et cette période d'ailleurs de novembre 1918 est valable aussi pour l'Autriche et peut-être pour la Hongrie puis, au printemps 1919, dans toute l'Europe centrale et là avec des nuances à propos de l'Allemagne. Plus tard, seules en Allemagne apparaissent des situations, en mars 1920, été-autonmne 1923. Si on inclut l'Italie, il y a aussi septembre 1920 où les conditions objectives sont remplies.

Si on examine la situation en novembre 1918 en Allemagne, les conditions objectives d'une révolution nous paraissent réunies. En réalité, comme l'a noté Pierre Broué dans une excellente formule, la révolution va « plus vite que les révolutionnaires ».[23] La défaite militaire a provoqué « la crise au sommet ». Les privations causées par les guerres et le sentiment que cette guerre est vouée à l'échec ont mis peu à peu les masses en mouvement. Dès avril 1917, des troubles ont éclaté parmi les marins à Wilhemshaven.[24] En janvier 1918, les grèves ont eu lieu et des conseils ouvriers sont apparus sur le modèle russe. En octobre 1918, le mouvement reprend et aboutit – première concession du sommet – à la libération de Liebknecht et d'autres détenus politiques. Mais c'est le soulèvement des marins de Kiel qui déclenchera le mouvement qui va déferler sur toute l'Allemagne avec la formation de conseils d'ouvriers et de soldats.[25]

Mais à ces conditions objectives réunies à la fin d'octobre – et une bonne partie de novembre – manquent quelques-unes des conditions subjectives. Les masses, en novembre indubitablement, sont prêtes à suivre une avant-garde. Elles auraient même tendance à pousser dans le dos des dirigeants.[26] Le problème vient plutôt de l'organisation de la classe ouvrière; celle-ci est divisée en plusieurs partis et organisations; mais même ces divers organismes regroupent eux-mêmes des tendances différentes qui se disputent la direction de la classe ouvrière. La guerre a provoqué la scission du Parti social-démocrate (S.P.D.) dont ont été exclus ceux qui ont formé le Parti social-démocrate indépendant (U.S.P.D.), mais celui-ci regroupe en son sein aussi bien des pacifistes de tendances diverses y compris le père du révisionnisme, Bernstein, que des révolutionnaires dont les spartakistes ne constituent d'ailleurs qu'un groupe parmi d'autres. Le clivage réformistes-révolutionnaires est finalement plus important à la veille de la révolution que la question de l'opposition à la guerre qui a provoqué la scission. Or, comme le note Pierre Broué, « les révolutionnaires n'avaient pas su provoquer cette clarification » entre le clivage réformistes-révolutionnaires « quand il était encore temp ».[27] Les conditions objectives sont depuis longtemps réunies, alors que l'organisation révolutionnaire se cherche encore. Et pourtant, dès les premières actions de 1917 déjà, l'organisation révolutionnaire des marins, qui exprimait « la volonté d'action des jeunes travailleurs sous l'uniforme »,[28] s'était tournée vers les dirigeants indépendants. Elle s'était heurtée à la routine bureaucratique des dirigeants de l'U.S.P.D., notamment de Dittmann qui avait, par ses actes mêmes, compromis, non seulement l'organisation, mais aussi la vie des dirigeants des marins, dont plusieurs avaient été exécutés.

Donc, à l'automne 1918, les conditions objectives de la situation révolutionnaire sont réunies. Normalement, les organisations socialistes et ouvrières ne devraient pas

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22. Neal Ascherton, « The Good War », dans *The New York Review of Books* (22 jan. 1976), p. 14.
23. Pierre Broué, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-109.
25. F.L. Carsten, *Revolution in Central Europe 1918-1919* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1972), p. 323. P. Broué, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-151.
26. F.L. Carsten, *op. cit.*, p. 324.
27. P. Broué, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

être prises de court; les événements viennent déjà de loin. Après ces premières affaires d'avril 1917, les conséquences de la révolution d'octobre en Russie et des pourparlers de Brest-Litovsk vont provoquer les grèves de janvier 1918, autre leçon pour les révolutionnaires, s'ils avaient su interpréter les événements. Ce mouvement a été déjà saboté par la direction social-démocrate, qui, menée par Ebert, a été inclue dans le comité d'action aux côtés des indépendants et des ouvriers révolutionnaires qui sont dirigés par l'indépendant Richard Müller. Certes Richard Müller constate déjà que « l'unique issue est la révolution ».[29] Leo Jogisches, un dirigeant spartakiste, porte un jugement sévère sur l'U.S.P.D., parti auquel il appartient malgré tout: « Par crétinisme parlementaire, dans son désir d'appliquer le schéma prévu pour toutes les grèves syndicales et surtout par manque de confiance dans les masses, mais aussi parce que dès le début, les indépendants ne pouvaient imaginer la grève que comme un simple mouvement de protestation, le comité s'est borné [. . .] à entrer en pourparlers avec le gouvernement au lieu de [. . .] déchaîner l'énergie des masses sous les formes les plus variées. »[30] À cette époque aussi, dans le mouvement ouvrier, Karl Radek a indiqué depuis 1916 que préparer l'organisation de la scission est indispensable pour les révolutionnaires allemands. Tôt ou tard, même majoritaires dans l'U.S.P.D., il faudra qu'ils se séparent des opportunistes de ce parti.[31] La constitution d'une organisation révolutionnaire, bien implantée et liée aux masses qui se mettent en mouvement, devient une nécessité de plus en plus pressante à mesure que les signes indiquent, à la fin de l'été et au début de l'automne 1918, que les conditions objectives d'une situation révolutionnaire apparaissent. Mais, comme le constate Broué, « l'organisation des révolutionnaires demeure inférieure à l'audace de leurs analyses politiques et de leurs perspectives et ne les met en mesure d'exploiter ni la fermentation révolutionnaire qui se développe tout au long de l'année 1918, ni l'aide technique et financière que leur accorde les Russes à partir d'avril. »[32] Arthur Rosenberg, quant à lui, déplore qu'il n'y ait pas eu une clarification à ce moment-là. En fait, l'aile droite ,« démocratique », de l'U.S.P.D., qui était dirigée par Haase et Dittmann, aurait eu davantage, dès cette époque, sa place dans le S.P.D. et aurait pu, même plus tard, constituer un certain frein, un contrepoids à la droite d'Ebert au sein de ce parti; d'un autre côté, les éléments révolutionnaires qui étaient à l'intérieur, et très partiellement à l'extérieur, de l'U.S.P.D. auraient pu constituer un centre de coordination ou même un parti allant de Ledebour à l'extrême-gauche, en passant par les militants comme Daumig, Richard Müller et les spartakistes de Liebknecht.[33]

Or ce qui arrive, c'est que, lorsque la révolution éclate aux premiers jours de novembre, « les masses ouvrières se frayent leur chemin vers l'action révolutionnaire, malgré leurs dirigeants et souvent contre eux, de façon presque indépendante des organisations révolutionnaires dépassées par l'événement »[34] en l'absence de toute direction sûre. Liebknecht essaie bien, dès sa libération, le 23 octobre, d'établir un contact avec l'avant-garde révolutionnaire dans les usines, qui se regroupe sous la bannière de l'U.S.P.D. Il n'arrive pas à s'entendre, évidemment, avec la direction de l'U.S.P.D. qui refuse de convoquer un congrès: Liebknecht entre alors en pourparlers avec un comité provisoire de délégués révolutionnaires d'usines qui est dirigé par des indépendants (U.S.P.D.). Liebknecht et deux autres spartakistes entrent dans ce comité provisoire, où les indépendants hésitent, et finalement il n'est pas possible d'organiser des manifestations. On considère que c'est prématuré; on évoque le rapport de forces, référence constante des dirigeants qui hésitent à ce moment-là.[35] En fait, ce sont les masses qui tranchent le débat en déclenchant l'action spontanément en novembre. Mais ces atermoiements, et c'est extrêmement important, permettent aux dirigeants sociaux-démocrates (S.P.D.) de récupérer en partie le mouvement en se plaçant à sa tête pour mieux le freiner. Le rôle de Scheidemann et d'Ebert, liés à l'état-major, est contre-révolutionnaire au point de

29. Cité par Pierre Broué, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
30. *Ibid.*
31. P. Broué, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 139-142.

vue d'une révolution prolétarienne. Ils ne veulent pas aller plus loin qu'une république démocratique; et encore, le Conseil des Commissaires du Peuple – ce gouvernement qui tire son pouvoir à la fois des délégués des Conseils de Berlin réunis au Cirque Buch et de l'ancien chancelier Max de Bade qui avait remis directement son pouvoir à Ebert – n'ira pas jusqu'à établir véritablement une république démocratique; les anciennes institutions restent marquées du sceau de la féodalité: le corps des fonctionnaires, l'armée impériale et les grands domaines des Junkers sont maintenus.[36] Or ces institutions serviront de base pour la contre-révolution et l'écrasement de la république démocratique, quelques quinze ans plus tard. Les sociaux-démocrates utilisent la passivité de la droite des indépendants (U.S.P.D.) et la désunion de la gauche révolutionnaire pour reprendre peu à peu ce que les mouvements révolutionnaires ont conquis et finalement écrasent les forces révolutionnaires au début de 1919, avec l'aide des *corps blancs*, qui sont de véritables gardes blancs.

En 1919, au moment de l'insurrection, il n'y a visiblement pas situation révolutionnaire. Le moment est passé. Les conditions objectives ne sont plus là. On est dans une situation, au contraire, *contre-révolutionnaire* de répression et l'insurrection, déclenchée en janvier par les spartakistes et également par une large fraction de la gauche social-démocrate indépendante, est écrasée. Finalement, c'est l'établissement de l'assemblée nationale constituante, quelques semaines plus tard.

Il nous semble que, durant cette période, les qualités des chefs des différents groupes qui se réclament du prolétariat jouent un rôle très important. L'irrésolution des dirigeants, qui « est ce qui débilite le plus les masses »,[37] fut la caractéristique des chefs de l'organisation révolutionnaire. Ce qui paraît frappant, ce sont toutes les heures que les chefs des différentes organisations révolutionnaires (les spartakistes, la gauche indépendante) passent à délibérer. Cette irrésolution contraste absolument avec la résolution des dirigeants social-démocrates qui sont sûrs de leurs objectifs. Le temps perdu par les uns, dans ces jours qui ont vingt ans, sert aux autres à gagner du terrain. Ayant choisi leur camp dès le 4 août 1914, les chefs sociaux-démocrates sont sûrs de leur objectif – la république démocratique seulement – et ne s'embarassent pas des moyens. Noske, en janvier 1919, avec l'aide des *corps francs*, qui préfigurent les bandes fascistes, n'hésite pas une seconde à écraser ses anciens camarades de parti.

Dans le cas autrichien, en novembre 1918, les conditions objectives d'une situation révolutionnaire sont remplies, en tout cas, quant aux trois premières que nous avions reprises et analysées à partir des conditions posées par Lénine. Il y a une crise au sommet: une décomposition de l'ancien empire austro-hongrois; les masses sont lasses des privations de la guerre, et la défaite précipite la révolution. Les masses ouvrières se sont mises en mouvement. En lisant l'ouvrage du Professeur Carsten, on trouve nombre d'éléments qui montrent que, durant cette période, il y a un net mouvement de la classe ouvrière. C'est surtout cette classe qui est active, alors qu'il y a plutôt une passivité relative des autres classes sociales. Toutefois, il est extrêmement intéressant de voir qu'à cette époque-là un certain nombre de paysans demandent le partage des terres et des forêts. La fameuse condition externe en 1918 se pose: c'est le problème de l'intervention étrangère. Mais dans le boulversement de novembre 1918, on peut se poser très sérieusement la question de savoir si l'Entente aurait pu si facilement intervenir. C'est raisonner d'ailleurs comme si d'autres facteurs extérieurs, notamment la situation en Allemagne et dans le reste de l'Empire austro-hongrois en décomposition, n'entraient pas en ligne de compte.[38]

Ce qui frappe le plus en étudiant les conditions subjectives c'est que, apparemment, un certain nombre de conditions subjectives semblent réunies pour qu'une révolution réussisse, du moins temporairement. Il existe une organisation qui a un lien étroit avec les masses et qui ne s'est pas brisée: le parti social-démocrate reste uni. D'autre part, des Conseils ouvriers et de soldats seront établis, certes avec un certain retard, et les conseils

36. F.L. Carsten, *op. cit.*, pp. 323-335.
37. Trotsky, *Histoire de la révolution russe*, Tome III, p. 24, cité par P. Broué, *op. cit.*, p. 236.
38. F.L. Carsten, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-32.

de travailleurs surtout vont jouer un rôle important. Également, ce qui est extrêmement important, il y a une armée qui est socialiste, le chef de l'armée est Julius Deutsch, qui est ministre de la guerre et qui a réorganisé complètement l'armée à la suite de la décomposition de l'armée austro-hongroise. D'ailleurs, c'est une armée qui, jusqu'en 1921, chante « l'Internationale », et défile avec un drapeau rouge; c'est donc une armée qui est une force prolétarienne considérable. En ce qui concerne les dirigeants, quelques-uns ont certaines qualités révolutionnaires: Friedrich Adler a, durant la guerre, assassiné le premier ministre, le Comte Sturg, et on sait donc qu'il est prêt à recourir à la violence, qu'il n'y a pas un refus de principe d'utiliser la violence. Pourtant ce parti et ses dirigeants n'utilisent pas les conditions objectives. Finalement, le problème capital nous semble le maintien dans le même parti de tendances extrêmement diverses, l'unité du parti passe finalement avant tout. Or même petite, la droite du parti freine le mouvement. D'autre part, la capacité d'analyse des dirigeants est execllente mais il y a une tendance – chez Otto Bauer, le leader théorique, ce sera très typique tout le temps jusqu'à et y compris 1933-1934 – à voir surtout les obstacles, à voir tout ce qui gêne, et à attendre que la situation soit mûre. On a peur d'une intervention extérieure et aussi de la présence des régions rurales de l'Autriche, dont, en 1918 en tout cas, on surestime l'importance.

Le printemps 1919 pose un certain nombre de problèmes. Les dirigeants autrichiens refusent d'agir en 1919, comme en 1918. Et cette politique de non-action leur coûtera très cher, puisqu'ils seront de toute façon écrasés en 1934, alors que le rapport de forces en 1919, en tout cas à l'intérieur, leur était extrêmement favorable, peut-être encore plus favorable qu'en novembre 1918. D'autre part, la non-reprise de pouvoir en Autriche pose la question de la rupture de la chaîne révolutionnaire de la Hongrie à la Bavière qui a peut-être été fatale, finalement, à l'ensemble de ces révolutions.[39]

Mais est-ce que vraiment en Allemagne il y avait alors situation révolutionnaire? En réalité, en Allemagne en avril 1919, on est déjà dans une période de reflux considérable. La Deuxième République des Conseils de Bavière, qui a été proclamée dans des conditions assez curieuses – on peut se poser à nouveau la question de savoir si les conditions objectives d'une situation révolutionnaire étaient réunies – est écrasée, alors que les dirigeants du mouvement ouvrier allemand témoignent d'une grande passivité. Radek, dans cette fameuse brochure sur « le développement de la révolution mondiale et la tactique des partis communistes dans la lutte pour la dictature du prolétariat » nous semble d'une lucidité exemplaire sur l'absence d'une condition subjective indispensable pour que la situation soit vraiment révolutionnaire, soit un parti capable d'être l'état-major de la révolution. Tirant l'expérience de la Bavière d'avril 1919, Radek écrit dans cette brochure terminée en novembre 1919: « Au moment où Noske mobilisait ses *gardes-blancs* contre Munich, le prolétariat allemand était encore trop faible pour aider la république des conseils de Munich à vaincre par un soulèvement d'ensemble, une adhésion à ses buts ». Mais, si les partis révolutionnaires – c'est-à-dire non seulement les communistes (spartakistes), mais également l'U.S.P.D. où les indépendants de gauche dominaient – « avaient manifesté pendant les combats par des meetings, des manifestations et des grèves au centre du mouvement sa solidarité avec Munich, ils auraient peut-être pu contraindre le gouvernement à renoncer au bain de sang ».[40] Les deux partis auraient pu donc permettre non un triomphe de la révolution mais du moins empêcher une réaction. Et comme Jogisches, Rosa Luxemburg et Radek lui-même en janvier 1919,[41] Radek attaque le gauchisme et demande « la fusion des deux armées communistes », le parti social-démocrate indépendant, dont il faut aider les éléments de gauche « à chasser les dirigeants droitiers des organismes centraux et locaux », et le parti communiste qui doit « vaincre les éléments anarcho-syndicalistes dans ses rangs et à adopter un cours ferme et politiquement actif ».[42]

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39. Yvon Bourdet, dans Max Adler, *Démocratie et conseils ouvriers* (Paris, Maspero, 1967), p. 32; André P. Donneur, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-133. Joseph Buthnyer, *Le précédent autrichien* (Paris, Gallimard, 1956), pp. 167 et 486.
40. Cité par Pierre Broué, *op. cit.*, p. 304.
41. F.L. Carsten, *op. cit.*, pp. 325-326.
42. Cité par P. Broué, *op. cit.*, p. 304.

En mars 1920, lors du putsch de Kapp, il semble que les conditions objectives d'une situation révolutionnaire sont réunies en Allemagne: misère de la classe ouvrière, mouvements globaux des masses, fuite du sommet – Noske et Ebert sont discrédités.[43] Mais encore une fois, les conditions subjectives bloquent tout. Il existe une organisation autour de Legien, le chef des syndicats, et du parti indépendant qui a un lien étroit avec les masses révolutionnaires. Mais, malgré la volonté de Legien, résolu à constituer un gouvernement ouvrier, les indépendants tergiversent, se divisent; la gauche elle-même est partagée et, finalement, on se trouve dans une impasse, incapable d'agir. La gauche indépendante et le parti communiste se décident, trop tard finalement, pour un gouvernement ouvrier lorsque le moment est déjà passé. La grève générale qui avait été déclenchée au moment du putsch aboutit à un échec, le travail reprend et la Reichswehr en profite pour écraser les travailleurs.[44]

Sur l'action de mars 1921 en Allemagne, nous pensons qu'il est clair qu'à ce moment-là, il n'y a pas de conditions objectives d'une situation révolutionnaire. On est tout à fait dans le subjectivisme.

Dans le cas italien de septembre 1920, les conditions objectives sont réunies, mais il manque également là des conditions subjectives. Il y a le parti communiste, il y a un énorme potentiel révolutionnaire à l'intérieur du parti socialiste, mais celui-ci est extrêmement divisé.

Enfin reste ce dernier soubresaut de la vague révolutionnaire de 1918-1923 qui est l'Allemagne de l'été et du début de l'automne 1923, où réellement toutes les conditions objectives sont réunies et où, semble-t-il, le manque d'initiative des dirigeants de l'organisation révolutionnaire allemande, soit un grand parti communiste, provoque l'échec. Il est trop tard lorsque la décision est prise à Moscou au Comité exécutif de l'Internationale communiste de déclencher une action.[45]

Conclusion

C'est un travail extrêmement schématique qu'on ne pouvait pas développer, le sujet étant extrêmement vaste. Mais même cet examen rapide montre qu'il y a eu, durant cette période, plusieurs cas où les conditions objectives d'une situation révolutionnaire étaient réunies. C'est véritablement les conditions subjectives qui, en dernier ressort, ont déterminé l'orientation bourgeoise ou prolétarienne des révolutions d'Europe centrale au lendemain de la première guerre mondiale et qui ont déterminé, tout court, le sort de ces révolutions, puisque les contre-révolutions fascistes ont triomphé dans ces pays.

Pourtant, nous pensons qu'on a trop tendance à voir les problèmes à court terme et, à ce propos, nous emprunterons notre conclusion à Rosa Luxemburg – qui écrivait en 1898 dans *Réforme ou révolution*:

« Si l'on considère les *conditions sociales* de la conquête du pouvoir, la révolution ne peut donc se produire prématurément; si elle est prématurée, c'est du point de vue des conséquences politiques lorsqu'il s'agit de *conserver* le pouvoir. La révolution prématurée [. . .] ne peut être conjurée [. . .] pour deux raisons. Tout d'abord un bouleversement aussi formidable que le passage de la société capitaliste à la société socialiste ne peut se produire d'un bond, par un coup de main heureux du prolétariat. [. . .] La révolution sociale implique une lutte longue et opiniâtre au cours de laquelle, selon toute probabilité, le prolétariat aura le dessous plus d'une fois. [. . .]

Or – et c'est là le deuxième point – cette conquête « prématurée » du pouvoir politique est inévitable, parce que ces attaques prématurées du prolétariat constituent un

43. P. Broué, *op. cit.*, pp. 340-348.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 349-359.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 653-777. Werner Angress, *Stillborn Revolution: The Communist Bid for Power in Germany (1921-1923)* (Port Washington, N.Y. Nennimat Press, 1972), pp. 288-313.

facteur, et même un facteur très important, créant les conditions politiques de la victoire définitive: en effet, ce n'est qu'au cours de la crise politique qui accompagnera la prise de pouvoir, au cours de longues luttes opiniâtres, que le prolétariat acquerra le degré de maturité politique lui permettant d'obtenir la victoire définitive de la révolution ».[46]

Summary

Professor Donneur opens his presentation with the question: was there a revolutionary situation in Central Europe after the First World War? He points out that for Lenin, Trotsky, Radek, Kun, Luxemburg and Lieknich the answer was yes, but for Bauer, Friedrich Adler, Max Adler, Kautsky and others the answer was not clear. In order to offer an answer to the question, Professor Donneur first provides a definition of a revolution.

