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# Trotskyism in occupied France

**The  
Trotskyist  
paper  
*Arbeiter  
und  
Soldat*  
1943-44**

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# Introduction

BY DAVID BRODER

**W**orld War Two created extremely difficult circumstances and political challenges for internationalist Marxists. In German-occupied Europe the Trotskyist Fourth International mounted a heroic struggle against national chauvinism and illusions in the democratic aspirations of Britain and the United States. Aiming to win German soldiers to a common struggle against imperialism, in summer 1943 the French Trotskyists turned to organising amongst the German troops occupying France. Given the strict discipline of the Wehrmacht and the murderous anti-communism of the Gestapo (and their French accomplices, the Milice) this was incredibly dangerous, but important both for teaching the French workers to repudiate the chauvinist attitudes promoted by the Communist Party and for encouraging dissent among the German ranks. The *Comités de la IVe Internationale* (Fourth International Committees) produced German-language leaflets as well as a monthly newspaper *Arbeiter und Soldat* (Worker and Soldier) to build links with German soldiers.

This was not the only such initiative. The paper of the group which had been associated Raymond Molinier had a German-language back page and contacts in Germany. But more important for the Fourth International group were the efforts arising from the German troops themselves. German Trotskyists produced *Zeitung für Arbeiter und Soldat im Westen* (News for the Worker[s] and Soldier[s] in the West) and furthermore a previously unorganised group of soldiers in Brittany produced *Der Arbeiter* (The Worker). The latter encouraged dissent but also called on conscripted workers to “throw down your weapons and go home”, a slogan opposed by the Fourth International Committees, who wanted the workers to hang on to their weapons and carefully prepare to overthrow the Nazis before the Allied

“liberators” plundered Germany. The Fourth International Committees therefore held discussions with revolutionary soldiers and tried to carry out joint agitation.

Yvan Craipeau’s book *Contre vents et marées* (Against winds and tides) quotes Roland Filiâtre, one of the comrades responsible for this work: “The French comrades started discussions with German soldiers and got them talking and giving hints of their past politics. Once they had shown themselves trustworthy, after screening they were put in touch with the German soldiers who produced *Der Arbeiter* and then taken care of by their organisation. The Paris region was organised as two branches. But the heart of the organisation was in Brittany, both around Nantes and in particular around Brest where the soldiers provided the party with Ausweis [identity cards] and weapons. In Brest the organisation had about fifty soldiers on average despite some people being posted elsewhere. Contacts were established in Toulon, Valence, La Rochelle and at Conches aerodrome. There was also an organisation in Belgium. Links were established with the German Trotskyist organisation, most importantly in the port of Hamburg, in Lübeck and in Rostock. Victor [a German Trotskyist, whose real name was Widelin] was responsible for these contacts. *Arbeiter und Soldat* was also distributed in garrisons in Italy.”

This soon met with repression. Young Fourth International activists attracted the Milice’s attention when they imprudently joined in a demonstration staged by *Der Arbeiter* activists through the streets of Kerhoun, singing the Internationale. Not much later, in early October 1943 a meeting of Trotskyist activists and German soldiers held in Brest was found by the Gestapo, who arrested all the participants. 17 German soldiers as well as Robert Cruau, the local fraternisation organiser, were shot on 6 October. On 7 October, 18 Fourth International Committees activists in Brittany were arrested, along with much of the Paris organ-

isation. In total around fifty French activists were rounded up, and many of them were tortured, killed or sent to concentration camps. Similarly, as many as fifty *Der Arbeiter* soldier comrades were put to death, and their paper never reappeared. *Arbeiter und Soldat* was itself out of action until May 1944, such were the losses suffered by the Fourth International Committees.

For these courageous activists the class struggle never stopped: even having been arrested and taken to the Compiègne transit camp Marcel Beaufrère told his comrades that: “We are going to be deported to Buchenwald. Before leaving I want to say: we are going to meet up with German revolutionaries and make the revolution with them.” The French Trotskyists set up a cell at the Buchenwald concentration camp and in April 1944 it managed to release a manifesto calling for: “revolutionary fraternisation with the workers in the armies of occupation. For a Germany of workers’ councils in a Europe of workers’ councils! For the world workers’ revolution!”. But the sad fact was that many of these activists would soon be murdered by the Nazis. In reality the task with which the Trotskyist movement was confronted, lifting the world working class from the abyss of imperialist war, fascism and Stalinism, proved to be far beyond their modest numbers and means. Not only the crushing of the German workers’ movement by fascism but also Stalinist misleadership and the ensuing co-option of working-class and democratic struggle by the Allied imperialists made working-class revolution nigh-on impossible. Despite all these difficulties the Trotskyists fought to promote the internationalist Marxist tradition, and here we reproduce the surviving propaganda distributed among German troops occupying France in 1943-44, both the collection of *Arbeiter und Soldat* and the sole extant fragment of *Zeitung für Arbeiter und Soldat im Westen*.