A revolution, he asserts, is the overthrow, or attempted overthrow, of the social order by the action of a class and the establishment of a new and progressive social order. This change, according to Professor Donneur, must be the result of collective action and not the seizure of power by a small group or the result of a *coup d'état*. The new social order must be progressive or, according to the author, the result will be a counter-revolution, not a revolution.

Professor Donneur employs Lenin's three points to determine the objective conditions of a revolutionary situation and he adds to this a fourth point-foreign intervention. He then adds a set of subjective conditions that he deems crucial in a revolutionary situation. The first of these is, the author notes, the movement of the masses to support the avant-garde of the proletariat. The second is the existence of an organization that is capable of leading the revolutionary movement and the third, which Donneur admits is difficult to define, is the necessity of courageous, intelligent leaders for the revolutionary organization.

Professor Donneur then applies these criteria to three concrete historical situations, concentrating primarily on the situation in Germany from 1918 to 1923, with brief looks at the Italian and Austrian situations. The author concludes that in all three cases the objective conditions for revolution were present but, he asserts, the original question revolves around the subjective conditions and scholars tend to answer negatively because they view the subjective conditions in the short-term and ignore the long-term struggle needed to raise the political maturity of the proletariat.

46. Rosa Luxemburg, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.

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Discussion

P. Pilisi. Je pense, probablement de façon subjective, que parmi les conditions objectives, on pourrait même mentionner deux facteurs qui me semblent non substantiellement importants, mais qui jouent quand même un certain rôle dans le déroulement ou le développement de la situation révolutionnaire. Premièrement, pendant la guerre, l'autoritarisme économique du gouvernement se transforme progressivement en un autoritarisme politique, autant dans les pays vainqueurs que dans les pays vaincus. C'est un autoritarisme politique. Mais, d'autre part, en ce qui concerne, par exemple, la Russie et certains pays de l'Europe centrale, comme l'Autriche ou la Hongrie, eh bien il y a une autre situation qui évoque, disons, les révolutions classiques, même la Révolution française, en ce sens que les centres se situent dans les capitales, c'et-à-dire à Vienne et à Budapest, où la concentration ouvrière joue un rôle important, en ce sens que ce sont les ouvriers qui sont la « locomotive de la révolution ». D'autre part, la paysannerie en Autriche et en Hongrie, par exemple, embarque dans la révolution politique à condition qu'une révolution sociale soit effectuée dorénavant. La masse rurale, qui constitue quand même l'écrasante majorité de la population, n'a pas été favorable à une révolution politique radicale. Tel était le cas que, la paysannerie voulant la révolution social-démocrate et bourgeoise, le premier souci de la révolution politique a été de satisfaire cette aspiration sociale de la paysannerie des pays mentionnés. Alors, M. Donneur, dans quelle mesure considérez-vous l'interaction entre la révolution sociale et la révolution politique, par exemple, entre la classe ouvrière et la paysannerie?

A. Donneur. Je pense que la questions se pose différemment dans les deux exemples que vous avez donnés, la Hongrie et l'Autriche. La question hongroise et la question autrichienne sont différentes. En Autriche, je pense qu'on a eu trop tendance, Otto Bauer notamment, et les dirigeants du parti socialiste autrichien en général, à surestimer le rôle de la paysannerie. Après tout, dans l'Autriche allemande, dans ce qui reste de l'Autriche allemande, comme on l'appelle à l'époque, les villes ont un poids considérable, et Vienne notamment. Vienne est une ville de deux millions d'habitants, sur une population d'à peu près huit ou neuf millions d'habitants; à part cela, il y a d'autres grandes villes industrielles, comme Linz par exemple. D'autre part – et dans l'ouvrage du professeur Carsten comme je l'ai dit dans mon exposé, il y a un certain nombre de références à des travaux qui le montrent – les paysans, au tout début, auraient été très intéressés par le partage des terres, par un partage des forêts domaniales, etc. Et là, finalement, le mouvement ouvrier, le parti du prolétariat n'utilise pas cette possibilité extraordinaire. Le fait que le parti détient les centres où la classe ouvrière joue un rôle extrêmement important, il a une prédominance. Il possède également un instrument, l'armée, et il n'arrive pas à conquérir, il ne cherche pas à conquérir les paysans; il laisse s'établir des conseils dans les régions rurales, conseils qui sont d'ailleurs très faibles, ou qui sont de faux conseils, dans un certain sens, où la petite-bourgeoisie et la bourgeoisie prennent le contrôle de la paysannerie, notamment dans la Haute-Autriche. Il y a là un manque d'initiative, très

nettement, qui joue un rôle négatif. Mais pourquoi y a-t-il ce manque d'initiative? Il y a un manque d'initiative, parce que les dirigeants du parti pensent que, de toute façon, il faut tenir compte de ces couches très conservatrices et des partis qui représentent ces couches conservatrices. Ils hésitent à les arracher à ces partis (c'est-à-dire aux chrétiens-sociaux surtout et au parti pan-germaniste). Je pense que, dans le cas hongrois, c'est assez différent. Là, le rôle de la paysannerie est extrêmement important, puisque la classe ouvrière est très minoritaire. Je laisserai le soin aux spécialistes de juger la politique qui a été pratiquée par la République des conseils; toutefois, en ce qui concerne la Hongrie, il y a eu un manque d'initiative, ou un manque de volonté de faire des compromis, à cause d'un attachement à la collectivisation des terres, un refus d'accepter, temporairement peut-être, le partage des terres pour gagner les paysans et, comme l'avait fait Lénine en Russie, prendre une partie du programme des socialistes révolutionnaires en matière agraire. Mais, dans le cas autrichien, je pense que la question se pose assez différemment et je ne suis pas d'accord avec la thèse du professeur Carsten qui accorde une importance très grande aux paysans partout, dans tous les pays, y compris en Allemagne. Bien sûr, l'hostilité de la paysannerie – et en Bavière cela joue un certain rôle, parce qu'il y a une ligue paysanne – est un fait, mais il faut aussi ne pas oublier l'état d'industrialisation du pays, la prédominance des villes, la prédominance du prolétariat. Et, en Autriche, finalement, même si l'Autriche est moins développée industriellement que l'Allemagne en général, le problème se pose quand même plus dans ces termes-là: prédominance des travailleurs, des ouvriers industriels sur la paysannerie, alors qu'effectivement, en Hongrie, cette dernière est un problème capital.

Y. Brossard. Je veux revenir sur cette troisième condition subjective, que tu as évoquée dans ton exposé, soit la présence de dirigeants de qualité, parce qu'elle me semble soulever un problème qui a été souvent débattu, un problème polémique souvent débattu dans toute cette histoire-là. De ce point de vue, Georges Castellan, dans son ouvrage sur la république de Weimar, disait que, quand on portait un jugement, sur la question de savoir si la situation en Allemagne était révolutionnaire à l'époque, ou pas, on se trouvait en face de deux écoles, et deux écoles polémiques en ce sens que, d'un côté, on avait tendance à dire que les sociaux-démocrates avaient trahi, et que, d'autre part, on avait tendance à dire que les radicaux, les bolcheviks allemands, pour ainsi dire, se berçaient d'illusions, ou étaient utopiques. Alors, il me semble que, quand on pose le débat dans ces termes-là, on éclaire peu de choses finalement. Et tu disais dans ton exposé que faire dépendre la révolution de l'action d'individus, c'était stérile; mais, j'aimerais te poser la question d'une autre façon, en l'inversant: est-ce que, justement dans tous ces débats-là, faire dépendre la non-révolution, ou l'absence de révolution, d'individus, ce n'est pas tout aussi stérile? Enfin, le point central de ma question, c'est: est-ce que, finalement, ce n'est pas complètement oiseux de parler de trahison ou d'utopisme, dans cette question-là? Et le fait que les conditions subjectives, comme tu disais dans ton exposé, ne se soient pas trouvées réalisées ou suffisamment réalisées, est-ce qu'il ne faut pas chercher les raisons de cet état de fait dans ce qu'on pourrait appeler le « sous-sol » de la situation révolutionnaire de 1917-1923, en Allemagne? Je pose la question, en même temps, à M. Broué, qui pourrait donner son point de vue là-dessus.

A. Donneur. Je pense que, sans parler de la question de la trahison, qui est effective, il y a une question de volonté. Qu'est-ce que veulent, finalement, les dirigeants sociaux-démocrates? Et non seulement les dirigeants, mais également en général leur organisation? Ce n'est pas seulement cette question de la qualité des gens qui joue, mais c'est aussi celle de l'organisation, une autre condition subjective qui est différente de la question des dirigeants proprement dits. J'avais limité la question des dirigeants au problème suivant: savoir prendre des décisions rapides, etc. Ce qui me paraissait patent, surtout dans la période de novembre 1918, mais aussi lors du putsch de Kapp et même aussi en 1923, c'est – et cela, c'est spécifiquement la qualité du dirigeant – que, d'un côté, on prend des décisions rapidement, on décide on agit. De l'autre côté, on délibère énormément; mais il est clair que cela, c'est imbriqué aussi dans la question de l'organisation. Le fait qu'il n'y ait pas d'organisation révolutionnaire, que l'organisation ne soit pas cohérente, qu'elle ne soit pas formée encore en 1918, ou qu'il ait plusieurs organisations contradictoires,

avec des tendances différentes, où la clarification politique ne s'est pas faite, joue énormément. Dans le parti social-démocrate, je pense que l'organisation comme telle, depuis longtemps, a muté; enfin cela a été vu bien avant 1914, perçu même dans les discussions qu'il y avait entre Rosa Luxemburg et Lénine: Rosa Luxemburg considérait que Lénine s'illusionnait beaucoup sur la social-démocratie allemande, sur ses capacités de faire une révolution sociale; finalement, les objectifs ne devenaient plus qu'une révolution démocratique, et une révolution sociale ou socialiste, mais à très très long terme, par une espèce d'évolution par ce qu'on a coutume d'appeler aujourd'hui le social-démocratisme ou la social-démocratie. Alors là, je pense que ce n'est pas une question de dirigeant; c'est déjà dans l'organisation elle-même, globalement, qu'il y a eu une mutation. L'attachement à l'unité du parti – on en a discuté ce matin, si je me souviens bien – qui a prévalu dans la social-démocratie allemande, malgré la lucidité de la gauche, beaucoup plus lucide que les bolcheviks sur les capacités de la social-démocratie allemande, a fait que les clarifications n'ont pas eu lieu sur le plan de l'organisation. Le parti social-démocrate indépendant (U.S.P.D.) lui-même est un parti où il y a tout le monde de nouveau; c'est un parti où on trouve aussi bien Bernstein, du moins au début – il le quittera au cours de l'année 1919 – que Ledebour, que Daüming que, plus à gauche encore, les spartakistes et d'autres organisations même qu'on peut qualifier de gauchistes; de ceux-ci il y en a une partie qui est en dehors de l'U.S.P.D., à ce moment-là, mais il en reste quand même une petite frange, à l'intérieur. Donc, il n'y a pas de cohérence sur le plan de l'organisation révolutionnaire, et cela, c'est différent de la question des dirigeants; ce n'est pas le même problème. J'ai posé la question des dirigeants uniquement au moment où il faut prendre des décisions rapides, où il faut agir plutôt que tergiverser, délibérer, etc. Et je pense que cette condition – des dirigeants capables et décidés – on ne peut pas l'isoler, on ne peut pas en faire un « mono-facteur », une « mono-cause », qui expliquerait tout. Je pense que l'explication de l'échec par la trahison des dirigeants était dans les nécessités polémiques de la lutte; on peut le comprendre. Mais en faire ensuite une justification qui expliquerait tout, je pense qu'effectivement c'est un appauvrissement très grand de l'explication et, au fond, ce n'est pas très intéressant: c'est réduire, finalement, l'histoire; effectivement, on en revient à l'histoire des grands hommes, ou des « moyens hommes », expliquée uniquement par quelques individus; c'est exactement comme expliquer l'histoire de l'Union soviétique par Staline pendant toute une période.

R. Rouleau (étudiant à la maîtrise, science politique, U.Q.A.M.). Je voudrais avoir des précisions sur les deux aspects, conditions objectives et subjectives, dans le cadre du déroulement d'une révolution. Je pose cette question-là et je me réfère à la citation d'Engels – je ne peux pas donner les précisions de cette citation (où, à quel moment, la date), mais c'est une citation que j'ai lue dans le recueil sur « *Le Parti de classe* (petite collection Maspero), textes de Engels et de Marx, où Engels parle de déclenchement des révolutions et dit que les révolutions ne dépendent pas de l'action de tel ou tel autre parti, mais que la révolution est un acte purement naturel. C'est dans cette veine-là que je pose la question: est-ce qu'il y a eu des révolutions, dans les événements que tu as cités, l'Allemagne, l'Autriche, l'Italie, où il y a eu des situations pré-révolutionnaires ou des tentatives de situations révolutionnaires? Je voudrais avoir des précisions là-dessus. Je me fie aussi à d'autres exemples, c'est que la révolution de 1905, en Russie, lorsque Lénine traite de la révolution de 1905, (comme Trotski et Rosa Luxemburg) il parle bien de révolution, bien que les conditions subjectives, telles que tu les as énoncées, n'existaient pas comme telle pendant la révolution de 1905. Je pose la question; ce sont des précisions que je voudrais avoir.

A. Donneur. Je pense qu'il faut être clair. Il s'agit de révolution. J'ai dit: la révolution allemande de 1918-1923. Il y a les conditions objectives d'une situation révolutionnaire: on est dans une situation révolutionnaire; pour moi, la question est indubitable, mais il manque certains éléments. Si j'ai bien compris ta question, en citant Engels, tu dis: il suffit qu'il y ait des conditions naturelles pour que la révolution se produise.

R. Rouleau. J'ai compris la citation d'Engels, disant que la révolution se déclenche d'elle-même; et la question de la victoire de la révolution ou pas, ou de la contre-révolution, par la suite, c'est une autre question; je l'ai comprise comme ça.

A. Donneur. C'est-à-dire, les conditions objectives, effectivement, ne découlent pas de la volonté ou non des organisations ouvrières; ça, c'est clair. Je pense que là, il n'y a pas de contradiction; je pense qu'aussi bien chez Lénine, en tout cas dans les écrits que j'ai cités, il n'y a pas d'équivoque là-dessus. Évidemment, après, quand on arrive à des situations comme l'action de mars, la question se pose. Je crois que Pierre Broué le mentionnait ce matin: l'action de mars, c'est autre chose, c'est plus compliqué que ça; là, on provoque, finalement, une situation; je pense qu'on n'est pas dans une situation révolutionnaire.

P. Broué. Je crois que c'est exactement comme ça qu'il faut comprendre ce texte d'Engels: l'organisation révolutionnaire n'est nécessaire qu'à la victoire. Elle peut, à la limite, ne pas exister, dans les développements qui mènent à la révolution. Mais la révolution ne saurait vaincre sans elle. On a de multiples exemples. La question posée à propos de Rosa Luxemburg est plus complexe. Je voudrais me contenter de deux arguments. D'abord, de façon générale, je crois que tu as raison dans ta réponse sur ce qu'on appelle la « trahison » des dirigeants. Un des éléments subjectifs d'une telle situation, c'est la façon dont est ressentie l'attitude politique d'un certain nombre de dirigeants, plus ou moins en contradiction avec les principes qu'ils avaient auparavant défendus. De ce point de vue – je sors du sujet, je remonte en amont – j'ai toujours été frappé par ce problème à propos des positions prises par les dirigeants social-démocrates en 1914. Borkenau – ou encore Annie Kriegel – nous expliquent que le chauvinisme l'a emporté dans la classe ouvrière. Je veux bien. Mais tout de même, quand un noyau socialiste prenait parti contre la guerre, ces hommes et ces femmes – Rosa et Liebknecht par exemple – qui avaient avec les autres créé un parti, des syndicats, des organisations, des journaux, se trouvaient privés de tout moyen d'expression par la coalition de l'État, représentant la classe adverse, et de l'appareil de leur propre parti, agissant en contradiction avec les « principes ». Comment réagissent ceux qui sont ainsi tout d'un coup baîllonnés? Rappelons-nous l'histoire du *Vorwärts* où s'exprimait un courant hostile à la guerre, qui avait été bâti par les ouvriers de Berlin: l'état-major le saisit, puis le remet à l'exécutif du parti social-démocrate, qui en fait un porte-parole de la politique social-chauvine. C'est à travers des affaires de ce genre que l'avant-garde du parti allemand a ressenti comme une trahison l'attitude politique de ses dirigeants, parce qu'elle constituait un passage pur et simple sur les positions de l'ennemi de classe, et que ces transfuges emportaient avec eux les outils, ou, si l'on préfère, les armes, bâties, conquises, en vue du combat de classe! Il en aurait sans doute été autrement si – ce n'est qu'une hypothèse – les dirigeants socialistes avaient dit: « Nous sommes pour la guerre, mais ses adversaires ont le droit de s'exprimer, et nous défendrons leur droit ». Mais ils ne l'ont pas fait. Ils sont donc passés sur les positions de l'ennemi et c'est d'ailleurs pour cette seule raison qu'ils ont pu continuer à s'exprimer. C'est effectivement une sorte de trahison. Et tout cela se retrouve finalement en 1918, où c'est en quelque sorte la suite logique. Pour la deuxième question, j'avoue que j'y ai pensé hier quand Peter Gouveritch nous a interrogés: « Y avait-il une chance de victoire de la révolution en Allemagne? » J'ai répondu « oui », et le professeur Carsten a répondu « non ». Il me semble évident que, derrière ces réponses, il y a certes des analyses de la période 1917-1921, mais aussi et surtout une conception actuelle du monde – du monde actuel – et que celui qui ne croit pas du tout à la possibilité que l'humanité connaisse un jour le socialisme va forcément répondre « non ». Celui qui croit à l'avenir socialiste de l'humanité répondra peut-être « oui ». Ce n'est évidemment pas certain, car l'analyse du « moment » jouera un rôle important dans sa détermination. Mais, de façon générale, je crois que la réponse qu'on donne à une telle question dépend de la position qu'on occupe soi-même dans le monde contemporain, par rapport à lui. Dans le même genre, je pense que les dirigeants social-démocrates allemands – qui avaient déjà pris position, fondamentalement, par rapport aux classes en présence de 1914 – répondaient au moins autant à leur propre condition, à la logique de leur propre développement, de celui de leurs positions passées, qu'à ce que plusieurs ont appelé ici le « soubassement » de la situation en Allemagne à cette époque.

D. Lamoureux. . . . par rapport à la question d'organisation, parce que même si tu as des dirigeants révolutionnaires qui sont capables de prendre les bonnes décisions au bon

moment, il faut que ces décisions se matérialisent dans une pratique sociale; et, à ce niveau là, ça ramène toujours à la question de l'organisation, c'est un facteur qui a une autonomie extrêmement relative, qu'on ne peut pas vraiment isoler de la question de l'organisation révolutionnaire.

A. Donneur. Moi, j'irais plus loin encore que toi, j'irais plus loin dans le sens qu'il y a non seulement le rapport dialectique dirigeants/organisation, mais il y a le rapport entre l'organisation et le mouvement des masses en profondeur. Les trois éléments sont liés, mais, pour des raisons analytiques, je pense qu'il faut décomposer les choses. Toutefois, c'est clair qu'il y a une dialectique entre ces trois éléments. Et j'ai rajouté le lien avec les masses, parce qu'on peut avoir une organisation splendide, mais qui n'est pas liée aux masses; enfin, c'est le problème de la théorie des minorités agissantes.

D. Lamoureux. Il y a un autre problème que je voudrais poser, c'est celui d'une certaine confusion qui semble y avoir entre une situation révolutionnaire et une situation pré-révolutionnaire. Les conditions objectives de la révolution peuvent surgir, effectivement, naturellement, mais toute la question, justement, de la possibilité de la victoire d'une révolution me semble liée à la différence entre ce qu'on peut appeler une situation pré-révolutionnaire, où objectivement la révolution est possible, et celle où, pour activer une situation révolutionnaire, il faut que subjectivement la classe appelée à renverser révolutionnairement ces formes de structuration sociale, soit consciente qu'elle peut le faire; ça me semble être un tout intégré.

A. Donneur. Qu'il y ait une conscience dans les masses, que les masses se mettent en mouvement, pour moi, c'est une condition objective. Je pense qu'il est nécessaire qu'il y ait déjà une mise en mouvement, autrement on n'est pas dans une situation révolutionnaire et les conditions objectives ne sont pas remplies. Je pense que là il y a une certaine part de spontanéité. J'ai bien précisé qu'il y a des conditions très générales, aussi, qui amènent la révolution. Mais, spécifiquement, dans la situation révolutionnaire, je pense qu'il y a une part de mouvement spontané. Maintenant, où le subjectif intervient, c'est que ces masses se lient à l'organisation, soient liées à l'organisation ouvrière. C'est là, je pense, que le lien subjectif-objectif se fait.

D. Lamoureux. Le mouvement ou bien la mise en activité spontanée des masses peut être un mouvement partiellement inconscient. Si tu prends, par exemple, la situation, plus actuelle et près de nous, de mai 1972, au Québec, quand il y a eu la grève générale, les travailleurs s'emparent de la ville de Sept-Îles: les travailleurs ne savaient pas qu'ils s'emparaient du pouvoir, à ce moment-là. Le meilleur exemple, c'est que, quelques mois plus tard, le parti libéral est élu, mais il y a tout un facteur conscient, justement, qui fait la différence entre révolutions prolétariennes et les révolutions antérieures, qui est déterminant dans la maturation de la situation révolutionnaire et qu'il ne faut absolument pas négliger.

A. Donneur. Dans le cas de Sept-Îles, c'est le cas. Et là, il faut qu'il y ait généralisation, effectivement. Moi, ça me paraît un élément objectif.

D. Lamoureux. En dernière instance, même si ce sont les conditions objectives qui vont déterminer la réalisation des potentialités subjectives, c'est tout le problème en fait de la conscience de classe; ce n'est pas simplement de prendre le pouvoir, mais d'être capable de le garder.

A. Donneur. Franchement, je pense que – là, je renvoie aux origines du socialisme scientifique – je pense qu'au départ la conscience de classe est une donnée objective pour Marx et Engels, dans les mouvements qui sont très sporadiques.

P. Broué dit, en gros, qu'il est très dangereux de faire ce que fait Diane Lamoureux, c'est-à-dire de séparer rigoureusement éléments objectifs et subjectifs. Ceci mènerait à dire qu'il n'y a pas eu de révolution, qu'il ne s'est pas créé de situation révolutionnaire en Espagne, malgré les mouvements de masses, parce qu'il n'y avait pas d'organisation orientant consciemment l'inconscient collectif.

J. Chamard. Étudiant à la maîtrise, histoire, (U.Q.A.M.). J'ai une question à adresser à Monsieur Broué. C'est au sujet de la conjoncture révolutionnaire d'alors. Vous avez dit qu'il y avait une possibilité objective de dépassement, à l'encontre de ce qui s'est produit alors, c'est-à-dire le triomphe de la contre-révolution. Mais moi je voudrais vous demander dans quelle mesure le poids du passé, le poids de la social-démocratie allemande n'a pas été un handicap majeur et un frein? Dans quelle mesure, finalement, la conjoncture révolutionnaire n'était-elle pas déjà, au départ, faussée par ce passé historique? Le fait que l'Allemagne a occupé une place particulière dans la chaîne impérialiste avant la guerre de 1914-1918, le développement d'une aristocratie ouvrière, tout cela, finalement ne faisait-il pas que cette révolution était bloquée?

P. Broué. Avant de répondre à cette interpellation, je voudrais revenir à l'ébauche de discussion de tout à l'heure, sur le rôle des individus. Je me suis posé la question en étudiant la révolution allemande: pourquoi dans le parti allemand, en 1923, n'y a-t-il que des dirigeants « suivistes »? Ces gens téléphonent ou télégraphient à Moscou pour demander: « Qu'est-ce qu'on fait? On y va ou on n'y vas pas? » ... et on leur répond « Allez-y » ou « N'y allez pas », et ils y vont ou ils n'y vont pas. Les mêmes arrivent à Moscou – ce fut le cas de Brandler – ils sont stupéfaits de ce qu'ils voient ou entendent dire sur la révolution qui vient chez eux, d'où ils arrivent à l'instant sans l'avoir vue. Ils écoutent, ils disent « oui ». Je n'ai pas vu d'hommes ni de femmes ayant une indépendance de pensée, se battant sur le terrain des idées avec toute l'indépendance de leur caractère comme de leur analyse personnelle. Il me semble que s'il fallait donner une explication, je la formulerais en gros ainsi: s'il y avait eu en Allemagne dans cette période historique des personnalités assez indépendantes, assez robustes, assez vigoureuses, pour penser réellement par elles-mêmes sur de telles questions, elles n'auraient pas rejoint le parti social-démocrate dans la période précédente, ou, tout au moins, elle l'aurait quitté avant qu'il fût question de scission. En gros, les gens qui dirigent le mouvement communiste, en 1923, sont forcément des gens qui ont un passé social-démocrate, qui sont passés par ce moule et qui en portent déjà, d'une façon ou d'une autre, l'empreinte.

De ce point de vue, l'avance considérable prise par le mouvement ouvrier en Allemagne avant la guerre, avec la construction du parti social-démocrate, a constitué dans la période ultérieure de la guerre et des révolutions un élément incontestable d'affaiblissement: c'est la négation de l'affirmation. De la même façon, les bolcheviks, précisément parce qu'ils avaient été placés dans des conditions de clandestinité très dures qui faisaient d'eux tout à fait autre chose qu'une machine militaire obéissant au doigt et à l'oeil, « *perinde ac cadaver* », mais, au contraire, des militants aptes à improviser, à prendre des initiatives et endosser des responsabilités, ont été au contraire beaucoup plus aptes à fabriquer des révolutionnaires que les robots du parti social-démocrate allemand d'avant-guerre... Et ce sont, en dernière analyse, ces derniers qui ont fait école plus tard, dans l'appareil du Komintern: là aussi, d'une certaine façon, celle de la dialectique de l'Histoire, toujours à l'affût d'un bon tour, c'est la « vieille école social-démocrate » qui a triomphé de façon transitoire – exactement dans le sens opposé à ce qu'escomptaient les bolcheviks quand ils disaient, au lendemain du congrès de Halle, que c'était le triomphe de la « vieille école ». Il me semble que c'est évident...

Y. Brossard. J'aimerais revenir sur un point de l'exposé d'André Donneur qui me paraît extrêmement important. Il s'agit de la question du projet de gouvernement ouvrier après mars 1920, après la tentative du putsch de Kapp de mars 1920. Alors simplement pour rappeler quelques faits, si ma mémoire est bonne et dans le but de me faire corriger si elle me trahit, le K.P.D. commence par demander le boycott de cet appel à la grève, pour des raisons qu'on a déjà invoquées. Lévi, furieux, renverse la vapeur et, un coup le putsch raté, il y a constitution, jusqu'à un certain point, je pense, de ce gouvernement ouvrier. La première position, si ma mémoire est bonne, que prend le K.P.D. vis-à-vis de ce gouvernement ouvrier formé, ou en formation en tout cas, c'est de ne pas le combattre ou essayer de le renverser par la violence; je pense que cett position-là est prise ou est énoncée par le Comité Central ou la centrale du K.P.D. et, si ma mémoire est bonne, toujours, cette position-là est fortement battue en brèche, ou contestée, et

ceux qui l'on prise sont également fortement contestés et battus en brèche par ce qu'on pourrait appeler la partie la plus ultra-gauche du K.P.D. Et ce qui est étonnant dans tout ça, c'est qu'au même moment, peu de temps après, Lénine, quant à lui, estime que cette position prise par la direction du K.P.D., est tout à fait raisonnable et tout à fait correcte. Alors, si tout cela est juste, on peut dire que ces événements-là, en tout cas tels qu'ils se présentent, vont à contre-courant de certaines thèses, à contre-courant de certaines explications par le même « oeil de Moscou » en quelque sorte; si le ralliement du K.P.D. à ce gouvernement ouvrier échoue, dans ce cas-là, ce n'est certainement pas à cause d'instructions téléguidées de Moscou mais bien à cause d'une partie du K.P.D. qui a eu le dessus à cette occasion-là. Tout ceci pour m'amener à demander si, finalement, pour reprendre une question que posait Flechtheim dans son ouvrage sur le K.P.D., ce qui est important, ce n'est pas de se demander, non pas si une autre politique de la social-démocratie aurait pu permettre l'instauration d'un régime socialiste en Allemagne, mais si une autre politique du K.D.P., autre que celle qu'il a eue, n'aurait pas eu de succès en relation avec cet ensemble qu'on appelle situation révolutionnaire en Allemagne, ce contexte qu'on appelle situation révolutionnaire en Allemagne? Alors, je pose la question à André Donneur, à Monsieur Broué également, à savoir ce qui m'intrigue dans tout ça, c'est l'espèce d'oscillation, de balancement entre deux positions à l'intérieur du K.D.P. et pourquoi, à un moment donné, la solution qui me semble, à moi, la plus irréaliste a-t-elle pris le dessus, alors que celle de Lévi et d'autres, qui postulaient un soutien au moins bienveillant au gouvernement ouvrier, me semble être réaliste. Il aurait pu en résulter des effets très favorables et très positifs, eu égard justement à cette situation révolutionnaire qui, à ce moment-là, je pense qu'on est tous d'accord là-dessus, est vraiment révolutionnaire.

A. Donneur. Pas seulement dans la Ruhr, comme a dit le professeur Carsten, c'est dans l'ensemble. Il n'y a pas eu formation du gouvernement ouvrier. C'est extrêmement intéressant, là aussi, à propos des discussions qu'on a eues tout à l'heure sur les dirigeants. Je serais content d'avoir l'intervention de Pierre Broué à ce propos aussi, c'est extraordinaire de voir un Legien, qui était ultra-réformiste, prendre l'initiative de la constitution de ce gouvernement ouvrier. Je pense qu'il n'y a pas seulement le K.D.P. qui est en cause; il y a aussi le parti social-démocrate indépendant, qui, à l'époque, dans sa très grande majorité (cela va être montré très clairement, ensuite, à l'automne) est acquis à la révolution. L'interprétation qu'on pourrait donner, c'est finalement l'espèce de modèle de dictature du prolétariat sous une forme de république des conseils, de république soviétique, qui bloque la vision; et aussi le souvenir de ce qui s'est passé avec le gouvernement de coalition, social-démocrate et indépendant, durant la période de novembre-décembre. Est-ce qu'on ne se retrouve pas dans une même situation? Et je pense que cela a joué énormément sur l'analyse, aussi bien au sein du parti communiste (il y a division au sein du parti communiste) que dans la gauche indépendante. Il faut souligner aussi qu'à cette période, il y a passage en masse des militants sociaux-démocrates à l'U.S.P.D. et au K.P.D. Mais Broué connaît beaucoup mieux la période et je serais content d'avoir son avis.

P. Broué. J'ai deux choses à dire sur cette question. La première, c'est que le K.P.D. joue un rôle déterminant parce que ce sont ses propres hésitations qu'il transmet en quelque sorte aux Indépendants. Les Indépendants discutent de la question, certes, mais un oeil tourné vers les communistes qui, ou bien se taisent, ou bien changent d'opinion toutes les heures. C'est schématique, parce que plus compliqué encore dans le détail. Les délégués du K.P.D. ont d'abord dit oui au gouvernement « des partis socialistes et des syndicats ». Puis la centrale a dit non. Le lendemain, la centrale, changeant d'avis, a dit oui, mais l'exécutif central a désavoué la nouvelle position de la centrale et est revenue au non. Et même dans la discussion ultérieure autour du bilan, ce fut la même chose dans les mois suivants, l'exécutif de l'Internationale endossant le non, puis, après intervention de Lénine, déclarant ouverte une discussion qui allait aboutir au lendemain du 3e congrès au mot d'ordre de « gouvernement ouvrier », c'est-à-dire au oui, sous une forme évidemment plus élaborée. Mais ce n'est là qu'un premier aspect, descriptif et forcément superficiel. De ce point de vue, je crois – et je l'ai dit à la session générale – que nous

étions à ce moment-là à un de ces moments privilégiés où l'Histoire peut tourner. Notre ami Bartovek appelle de tels instants les « dimanches de l'Histoire ». Mais il y a un autre aspect, plus intéressant à fouiller: celui de la capacité d'un parti à tourner en fonction des modifications de la situation objective. Ce qui est extraordinaire dans la discussion autour des propositions de Legien de « gouvernement purement socialiste », c'est la référence que ses adversaires font à ce qui s'est passé en 1918 et qui leur interdit de réfléchir plus avant: ils disent « On va refaire le gouvernement Ebert-Haase de novembre 1918 ». Sans voir ce qu'il y a de nouveau dans cette situation d'avril 1920, c'est-à-dire que précisément il y a bien la social-démocratie, comme en 1918, mais la *social-démocratie sans Noske*. Car Noske – la politique de Noske – a fait faillite précisément aux premières heures du putsch de Kapp, lequel était précisément l'oeuvre des généraux qui avaient été les protégés de Noske. Or la social-démocratie allemande sans Noske, c'est tout de même autre chose, c'est une force sociale et politique en mouvement. Et en mouvement forcément vers la gauche, puisqu'elle est débarrassé – et combien brutalement – de sa composante de droite. Cette rupture d'équilibre dans un mouvement, c'était là l'essentiel. Peut-être Paul Levi l'a-t-il pressenti sur le coup, mais encore une fois, sur le coup, personne ne l'a dit. Les communistes allemands – et avec l'encouragement combien précieux de Lénine – l'ont finalement perçu avec des mois de retard, des mois où l'histoire n'avait pas tourné, du coup. On en est resté à une transposition mécanique de la situation telle qu'elle était deux ans auparavant. Bien sûr, on évoquait l'inexistence de soviets, et toute une série d'arguments de ce genre, mais le vrai problème, c'est que le parti communiste ne se résignait pas à tourner, à s'adapter à la situation réelle. Comme toute organisation, il avait secrété son propre conservatisme, restait attaché aujourd'hui à ses formules d'hier. Ce n'est pas le moindre des problèmes qui se posent aux partis communistes dans cette période – et qui en concernent d'autres, aujourd'hui. Si l'organisation n'est pas un champ de bataille autour de l'analyse concrète d'une situation concrète, elle devient un facteur de conservatisme, d'immobilisme, si on préfère. Et, soit dit en passant, c'est la meilleure justification, pour ainsi dire la seule, de la démocratie ouvrière dans un parti communiste, voué à l'impuissance sans combat interne, c'est-à-dire sans lutte politique, en dernière analyse, sans démocratie.

Troisième jour

Conclusion

Le colloque était organisé de façon telle qu'une même personne ne pouvait assister à tous les ateliers. Par conséquent, chaque conférencier a présenté, lors de la session de clôture, un résumé de son intervention. Etant donné, toutefois, que la présente publication contient un rapport complet des ateliers, le directeur de l'ouvrage a éliminé ces résumés en vue de réduire le coût et le volume des *Actes*.

Third Day

Concluding Remarks

Since the colloquium schedule made it impossible for anyone to attend every workshop, each participant who had conducted a workshop gave brief summary of it at the final session. The reader, however, has all the information in this volume and, therefore, the editor, in the interests of space and costs, has deleted these summaries.

Internal Crisis and War Since 1870

Arno J. Mayer

I

This essay explores the relationship of domestic crisis and foreign war in Europe since 1870. Above all, it examines the nature of crisis and the process by which internal crises generated international conflicts. It is the thesis of this essay that domestic crises were the precondition and cause rather than the consequence of foreign wars, and that the end-purpose of external conflicts was to affect the outcome of the internal crises in which they originated.

There was, of course, crisis and crisis, just as there was war and war. But whatever the extent and intensity of crisis, it rarely took the form of pre-revolution rooted in popular discontent and protest. In fact, the essence of crisis was the opposite: a drive by aggressive ultra-conservatives to harden the established order. Emboldened by the stagnation or retreat of insurgent movements from below, radical conservatives sought to strengthen their position in fractured "hegemonic blocs" as well as in unstable or paralyzed governments. They mounted this offensive, convinced that they needed to reaffirm their dominance in political society if they were to preserve their privileged but endangered economic, social, and cultural positions, which were fixed in pre-modern, pre-industrial, and pre-bourgeois structures. With their siege mentality they exaggerated the revolt in civil society, the frailty of the political and hegemonic apparatus, and the reformist bent of the industrial and professional bourgeoisie. To the extent that they became politically decisive, the ultras locked the entire ruling and governing class into a crisis of *over*-reaction, whose main expression was the politics of unreason and domination at home and the diplomacy of confrontation and war abroad. In sum, the political offensive of intransigent conservatives became the essential intervening link between antecedent crisis and consequent war – in 1870, in 1904, and in 1914.

Whereas ultra-revolutionaries remained marginal in the insurgent labor or nationality movements, ultra-conservatives played a central role in pushing the ruling and governing classes into the politics of over-reaction. This crucial importance of the far right suggests that the momentum of crisis was a function of cleavages in the upper classes and their repercussions in government rather than of the agitation and defiance of subordinate classes or oppressed nationalities.

Although the *ultras* were an essential force for war under conditions of both limited and general crisis, these two distinct types of crisis gave rise to two different types of war: limited or inorganic crisis provided the impulse for the local and limited Franco-Prussian and Russo-Japanese wars while general or organic crisis engendered the absolute and generalized World Wars of the twentieth century. In other words, the total warfare of the first half of this century was not the prodduct of a fortuitous escalation of limited war, but was congenitally tied into an antecedent organic crisis, which was European-wide.

Under crisis conditions governments decided for war-induced international conflict – for the end-use of maintaining or reinforcing the domestic status quo. Whereas victory

favored this outcome, defeat had the opposite effect, in that it undermined the steel frame of government at the same time that it fostered popular disaffection. As for the parameters of the political consequences of defeat, they were significantly different in local and absolute war. The defeat of France in 1870 and of Russia in 1905 involved limited political and social unsettlement which was brought under control quickly and without major help from the European powers.

The repercussions of Russia's defeat in the First World War were of an altogether different order: the governing class as well as the tsarist regime were swept away, and so was the entire ruling class and its hegemonic institutions. This revolutionary breach in Europe's general crisis prompted the ruling and governing classes of the other powers to collaborate in the containment of the revolution in Russia.

Until 1917, the ruling elites of the major powers gambled on war, even on absolute war, to restabilize their respective civil and political societies along conservative or reactionary lines. It was the conflation of the politically motivated decisions for external belligerence of these elites that generated the absolute war which finally became an unbearable burden for the tsarist regime and exposed the international face of general crisis.

Once the general crisis had taken a revolutionary turn in Russia, the ruling and governing classes of Europe – and beyond – could no longer view the coupling of crisis and war in purely national terms. Hereafter, diplomacy and war would have to be used to manage the crisis on the international level as well. Needless to say, it was difficult to synchronize these two aspects of crisis management, notably because of national variations in the configuration and rhythm of general crisis which compounded the normal strains and stresses in the international system. But even the Munich agreement and the Nazi-Soviet pact, the most glaring demonstrations of these incongruities, were grounded in the politics of over-reaction of the ruling and governing classes. Just as the forces of radical reform and revolution were decisively outclassed, checked, or repressed inside the different European countries, so Bolshevik Russia was decisively outclassed and contained in the international system.

The essence of the general crisis of the first half of the twentieth century – as also of other historical epochs – was this successful over-reaction to over-perceived revolutionary dangers rather than any calibrated and hazardous resistance to enormous and imminent insurgencies. War played a vital but also complex role in this overdrive for social defense, which also involved massive excesses of power as well as the abdication of reform. But whatever the excesses and retrogressions, this over-reaction was anchored in, collaborated with, energized by, and ultimately benefitted the established ruling classes, interests, and institutions. Evidently the underlying structures of civil and political society that are said to be profound, silent, and enduring were not self-sustaining. *Pace* Fernand Braudel and his *épigones*, these structures not only required political activation, mediation, and coordination, but also underwrote the over-reaction that accounted for the noise as well as the importance and gravity of punctual events.

II

To speak of "the era of the French Revolution" or "the era of the Russian Revolution" is to foster the presumption that during those two eras the entire continent, not to say the whole world, was on the verge of popular eruptions of the sort that shook France from 1789 to 1794 and Russia from 1917 to 1921. Needless to say, historical possibilities and realities do not justify such a sweeping premise. Even the archetypal French and Russian revolutions were not products of pre-revolutions in which the rising disaffection and militancy of the underclasses of society were the principal components. Eventually, to be sure, urban crowds stormed the Bastille and the Winter Palace, and peasants seized the lands of the nobility and the church. But the success of these insurgencies was less a

function of the rebellious strength of the underclass than of the cleavages in the ruling and governing class, and of a conjunctural paralysis of breakdown of the state's coercive apparatus.

Neither Europe nor other parts of the developing world was in a prerevolution in the decades before 1789 and 1917. Admittedly, there were "democratic movements after 1760, and "socialist" as well as "self-determination" movements after 1890. But these insurgencies were not massive and threatening by the standards of their day, and in addition they faced strong ruling classes, hegemonic structures, and public authorities.

Of course, the dominant classes and incumbent governments were not without serious fissures. In fact, before the end of the 1780s, these internecine divisions at the top contributed considerably more to the destabilization of polity, society, and culture than popular challenges from below. As of the mid-18th century, the principal political conflict was between two camps: on the one hand, centralizing governments; on the other, constituted and intermediate bodies, including municipal corporations and guilds. Significantly, in this struggle neither side enlisted the support of the exploited peasantry in the countryside and the menial workers in the towns and cities. Whatever the politically liberalizing propensities of the anti-centralist offensive of these constituted and intermediate bodies, their social and economic impulses were distinctly preservative, or even regressive: national parliaments and diets, provincial estates, and chartered towns became vehicles for the defense and recovery of imperiled interests of class and status, notably of landed aristocracies and urban patriciates.[1]

Until the end of the 1780s this political offensive in defense of economic, social, and cultural privilege made headway all over Europe. The fast-expanding state bureaucracies had to reckon with the determined resistance of these pre-modern elites. To finance their conservative modernization projects the enlightened absolutists needed rising tax revenues and expanding economies. Not surprisingly, significant segments of the old elites were and felt threatened by the advancing tides of modern change; fearful for their own future and driven by a siege mentality, they refused to renounce time-honored fiscal and legal prerogatives and to accept new levies and statutes, except in exchange for a reconfirmation of their ancient rights and privileges in polity and society.

But this struggle for control of state and government, which was the key to economic and social survival or advancement, was not a dichotomic class conflict between the declining but resurgent landed aristocracy and the rising but cramped grande bourgeoisie, supported by a fast-expanding professional (middle) class. The upper layers of the third estate either were allowing themselves to be co-opted by the state bureaucracy and nobility, or were craving to assimilate the social ethos and values of the aristocratic polity and culture, which remained dominant.

Clearly, the ruling and governing class was a complex amalgam of traditional and modernizing strata heavily weighted toward conservative pre-capitalist and pre-bourgeois elements. Being deeply embedded in the feudal society and manorial economy, the king and the state bureaucracy were in no position to break with the unbending aristocracy; nor were they inclined to do so. Whatever its autonomy, the fast-expanding tax-collecting state needed the army to maintain order at home and abroad, and the church to exercise hegemonic control, and both of these institutions were solidly rooted in pre-modern, not to say archaic social, cultural, and mental structures.