## 1943: the situation in Europe

**B**y summer 1943 the Axis war machine was suffering heavy setbacks. Although Hitler had completed a total occupation of France in November 1942, and still held on to his conquests in the Low Countries, Denmark, Norway, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Greece, Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic States and parts of western Russia, the Axis powers no longer looked able to win the war. The German defeat at Stalingrad and the subsequent loss of much of south-western Russia; the Allies’ conquest of North Africa and threatened landings in southern Italy; Japan’s defeats in the Pacific; the taking of much of Macedonia, southern Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and part of Slovenia by Tito’s partisans; and the mounting French Resistance were all bad omens for the Nazi leaders and their satraps.

With increasing privations, continued Allied bombings and mounting military disasters, there were significant stirrings of discontent in the Axis countries. Not only did German officers make plans to remove Hitler and take charge of the war effort but in Rome the Fascist Grand Council voted 19-7 on 25 July 1943 to no-confidence Benito Mussolini, who was summoned to King Victor Emmanuel III, arrested and taken to jail in an ambulance. This manoeuvre on the part of the King and Marshal Pietro Badoglio was a ‘revolution from above’ mounted to save the ruling class from the threat of working-class uprisings. As the Trotskyist Partito Comunista Internazionale commented:

“The bourgeoisie, the monarchy and the Church, who created and supported Fascism, who today are throwing Mussolini to the people to avoid going down with him, and who don democratic and populist clothes in order to continue the exploitation and oppression of the working class, have no right to say anything in today’s crisis. This right exclusively belongs to the working class, the peasants and the soldiers, the eternal victims of the imperialist octopus.”

The late World War Two period is usually compared unfavourably to the wave of revolutionary struggles provoked by World War One, such as the February and October revolutions in Russia; anti-war demonstrations in Germany; soviets in Bavaria and Hungary; and a series of revolutionary opportunities in Germany until 1923; contrary to Trotsky’s prediction that it would cause an even greater revolutionary crisis. However, during this period there were significant working-class struggles in several belligerent countries, including strike waves across northern Italy; miners’ strikes in Britain and the United States; strikes tens of thousands strong against forced deportations in France and Belgium; the Warsaw Ghetto uprising; and

small-scale mutinies in the German armed forces.

But for the most part working-class mobilisation was co-opted into the Allied war effort. Hundreds of thousands of workers who supported the Communist Parties of Europe, loyal to Moscow, devoted themselves to “resistance” armies led by bourgeois nationalists. Stalin postured as “anti-fascist” yet was keen for CPs to work alongside the same nationalists, generals and bankers who had helped the fascists crush the workers’ movements of Europe in the first place. Just as before the war the French CP leader Maurice Thorez had called on “patriotic” French fascists to join a “national front” against the Nazis, Stalin created a “Committee for a Free Germany” mostly composed of ex-Nazi generals; along with his allies supposedly liberating Europe from fascism he left Franco in power in Spain and Salazar in Portugal; he betrayed his supporters in Greece, who were then butchered by the monarchists’ allies, the British Army, at the end of that country’s civil war; and he ordered the Italian CP to support the monarchy and lay down its weapons. In 1943-45 the rulers of the USSR played a significant role in stabilising European capitalism.

Hostile to all strikes and independent working-class action which might undermine the Allied war effort, the Communist Parties instead focused on agitation against Germans — in France the Communist Party raised the slogans “everyone, united against the Krauts” and “everyone kill a Kraut”. The anti-German chauvinist hysteria promoted by Stalin, who portrayed the war to his own subjects as just another chapter in the Slavs’ struggle against the Germans, must be held responsible for the vengeance exacted on the German people at the end of the war, including hundreds of thousands of rapes by Russian troops. This was a far cry from the disciplined behaviour of the real Red Army in the 1918-21 civil war.