Joseph Schumpeter was particularly sensitive to this vigorous perseverance of pre-modern crown, state, and church:

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1. Robert R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution,* Vol. I (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959); Franklin L. Ford, *Robe and Sword: The Regrouping of hte French Aristocracy After Louis XIV* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953); William Doyle, "Was There an Aristocratic Reaction in Pre-Revolutionary France?", in *Past and Present,* No. 57 (November, 1972), pp. 97-122; Colin Lucas, "Nobles, Bourgeois and the Origins of the French Revolution", in *Past and Present,* No. 60 (August, 1973), pp. 84-126.

> The steel frame of that structure still consisted of the human material of feudal society and this material still behaved according to precapitalist patterns. It filled the offices of state, officered the army, devised policies – it functioned as a *classe dirigente* and, though taking account of bourgeois interests, it took care to distance itself from the bourgeoisie. The center piece, the king, was king by the grace of god, and the root of his position was feudal, not only in the historical but also in the sociological sense, however much he availed himself of the economic possibilities offered by capitalism. *All this was more than atavism. It was an active symbiosis of two social strata* [italics mine], one of which no doubt supported the other economically but was in turn supported by the other politically.

In Schumpeter's view, the "aristocratic element . . . continued to man the political engine, to manage the state, to govern", even if no longer for ends entirely of its own.[2]

In any case, when challenged by genuine liberal-democratic movements, as was the case in Belgium and Holland, the heterogeneous yet symbiotic ruling and governing class closed ranks. Where necessary, this class invited or welcomed military assistance from across national borders to help restore order, with the result that the ultra-conservatives recovered lost ground in both the political and civil society of the *ancien régime*.

Beginning in the mid-18th century the balance of forces within the hegemonic bloc of the ruling class and the steel frame of government shifted in favor of the resurgent privileged and entrenched notables. Precisely because these notables were losing economic ground, they meant to maintain or reinforce their preeminent *political* power in order to shore up their deteriorating material and social prospects. France was the only country in which this aggressive resistance to conservative modernization eventually misfired. Because of a conjunctural economic and fiscal crunch the divisions within the ruling and governing class become more explosive in France than elsewhere in Europe. At any rate, it was not until after these cleavages had dislocated the steel frame of government and the hegemonic institutions that peasants and artisans entered the maelstrom of politics. The land seizures and the first *journées* were less an expression of the strength of the radicalized underclass than of the contingent weakness and irresolution of a government at odds with significant sections of its own social and political base.

Louis XVI and his ministers could have saved the essence of the *ancien régime* by outright coercion or by a timely but reversible revolution from above, backstopped by assistance from abroad. But France, compared to Belgium and Holland, was not only an immense country but also a major power in the international system. Consequently foreign intervention in support of conservative or reactionary restabilization faced two confining conditions from the very outset: the large interventionist effort required, even to assist as sizable a counterrevolutionary "opposition" as the Vendée; and the unavoidable rivalries among the big powers, the undertaking being too large and risky for any one of them.[3]

Even so, the crisis in France instantly revealed its transnational character. The lobbying of the *ultras* who went into exile as of 1789, the appeals of the French royal family, and the abortive flight to Varennes eventually produced the Pillnitz declaration of August 1791. The European powers served notice that they would take concerted action: at a minimum they would surround France with a quarantine (a *cordon sanitaire*), but more likely their containment would take the form of active intervention, both direct and indirect. In turn, this imminent as well as immanent internationalization of the émigrés drive to recover lost ground and to complete the aristocratic reaction radicalized

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2. Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy,* 3rd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1950), pp. 136-137, 139.
3. Kyung-Won Kim, *Revolution and International System* (New York: New York University Press, 1970), and Jacques Godechot, *La Contre-Révolution, 1789-1804* (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1961).

the situation inside France. It also intensified the debate between Brissot and Robespierre over the relationship of the embryonic and inchoate revolution in France to conservative Europe: universal and permanent revolution, or revolution in one country?[4]

But whatever the outcome of this debate within France, in the other European countries the ruling and governing classes, shaken by the breakdown of the steel frame in Paris, closed ranks. In each country the *ultras* played on the fear of the fledgling revolution in France, exaggerating its radicalism in order to improve their own positions. Especially modern-minded conservatives allowed themselves to be frightened into abandoning their efforts to curtail the power and privilege vested in the recrudescent constituted and intermediate bodies. Hereafter it took French bayonets to advance the fortunes of reformist movements, even of movements that were stronger than those that had surfaced before 1789. Moreover, no sooner were these bayonets withdrawn, the old ruling and governing classes reclaimed the *ancien régime*, though they never achieved a complete restoration.

The years 1780 to 1815 were not really an *era of the French revolution*, if this phrase is meant to suggest the overturning or undermining of the old European order. It was, much rather, an epoch of general crisis which, except in France, witnessed the maintenance or reinforcement of monarchy, aristocracy, and patriciate. In the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars, it became clear that in terms of regime as well as of social, class, and hegemonic structures the continuities distinctly outweighed the discontinuities. Too much attention has been centered on the *failure* of democratic, let alone social-reformist forces to irrupt and to prevail, and not enough on the *success* of the forces of resistance, containment, and restabilization throughout this long epoch of organic crisis. This fierce "opposition" of the old order was neither purely reactive nor politically monolithic. In each country this "opposition" had its own dynamic which was governed by intramural conflicts of class, status, and power within the conservative bloc. Moreover, just as the endogenous forces for change looked abroad for inspiration and support, so also the endogenous forces for order in the different countries fused into an international drive to save and brace Europe's established order.

III

If the era of the French revolution can legitimately be viewed as an epoch of general crisis in which, in transnational terms, the old order held its own, then it might be fruitful to consider the era of the Russian revolution from a similar angle of vision. For it can be argued that between 1905 and 1950 Europe and much of the world experienced another epoch of general crisis. The start of this crisis may be dated from the Russo-Japanese war. While this local war foreshadowed the antipodean consequences of military defeat and victory under conditions of limited domestic unsettlement, it also presaged the expansion of the international system to include both Japan and the United States. As for the end of the general crisis of the 20th century, it came in the wake of World War II with the restabilization in western and central Europe, the crystallization of a nuclear balance, and the routinization of the Cold War. Except for the years 1924-1929, which were a parenthesis of spurious domestic normalcy and illusory international equilibrium, throughout the first half of the 20th century Europe remained locked into an organic crisis that had a distinctly transnational character. The two world wars were violent expressions as well as generators of this vast unsettlement, and had all the earmarks of an extended Thirty Years' War.

To be sure, the socialist and self-determination movements of the early 20th century were more massive and powerful than the democratic movements of the late 18th century. Moreover, the general crisis resulted in a lasting revolutionary breakthrough, not only in Russia but eventually also in eastern Europe and parts of the Third World. But the

4. Michel Vovelle, *La Chute de la monarchie, 1787-1792* (Paris: Seuil, 1792), pp. 153-167, and Georges Michon, *Robespierre et la Guerre révolutionnaire, 1791-1792* (Paris: Riviere, 1937).

"opposition" to this socialist upheaval was also more formidable and daemonic than the "opposition" to the democratic upheavals of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Precisely because fascism, in all its guises, became the epicenter of this "opposition," it came to rival the Bolshevik revolution in world historical importance.

This "opposition" can only be brought into proper focus if it is traced back to the years before 1914 and 1917. Historians still present a skewed picture of the prewar world. Admittedly, they no longer view and regret it as an untarnished golden age. But even those who concede that Europe was moving into the eye of a catastrophic storm distort the symptoms of the incipient crisis: whereas they exaggerate the lightning and thunder on the left before, during, and after the Thirty Years' War of the 20th century, they overlook, or underestimate, the concurrent lightning and thunder on the right. In fact, the prewar decade witnessed not so much the rise of labor and of subject nationalities – of socialism and of self-determination – *as the resurgence of ultra-conservatism to defend and reinforce the status quo.* Throughout Europe, as also in America, reformism was stalled: wherever prime ministers and cabinets called for forward change, they met with the resistance of conservatives who, pressed by their own diehards, became altogether intransigent.

In the decade prior to 1914 – and during the interwar years – the "opposition" or attack from *above* was considerably more powerful and resolute than the danger or possibility of upheaval from *below*. This is not to deny or minimize the reality and importance of the revolution in Russia and of revolutionary movements or breakthroughs elsewhere. But rather than to keep probing for the mainsprings and confining conditions of revolution, historians need to examine the taproots and dynamics of conservative and regressive restabilization under conditions of general crisis. Particularly after the revolution in Russia in 1917, Europe's ruling and governing classes were chastened: not unlike their counterparts following the revolution in France in 1789, they resolved not just to fight for their own survival but to bend the general crisis to their own advantage.

In 1914, then, was Europe at high noon or in her sunset? Were the governments and regimes of the major European powers essentially stable? Were their economies prosperous, their ruling classes confident, their peoples quiescent, and their opinion makers optimistic? Or were their authority systems overstrained, their national economies stagnant, their elites insecure, their peoples restless, and their intellectuals bewildered?

An attractive but dubious answer would be that the European societies were neither in perfect equipoise nor on the edge of disaster, but somewhere in-between. Historical reality, however, defies such equivocating assessments. Rather than strike a precarious balance, history, like justice, cannot help leaning to either one side or the other.

There is no objective way to decide whether the signs pointed toward continuing vitality or growing distemper in the established order. Historians of liberal and conservative persuasion are inclined to see the prewar world as basically robust and as heading for greater liberty, political participation, social welfare, and education, notably for the vast underclass of society. They tend to minimize the ultra-rightist resistance to reform while exaggerating the far left's revolt against the status quo. In the establishment their heroes are Stolypin, Beck, Bethmann-Hollweg, Caillaux, Asquith, and Giolitti; in the opposition they look kindly on reformist and even revisionist Socialists. Rather than examine the structural obstacles to the politics of compromise, consensual historians speculate about the errors of politicians who presided over the abortion of so many promising historical possibilities: the growth of an independent peasantry in Russia, the conciliation of the subject nationalities in Austria-Hungary, the reform of the three-class franchise in Prussia, the adoption of a progressive income tax in France, the passage of Irish Home Rule in England, and the deepening of parliamentary government in Italy. Had it not been for rising military budgets, mounting international tensions, and, finally, the ravages of war, these and other forward steps would have been taken in due time, in spite of last-ditch resistance by despairing backwoodsmen.

Historians of a more progressive and critical disposition take a rather different view. For them the prewar civil and political societies were approaching an explosive stalemate precisely because the politics of compromise had run its course. Instead of celebrating Stolypin, Bethmann-Hollweg, and Asquith for having tried their best or prevented the worst, they portray these temperate statesmen as condemned to manage political and civil societies that had run out of space and time for reform, also because just then Europe's capitalist economy was marking time. According to critical historians on the left, organized labor and the subject nationalities not only found their rising expectations frustrated but also faced resolute conservative and reactionary opposition. Thus, World War I served to deflect, defuse, or postpone imminent popular upheavals and political conflicts throughout Europe.

One's view of the prewar years biases one's interpretation of the great turbulence which began to consume Europe in 1914. The celebrants of the regretted "good old days" argue that it was the unwanted and unnecessary Great War that unhinged polities that were fundamentally sound. Liberal-conservative historians do not deny the role of domestic factors in the decision for war, but in their judgment, these factors were in the nature of innocent miscalculations by fallible statesmen and nefarious pressures by excitable masses.

Historians who consider prewar Europe as seething with instability and unrest insist that the world conflict, including its excesses, was an expression and consequence of these domestic distempers of a revolutionary nature. Stressing the primacy of domestic politics, they also attribute the rigidities of the balance of power to these endogenous distempers rather than to any exogenous derangements in the international system.

Both schools run the risk of scooping together evidence to validate their respective interpretations of the condition of prewar Europe. Needless to say, I run that same risk in arguing my own thesis that a general crisis was the essential precondition and cause for the Thirty Years' War of the 20th century.

Europe's general crisis swelled up during the decade, and more particularly during the last five years, preceding the outbreak of war. In the late phase of a long Kondratieff cycle the rate of economic growth decelerated, downward movements in the business cycle became more frequent, and the real income and per capita welfare of workers and peasants at best advanced slowly or became stationary. Even if the objective indices of this economic slowdown or stagnation were rather ambiguous, this economic constriction assumed serious proportions in the perceptions of employers, workers, and politicians. Among employers there was mounting concern with the mystifying uncertainties of the business cycle, the alarming growth of trade unions, and the concerted drive of labor for collective bargaining and political power. Consequently employers intensified their pressure for government contracts and expenditures, including military and naval outlays (that were anti-cyclical), at the same time that they pooled their resources and efforts to check or to break the organized left.

As for labor's leaders, they became rather more guarded in their confidence in the strike weapon, especially after 1911. By then it was clear that the state would not tolerate work stoppages in essential private industries and public services, that big employers were preparing to resist organized labor, and that economic recession or stagnation was not only slowing the growth of union membership but also cooling the militancy of the rank and file. At the same time that union officials shifted from improvised confrontations to positional warfare, they also moved toward closer cooperation with the reformist and revisionist leaders of the Socialist and Labour parties. Driven on the defensive, the core of the labor movement became a force for pragmatic reform, disposed to collaborate with advanced liberals and democrats. To be sure, there was an upswing of anarcho-syndicalism, whose activists brandished the general or mass strike as the ultimate weapon. But this outburst of militancy was an expression of disillusionment and a protest against the betrayal by reformists rather than a sign of mounting revolutionary ardor and cohesion.

Even the labor unrest in St. Petersburg in the first half of 1914 and Red Week in Italy in June of that same year did not run counter to this drift to moderation in the trade union movement.

Much the same temperate trend was in evidence in the political sectors of the labor movement. There is no denying the spectacular increase in members, voters, and deputies of Europe's Socialist and Labour parties throughout the prewar decade. But once the radicalizing stimulus of Russia's upheaval of 1905 had been spent or defused, this growth in numbers, which had crested by 1914, was accompanied by a renewed advance of revisionism and reformism. Except in Russia, where the Duma counted for little, the parliamentary Socialist and Labour parties steered a decidedly moderate course not only within the labor movement but also in the political arena at large. This same moderation and caution were in evidence among the restless national minorities of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires, and also of Great Britain. Their principal political spokesmen advocated autonomy from above and not secessionist independence from below. Although there were occasional outbursts of violence and terror, these were expressions of impotence and frustration rather than of vital energy and self-confidence.

In other words, *objectively* there was a leveling off in the expansion of the trade-union and Socialist left, along with a decline of its militancy and *élan*. The strident internationalist and anti-militarist rhetoric at the prewar congresses of the Second International covered up this great retreat: it enabled the faltering socialist movement to maintain an appearance of unflagging radicalism that became counterproductive. The nationality movements were in a similar state of reflux, notwithstanding a string of dramatic political assassinations.

Just the same, against a background of economic uncertainty and fiscal stress Europe's ruling and governing classes were intensely preoccupied with the claimant left and the restless nationalities. In all quarters and not just among diehards, there was a chronic disposition to overestimate the strength and radicalism of trade unions, labor parties, and nationality movements. Even so, progressive liberals and democrats were confident that the bark of the left and the national minorities was louder than their bite. Accordingly, they meant to divide and temper them with minimal reforms and strategic cooptions. But ultra-conservatives opposed such an open and flexible policy. They were desperately fearful that left liberals, progressive democrats, and moderate Socialists would form a united front and exploit the universal manhood franchise to put over a far-reaching reformist project. Not yet confident of their own ability to compete successfully at the polls, ultra-conservatives trembled for the future of their beleaguered interests and positions. They were determined to forestall any would-be reformist majority by either blocking the introduction of universal suffrage and full parliamentary control of the executive, or, where these were operative, by strengthening the executive through the reinforcement of the crown, the upper chamber, or the presidency.

Indeed, as of 1911-1912 the irruption of trade unionists, Socialists, and self-determinationists had been contained and their insurgence forced into legal political channels. Moreover, this domestication of the forces of movement had been carried out by moderate conservative or liberal governments, though these had not hesitated to use the state's coercive apparatus to achieve their goal. Nevertheless, these governments and their principal supporters reaped little credit for this accomplishment. In fact, the lightening strokes on the far left, which were so easily and successfully run into the ground, were followed by an outsized rolling thunder on the far right.

There was much to give courage to ultra-conservatives: the readiness of the insecure vital center to give first priority to the maintenance of order; the persistent backlash against real and verbal extremism; and the disarray within the socialist and self-determination movements. Determined to brace or improve their crumbling positions in the hegemonic bloc as well as in the steel frame, the diehards launched a campaign whose professed purpose was to revitalize and purify the nation to meet mounting dangers at home and abroad. But their real aim was to mobilize all social, economic, and political

forces that were or felt themselves threatened by capitalist modernization. Although the "victims" of this modernization – the atavistic factions of the active social and political symbiosis, both high and low – were in the vanguard of this campaign, they found willing partners in bourgeois sectors of the ruling and governing class. These had their own reasons for a *Sammlung* of all the forces of order: to secure favorable taxes, tariffs, subsidies, and government contracts, and to block or dismantle progressive labor, social, and welfare legislation.

Admittedly, judging by its rising contribution to the gross national product and by the growth of the industrial labor force, capitalist industrialization was making immense strides. Moreover, factory and agricultural workers were organizing along both syndical and political lines, thereby inflating the red specter that had been haunting Europe ever since 1848. Also, the gyrations of the business cycle prompted both capitalists and workers to turn to politics to protect and foster their clashing interests.

But this surging and uneven development in the modern sector contributed less to the mounting tensions between society and government than the resolute resistance to modernity. Not only in Germany but throughout Europe and in Japan – much more so than in the United States – capitalist industrialization needed to be fitted into preexistent and venerable social, cultural, mental, and political structures. What Ernst Bloch called the "Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen" (the synchronous coexistence of unsimultaneity)[5] became increasingly strained largely because at this time these vestigial forces would no longer hold still for the unrelenting ingrafting of dynamic structures, relations, and processes. In fact, pre-industrial, pre-bourgeois, and pre-capitalist sectors of economy, society, and polity mounted a vigorous campaign to slow down, halt, or drive back the advancing tides of industrialization, urbanization, and democratization.

Agrarian elites were in the vanguard of this aggressive defense against the conservative modernization which they perceived to be radical, not to say revolutionary. Among the "atavistic" strata these landed elements were not only the most powerful but also the best organized force. To be sure, agriculture continued to be of great economic importance, even in England. But the social and cultural influence as well as the political power of the agrarians by far exceeded their failing or beleaguered economic strength. Except in France – and the United States – the upper echelons of the state bureaucracy, army, and church were still of landed, not to say noble background. In addition, the agrarians continued to exercise disproportionate political leverage by virtue of constitutional practices and structures that went back to feudal and pre-industrial times.

King, emperor, and tsar presided over royal courts that gave the landed aristocracy and gentry – whose social provenance and world view they shared – not only conspicuous visibility but also privileged access to inner corridors of executive power. Rather than merely reign, these dynastic rulers continued to be the linchpins of incongruous authority systems that were the principal institutional expression of the ever more tenuous "Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen." By immemorial custom or constitutional provision these political systems were weighted in favor of landed society, economy, and culture: executive councils, upper chambers, election districts, and suffrage laws were designed to perpetuate the political preeminence of agrarians – large, medium, and small.

In sum, the agrarian elites were well placed to become the chief sponsors and architects of resistance to forward change, of defense and celebration of the embattled *ancien régime*. By social origin, class position, economic interest, functional role, and shared belief they were predisposed to use their disproportionate political power and hegemonic magic to bolster their arrested or deteriorating economic and social condition. In pursuit of this goal, the agrarians and their acolytes collaborated with pressure groups, factions, and parties of the hegemonic bloc that, like themselves, needed government aid to safeguard or promote their interests, especially in the realm of tariffs, subsidies,

5. Ernst Bloch, "Bemerkungen zur 'Erbschaft dieser Zeit'", in Bloch, *Vom Hasard zur Katastrophe: Politische Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1934-1939* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972), pp. 42-64, esp. pp. 53-58.

contracts, and taxes. To the extent that they cooperated with advanced industrial interests, they contributed, in spite of themselves, to the modernizing transformation that was hastening the erosion of their own privileged world. On the other hand, this cooperation enabled the anti-modernists to permeate the zealous bourgeois and professional strata with their own archaic as well as autocratic ethos. The leaders of the hegemonic bloc soon recognized the limitations of their politics of logrolling and deference. Faced with the new realities of mass politics, they had to secure popular backing for their project that was an unstable and brittle compound of radical reversion and conservative modernization. Accordingly, the embattled elites proceeded to mobilize less well-born socioeconomic strata – notably the composite lower-middle class, both urban and rural – with appeals designed to stimulate their latent fears and anxieties, to flatter their susceptible sense of status, and to inflame their jingoist nationalism.[6]

While the different segments of the ruling and governing class pressed this offensive they continued to spar among themselves, a luxury they could afford once the danger of serious popular upheavals receded – as it did in the years immediately preceding 1914. Precisely because of the unfavorable state of the economy and budget they found it difficult to agree on urgent fiscal questions. In particular, soaring military and naval expenditures created rising budget deficits which could only be covered by new revenues. With higher indirect and regressive taxes politically dangerous or impracticable, there was no alternative to direct levies on capital, income, or property. No issue could have been more divisive for the ruling class: each major faction was equally determined to avoid new taxes detrimental to its own interests. The fiscal crunch exacerbated the cleavages and insecurities within the hegemonic bloc, with the result that the governing class and the steel frame became unsteady and paralyzed.

Paradoxically, this unsettling tax and fiscal problem was a by-product of the anti-modernist resurgence whose ultimate objective was to freeze or roll back the status quo, but whose principal banner was strident superpatriotism. Jingoist nationalism served two purposes: it provided the conjoined but squabbling conservatives with a cementing ideology at the same time that it gave them a popular, not to say populist ideology with which to counter the mass appeals of the forces of movement. The far right became the spearhead of nationalist mobilization, in that it seized the principal command posts in the conservative *Sammlung* that sponsored the preemptive political offensive. Among the chief consequences of this intensive massaging of the aggressive national ego was an increasingly burdensome armaments race and the attendant aggravation of international tensions.

The catonists, with their bunker mentality, were expert at magnifying the two dangers that disposed traditional conservatives among the classes and masses to condone or support their push for confrontation politics at home or abroad. They made a point of ignoring the practical reformism of the socialist and self-determination movements. Instead, they played up the inflammatory rhetoric as well as the incidental terrorism of the emarginated radicals in these opposition movements so as to exploit more effectively the specter of revolution. Similarly, they exaggerated the aggressive capabilities and intentions of foreign enemies. It was this unrelenting fear-mongering that contributed so significantly to uniting the major conservative factions in spite of their intense incompatibilities of interests, styles, and values.

The conservative resurgence, sparked by the ultras, was one of the most striking developments of the prewar years. Although it assumed a different shape in each of the six major European countries, it was of consequence in all of them. In the three absolutist empires of central and eastern Europe the old landed, bureaucratic, military, and ecclesiastic elites certainly played a prominent, decisive, and ominous role in pushing the active symbiosis of political leadership into practicing radical politics for regressive social, economic, and cultural purposes. But it would be wrong to say that this conservative

6. See Arno J. Mayer, "The Lower Middle Class as Historical Problem", in *Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 47, No. 3 (September, 1975), pp. 409-436.

defiance was insignificant in the democratic countries of western Europe where the atavistic elements were less imposing and cohesive, and of less consequence in the hegemonic bloc. All over Europe the revolt from the right was grounded in and carried by substantial economic interests, by influential and even powerful political factions and parties, by strategic state elites, and by galvanizing ideas. Moreover, it made headway in all the major powers, regardless of the nature of their authority system or the degree of their industrialization: even England was no exception. Without a doubt this conservative incursion sparked by the diehards, ran in transnational veins. Notwithstanding the brazen and bigoted nationalist professions of this conservative movement, it, like the socialist movement, was of pan-European dimensions, and therefore represents a significant index of general crisis.

IV

Of course, the term general crisis needs to be defined if it is to have any analytic force.[7] As noted before, general crisis is a relatively rare historical moment and phenomenon: the civil and political societies of the modern world are peculiarly resistant to disintegration or breakdown. This is not to say that they are ever without strains and stresses of various types and degrees. Indeed, all modern societies are permeated by chronic contradictions and conflicts, as are the structures and processes that connect them to the international system. In normal times this stress toward disequilibrium remains circumscribed, diffuse, and, above all, self-corrective. In periods of mounting dislocations, however, these homeostatic capacities of economy, society, and culture become overstrained and are reinforced or supplemented by government and state intervention.

Of necessity, any notion or concept of general crisis presupposes a notion or concept of the conditions that precede and follow it. The word-concepts of stability and equilibrium – of normalcy – are highly problematical, also because of their normative implications. Even so, it is impossible to avoid counterposing the idea of normalcy to the idea of crisis. Since every equilibrium is constantly in flux, the principal problem is to determine the conditions in which the inherent disturbances of a moving but ultimately stable equilibrium converge to produce an unstable equilibrium. There is no litmus test to indicate when the scope, intensity, and pattern of disturbances produces a shift from normalcy – i.e., a moving but stable equilibrium – to crisis – i.e., an unstable equilibrium. It is equally difficult to say whether a crisis is one of growth or decline, of expansion or contraction.[8]

Crisis is no less problematical a word concept and historical condition than normalcy. According to Jürgen Habermas, a crisis "can arise at different points; and the forms in which crisis tendencies manifest themselves up to the point of their political eruption – that is, the point at which an existing political system is delegitimized – are just as diverse."[9] A general or organic crisis consists of multiple, interlocked, and synchronized strains and conflicts, although these stresses are never equally intense in all sectors of a sociopolitical system. Accordingly, a general or organic crisis can assume a variety of

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7. For the recent discussion and bibliography on the problem of crisis see Claus Offe, *Strukturprobleme des kapitalistischen Staates* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972); Martin Janicke (ed.), *Herrschaft und Krise* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1973), esp. essays by Janicke, Elmar Altvater, Offe, and Wolf-Dieter Narr; Janicke (ed.), *Politische Systemkrisen* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1973), esp. essays by Janicke and Offe. See also Randolph Starn, "Historians and 'Crisis'", in *Past and Present*, No. 52 (August, 1971), pp. 3-22. After completing my own reflections on the problem of crisis there appeared an issue of the French journal, *Communications*, No. 25 (1976), which is entirely devoted to what Edgar Morin calls "crisologie". None of the contributors mention the German literature cited in this footnote though some of them no doubt are familiar with it.

8. Cf. Rosa Luxemburg, *Sozialreform oder Revolution*, in Luxemburg, *Politische Schriften* (Leipzig: Verlag Philipp Reclam, 1969), p. 26, and Nicolai Bukharin, *Historical Materialism: A System of Sociology* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1969), p. 79.

9. Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimationsprobleme im Spätkapitalismus* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), p. 66.

configurations, all depending on the particular element that becomes dominant in the mix of conflated economic, social, ideological, and political malfunctionings.

As previously noted, not every general crisis is a pre-revolution or develops into a revolution. What needs special emphasis is that unless the intense unsettlement of civil society produces or coincides with an acute derangement and delegitimation of political society, the chances or dangers of revolution remain marginal. In fact, if state and government remain steady, a general crisis produces not revolution but reaction, bonapartism, or counterrevolution, compounded by foreign war.

Conditions of general crisis have deep and multiple roots which develop gradually and not by accident. But in terms of historical time, compared to normalcy, an organic crisis is relatively brief, intense, and distinct. Jakob Burckhardt considered "genuine" crises to be rare and to be in the nature of sudden and terrifying accelerations of the historical process.[10] Obviously, a general crisis is not an ephemeral moment or an intermediate conjuncture: it is, rather, an expression of the erosion or unhinging of deep-seated structures that have a *longue durée.*

A genuine crisis runs in international veins, which is to say that it is not a local, regional, or national affair. Admittedly, it assumes significantly different configurations in different countries. But neither these local variations nor the force of contagion or imitation can obscure the common structure of the unstable equilibrium which accounts for the transnational interconnectedness of general crisis. Hugh Trevor-Roper argued convincingly that "even contagion implies receptivity," and he attributed the "epidemic" of upheavals of the 17th century to the universality of Europe's intellectual, physical, and structural vulnerability: at the time "the various countries of Europe seemed merely the separate theaters upon which the same great tragedy was being simultaneously, though in different languages and with local variations, played out."[11] The same holds true for developments in the various European countries during the epoch of the revolution in France which Edmund Burke instantly judged to be "a great crisis, not of the affairs of France alone, but of all Europe, perhaps of more than Europe."[12] Similarly, not only Europe, but many other parts of the world experienced a vast general crisis in the 20th century, of which the two world wars, the Russian and Chinese revolutions, and the Fascist counterrevolutions were the most extreme expression. To be sure, in the 17th, in the late 18th, and in the first half of the 20th century in each country the crisis took a different form, followed a distinct course, and produced diverse results. But even though each national rupture had authentic local mainsprings it also reflected the transnational nature and interrelation of these distempers. In turn, these domestic distempers were the taproot for absolute external war.

This transnational thrust and scope of general crisis testify to the indeterminate nature of its trajectory, to its Janus-headed quality.[13] To repeat once again, organic crisis need not culminate in revolution. In fact, more often than not it becomes an incubator and locomotive for reaction, caesarism, or counterrevolution. Accordingly, it is characteristic of general crisis that the future direction of society hangs in the balance: regression or progress, slavery or freedom, despotism or democracy, poverty or welfare, reaction or revolution. It goes without saying that in historical hindsight alternatives never look quite so clear-cut and extreme. What matters, however, is that in times of general crisis the elites and counter-elites of opposing attentive publics view the situation in these bipolar and irreconcilable terms. Jürgen Habermas even identifies this intense awareness of the "incompatibility" of claims, interests, and intentions as one of the most salient

10. Jakob Burckhardt, *Force and Freedom* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964), pp. 206-267.

11. Trevor Aston (ed.), *Crisis in Europe, 1560-1660* (New York: Basic Books, 1965), pp. 59-60.

12. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: Oxford World's Classics, 1907), p. 10.

13. See Karl Kautsky, *Der Weg zur Macht* (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1972), pp. 110-112; Reinhart Koselleck, *Kritik und Krise* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1973), p. 105; Jänicke (ed.), *Politische Systemkrisen,* p. 17.

indicators of systemic crisis.[14] Although general crisis is not simply a matter of perception and overperception, it does take this inflamed sense of distrust and irreconcilability to make it manifest, acute, and explosive. What needs special emphasis is that this anticipation or realization of a momentous rupture surfaces not only among those social and political forces that are driven by hope and that seek and welcome a new dawn. It becomes equally pronounced among forces that are consumed by insecurity and fear and that mean to exploit the distempers of their time to invert the course of history.[15]

V

It can be said that a preoccupation with general crisis was near the center of Marx's social theory and political praxis. Although he confronted the prospect of the ultimate collapse of capitalism with confidence, Marx had no illusions about the uniqueness, complexity, and infrequency of general rather than limited crisis, of organic rather than inorganic crisis. His theory of the business cycle was intended to distinguish between the normal contradictions and conflicts *within* the moving capitalist equilibrium and the heightened disequilibration that causes the terminal breakdown of declining capitalism.

For Marx and Marxists, then, there can be no lasting economic stability under capitalism. Instead, there is an ever precarious balance between production and consumption that generates chronic fluctuations and recurrent inorganic crises. Whatever the disagreements among economists about the root causes for this built-in disequilibration, even today there is broad acceptance of Marx's seminal insight that the capitalist economy moves in regular sequence through cycles of recession (or depression), recovery, and prosperity, Another aspect of Marxist theory, however, remains controversial: the proposition that under advanced capitalism the periods of recession or depression become longer and more intense, the periods of recovery more sluggish, and the periods of prosperity shorter and less vigorous. According to Marx and his disciples, eventually these intensifying and accelerating fluctuations of the business cycle will produce the general crisis of the final collapse of capitalism. It is not only their theoretical hypothesis, but also their political conviction, that the structures of contemporary polity, society, and culture are too fragile to withstand these aggravated economic convulsions for long. In sum, for Marxists the preoccupation with periodic economic disorders is an integral part of their anticipation of the inevitable end-crisis of captalism which they say is bound to take a revolutionary course.[16]

In the embryonic but pioneering Marxist theory of crisis the economic cycle is the principal motor for the recurrent and ultimately terminal disequilibration of capitalist society and state. It is almost as if the workers could claim their inheritance by merely delivering the last blow to an increasingly unstable capitalist system or by simply taking over once the system has finally collapsed. Although this conception has been analytically fruitful as well as politically energizing it has also been one-sided. Above all, the Marxist approach has tended to ignore or underestimate the coalescence of resistant and restabilizing forces and processes, especially under conditions of intense disequilibration.

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14. Habermas, *Legitimationsprobleme,* p. 12 and pp. 44-45, and Koselleck, *Kritik und Krise,* passim.
15. Cf. Wolf-Dieter Narr, "Zur Genesis und Funktion von Krisen", in Jänicke (ed.), *Herrschaft und Krise,* p. 226.
16. Paul Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development,* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1956), chs. VIII-XII; Bukharin, *Historical Materialism,* passim; Eugen Varga, *Die Krise des Kapitalismus und ihre politischen Folgen* (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1969); Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy,* pp. 38-43. The concluding paragraph of Marx's postscript of 1873 to the second edition of the first volume of *Capital* reads as follows:

> The contradictory movement of capitalist society impresses the practical bourgeois most forcefully through the gyrations of the periodic [business] cycle which pervades modern industry [i.e., the industrial sector], and whose culminating point is the general crisis. This crisis is approaching once again, although it is only in a preliminary phase; and by the universality of the stage [on which it unfolds] and the intensity of its actions it will drum dialectics even into the heads of the hothouse upstarts of the new, holy Prussian-German empire.

Indeed, the economism of Marxist theory died hard.[17] It persisted in spite of the fact that capitalism survived not just the "great deflation" of 1873-1896, but also the "great depression" of 1929 and the enormous disorganization of 1945-1950. To be sure, the cost of survival has been high. Even so, capitalism has survived and still survives, albeit in significantly altered forms.

Beginning in the last quarter of the 19th century, the bourgeoisie, in uneasy alliance with pre-industrial and pre-bourgeois segments of the ruling class, enlisted government and state for the purpose of system maintenance. This hegemonic bloc secured protective tariffs, fiscal preferments, subsidies, government contracts, and social imperialism in order not only to maintain the rate of profit but above all to moderate the swings of the economic cycle which threatened to tear apart society and polity. In particular the better organized interests learned to make the government intervene in the economy in directions favorable to themselves. Big businessmen and agrarians entered the political forum and state service in order to help design and apply government regulations and controls. Not that capitalists took over the state apparatus – which continued to be top-heavy with officials of pre-bourgeois and pre-industrial background – but they did take a more direct hand in government now that economy, society, and polity were again being tightly interlocked.[18] In addition, they pressed governments to streamline the state's legal, police, and military apparatus for the control of labor and peasant unrest.

By 1895 Friedrich Engels noted that Europe's ruling and governing classes were determined not to be swept away on the wave of a general crisis. He was particularly impressed, not to say awed, by the growing capacity and resolve of governments to enforce order in times of unsettlement.[19] In fact, Engels all but suggested that only the strains of modern war would destabilize political authority systems sufficiently for revolutions to have a chance. He also predicted that to undermine the steel frame of government it would take not just local and limited wars but "a world war of hitherto unimagined scope and intensity." He prophesied that in the coming international conflict "eight to ten million soldiers [would] slaughter each other"; that "the destruction of the Thirty Years' War [would] cover the entire continent"; that "trade, industry, and credit [would] be totally unsettled and sink into general bankruptcy"; and that "old and traditional regimes [would] collapse and royal crowns [would] roll in the streets by the dozens, with no one to pick them up."[20] August Bebel shared Engels' presentiment that only a major European conflagration could precipitate the *grosse Kladderadatsch* and the *Götterdämmerung* of the bourgeois world. Nevertheless, Bebel remained confident that the new socialist society could be forged even in the fire of such a cataclysm.[21]

To be sure, Engels and Bebel still considered the contradictions of advanced and advancing capitalist economies to be the ultimate cause of Europe's burgeoning tensions, both national and international. Still, they did abandon the mechanical conception that the massive breakdown of the capitalist economies would necessarily and inevitably become the crucial pivot of general crisis pregnant with revolution. In fact, blinded by their undaunted revolutionary optimism, they expounded a non-dialectical conception of the nature and role of war in general crisis: neither Engels nor Bebel allowed for the future total war to leave a legacy not only of destruction and defeat – and hence of revolution – but also of victory.

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17. Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), passim, and Lucio Colletti, *From Rousseau to Lenin* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), esp. pp. 48-63.
18. Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), esp. ch. 17; Heinrich August Winkler (ed.), *Organisierter Kapitalismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1974), passim; Charles S. Maier, *Recasting Bourgeois Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), esp. 22-46; Gabriel Kolko, *The Triump of Conservatism* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1963).
19. See Friedrich Engels' introduction of March 6, 1895, to Karl Marx, *The Class Struggles in France, 1848-50* (New York: International Publishers, 1935), pp. 9-30.
20. Cited in Karl Kautsky, *Sozialisten und Krieg* (Prag: Orbis Verlag, 1937), pp. 250-251.
21. See *Die Krise der Sozialdemokratie* (Junius Broschüre), in Luxemburg, *Politische Schriften*, p. 236.

Also in the last third of the 19th century Friedrich Nietzsche proclaimed that "human nature supports great victories less well than great defeats."[22] Some one hundred years later and perhaps inspired by Nietzsche, Alexander Solzhenitsyn declared that in great wars not victories but defeats were blessed. Contemplating Russia's defeats in the Crimean war, the Russo-Japanese war, and the First World War, Solzhenitsyn propounded the view that "whereas governments need victories, the people need defeats," which provide a liberating thrust.[23] These maxims point to the political by-products of military victory in times of inorganic as well as organic crisis: the ruling and governing classes of victor nations become a formidable force for order both at home and internationally. As such they reinforce the "opposition" to the revolutionary impulses or advances of crisis.

Engels and Bebel ought to have listened to Burckhardt, for he measured the seriousness of crisis by the intensity of this "opposition." According to Burckhardt, while "counterfeit or inadequate" crises can easily be defused, "genuine crises first show their true force under opposition."[24] This opposition, which was nurtured by victory in the Great War, had been gaining momentum throughout the prewar years. Well before 1914 there was a marked resurgence of ultra-conservative forces and ideas that meant to turn the mounting disequilibration of European societies to their own advantage. Impressed and troubled by this resurgence, first Jean Jaurès, then Rosa Luxemburg, and finally Antonio Gramsci warned that the unfolding organic crisis would be dangerously Janus-headed.

By 1905 Jaurès considered Europe's ruling and governing classes to be moving toward a major war. Precisely because the spiraling domestic dislocations of the major powers cut across national borders, he expected the coming international conflict to exceed the first Thirty Years' War in scope and intensity. To be sure, there was a good chance that such a conflict would advance the revolutionary cause and pave the way for a social-democratic Europe. But Jaurès was loath to "take this barbarous gamble" and to stake the emancipation of the workers on such a "murderous toss of the dice." For he realized that a general war could just as likely "result, for a long period, in crises of counterrevolution, of curious reaction, of exasperated nationalism, of stifling dictatorship, of monstrous militarism, of a long chain of retrograde violence and of base hatreds, reprisals, and servitudes."[25] Jaurès' assassination on July 31, 1914 symbolized the doubled-edged nature of the general crisis which just then erupted into external war.

Rosa Luxemburg was equally troubled at the prospect of a universal, cataclysmic war which would be a consequence of Europe's domestic distempers, and whose outcome would be uncertain and full of dangers. In her *Junius* pamphlet, written in prison in 1915, she proclaimed that the destiny of Germany as well as of the entire continent was trembling in the balance between "either-or." Not surprisingly, Luxemburg invoked Engels' prophecy of a second Thirty Years' War to support her own foreboding that world history had reached a momentous crossroad: "*either* the triumph of imperialism and the destruction of all culture and, as in ancient Rome, depopulation, desolation, degeneration, a huge cemetery; *or* the victory of socialism. . . ."[26] Rosa Luxemburg's gratuitous murder on January 15, 1919, by the white guards of Germany's carefully managed "revolution from above" prefigured the barbarism of the Nazi holocaust. In the meantime the victors of World War I, frightened by the revolution in Russia, supported not only the restabilization of central and east-central Europe, but also the counter-

22. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*, in *Nietzsches Werke*, vol. II (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 1921), p. 3.
23. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago, 1918-1956* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), p. 272.
24. Burckhardt, *Force and Freedom*, p. 273.
25. Harvey Goldberg, *The Life of Jean Jaurès* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1962), p. 432, and *Oeuvres de Jean Jaurès: Pour la paix*, vol. II (Paris: Rieder, 1931), p. 247 and passim.
26. Luxemburg, *Politische Schriften*, esp. p. 242. Italics mine.

revolution in Hungary and in Russia.[27] Lenin was the first to fully appreciate the effectiveness with which Europe's ruling and governing classes were bracing their political power, with the result that hereafter the revolution would have to breach more formidable steel frames of government than the one the Bolsheviks had smashed in 1917.

VI

As early as 1920 Antonio Gramsci realized that Italy would witness either a proletarian revolution or "a terrible reaction by the possessing classes and the governmental caste".[28] The "march on Rome" in October 1922 which enthroned fascism in Italy soon convinced him that without a thorough dislocation of government and the de-legitimation of the regime an unstable equilibrium could not culminate in revolution. With the steel frame of government essentially intact, an organic crisis could result only in reaction or caesarism. In other words, Gramsci discovered the importance of political society with the bonapartist rise of Mussolini and fascism from the post-1918 turmoil in Italy much as Marx had been forced to face up to it by the coup d'état of Louis Napoleon after 1848 in France.[29] Unlike Marx, however, Gramsci proceeded to explore the theoretical and practical implications of the resilience of political society. Perhaps Gramsci did so because, as a committed revolutionary, he lived through a general crisis whose *dénouement* was still wide open and that was contingent not on national but on world developments. Marx, for his part, had only experienced the upheavals of 1848 which, precisely because they were crushed so easily, had been in the nature of what Burckhardt considered "counterfeit" crises. In any case, for Gramsci, in an organic crisis "the field is open to solutions of force, to the activity of obscure powers represented by 'men of destiny' or by 'divine' men". The situation becomes so acutely perilous "because the traditional ruling class", with its "numerous trained personnel", reinforces its control and power in one of two ways: it either crushes the popular insurgency by itself, or, if need be, it sanctions and mediates a bonapartist project.[30]

With the onset of the great depression in 1929 Gramsci more than ever fixed his attention on the role and behavior of political society. The big crash revived and relegitimized economism, notably the theory of the imminent and inevitable breakdown of capitalist societies from essentially economic causes. But rather than endorse or yield to this fatuous optimism which momentarily swept both the communist and the socialist left, Gramsci remained a pessimistic revolutionary tortured by the perils of the soaring organic crisis of his day. Above all, not unlike Engels before him, he was struck by the firmness of the state apparatus as well as the resources, resourcefulness, and resolve of traditional ruling and governing classes in the face of unprecedented economic chaos. Not only the fascist regime in Italy managed to weather the economic hurricane. But also in Germany, where this hurricane wrought even worse ravages, the hegemonic bloc and state apparatus coalesced to protect established economy and society, ultimately by sanctioning Hitler's "march on Berlin".[31] For Gramsci the conclusion was clear: unless the collapse of the capitalist economy was accompanied by the acute impairment of political society's coercive organs and civil society's hegemonic institutions, the organic crisis could not develop a commanding revolutionary momentum.[32]

Quite clearly, although the permanent state apparatus had considerable autonomy in relation to changing governments, its personnel was not politically neutral. By social

27. A. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peacemaking: Containment and Counterrevolution at Versailles, 1918-1919* (New York: Knopf, 1967), passim.
28. Cited in Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *Gramsci et l'État* (Paris: Fayard, 1975), p. 117 and p. 174.
29. See Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1935), passim.
30. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), pp. 210-223; Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1967), pp. 174-175; Hugh Portelli, *Gramsci et le Bloc historique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972), ch. V.
31. Buci-Glucksmann, *Gramsci et l'État*, p. 173.
32. *Ibid.*, pt. III, ch. 3.

origin and ideological inclination the high bureaucrats were tied into the hegemonic bloc. Their professional interest as well as their life function reinforced their social disposition to use the state apparatus to uphold the established social order.