The Trotskyist Fourth International had no truck with this chauvinism, nor the Stalinist ideas that workers in the Allied countries should cross picket lines to aid the USSR’s war effort or that the war was a struggle between ‘democratic nations’ and ‘fascist nations’. However, its press often fostered illusions in the progressive character of the USSR’s war effort, claiming that as a “degenerated workers’ state” with a nationalised economy it deserved support against the Axis, and furthermore in some of its sections’ press hailed the success of “Trotsky’s Red Army” in fighting back the Wehrmacht. American Trotskyist James Cannon said that Trotskyists would “fight in the front rank” of the Soviet army to defend the USSR. Of course, the Fourth International’s optimistic claims that the USSR’s successes in the war were the result the “planned economy”, which

gave Russian workers something worth defending and because the Russian army was still, somehow, “Trotsky’s Red Army” were nonsensical: the Russian economy had experienced complete counter-revolution, with an atomised working-class unable to act independently with its own unions, soviets or party; the Communist Party had been gutted, almost all the leading actors in the revolution had been shot; the Red Army had been purged repeatedly, with titles and saluting reintroduced as well as orders and military academies named after Tsarist war heroes like Aleksandr Suvorov; early setbacks in the war at the hands of Germany (whose own war economy was almost entirely state-run) ran counter to claims of the Stalinist economic machine’s superiority; and throughout the war the Russians relied heavily on food supplies, military equipment and thousands of Studebaker trucks from the United States.

French Trotskyists were sharply critical of the Gaullist “French Resistance”, characterising it as an instrument of Allied imperialism which aspired not simply to liberate France but also to let it hold onto its colonial empire. Rather than calling on workers to act as a supporting cast for the Allied war effort, these internationalists called for fraternisation with soldiers, working-class struggle against the belligerent governments and a “revolutionary defeatist” attitude towards both sides, hoping to transform the imperialist war into class war. As Jean Rous explained in a motion to the centrist Parti Socialiste Ouvrier et Paysan’s (Workers and Peasant’s Socialist Party) congress in 1939:

“The party will not be put off the belief that the main enemy is in our own country by the possibility that mass revolutionary agitation in time of war may contribute to the military defeat of our country. Accepting this possibility does not mean encouraging or wanting victory for Hitler, but on the contrary will encourage the total defeat of Hitler and worldwide fascism. Indeed:

“1. Revolutionary agitation led by workers in our country will exercise a powerful contagious influence on workers in the fascist countries; will provoke the break up of the rival capitalist armies, fraternisation between soldiers of both sides and the collapse of the dictatorships; and will light the flame of world revolution, the only means of defeating war and fascism, across the globe.

“2. Besides, a revolutionary seizure of power by the working class in our country will turn the imperialist war into a civil war and create the conditions for meaningful national defence: only a proletariat in control of its own destiny and defending a socialist order will be able to mount an invincible resistance to foreign fascism...”

# What does *Arbeiter und Soldat* stand for?

No. 1 JULY 1943

## IS PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION COMING?

Once again the spectre of communist revolution haunts the globe. In Germany Goering invites his SS and Gestapo "compatriots" to eliminate any German worker who speaks out about the coming proletarian revolution. Goebbels writes that "this war is synonymous with social revolution". He uses exorcisms like this and others to try and escape the abyss of the now inevitable revolution. In Britain even the Tories, hoping to calm the proletarian tide, are talking of projects to improve the well-being of the masses after the war. In the United States high finance warns "If Stalin goes over to the Trotskyist theory of world revolution" — or, more precisely, if communist revolution breaks out — "we will crush it with arms". In the name of the capitalists of the United States and the rest of the world, Roosevelt demanded that Stalin dissolve the Comintern. In Russia — yes, in Russia! — the Stalinist clique has indeed dissolved the International. The Russian bureaucrats have called for revenge against the German people and they have made great pains to prove to their dear allies their honourable intention to crush any communist revolution in the egg.

This is how these gentlemen view the danger of communist revolution, and this is how they prepare to greet it. But what of the workers, the hundreds of millions of exploited? Most importantly, what of the German proletariat? Are we really on the threshold of communist revolution, or will the ruling class have more to show for itself than the bloodbath of peoples it has organised in its quest for profit?

The question must be posed even more sharply. These gentlemen would have no objection to an uprising against Hitler's clique which ushered in victory for the Anglo-Saxon imperialists: on the contrary. It is with this goal in mind that working-class districts are bombed day and night with the aim of heightening exasperation and thus pushing the desperate masses into revolt. An uprising would have its place in these heroes' programme, as long as it brought some dictator to power or, in the worst case scenario, some sort of "democratic" régime, which they would simply require to respond to the wishes of Anglo-American capital.