Especially with this social order under severe attack, high civil servants, including the military, acted in concert with the ruling class. To be sure, the upper bureaucracy had its own divisions about political tactics and alignments. But no matter how intense these internal debates and rivalries, the bureaucratic caste was not about to support advanced reformers or revolutionaries. Accordingly, within the key ministries – justice, interior, war – the highest legal, administrative, and military officials operated the steel frame either in defense of the established social order and incumbent government or for the benefit of atavistic elements within the hegemonic bloc to whom they were or felt tied by social background, education, world view, and political predilection.[33]

Following the Great War and the Russian Revolution both Bukharin and Gramsci sought to account for this astonishing resilience of the ruling class and the state in the face of organic crisis. Looking beyond the economy and the state's coercive machinery, Bukharin noted the importance of ideologies "that serve as rivets to hold together the existing order". He insisted that "these ideologies are not playthings, but in many ways serve as girders to maintain the equilibrium of the entire social body".[34]

Whereas Bukharin merely identified the critical importance of ideology in the consensual (over the coercive) governance of civil and political society, in his prison cell Gramsci proceeded to probe the nature and function of ideology in some greater depth. For Gramsci "the state is the sum of political and civil society, or hegemony armed and primed for coercion".[35] As the *ultima ratio*, coercion becomes salient and supreme, though not necessarily effective, only in those rare moments when tenacious hegemonic structures and processes are delegitimized and break down – when management gives way to outright domination and command.[36]

The state's coercive apparatus is relatively unified and centralized, and the army, police, bureaucracy, and judiciary belong entirely to the public and official realm. As for the hegemonic agencies, they are multiple and diffused throughout civil and political society. Moreover, those institutions that according to Bukharin provide the ideological "rivets" and "girders" – church, school, university, academy, museum, theater, media, voluntary association, trade union, party – have a more autonomous position. Of course, whatever the degree of "privacy" of any of these institutions and activities, they nevertheless have close ties to the official world. Gramsci stressed the critical position of intellectuals in this formidable hegemonic apparatus: he saw them as the functionally indispensable creators, organizers, and managers of consensus entrusted with designing and operating the vast socialization apparatus that fosters "voluntary" compliance with the existing social order and political regime. According to Gramsci, even though these intellectuals, mostly of lower-middle class origin, are not *in* the establishment of civil and political society, they are nevertheless *of* it. In other words, Gramsci sought to understand the nature, place, and role of the ideological, educational, and cultural structures and their functionaries in the fusion and preservation of civil and political society.[37]

Gramsci never ceased to be preoccupied with the enormous obstacles to a revolutionary breakthrough under conditions of organic crisis. He had to concede that even if the elastic fabric of hegemony should tear, there was still a formidable political society to brace the unsettled civil society. To be sure, the erosion of the belief system would lessen the effectiveness of the authority system. But rather than exaggerate the heightened vulnerability of the old order, Gramsci saw the loss of consensual rule compensated by

33. Cf. Ralph Miliband, *The State in Capitalist Society* (London: Quartet Books, 1973), ch. 5.
34. Bukharin, *Historical Materialism*, p. 255.
35. Buci-Glucksmann, *Gramsci et l'État*, pp. 87-89.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-125.
37. Portelli, *Gramsci et le Bloc historique*, chs. III and IV, and Louis Althusser, "Idéologie et Appareils idéologiques d'état", in *Pensée*, no. 151 (June, 1970), pp. 9-21.

the hardening of the state's coercive controls: notwithstanding sharp cleavages within the ruling class, in moments of de-legitimation the coercive bureaucratic and military organs of political society maintain a formidable coherence.

In times of normalcy, sustained by economic and fiscal ease, the contending factions of the ruling and governing class permit and expect government to foster the compromise of their conflicts of interest, class, status, and power. In times of unstable equilibrium, however, this coordination and mediation become altogether more difficult, in that competing factions of the fractured elite make increasingly irreconcilable demands on government. The result is the kind of political stalemate and instability that enhance both the autonomy and the power of the permanent state bureaucracy.[38]

But this is not to say that these state institutions and their chief operatives, which then become the fulcrum of crisis-management, are independent of the underlying structures and relations of class, status, and power. Obviously, in a time of general crisis state intervention is neither above class nor non-partisan. Rather, the momentum and direction of this intervention are defined by the shifting balance of power and influence within the riven ruling and governing class. Specifically, economic downturn and their potential for social upheaval prompt government and state to take both anti-cyclical and internal security measures. But precisely because the thrust of this prophylaxis is conditioned, not to say determined, by the rivalries within the hegemonic bloc and their repercussions within the state apparatus, government intervention becomes highly controverted. In other words, mounting economic and social stresses force the kind of government intervention that is transparently *political* rather than merely administrative.

Rival factions within the ruling and governing class turn to battling fiercely over economic, tax, tariff, subsidy, and welfare policies, as well as over political and security measures. As noted before, it is a sign of general crisis that this in-fighting in the incumbent power bloc becomes so intense that it produces government disorganization, stalemate, or paralysis at the very moment that the social system's homeostatic capacities are overloaded to the breaking point. Contrary to conventional scholarly wisdom the malfunctioning of government is not due to the incompetence, corruption, decadence, or irresolution of homogeneous, isolated, or arrogant elites. More likely this failure is an outgrowth of paralyzing or disaggregating rifts within the ruling class over strategies to forestall or contain economic, social, and cultural disruptions, both real and imagined.

This politicalization and failure of administrative management predisposes incumbent ministers and high bureaucrats to rely increasingly on coercive rather than consensual controls. In turn, this retreat into the politics of domination not only symbolizes but also aggravates the de-legitimation of the established regime.

But rather than benefit the forces of revolt or revolution, this erosion of legitimacy usually benefits the forces of reaction. In fact, these intransigents outflank the forces of flexible conservatism within both polity and state. As Gramsci noted, with government stalemated and de-legitimized, the state apparatus assumes growing importance and exposes its latent political disposition. The armed forces, police, bureaucracy, and judiciary are primed for system maintenance. They are so disposed not only because of the dependable provenance and careful screening of their personnel but also by virtue of their institutional functions. Moreover, those political actors and forces whose interests and fears incline them to support this rule by coercion, either at home or abroad, manage to appropriate the awe-inspiring though tarnished mantle of legitimacy for themselves. To be sure, these champions of the mailed fist exacerbate the unsettlement and de-legitimation of government. But, paradoxically, they nevertheless manage to exploit this discomposure of government to enhance their own position within the fragile hegemonic bloc.

The principal choice to be made is between reactive and preventive crisis management. The advocates of a reactive strategy intend to be firm without being rigid and advo-

38. Cf. Nicos Poulantzas, *Pouvoir Politique et classes sociales,* Vol. I (Paris: Maspero, 1972), pp. 32-51, and Habermas, *Legitimationsprobleme,* p. 15.

cate the use of repressive force only to *counter* calculated provocation or overt violence. Proponents of preventive action seek to precipitate an early showdown in order to *forestall* a threat that they are inclined to overestimate.[39] Those two groups will also differ over the recourse to external belligerence, including war, for purposes of domestic crisis management. In fact, it is another central, not to say preeminent characteristic of general crisis that foreign policy becomes highly politicized and external affairs are manipulated for essentially domestic political purposes.

VII

That there is a link between crisis at home and war abroad has never really been in question. Since classical antiquity political theorists and historians have called attention to it: Plato and Aristotle, Livy and Plutarch, Machiavelli and Bodin. This connection has also been noted by modern thinkers from Clausewitz, through Marx, Weber, and Schumpeter, down to contemporary social and behavioral scientists.[40]

Not only scholarly but also popular texts abound with casual references to war as a safety valve or outlet for pent-up internal dissension and unrest; or as a diversion, displacement, discharge, or externalization of domestic stress into the international system or environment. Indeed, there is a broad and time-honored consensus to the effect that the internal strains and stresses of civil and political societies are both a reservoir and a cause for external bellicosity or war.

But even though this linkage has been universally recognized – and mostly deplored – it has not been probed systematically. The central question is still open: are particular types of domestic crisis correlated with particular types of external war? In the context of this discussion there is no need to inquire into the pattern of these correlations either in animal or primitive societies, or in nascent and new nations of historical societies. It should be noted in passing, however, that for pre-historical societies as well as for fledgling states or nations the causes and purposes of war are of a distinctly conservational, integrationist, and cementing nature – above all, in terms of social stratification and power relations.

Similarly, there is no need to examine the extent to which the built-in contradictions of essentially equilibrated societies foster war in times of normalcy. Naturally enough, nations with integrated societies and stable polities have a relatively low propensity for external conflict. This is not to suggest that the governments of such nations never go to war by choice or have war forced upon them by governments of other nations. What matters here, though, is that when essentially stable societies and governments do go to war they fight wars for limited, well-defined, and negotiable objectives. In other words, they engage in the type of conflict that Clausewitz idealized and that Simmel classified as realistic and genuine: war as a controlled instrument for the achievement of concrete territorial, economic, and military aims.[41] In this realistic war, domestic political motives and purposes play a distinctly subordinate but not negligible role. Above all, the governments concerned can make decisions with little if any worry for their own survival or social stability. Still, victory has the unintended but not unwelcome effect of further solidifying the existing structures of class, status, and power, while defeat weakens incumbent governments and ruling classes, though not to the point of endangering the regime itself.

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39. Jänicke (ed.), *Herrschaft und Krise*, p. 19.
40. See Mayer, *Dynamics of Counterrevolution in Europe, 1870-1956* (New York: Harper, 1971), ch. 6; Dean G. Pruitt and Richard C. Snyder, *Theory and Research on the Causes of War* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969); Michael Hass, *International Conflict* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1974).
41. Carl von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege* (Berlin: Verlag des Ministeriums für Nationale Verteidigung, 1957), esp. bk. I, ch. I and bk. VIII, chs. 1-6. For a balanced discussion of Georg Simmel's sociology of conflict see Lewis Coser, *The Social Function of Conflict* (New York: Free Press, 1964), passim.

Of central interest, then, is the relationship of domestic stress and foreign war not in times of normalcy but in times of both limited and general crisis. There are, of course, significant structural and dynamic differences between these two types of crisis. However, for the purpose of analyzing the linkages between domestic crisis and the press for war, the elements of similarity are of greater importance: insecure and divided ruling and governing classes, insurgent diehards, eroded vital centers, crested social movements, and unstable or paralyzed governments. To the extent that the scope, synchronism, intensity, and transnationality of general crisis are significantly greater than those of limited crisis, general crisis is an incubator of the abstract and pure war that Clausewitz disvalued and the extreme conflict that Simmel characterized as unrealistic.

The central point is that under conditions of both inorganic and general crisis, the primary motives, preconditions, and causes for war are political. The governors opt for war for reasons of domestic politics rather than of foreign policy and international politics. To follow Simmel, their choice of foreign-policy objectives is essentially arbitrary, in that they induce foreign conflict for objectives entirely at variance with their real purpose, which is to restabilize political and civil society along lines favorable to the hegemonic bloc, notably to certain factions, interests, and individuals within that bloc In other words, in conditions of domestic crisis war becomes the continuation or extension not of diplomacy but of politics by other – i.e., violent – means. With their lifeblood drawn from internal conflicts of class, status, and power, such "conflict-oriented" wars[42] have a great propensity to become absolute wars. Precisely because their purpose is to affect the domestic scene, their foreign-policy objectives, in addition to bing peremptory, tend to be ill-defined, unlimited, unbending, and ideological.

As noted before, the more intense the internal crisis the greater the momentum for hyperbolic war both before and after the start of hostilities. Accordingly, wars that grow out of inorganic crisis and have a relatively modest internal political assignment remain limited. Even though their foreign-policy objectives are arbitrary and vague, they are not infused with the political fury, both national and international, that makes wars ideological and resistant to a timely negotiated termination. On the other hand, wars that are products of general crisis and are meant to achieve vast and complex domestic realignments are congenitally programmed to be unlimited, ideological, and resistant to mediation and compromise. It is not the dynamics or the logic of warfare or of the international system that radicalizes and universalizes "conflict-oriented" wars, but the impulses of *preexistent* general crisis.

Victory (success) and defeat (failure) result in opposite outcomes. Victory reunifies the hegemonic bloc (even if to the advantage of atavists and diehards); restabilizes or de-paralyzes government; re-legitimizes the regime; renews the sense of national purpose; and reinforces the class and status structure. Defeat aggravates the cleavages in the ruling and governing class; foments insurgence in the underclass; fosters government instability and disorganization; and intensifies de-legitimation. Depending on the extent of the military defeat and the policy of the victors, unsuccessful war can result in revolt, reform, or revolution; in separatism, sedition, or break-up. Of course, each war has a phaseology of its own: for each belligerent the integration thrust of the first hours may at some later stage give way to disintegrative impulses before the balance is struck between these opposing impulses.

Defeat is an undesirable and often fatal consequence especially for a ruling and governing class that has recourse to war for political motives in conditions of inorganic or general crisis. But it does not follow that because a war is unsuccessful that therefore statesmen stumbled or backed into that war by miscalculation. One of the salient symptoms and components of limited as well as general crisis is that divided elites and beleaguered governments seek war, or do not exert themselves to prevent it, in spite of the high risks involved. In fact, the diehards in and out of government, with their fortress

42. The expression "conflict-oriented" wars or goals is taken over from Pruitt and Snyder, *Theory and Research on the Causes of War*, p. 17.

mentality, are particularly inclined to advocate external war for the purpose of domestic crisis management even if chances for victory are doubtful.

Needless to say, when diplomatic and military policy is heavily swayed by internal political exigencies the margin for miscalculation is significantly greater than in times of normalcy, when foreign policy is relatively unaffected by political impulses and dictates. Paradoxically, in conditions of crisis, quite apart from overestimating the military and diplomatic capabilities of their own countries, war parties tend to underrate or overlook the poltical pressure and will for war in would-be enemy nations.

In any event, even these miscalculations and misperceptions, rather than being random or indeterminate, are consonant with the press for politically motivated war. Besides, in times of limited as well as general crisis pivotal decisions rest with a small inner group of the most powerful members of the governing class for whom domestic and foreign policy are a seamless web. The ranking politicians in the executive share a common mind-set that predisposes them to consider or opt for war to serve a domestic rather than a foreign-policy design. Senior military and diplomatic state servants hold these same unspoken assumptions, with the result that, although they may offer divergent advice, their disagreements are of a procedural rather than a substantive nature. In any case, the decision for war cannot be considered irrational or adventitious because it is dictated more heavily by political than by foreign policy and diplomatic considerations. As Clausewitz insisted so rightly, in the supreme executive council of civil and political society rashness and emotion are checked by intellect, reason, and judgment.

VIII

Precisely because he had first-hand and high-level knowledge of limited as well as absolute war Clausewitz penetrated to the central nervous system that is common to these two major types of international conflict. No doubt he had a distinct preference for the enlightened absolutism, reason of state, cabinet diplomacy, and dynastic warfare of the 18th century. But he also came to understand the nature of the national warfare of revolutionary and Napoleonic France. Although he conceded that profound social and political transformations are needed to sustain a war effort that is carried by a whole nation, Clausewitz was confident nevertheless that conservative governments could adapt this new warfare for their own purposes, though not without risk.[43] He wrote *On War* during the restoration that re-legitimized and suited his aristocratic world view and pretensions. It is not surprising, therefore, that Clausewitz should have used the absolute war that he apprehended as a foil for his analysis of the limited war that he celebrated. But to repeat, his intimate experience with warfare in times of normalcy as well as crisis enabled Clausewitz to formulate the thesis that politics was the womb as well as the governor of war, whatever its form.[44]

Notwithstanding his career as a practicing general and strategist, Clausewitz clearly considered war to be first and foremost an instrument of policy. In his conception, war was the means to secure *not* military and diplomatic objectives, which were of an instrumental nature, but an over-arching end-purpose that was intrinsically political. Admittedly, he never really defined what he meant by either *le politique* or *la politique*. As an enlightened absolutist and Hegelian, Clausewitz simply assumed that politics would always be the rational incarnation and expression of the general interest of society in confrontation with other states.[45] He was perhaps more unsympathetic than insensitive to the economic, social, and ideological conflicts that characterized politics in his lifetime. Still, except for occasional and vague references to social tensions, he had

43. Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege,* pp. 711-712.
44. For the two most recent interpretations of Clausewitz's thought see Raymond Aron, *Penser la Guerre: Clausewitz,* 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), and Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).
45. Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege,* p. 730.

little to say about the sources, the content, and the mechanics of public policy, whether domestic or foreign.

There is no denying this lack of even a rudimentary discussion of the nature and process of politics, though this lapse is not all that exceptional for a general and social theorist of Clausewitz's time. Even so, while politics remained a mere postulate for him, Clausewitz nevertheless made it the vital core of his conception and doctrine of war.[46] For him, political and social reality was the encompassing totality which both generated and controlled war. Though a political act in its essence, war was a means to achieve a political objective. As such it had "a grammar of its own, but not its own logic."[47] The guilding logic was the logic of politics which provided the directing intelligence.[48] Clausewitz repeatedly insisted that war was embedded in a superior political reality that included a center of authority which decided the motive, the end-purpose, the objectives, and the strategy of war.[49]

It was in this connection that Clausewitz stated, explicitly, that the "principal lineaments of war were always determined by the cabinet . . . [which] was an exclusively political, not military authority."[50] As the seat of supreme power, the cabinet not only made the decision to go to war but also stipulated and controlled the means necessary to achieve the end-purpose, which was its lodestar.

As to the type of war and the scale of the war effort, they were functions of the nature and the intensity of the considerations that dictated recourse to war. According to Clausewitz, "the smaller the political end-purpose" of war, the more limited its military objectives and efforts, and the greater the disposition for compromise settlement. In sum, the ultimate goal, which was political, defined the measure of all things, the more so if the cabinet remained free from public and other pressures.[51]

The matrix for unlimited war was much the same, except that its driving momentum reached such an intensity thaat the outcome was a qualitatively different war and warfare. Clausewitz sought to convey this transmutation in one of his longest and least elegant sentences: "The larger and stronger the reasons for war, the more these reasons involve the very existence of the people, the more violent the prewar tensions – the more will war approximate its abstract [i.e., absolute] form, the more will it seek the submission [i.e., unconditional surrender] of the enemy, the greater will be the conflation of military objectives and end-purpose, and the more will the war *appear* to be purely military and less political."[52]

In what reads like an analysis of the link between general crisis and war Clausewitz was careful to say that "abstract" or "perfect" [i.e., absolute] war only appeared to be less political than limited war. He insisted that whereas politics seemed "to disappear altogether" in the former but "came to the fore decisively" in the latter, in fact "both types of war were equally political."[53] In other words, with the wars of revolutionary and Napoleonic France as his example, Clausewitz pointed to domestic tensions and politics as the motor and governor of total war.

To be sure, given his own conservatism, Clausewitz had a pronounced distaste for epochs in which "explosive forces" made it difficult for politics to impose its restraining, tempering, and moralizing controls.[54] At the same time, however, precisely because

46. This point is effectively made by Werner Hahlweg, "Lenin und Clausewitz", in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte,* Vol. 36 (1954), no. 1, pp. 30-59, and no. 3, pp. 357-389.
47. Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege,* p. 30.
48. *Ibid.,* pp. 728-730.
49. *Ibid.,* passim.
50. *Ibid.,* p. 731.
51. *Ibid.,* p. 26.
52. *Ibid.,* p. 34.
53. *Ibid.,* p. 35.
54. *Ibid.,* p. 33.

Clausewitz saw politics as the womb of war, he denied that "politics could ever make demands upon war which war could not fulfill."[55] This was his way of legitimizing the demands of crisis politics on total war.

It is certainly striking that Clausewitz never spoke of war as an extension or continuation of either *foreign policy* or *diplomacy*. Instead he spoke of war as an outgrowth of state policy, which had a domestic as well as an external side, and whose driving engine was politics. War was "not just a *political act*, but a genuine *political* instrument,"[56] and as such, it was in the nature of "the continuation and implementation of *political* transactions" by the "admixture of other [i.e., violent] means."[57] When he formulated the first version of this axiom Clausewitz bluntly affirmed that while "the political intention was the end-purpose, war was the instrument, and this instrument could not be envisaged separate from its end-purpose."

Admittedly, Clausewitz never made specific mention of recourse to war for the purpose of restabilizing crisis-torn societies and polities along conservative lines. But his concept of war as a political act for political ends would have to be defined very restrictively in order for it not to fit that particular historical possibility.