But revolutions are a dangerous thing, and a lot can change. If millions of workers took to action they may well go beyond that and fight for their own objectives, creating a Soviet Republic as the basis for socialist construction. But is



there any sign that the leaders in Washington, London and Moscow will not get their way? Didn't the German proletariat let the revolution slip through its fingers once already? Haven't Himmler's terror and Goebbels' brutal propaganda broken the German working class and completely destroyed its faith in its own revolutionary strength? Can anyone really believe that the European revolution will go beyond the tight confines of the Anglo-Saxon imperialists' plans? That is the question posed.

## HAVE WE GONE FORWARD SINCE 1918?

The 1918 Revolution failed because of three main errors. First and second: millions of workers were still full of illusions about the capitalist system and the democratic republic. Third: millions of workers who did want to fight for socialism still trusted the old Social Democrat Party which had been degenerate for many years and whose bureaucrats only had one idea in mind: pass the power they held into the hands of the bourgeoisie, disarm the proletariat and take away the main organs of revolution, the workers' and soldiers' soviets.

That millions of workers could still have expected capitalism to improve their conditions can be explained by the fact that before the First World War the capitalist system was still experiencing growth. This period is now definitively over. After the post-war crisis; inflation; a brief stabilisation which nevertheless saw a million German workers unemployed; the great crisis which saw eight million unemployed; and rearmament under the Nazi régime — the only answer to the crisis but inevitably leading to war — the working class has now been broken from its illusions in the capitalist system.

Much the same goes for its illusions in democracy. The "democratic republic" was ushered in on the end of bayonets directed against the working class. In place of their guns and workers' councils the workers were given ballot papers, the Reichswehr and prison cells.

Whether bribed by the capitalists' money, ministerial offices or big jobs in the unions, the workers' leaders blocked any advance towards proletarian revolution. But when crisis came these gentlemen's "democracy" itself became an obstacle. It was necessary to force down wages and make rapid preparations for the coming war. Little by little, brick by brick, the democratic edifice was dismantled. The Constitution of the Republic left the way clear for such developments. Handing over power to the fascists, the bourgeoisie dealt the final blow to a democracy no longer useful to it. However, at the same time the German worker was freed from his illusions in the peaceful, democratic path to power and gradual progress towards socialism.

There still exists the danger that the Stalinist party, which calls itself Communist, will deny the German workers their revolution via mass repression and GPU terror, much as the Social Democrats did 25 years ago. During the Spanish Civil War this danger was played out in all its glory. But the danger should not be overestimated. The capitalist governments' distrust obliges the Russian bureaucracy to unmask itself more and more in front of the international proletariat. Moreover, the German worker has understood this problem and its origins. The misery of the Russian masses and the high life of the bureaucracy teach him that after the failure of the German revolution, and indeed the European revolution, the victorious but isolated October revolution was

bound to — and did — collapse. Besides, this bureaucratic layer which came to power after Lenin's death constituted the centre of the Third International and chose the leadership and policies of its member parties. The Russian bureaucrats thus have no more ability or even desire to lead the masses into struggle than the SPD bureaucrats or the unions.

So it is wrong to believe that the German workers have learnt nothing since 1918. It is wrong to believe that the tragedy is bound to repeat itself. It is superficial to say that after ten years of fascist rule we will have to start all over again. In the years following the First World War the German workers learned very rich, albeit very bitter, lessons. They saw greater capitalist crisis than the workers of almost any other country; they saw at close quarters the rottenness of bourgeois democracy; they learned to distrust parties and to be careful in choosing their leaders.

All this recently won experience will only be made clear in the struggle itself. When the rancour against the capitalists responsible for the war sweeps away the layer of slurry laid down by the fascists' lying propaganda, it will not take the workers much time to learn and gain experience in struggle, since it will only be necessary to rediscover memories of the past and teach the knowledge of the older generation to the young. This is a sure thing. Gentlemen of London and Washington, Berlin and Moscow, although it is threatened by many dangers, the proletarian revolution you see in your nightmares is at the door and closer still.

## REVOLUTION AWAITS

It is impossible to predict on precisely what day revolution will come. But it will begin to ripen long before it breaks out. When after its quick victories over the less well-prepared and well-armed peoples the German army first met with serious resistance, the fascist attempt to smother the worldwide class struggle was also shown to be impossible. Fascism did succeed, using massive terror, to banish it from the surface for some time. But it came back again! A process of decomposition began both at the front and in the rear. The drunkenness of victory lapsed, the spirit of combativity was dampened, and the foundering of speed-ups and sabotage in the factories became more and more widespread; only the bloodiest terror was sufficient to keep the front and the economy afloat.

But for the moment there are few who know what the goal to be reached is. The curtain of smoke of fascist propaganda has not yet completely dissipated. For the moment the lessons the German worker in uniform has learnt in Russia bring him more confusion than they do clarity, more doubt than they do hope. Already, however, groups are arising everywhere to answer the questions posed. Old cells which survived the years of terror by keeping themselves to themselves are again putting out feelers. New groups are being organised. Light is being cast on the issues in discussion and in writing, in papers and in leaflets. On the first day of open struggle these groups will unite into a revolutionary communist party.

*Arbeiter und Soldat* is geared for this process of destroying fascist rule and all bourgeois rule, undermining the capitalist war front, rebuilding the proletarian class front and preparing the communist revolution. These are the goals it has set itself.

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## On the dissolution of the Third International

The Stalinist bureaucrats have dissolved the Comintern. "Warning", declares the Axis propaganda, "this is just a manoeuvre, a chimera, playing dead". "Hurrah!" the Anglo-Saxon imperialist press cries with joy, "our allies are not communists, they are good Russian patriots". "Of course, it's just a manoeuvre" is the rationalisation the communist worker still committed to the Third International despite all the defeats uses to reassure himself; they are tricking their capitalist adversaries, folding up the flag only to unfurl it again in the future. Such manoeuvres, he tells himself as he reflects, can and must be made when faced with the class enemy. But he starts to have doubts: is the dissolution of the International really another move to trick the class enemy, or might it be a manoeuvre against the workers of the world?

Might the dissolution of the International be a manoeuvre which impacts on the proletariat's class struggle? "The struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat necessitates a single, joint, international organisation of all communist forces fighting for that goal" declared the resolution which founded the Third International. But now the man who dissolved this organisation (even if he only 'appeared' to do so) and only in order to wrong-foot the enemy, is also confusing the workers about the task to be accomplished, which is indeed the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Today when millions of oppressed people hope that the end of the second imperialist war will bring the end of all oppression and the end of all war, today when society readies itself for violent revolutionary struggles, the dissolution of the International can only serve to paralyse the fighting strength of the proletariat, to discourage it and sow confusion in its ranks. No, such a manoeuvre as this is not directed against the class enemy, but it is an effort to trick the workers and above all the International's adherents themselves. This move is a clear rejection of communist revolution.

It is not the first move of this character made by the Russian bureaucracy. We shall only mention the most recent and the worst. In Spain, the proletariat's struggle against fascism and for the establishment of a Soviet Republic was labelled a "national liberation struggle": the workers' councils were strangled, revolutionary workers were submitted to GPU terror and the cornerstone of the resistance to Franco was broken. In France in June 1936 it put the brakes on the strike wave and buried the nascent revolutionary movement by trapping it into the Popular Front. In Germany it recommended the creation of a Popular Front wide enough to include the Stahlhelm and set as the objective of the struggle the establishment of a "national-popular government".

The dissolution of the proletarian front just before the rise of the new revolutionary wave is not simply abandonment or rejection of revolution. It is above all a declaration of war

against the coming proletarian uprising. The sole task of the surviving national sections of the Comintern is to suffocate any revolutionary proletarian struggle, following the Spanish model. The communist revolution is international, but it will be strangled country by country.

None of this is very surprising for the German proletariat. They can see for themselves in the East that the Russia of the Stalinist bureaucracy has replaced the Russia of Lenin's day, the Russia of workers, peasants and their soviets. The bureaucracy has long been characterised by its deep, deep hostility towards mass revolutionary struggles. That is why the bureaucrats have always portrayed themselves as intelligent and terribly 'realistic'. "We will thank you a thousand-fold", said Roosevelt, "if you will dissolve the International". A thousand thanks and the confidence of Roosevelt, the bureaucrats say, are worth more than the coming revolution and the confidence of the masses".