IX

Marx and Engels had to quarrel with Clausewitz's fundamental postulate, though they certainly proposed to give concrete economic, social, and ideological content to the motor forces as well as end-purposes of the politics of war. For them war was the "continuation of the politics of class conflict by other, i.e., violent, means."[58]

Neither Marx nor Engels ever wrote a comprehensive treatment or formulated a coherent concept of international politics or war. Not unlike their ideas on class, which remained inchoate, their ideas on international affairs, which are even less systematic, are scattered throughout their political pamphlets, newspaper articles, and personal letters. Although their major doctrinal and theoretical works say little on this subject, they nevertheless provide the integrating frame for their running discussion of foreign policy and diplomacy. For forty and sixty years respectively, Marx and Engels relentlessly commented and analyzed the international politics of the European powers on the continent and overseas as an essential part of their political praxis.[59]

In comparison with Clausewitz, they lived through a relatively quiet and unbroken era of world history – in a period of normalcy. Clausewitz meant to explain the conventional international politics and warfare of the years before 1789 and after 1815 against the background of the intervening organic crisis and absolute war that had marked and distressed him. Marx and Engels, for their part, never experienced the general crisis for which they consistently hoped and militated. Instead, their intellectual and political positions unfolded in response to the counterfeit crises of 1848 and 1871, the limited Crimean and Franco-Prussian wars, the restricted struggles for national unification, and the distant colonial engagements. In fact, buoyed by the revolutionary consequences of defeat in the Crimean and Franco-Prussian wars, Marx and Engels, almost in spite of themselves, came to consider war as a forcing house for the protean revolution much as they valued European imperialism as the "unconscious tool of history"[60] in Turkey, India, and China.

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55. *Ibid.*, p. 731.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 728.
58. See Wolfram Wette, *Kriegstheorien deutscher Sozialisten* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1971), pp. 14-19, 44-49, 65-69.
59. For a first effort to give a balanced and coherent reading of the thought of Marx and Engels on war and peace see Miklos Molnar, *Marx, Engels, et la politique internationale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).
60. Marx used this phrase in his discussion of India at the time of the Sepoy mutiny.

At any rate, Marx and Engels viewed war as an instrument of politics even before 1857, the year in which they seem to have read Clausewitz's *On War*.[61] From the outset their world view shaped their search for the driving forces and purposes of the international politics of their time. It was their vision that Europe was moving toward full capitalism, democracy, and enlightenment on its way to socialism, and that western Europe was the catalytic agent for this progress in eastern Europe as well as throughout the semi-colonial and colonial world.

Marx and Engels could never conceive of opposing war as such, since they at all times saw war in relation to this teleological movement. Besides, international tensions and wars were as inevitable as the internal contradictions and conflicts of developed and developing capitalist societies. More important, still, they were closely interwoven with them.

Like Clausewitz, Marx and Engels considered war to be rooted in sociopolitical reality and pointed toward an end-purpose. But, whereas Clausewitz concealed his eagerness to place international politics and war in the service of the status quo by not amplifying his political postulate and by using Hegelian metaphors, Marx and Engels practised no dissimulation whatever. When examining international imbroglios and conflicts they meant to determine and demonstrate which of the opposing powers or alliance of powers would move world history in what they believed to be a progressive direction. Theirs was a coherent position: just as reactionary and progressive forces were in conflict within each civil and political society, so reactionary and progressive nations confronted each other in the concert of powers.

With the abortive upheavals of 1848 as their formative political experience, Marx and Engels came quite naturally to this perspective. They were particularly struck by the perfectly congruent posture of tsarist Russia: granite-like stability at home combined with resolute performance as a counterrevolutionary policeman abroad. By 1850 they were equally stunned and scandalized by Louis Napoleon's effortless and Caesarist take-over in France.

Marx, in particular, saw Russia as the negative and dangerous pole of the European state system. The tsarist empire was threatening on two scores. With its precapitalist and autocratic civil and political society Russia was the headquarters for a reserve army of reaction, primed for counterrevolutionary interventions in eastern and central Europe. In addition, unable to complete economically with England, and also with France, St. Petersburg's political class was out to secure preferential commercial access to the Balkans, the Ottoman empire, and beyond through direct imperialist expansion. Given her formidable size and pivotal geopolitical emplacement astride two continents, Russia threatened to become a unique superpower, bent on stopping or slowing down the march of world progress.

This comprehensive apprehension explains, in large part, why Marx and Engels were so impatient for England and France to stand up to the Russian colossus, as London and Paris eventually did in the Crimean war. They were especially eager for England, the pioneer and model of commercial and industrial capitalism, to help the Sultan hold Constantinople "in trust for the Revolution."[62] By blocking Russia's advance to the Mediterranean and the east the British middle class would promote its own economic interests in the fragile Turkish empire while at the same time fostering the "re-civilization" of that part of the non-European world.

England, however, followed an indecisive policy, in part because neither her ruling nor even her governing class was as unified and coherent as Marx would have wished. In fact, the British cabinet was torn three ways with the Clarendon faction seeking to mediate between Aberdeen's doves and Palmerston's hawks. Eventually Palmerston carried the day by capitalizing on the rising war fever, stimulated by the "Sinope

61. See Hahlweg, "Lenin und Clausewitz", pp. 31-32.
62. Marx, *The Eastern Question* (London: Swan Sonnenheim, 1897), p. 81.

massacre", and the need to keep in step with Paris. In the process, by showing himself resolute and spirited in foreign affairs, Parmerston solidified his Whig government along more conservative lines and also dished the Tories. Although Marx was attuned to the divisions and strains within Britain's hegemonic bloc, he was so eager for England to shoulder her enlightened, though interested, world mission that he never gave a close reading of the politics of class and partisan conflict behind Palmerston's decision for limited war.[63]

In his discussion of the coming of the Crimean war Marx was equally interested in the policy of Napoleon III, who may have forced Palmerston's pace. Between 1850 and 1871 Marx and Engels – and many of their disciples since then – focused on the coup d'état and regime of Louis Bonaparte in an effort to illuminate the conditions and processes surrounding the establishment and maintenance of the primacy of political over civil society in furtherance of an ultimately conservative project. For Marx, as also for Gramsci, the underlying socioeconomic reality was that the vulnerable pre-bourgeois and pre-industrial factions of the ruling class, though still powerful, were too weak to govern by themselves, while the vigorous bourgeoisie still lacked the strength and the self-confidence to claim power for itself. With these two factions of the dominant class evenly balanced, their conflict threatened to intensify to the point of mutual destruction. Of course, Napoleon, the strong man, took full advantage of the impasse. But, of equal importance was that the battling ruling factions were eager for this would-be Caesar to take in hand the government, including the state's coercive organs, in the face of mounting social unrest, though they expected to dismiss him once their internecine disputes were resolved.[64]

According to Marx and Engels a bellicose foreign policy, punctuated by war, was a necessary component of the political formula of Caesarist rule that was designed to provide the time and space for suicidal cleavages in the ruling class to subside. Marx first formulated this axiom in his discussion of Louis Napoleon's eastern policy:

> Bonaparte is, of course, in good earnest in embarking in the war. He has no alternative left but revolution at home or war abroad. He cannot any longer continue to couple, as he does, the cruel despotism of Napoleon I, with the corrupt peace policy of Louis Philippe. He must stop sending new batches of prisoners to Cayenne, if he dare not simultaneously send French armies beyond the frontiers.[65]

Not only the Crimean war but also the Mexican expedition and, finally and fatally, the war with the North German Confederation were expressions of this necessity for Napoleon periodically to bolster his regime's precarious legitimacy and to stimulate flagging sociopolitical support.

Significantly, for Marx and Engels raw economic structures, interests, pressures, and conflicts do not automatically determine either national or international politics. Especially in times of crisis these are mediated by political systems and conflicts that have considerable degrees of autonomy. As previously noted, Marx and Engels kept analyzing and attacking Bonapartism precisely because it exposed the diversity and incompatibility of the economic and social infrastructures of unevenly developing civil societies: dynamic but mutually antagonistic industrial, financial, and commercial capital in a strained relationship with pre-capitalist but time-tested agriculture, manufacture, trade, and shopkeeping. The strain is reflected in the cleavages not only of the ruling but also of the governing class. It is when government, as the supreme coordinating agency, is unsettled or paralyzed by the conflicting demands of the fractured dominant class that the state achieves its highest degree of political autonomy. For Marx, the Bonapartism of the second French empire was an ideal-typical expression of this autonomy exercised

63. *Ibid.*, passim.
64. Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, passim, and Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, pp. 219-222.
65. Marx, *The Eastern Question*, p. 269.

for conservative economic and social purposes, with the recurrent use of war as an additional instrument of control. Needless to say, Marx considered the threat of real and imagined turmoil or revolution from below the essential rationale for this political realignment along Caesarist lines.

Without ever muting their criticism of Palmerston and Louis Napoleon, Marx and Engels implicitly condoned their turning to the right at home in order to secure or improve the world environment for the democratic and capitalist development of their own and other societies. In other words, Marx realized that although limited war would serve this vectorial political purpose of a universal nature, it would simultaneously intensify the structures and relations of exploitation within capitalism, both national and international. He came to hope, therefore, that before too long one or another local conflict would "turn into a European conflagration . . . [with] terrible and revolutionary dimensions".[66] In fact, Marx and Engels were as much concerned with war as a catalyst for revolution or counterrevolution as they were with social and class conflicts as causes of inter-state violence. They considered it more likely that the exertions of modern warfare would exacerbate domestic unsettlement to the point of crisis – Russia in the Crimean war and France in the Franco-Prussian war – than that domestic strains would generate recourse to war. This perspective stemmed, in part, from their presumption that the space, time, and movement of revolution and counterrevolution were transnational: while the causes of war were rooted in the civil and political societies of sovereign states, the consequences of war burst across national borders.

An additional reason for being attentive to the consequences as well as the causes of war was that until the late 19th century the socialist movement lacked the strength to oppose wars waged for conservative political purposes. But then, once the workers acquired organized power, it was more difficult to distinguish between a "progressive" and a "reactionary" side in the concert of nations than at the time of the Crimean war. When the Second International put the struggle against militarism and war at the top of its agenda, imperial Germany had joined imperial Russia as a forbidding obstacle to progress, leaving a bulwark of reaction at the core of the two diplomatic alliances that confronted each other in Europe, in the world.

X

Max Weber, like Marx and Engels, never wrote a treatise on international politics, and his ideas relating to this particular facet of social reality were also scattered throughout his writings. For Marx and Engels foreign policy and war were a continuation of the *politics* of class conflict in the perspective of a universal struggle for progress and a movement toward revolution. For Weber they were embedded in the politics of class, status, and power on the model of imperial Germany whose ruling and governing class needed an active foreign policy and possibly war for its own survival. Marx and Engels looked to the tandem of war and crisis to move history forward; as a critical but loyal diagnostician of Germany's contemporary problems, Weber faced that same tandem with misgivings. He feared, above all, that unless the dated imperial symbiosis were liberalized, the strains of modern warfare would bend it to the breaking point, to the point of revolutionary crisis. Accordingly, Weber gave high priority to reducing the explosive incongruities between the fast-growing capitalist sectors of the economy and the unchanging social and authority system. He wanted civil and political society rationalized so that the governing class should be able to make effective use of foreign policy and, if need be, of traditional war to promote olderly change.[67]

In the German empire that had so recently been forged by iron and consacrated with blood an impressive array of social theorists – Ludwig Gumplowicz, Franz Oppen-

66. *Ibid., p. 270.* See also Molnar, *Marx, Engels et la politique internationale,* pp. 152-153.
67. For the political and ideological context of Weber's social thought see Georg Lukacs, *Die Zerstorung der Vernunft,* Vol. III, (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1974), pp. 54-70, and Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Max Weber und die deutsche Politik, 1980-1920* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1959).

heimer, Gustav Ratzenhofer, Georg Simmel, Ferdinand Töennies – gave special weight to conflict, including foreign war, in the making and preservation of society, state, and nation. Max Weber stood in this tradition: he claimed that "the discipline of the army [gave] birth to all discipline," and that "bureaucracy was the most rational offspring" of this discipline.[68] It was with this positive evaluation of the Prussian synthesis that he pondered the problems facing the large and rapidly modernizing German nation as it implanted itself in a concert of powers that was being strained by imperialist rivalries. For Weber, in this age of imperialism, the future of Germany's civil and political society was unthinkable without an active *Weltpolitik*.

In his political sociology Weber gave pride of place to legitimacy, prestige, and bureaucracy,[69] the principal repositories and agents for system-maintenance, notably under conditions of strain and stress. By defining sovereign power as the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence he acknowledged his preoccupation with crisis situations in which control of the state apparatus, including police and army, becomes all-important. Weber considered prestige – which he never defined – a critical legitimizing force in the exercise of coercive power in extreme situations.

Weber made no explicit distinction between the domestic and international politics of system-maintenance. At a certain point he did assert, however, that "the claims to prestige [had] always played into the origin of wars," and he advanced this proposition while arguing that those with "vested interests in the political structure [tended] systematically to cultivate this prestige sentiment."[70]

In the second half of the Wilhelmine empire a social theorist of Weber's patrician-bourgeois background and world view was not likely to overlook the politics of prestige, both national and international, of those atavistic elements in the active symbiosis of the ruling and governing class that feared for their future. The second founding of the German empire had left its mark: in 1879 the formation of the solidarity bloc of rye and steel around the protective tariff had confirmed the continuing power of the east Elbian Junkers and their acolytes. This power was reconfirmed after the fall of Bismarck, when Caprivi tried to steer a new course that threatened to cut into the primacy of the agrarians in the hegemonic bloc. For Weber the dismissal of Caprivi in 1894 was a grim reminder of the perilous difficulties of reconciling rapid capitalist modernization with time-worn economic, social, and cultural forces, institutions, and mentalities that still wielded vast political power. As early as 1895 he used his inaugural lecture at Freiburg to present his anguished diagnosis of Germany's political predicament.

> It is dangerous and, in the long run, incompatible with the interest of the nation that an economically sinking class should continue to retain political power in its own hands. It is even more dangerous when economic power and its attendant claim to political authority shifts to classes that still lack the political maturity to assume control of the state. Presently both dangers threaten Germany and, in fact, are the key to the perils of our situation.[71]

Incidentally, in his assessment Weber still used class analysis and, in Marxist fashion, focused on the complex relationship between socioeconomic infrastructures and political superstructures. He was equally Marxist in his conclusion that since the bourgeoisie had not been strong enough to create the German nation-state by itself, once the empire was founded it had Bismarck at its head, and the iron chancellor was a "ceasar-like [ceasarist] figure carved out of other than bourgeois wood."[72] The political society

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68. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), p. 261 and p. 254.
69. See *ibid.*, passim, and Talcott Parsons (ed.), *Max Weber: The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), passim.
70. Gerth and Mill (eds.), *From Max Weber*, pp. 160-161.
71. Max Weber, *Gesammelte politische Schriften* (Munich: Drei Masken Verlag, 1921), pp. 24-25.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

of the second German empire, not unlike that of the second French empire, owed much of its autonomy to grave cleavages in the ruling class in the face of genuine or specious unrest in the underclass.

In any case, as he contemplated the future, Weber squarely faced up to what for him, the *bürgerliche Ordinarius* in a pre-bourgeois university, was the central question: did the coherence and stability of Wilhelmine civil society demand the continuation of an autocratic authority system whose social and ideological bases and bureaucratic personnel were essentially pre-industrial and pre-bourgeois? He answered this question in the negative. In his judgment, which was highly normative, *not to reforme or "rationalize"* political society – i.e., not to make it homologous with civil society – was to court disaster, was to allow conflicts of class, status, and power to reach a point of disruption. Weber was convinced that the Hohenzollerns, junkers, and prussianized public service class that dominated the empire through their stranglehold on the steel frame of government were too atavistic and anachronistic for their time. They simply lacked the "rationality" to manage efficiently an advanced capitalist economy, a modern bureaucracy, a mass army, and a streamlined navy in an era of mounting social conflicts at home and imperialist rivalries abroad.

Needless to say, Weber was not alone or original in his insistence on the close interpenetration of the social and imperialist challenge. He merely joined the great debate about the relationship of imperialism and social reform which just then agitated the ruling and governing class not only in Germany but in every major European country [73] – and America.[74] In this debate conservatives and reactionaries tended to join forces to argue that a successful foreign and imperialist policy, which required a credible military capability and resolve, was the essential prerequisite for the improvement of economic and social welfare at home. Reversing this equation, advanced liberals and progressives maintained that a new deal at home was an urgent precondition for an effective external policy in an age of heightened international competition.

To be sure, this debate was in the nature of a family dispute, in that the two factions of the dominant class were agreed on essentials. They merely differed on the future priorities and methods of the imperialism that had long since become part of the political formula for the maintenance of order and stability under conditions of rapid capitalist modernization. Evidently, Max Weber sided unequivocally with the liberal imperialists who stressed that if Germany was to prevail in the fierce struggle for world power – a struggle from which she could not afford to withdraw – the government would have to deepen its popular support and rationalize its foreign-policy capabilities with political, social, and fiscal reforms. But for Weber *Weltpolitik*, with war as its *ultima ratio*, had first and foremost a domestic function: it was to help the bourgeoisie in its uphill struggle to shift the active symbiosis within the hegemonic bloc to its own advantage – to help the rising classes assert their primacy over declining classes in terms first of power and then of status.

Actually Weber vastly exaggerated the political liberalism and socioeconomic progressivism of the German bourgeoisie. But above all, he underestimated the viability and effectiveness of the Prussian ruling and governing caste, as well as the extent to which Germany's energetic *Weltpolitik* was making it that much more difficult to break or curtail the political primacy of this caste. In particular, the Hohenzollern court, the agrarian magnates, the generals, and the bureaucrats traded on their reputed martial

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73. See Hans Ulrich Wehler, *Das deutsche Kaiserreich, 1871-1918* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1973), pp. 171-179; Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960); Robert J. Scally, *The Origins of the Lloyd George Coalition: The Politics of Social Imperialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), esp. the introduction.

74. See Walter LeFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1963), and Wehler, *Der Aufstieg des amerikanischen Imperialismus: Studien zur Entwicklung des Imperium Americanum, 1865-1900* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1974).

virtues as they declared themselves indispensable for the implementation of the *Weltpolitik* that might require recourse to war. They counted on such a war to reconsacrate the embattled *ancien régime* as well as their preeminent place in it.

Neither the bourgeoisie nor Weber were prepared to risk a break with these advocates and specialists of coercive rule, notably for fear of dislocating the state apparatus to the advantage of the socialists. As a consequence, Weber wound up condoning and supporting the use of a forward *Weltpolitik* replete with war, whose logic was to reinforce and relegitimize the prevailing power structure of which he was so critical. Clearly, this drive for world power which lacked concrete objectives was rooted in the incongruities between economic and political power that, as early as 1895, Weber himself had singled out as Germany's greatest danger. By 1914 these same incongruities produced acute cleavages in the ruling class, a resurgence of ultra-conservatism, a political impasse, and a bent to coercive rule. In sum, Germany had become an ideal-typical reservoir for politically motivated external war.

Joseph Schumpeter spoke very directly to the link between domestic stress and foreign war. More forcefully than Marx and Engels, and than Weber, he fixed on those explosive conflicts in the ruling and governing class that were an expression of uneven economic and social development. According to Schumpeter, right down to 1914 much of Europe continued to have a "social pyramid . . . formed not by the substance and laws of capitalism alone," but also by those of a surviving feudalism and manorialism.[75] Schumpeter, like Weber, meant to come to terms with the nature and ramifications of the resilience and combativeness of pre-industrial and pre-bourgeois social and mental structures. Having spent his formative years in Vienna, he was exposed to the gilded but also effective anachronisms of the Austro-Hungarian empire. To be sure, in the Dual Monarchy there was no redoubt of pre-modernity comparable to the Prussian fortress within the German empire. Even so, the Austro-German and the Magyar landed aristocracies, state bureaucracies, and hegemonic institutions had a redoubtable coherence of their own, notwithstanding their constant wrangling. In any case, the rule of these magnates was the point of reference for Schumpeter's bold claim that, until the First World War, the ideology and politics of Europe remained "greatly under the influence of the feudal substance." As for the bourgeoisie, even though it managed to "assert its interests everywhere, it 'ruled' only in exceptional circumstances, and then only briefly."[76]

Rather than view the feudal-aristocratic and the bourgeois sectors in counter-pointal terms – as did Weber, with his penchant for ideal-typical constructs – Schumpeter focused on their interpenetration, notably in political society. As noted before,[77] he insisted that although "the steel frame" of government was made of the "human material of feudal society . . . that behaved according to precapitalist patterns . . . , [it] took account of bourgeois interests." In other words, while the *governing class*, including the royal sovereign (king, emperor, tsar), was made of inherently feudal or precapitalist material, the *ruling class* was not nearly so homogeneous. Schumpeter explicitly emphasized that this ruling class was in the nature of an "active symbiosis" of two social strata that "owed their existence to different epochs and processes."[78]

Schumpeter was equally emphatic in his insistence that the feudal, pre-capitalist, and pre-industrial organisms in this active symbiosis were not inert and recessive, that they were, quite definitely, *"more than atavism."*[79] In his argument the time-honored governing class and its social, economic, and cultural carriers adroitly perpetuated their own political primacy. They did so by satisfying the material interests of the bourgeoisie

75. Joseph Schumpeter, "The Sociology of Imperialism", in Schumpeter, *Imperialism and Social Classes* (New York: Meridian, 1955), p. 92.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

77. See above, p. 204.

78. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*, pp. 136-139.