But these days no politics are 'realistic' apart from the politics of revolution. Through their aversion of revolution, which they have betrayed and sold out to Anglo-American capitalism, through their dogged chauvinism and their barbarous treatment of their prisoners, the bureaucrats have only succeeded in exasperating the German soldier, masking the possibility of revolution and so throwing him disarmed into the hands of Goebbels and his propaganda: in so doing they have prolonged the war. One German worker, upon receiving revolutionary propaganda from a comrade, said: if these publications were distributed widely it would surely take only a few days before revolution broke out in Germany and the war was over. This worker had a more 'realistic' political outlook than that of the bureaucrats over their corrupt twenty-five year rule.

The German media, which tries to pass off the rapacious war of capitalists like Krupp, Kloeckner, Roehling and Borsig as a crusade against "Bolshevik chaos" must of course do all in its power to expose this "manoeuvre". Thus it argues that the dissolved Third International will just turn into a Fourth International. The first part of this story serves to flatter the Stalinist bureaucracy — the second part is an outrage against the organ of the coming revolution: the Fourth International has indeed been created, but as a rallying point for authentic revolutionary communists. It follows the tradition of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, Liebknecht and Luxemburg. The organisation has been created to struggle against the treachery of Stalin and his followers, not as some new version of the Comintern. To the extent that it represents a continuation of the Third International, this is only insofar as it will fight to accomplish the tasks set by Lenin — long betrayed by Stalin — in the coming revolutionary struggles: building a single, joint, international organisation to struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Revolutionary communists welcome the dissolution of the Comintern. Of course, at first it will serve to discourage the workers and sow confusion among their ranks. However, in

the last analysis — against the will of the Stalinist clique — it will facilitate the struggle for the proletariat's goals in the coming revolution. It will expose the treachery of the Russian bureaucrats and their Comintern before the eyes of all proletarians. In the last analysis, it can only help to convince the workers of the need to build a new revolutionary International.

Comrades!

You want to fight for a proletarian revolution. You are convinced of the need for a new revolutionary communist party. You want to win your work colleagues and your comrades on the front and in the barracks over to these ideas. You are yet to succeed in doing so. Many among them are still Stalinists, others hope to see the SPD resurrected, a third group want to re-live the "good times" of before 1933 and a fourth group is totally uninterested in any talk of politics. But this must not stop you talking to all of them when resistance arises confronting a boss, a tyrannical foreman, an officer or reprisals by the Nazi clique. On the contrary. You, as revolutionary communists, must be the first to prove your courage, energy and prudence. Many who would today be unwinnable even with the best arguments could be won over by your attitude. Many will only find the courage to join us when struggle emerges.

## 19 July 1936

On 19 July seven years ago General Franco rose up against the Spanish Republican government. With an amazing action the Spanish proletariat rose up, crushing the military uprising in Madrid and Barcelona. The Republican government, proving its inability to stop the reactionary putsch, was forced to give in faced with the resolve of the working masses. In Barcelona the old Catalan government was replaced with the Central Committee of the Militias, which exercised de facto governmental power. All political parties were represented in the Committee. The Militia Committee was the Spanish version of a soviet. In Catalonia, Aragon, Valencia and Malaga the movement went way beyond the bounds of bourgeois republicanism: it carried out expropriations, collectivised agricultural property and distributed basic goods between workers' and peasants' co-operatives. The old Catalan government was a shadow of its former self. In the provinces mentioned above the workers and peasants held power.

But it did not go the same way in Madrid. The Popular Front government from the start tried to denude the mass movement of its revolutionary characteristics. Only where absolutely unavoidable did it carry out measures to expropriate the bourgeoisie. It engaged in armed struggle against the workers' and peasants' committees. The Republicans, right-wing Socialists and Communists were the protagonists of this effort. It was inevitable that conflict would break out between the two centres, reformist Madrid and revolutionary Barcelona.

The international situation was marked by the weakness of the proletariat. Of course, a powerful factory occupations movement was in motion in France. But even there the mass movement was hijacked by the Popular Front government: the Communists and social-democrats put the brakes on the movement, smothering it with a joint agreement. Furthermore the Great Powers each took a stance on Spain. The so-called "democratic powers" decided on non-intervention, despite the existence of a struggle against the reactionary generals. From the start the fascist powers sent aid to Franco. As for the Soviet Union, at first it took part in the face of non-intervention, before taking sides with the bourgeois Republic. But it was certainly not on the side of the mass revolutionary movement. All the USSR's arms ship-

ments to Spain had the sole aim of strengthening the bourgeois republic by crushing the workers' revolution. It only gave weapons to organisations who loyally followed this line.