79. *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137. Italics mine.

and by coopting some of its members. This was the price they had to pay in order to continue "to man the political engine, to manage the state, [and] to govern." In this logrolling the feudal aristocrats capitalized fully on the venerated world view, ethos, and life style that gave them the prestige to which the claimant bourgeoisie aspired.[80]

An active symbiosis of this sort is never stable or self-regulating. It generates incessant intramural conflicts which, according to Schumpeter, provide a strong impetus for war. In his judgment, "if civil war was to be avoided [under Louis XIV], then external wars were required." The Sun King distracted the nobles with military campaigns that aroused their "warlike past, martial ideas and phrases, bellicose instincts," though he carefully kept all military and political controls in his own hands. Schumpeter concluded that "the belligerence of the autocratic state . . . [resulted] from the necessities of its social structure, from the inherited dispositions of the ruling class, rather than from the immediate advantages to be derived from conquest."[81]

Schumpeter's analysis of the new imperialism of the decades preceding the Great War was cast in these same terms. He maintained that "the orientation to war was *mainly* fostered by the domestic interests of ruling classes," though he also acknowledged "the influence of all those who stood to gain individually from a war policy, whether economically or socially."[82] Schumpeter claimed, furthermore, that the atavistic – i.e., pre-bourgeois and pre-industrial – components in the active symbiosis of the ruling and governing class were the prime movers of the use of a forward foreign policy for the purpose of preserving the world they were fearful of losing, or for reviving the one they thought they had already lost. These pre- and anti-modernists looked to imperialism and war to help them maintain and reinforce the "*power factors*" that they needed to shore up their declining economic and social fortunes. For Schumpeter the pressures for diversionary imperialist forays or war were rooted in what he himself called "*political interest.*"[83]

But Schumpeter made one further point. He stressed that whenever "political interest" dictated foreign and imperial policy, "concrete interest" gave way to "objectless" and unlimited aims which defy fulfillment. Indeed, Schumpeter's famous dictum that the new imperialism "was the objectless disposition on the part of the state to unlimited forcible expansion" must be read in connection with his discussion of the "political interest" that constitutes the internal impetus behind imperialism.[84] This "political interest" or, in the language of Clausewitz, this "end-purpose," reaffirmed and improved the position of premodern forces not only in the ruling class but also within the steel frame of government. This is not to say that the pre-capitalist elites would be the sole beneficiaries of politically motivated war. Although war, if successful, would again postpone the political primacy of the bourgeoisie, it would nonetheless promote its economic and social interests as well.

XII

Both inorganic and general crises foster external conflict. But crises are rarely in the nature of pre-revolutions, and the wars they generate do not discharge or divert pre-revolutions into the international system.

Not pre-revolutionary pressures but cleavages in the hegemonic bloc and unsettlement or stalemate of government are the womb of crisis and of crisis-generated war. This is not to say that these political distempers have no deep socioeconomic roots and that pressures from below are of no consequence. But the impact of these pressures is not a function of their high intensity and their imminent explosion into revolutionary

80. Schumpeter, *Imperialism and Social Classes*, p. 93.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 59.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 65. Italics mine.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 65. Italics mine.
84. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

unrest. If anything, the opposite holds true: the insufficiency and decline of social rebellion favors divisions in the hegemonic bloc which, in turn, forment war.

In other words, pre-revolutionary conditions are a deterrent rather than a catalyst of foreign war, political and civil society being too frail for the ruling and governing class to risk intramural divisions and the strains of warfare. Cleavages in the elite and the accompanying press for war materialize not when insurgent social pressures are at their peak, but after they have crested or have been contained.

There is, then, a time lag between the lightning of infrastructural stress and the rolling thunder of war, which is released and carried by resurgent ultra-conservatives. These intransigents of the right resolve to bring down governments that while, or after, vigorously repressing social disorders also practice moderate reform at home and appeasement abroad.

On the eve of the Franco-Prussian war in France and the Russo-Japanese in Russia ultra-conservatives launched a concerted drive to reaffirm their endangered primacy in the hegemonic bloc. In France they fatally undermined Emile Ollivier, while in Russia they managed to eliminate Serge Witte in favor of Viacheslav Plehve. In both cases the eventual press for war was but a natural extension of this political offensive: the diplomatic humiliation or military defeat of Prussia was to serve the end-purpose of terminating or reversing the liberalization of the Napoleonic regime, while the diplomatic humiliation or military defeat of Japan was intended to slow down or halt the conservative modernization of the tsarist empire.

The Franco-Prussian and Russo-Japanese wars were rooted in inorganic crisis. As a consequence, they remained limited and lent themselves to quick termination. Moreover, the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Russian upheaval of 1905, which were by-products of military defeat, were easily contained and repressed. In both instances, timely diplomatic concessions and political reforms helped to restabilize civil and political society without major damage to the ruling class. The fact that the Paris Commune and the St. Petersburg Soviet had only faint echoes in the rest of Europe is additional evidence that the limited wars of 1870-1871 and 1904-1905 were expressions of counterfeit rather than genuine crisis – of so many inorganic crises of essentially national dimensions.

By 1914 Europe was well into a general crisis that was transnational. Had it not been for this drastic change in the internal life of the major powers, the incident at Sarajevo could and would have been settled either by diplomatic negotiation or by limited war. As it was, the preexisting organic crisis was the incubator of a war that was absolute from its inception. From the very outset Sarajevo was caught up in a highly politicalized diplomacy: the governments of the major powers acted and reacted in accordance with the dictates of political interest rather than reason of state. At the time these governments were being buffeted by fierce conflicts within the ruling and governing classes, with the ultra-conservatives playing a particularly virulent role. The decision for war and the design for warfare were forged in what was a crisis in the politics and policy of Europe's ruling and governing classes. Although this crisis in political society was thoroughly embedded in the acute strains and stresses of civil society, nowhere did it take the form of a pre-revolution. Accordingly, in 1914, the intended end-purpose of war was not the diversion or defusion of dangerous social unrest but the requilibration of hegemonic blocs and the restabilization of governments.

Of course, the relationship of crisis and war in the Great War, and also in the Second World War, remains in dispute. Some argue that, without the exogenous alliance system and the unexpected military stalemate, the war of 1914 would not have become an absolute war, which wrought vast social, economic, and political upheavals. In this argument, the general crisis of the 20th century was not the cause but the consequence of war.

Others argue that the two world wars accelerated and intensified in different European nations the inorganic crises that predated 1914 and that, without the additional

strain of absolute warfare, could have been contained or resolved. Trevor-Roper advances a similar thesis in the classic debate on war and crisis in the 17th century. In his view the wars of that century did not "cause but merely exposed and accentuated . . . serious structural weaknesses" in polity and society.[85] Except for stressing economic rather than political and ideological factors as the prime cause for structural cracks in 17th century Europe, Eric Hobsbawm quite agrees with Trevor-Roper's interpretation. For him war was neither the principal nor the sufficient cause for the massive turmoil of the 17th century, though he concedes that it "aggravated already existing tendencies of crisis."[86]

But Hobsbawm also gives expression to a third view of the relationship of crisis and war. For after characterizing war as the accelerator rather than the womb of crisis, he nevertheless wonders if it might be "worth considering whether [in the 17th century] the crisis did not to some extent produce a situation which provoked or prolonged warfare." In this casual aside he hints at a causal link between an antecedent general crisis and the coming and persistence of the Thirty Years' War. But Hobsbawm instantly dismisses this hypothesis with the assertion that it is "perhaps too speculative to be worth pursuing."[87]

Too many historians have avoided looking at the causal ties of crisis and war in the 20th century for much the same reason that Hobsbawm recoiled from facing them in the 17th century. But this recurrent problem is of such exceptional historical interest and political importance that it should be explored even if historians who do so have to leaven their canonical empiricism with the dangerous but necessary ferment of speculation.

Résumé

Les concepts de guerre et de révolution ont fait l'objet de sérieux efforts de clarification de la part des spécialistes des sciences sociales, y compris les historiens. Mais il n'en va pas de même de l'idée de crise, dont on fait en général un usage abusif et qui, malgré tout, demeure assez vague. Puisque les phénomènes de crise, de guerre et de révolution ont été et sont toujours étroitement reliés, il serait souhaitable que le débat en cours sur la guerre et la révolution s'enrichisse d'une définition plus précise du concept de crise.

L'histoire de l'Europe ne compte qu'un petit nombre de crises générales ou organiques, de guerres et de révolutions aux proportions gigantesques. Lorsqu'elles se sont produites, les crises générales qui ont donné naissance à la révolution et à la guerre totale ont ignoré les frontières nationales pour atteindre les dimensions de l'Europe entière, pour ne pas dire du monde.

Tout comme la période de 1785 à 1815 se caratérise davantage par une crise générale à l'échelle de l'Europe que par la seule Révolution française, de même il y aurait lieu de considérer l'ère dite « de la révolution russe » dans une perspective plus vaste. Car, mise à part la période de 1924 à 1929, bref intermède de fausse « normalité » intérieure et d'équilibre international illusoire, l'Europe fut emprisonnée durant toute la premième moitié du XXe siècle dans une crise organique de caractère très nettement international et dont les deux guerres mondiales furent de violentes expressions. Le début de cette crise remonte au conflit russo-japonais de 1904-1905 et la fin se situe au lendemain de la deuxième guerre mondiale. C'est elle qui fut la condition nécessaire et la cause essentielle de la « Guerre de Trente Ans du XXe siècle ».

Les mouvements socialistes et les mouvements d'autodétermination nationale du XXe siècle furent plus massifs et plus puissants que les mouvements démocratiques de

85. Aston (ed.), *Crisis in Europe,* p. 63.
86. *Ibid.,* p. 14.
87. *Ibid.*

la fin du XVIIIe siècle. D'ailleurs, la crise générale ne donna-t-elle pas lieu à une percée révolutionnaire durable, non seulement en Russie, mais aussi, par la suite, en Europe de l'Est et dans certaines régions du Tiers-Monde? D'autre part, l'« opposition » à ce soulèvement socialiste fut également plus redoutable et diabolique que l'« opposition » aux mouvements démocratiques de la fin de XVIIIe siècle et du début du XIXe siècle. C'est précisément parce que le fascisme, sous toutes ses formes, devint l'épicentre de cette « opposition » qu'il en vint à rivaliser d'importance, dans l'histoire universelle, avec la révolution bolchevique.

Cette « opposition » ne peut être replacée dans une perspective juste que si l'on reconnaît son existence antérieusement à 1914 ou 1917, ce que trop peu d'historiens sont portés à faire. En fait, la décennie d'avant-guerre ne fut pas tant le cadre de la montée des classes ouvrières et des nations dominées que celui de *la résurgence de l'ultra-conservatisme voué à la défense et au renforcement du statu quo*. Au cours de ces années, comme entre les deux guerres, l'« opposition » ou l'attaque « *par le haut* », fut considérablement plus puissante et déterminée que la menace d'insurrection « *par le bas* », ce qui ne diminue en rien l'importance réelle de la révolution russe comme des mouvements ou des percées révolutionnaires qui eurent lieu ailleurs. Mais au lieu de s'en tenir uniquement aux éléments moteurs et aux limites de la révolution, les historiens devraient examiner les pivots et la dynamique de la « re-stabilisation » conservatrice et rétrograde, dans un contexte de crise générale.

Ce caractère déterminant des crises majeures, au terme de longs cycles économiques, Marx et les marxistes l'on reconnu, au point d'en faire le centre de leur argument sur l'effondrement ultime du capitalisme et sur la révolution victorieuse. Mais combien d'entre eux ont perçu clairement le rôle historique des classes dominantes européennes, fermement résolues à survivre à ce type de crise et à écraser la révolution? Engels et Bebel, par exemple, ne s'arrêtèrent pas à cette possibilité. Burckhardt, Jaurès, Rosa Luxembourg et Gramsci, pour leur part, furent conscients du caractère ambivalent de la crise organique et du fait que si elle ne débouchait pas sur le triomphe de la révolution, les horreurs de la contre-révolution atteindraient des proportions inimaginables.

En somme, le problème des crises générales est d'un intérêt historique si exceptionnel et d'une importance politique telle qu'il mériterait d'être exploré même si, pour ce faire, les historiens doivent imprégner leur empirisme canonique du dangereux mais nécessaire ferment de la spéculation.

Conclusion / Concluding Remarks

Discussion

L. Rothkrug (Concordia). When you say that implicit force always is inherent in institutions, that is of course true, but is it legitimate force? The problem of legitimation is when either that force is not recognized as legitimate because it has not a representative origin, or it is used to crush representative groups. Now, there is here the implicit assumption that the search for representation is identical to a search for consensus, and this is at the heart of the crisis of legitimation, that is legitimation is a consensus, but does the fact that somebody finds representation, or groups find representation, in itself, identical with consensus, I just don't know; I mean is this problem?

A. Mayer. Yes, it is a problem. My feeling is that in most circumstances, by the time you use force, it is an indication that legitimacy is gone. In other words, you've lost the game by having to use the ultimate weapon.

Now, the question: is representation consensus? I think that there you may be using consensus in two ways. The way people who are on the top of the situation in society, in a ruling system, mean consensus. I think it is why generally that the policies which seem to be within the acceptable set of soundness, decency, are prevailing without people going to the streets over them. That does not mean that every group represented gets its way. There may be permanent minorities and what I was trying to get at is that certain groups really did have aspirations which the parliamentary systems, and the answers devised by the left, such as councils could not really take into account, could not really give voice to. The system did not really allow for these aspirations to be articulated at the national policy level.

C. Maier. Very briefly, I would make the distinction between force and violence. It seems to me that another aspect of legitimation which is left out here but which is crucial is the question what admixture of violence with force becomes illegitimate?

G. Feldman. I just wanted to make one comment about the question of legitimation. It seems to me that another aspect of legitimation which is left out here but which is terribly important is legitimation through performance. Throughout the history of advancing industrialized society there is a question of the extent to which governments perform in a manner that maintains their credibility. Legitimation cannot only be conceptualized in terms of successful internal repression of opposition or in terms of gaining votes and thereby being representational. An important element is "delivering the goods" in various ways and being competent, and the question of "delivering," be it military victory or social welfare, is of fundamental importance. This has to be kept in mind when we talk about the legitimacy problem.

A. Mayer. Just a comment: I would say, Jerry, though that both the Italian fascists and the German national socialists for quite a period of time were terribly efficient and competent and legitimized themselves but as they went about legitimizing themselves and making the trains run on time, they used an indefensible amount of what I call illegitimate violence.

G. Feldman. Oh, I would agree with that. I'm not trying to defend them.

A. Mitchell. No one could possibly summarize everything which has gone on here, because no one could attend all the sessions, and no one is omnicompetent to judge what transpired in those sessions. But it does seem to me that two basic differences have emerged, and I would like to solicit your reaction to my opinion about them. One is a difference between those who emphasize the short run and those who emphasize the long run. While there is no unanimous consensus, it strikes me that it has been a very valuable contribution of this colloquium to force those of us who have concentrated on the episodic period of the revolutionary situation to look for a broader and a wider context. I applaud that development; and I think that is, in terms of research and analysis, the wave of the future.

The second basic difference which seems to me to have emerged at the conference is between those who believe that there was a great possibility for revolutionary change and those who feel that this possibility was very limited, both in time and in its scope. Again I see no absolute consensus for one side or the other, but it is my feeling that the majority probably has been led to take the view that the possibilities were very limited and were very circumscribed. I would like to know whether the panelists agree that those are in fact differences which have emerged, whether they see other differences or whether they perhaps hold other conclusions.

C. Maier. I'll start and hope that others join. Certainly I hope that looking at the long-term development of a revolutionary crisis is not the wave of the future in the sense that I would hope that many of us really have been doing it all along. I think that this mode of analysis may be only implicit in the history we read, but certainly it must be carried forward. Now as to the question of the type or extent of change I see: 1917-1919 did bring a revolutionary crisis, which, after all, did overthrow one social system in a very large and important country; did install parliamentary, democratic regimes – weak to be sure and later reversible – in Germany, Austria and Hungary and the successor states; did severely shake ruling elites in France, England and, above all, Italy. Thus, I think we can write off its importance too quickly.

Now to take the old charge that it did not transform or overthrow capitalism in the countries outside the Soviet Union. This is certainly an important limitation, but I think we distort historical significance if we don't constantly recognize together both what was changed and what was not changed. Now part of the reason for the long duration I think is that so many of the changes which did occur were germinating before the First World War, and some of the political changes would be reversed. But it seems to me that what is important about a history of a revolutionary situation is precisely this capsulization, this acceleration of events which probably are going to take place anyway.

My reading of revolutionary situations is that their importance lies not in reversing some course of history which has otherwise been sweeping on triumphantly and in throwing it backwards and bringing forth something new, but precisely in their accelerating, ripening and pushing through social developments which become fully revealed only thereafter. Thus if we ask what the revolutionary situations was about, we must agree that in many respects it wasn't a revolution against capitalism. It was a revolution in Western Europe I believe, for new forms of capitalism, and if we left here thinking that nothing had changed in this period, we would be limiting our understanding as badly as if we kept an image of successful social revolution and the romantic illusion of how blissful it was in those days to be alive.

G. Feldman. Well, I would make just one comment. I agree with what Professor Mitchell said summarizing some of the basic tendencies of our meetings. I think we have to be a bit careful about what Arthur Marwick calls the use of gynecological metaphors in connection with this period of war and revolution when we argue that it served as the "midwife" to changes that would have taken place anyway. I think this is a little tricky because, after all, the *way* in which things happen is exceedingly important to historians.

Now, it seems to me that it's one thing to say – to take my particular subject – yes, we were on the road to collective bargaining and the War and Revolution mediated this particular process, and we were on the road to a certain kind of "crisis management" that was mediated by these events, and perhaps we are on the road to greater worker control and codetermination and heavens knows what else, and the War and the Revolution mediated these particular processes too. I think that such long run perspectives are terribly important, as should be obvious from my work, but at this point I would join with Arno Mayer and say that this was a rather extraordinary type of "mediation," that there was an enormous amount in it that was extremely retrograde, some of it perhaps avoidable, some of it unavoidable, but that one must pull in this perspective too.

M. Molnar. Juste un mot à propos de court terme et long terme – short time and long time – je ne vois pas ici forcément une opposition. Il s'agit de deux aspects complémentaires, tout comme sont complémentaires les approches.

A. Lyttleton. Very briefly, in relation to what Professor Feldman has just said, I think that one of the ways in which we should try and link the revolutionary crisis, fascism, the parenthesis of normalcy 1924 to 1929, and what comes afterwards, is in the question of the crisis, or the decay rather, of symbols of authority, and their re-establishment. This is also, I think, something which Professor Molnar has quite rightly said, we need to see both in long term and short term perspective.

My second point is that this social stabilization which takes place in 1924 to 1929, is incomplete, in just this sense. In Germany we know that the Weimar Republic did not provide an adequate symbolic substitute for the vanished authority of the Kaiser. The importance of this symbolic void seems to me to come out very clearly in the studies that have been done on the various biographic reminiscences of early Nazis. Even in Italy I would say, in spite of the attempt to build up the *Duce* as a substitute symbol of authority, there was an incomplete stabilization in this sense, and in fact it was in 1929, with the reconciliation of Church and State in the Lateran Pact, and only then, that a really solid re-establishment of authority symbols which were accepted by the mass or the majority of the population took place. And finally I would suggest that this restoration also takes place in Russia, with the cult of personality. And I think this is one of the perspectives which will remain valuable.

G. Bassler. I was struck by the fact, especially by the tendency that came out today that we tended to judge the Revolution by its outcome more or less. In other words, there was a tendency to give no other meaning to the Revolution than by what happened afterwards. Looking back at the conference I think this tended to be the dominant theme. I haven't attended all the sessions, but the sessions which I did attend, none of them focused on the Revolution itself. Exactly what issues did the Revolution raise, regardless of whether these issues were realizable afterwards and could be implemented. But what issues did the Revolution raise? If the Revolution raised certain issues, why did it raise these issues, where did they come from? There can be a lot of meaning in something that seems to lead nowhere.

We should not judge a situation by its outcome, but we should see it as an event in its own right, raising issues that may suddenly have meaning fifty years later, and there not being any immediate connection visible between these two events.

F. Carsten. We need the short term view and the long term view. Professor Arno Mayer has put in a very impassioned plea for the long term view, for the thirty years crisis in Europe, which is a very important approach to the problem. But, we also have to look at the events as was said here, in their own right, with a very short term view. And I think finally one hopes a kind of synthesis will emerge from the monographs and detailed studies and Ph.D. theses taking a short term view and the problems seen in their long term view which one hopes will absorb all the detailed work, and there is so much detailed work which hasn't been done yet. I think that a synthesis can only emerge at a later stage.

A. Mayer. I quite agree with what Professor Carsten said there – and it seems to me that also as you emphasized the two always go together. I do feel a little defensive when the argument is made that mine was the long term view because it seems to me that I constructed the long term view while looking at a great deal of short term historical development. And if I may come to just one point which it seems to me could perhaps illustrate this, I do not think that I could have made part of the argument that I tried to make had I not come to the conclusion as a result of a great deal of work that is in process that is of a very microscopic nature.

I could not have come to the conclusion with regard to the rather greater importance of the conservative resurgence before the War as compared to the activism, the militancy on the Left, had I not looked at the monographic literature and indeed perhaps done some monographic work of my own. So that I would want to argue that as historians we invariably focus our lenses on the short term, the analysis in depth and so on, and then try to use that to put a mosaic of a larger sort of picture together. Though I would also perhaps want to make one point that may argue against that. And that, it seems to me, is that the closer historians are to events that appear to be cataclysmic, the more cataclysmically they see them. The greater distance they take from the event, they begin to be rather more attentive to continuities, to perhaps the fact that there isn't really that much in the social, the political, the cultural fabric that can be snapped from one day to another.

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