In the second month of the war the Russians demanded the dissolution of the Central Committee of the Militias and the re-establishment of the former bourgeois government. After a weak show of resistance the anarchists capitulated. The workers', peasants' and militia committees were deprived of their authority and were gradually broken up. The GPU hunted down revolutionary workers' organisations and suppressed them.

The proletarian masses rose up against this anti-working class agenda one more time in Catalonia, Aragon and Valencia in May 1937. During their three-day uprising the masses took control of the streets and neutralised the Communist and Republican organisations. Unfortunately, they did not have a workers' party which could have given the masses' struggle direction. The movement was decapitated by the treachery of the anarchist leaders and the uprising was crushed into the ground. The defeat of the revolutionary movement broke the cornerstone of the resistance against Franco. The fascist uprising could not be defeated on the basis of defending the bourgeois Republic.

How can we explain the Communists' behaviour? There is only one possible explanation for such an attitude: the Russian bureaucracy's only fundamental political principle was staying in power and hanging onto its privileges. Any mass revolutionary movement would threaten the power of the bureaucracy. Therefore any revolutionary movement was a mortal enemy. No to revolution! No problem with the imperialist Great Powers! The Russian bureaucracy is the incarnation of counter-revolution. It is not just Stalin. The bureaucracy is a social force, a new generation motivated by stark nationalism, a heartfelt sense of self-entitlement and parasitism. The bureaucracy would sacrifice anything to remain in power, including the social and political gains of the October revolution.

The example of Spain teaches us this: the revolution cannot succeed without a revolutionary party. There was none in Spain and the revolution perished. Moreover, any future revolution will have as its enemy not only the local bourgeoisie but also the Russian bureaucracy. In the coming

German and European revolutions we must take account of these two lessons.

Peace! Bread! Freedom!

## The working class in the war

The Belgian workers, the majority of whom saw in advance that the war was fought solely in the interests of the wealthy capitalists, entered the war reluctantly. That was one of the main reasons for Belgium's quick defeat, saving the lives of many of its people. However, the workers' movement suffered a heavy blow from the German victory. A wave of nationalism and enthusiasm for the Royal Air Force swept over the country and had a significant effect over even the working class. The main reason for this was the deterioration of living standards caused by the decline of imports and the export of basic goods and coal to Germany. One of the first German decrees slashed wages, forcing poverty on the working class.

The workers and their families tried to make the best of things with Sunday trips to the countryside where basic goods were not so expensive. Those unable to do so could "freely" travel to Germany. Despite the poverty of the working class, or indeed because of it, the Belgian and German industrialists producing armaments made a roaring trade. Prices went up, but wages did not budge. This was the Belgian proletariat's first experience of national socialism.

During winter 1942 the German authorities started mass deportations of workers to Germany. A protest strike broke out in a large firm of around 10,000 workers in Liège. After a three-day strike the authorities postponed the deportation of the workers until February 1943. The Liège province was the main theatre of a feverish revival of workers' organisations seeking to resist the deportations. New trade unions, weapons of a class-conscious proletariat, were established to replace the old ones which had been broken up. The still weak revolutionary communist party made its first steps in heavy industry.

When another strike resisting the deportations broke out at the end of February — 30,000 workers struck in the Liège province alone — we saw the interesting spectacle of the

capitalist owners helping the German authorities break the strike. The workers thus saw that all the chatter about national unity was just bluffing, and it only took a few days to collapse when profits and good business were threatened. The workers feared that if there was any trouble or any demonstrations the German soldiers, under the control of the military authorities, would open fire. A leaflet circulated among the workers calling for fraternisation with the German workers in uniform who wanted to go back to their homes just as much as the Belgian workers wanted to stay in theirs. There had not been any fighting or any fraternisation, but the leaflet had a profound impact on the workers. They had realised who the real enemy was and where they could find their real ally. At the start of the fighting the artificial front of national unity was replaced by the class front of the Belgian and German workers against the Belgian and German capitalists and their military backers.

The struggle finished after three days. It proved that the new organisation was still too weak and too inexperienced to unite the masses faced with reprisals by the German repressive apparatus. But at root this struggle was a rehearsal of the coming revolutionary period. The defeat of the workers can therefore only mean a limited period of demoralisation. They will realise their mistakes and resolve to put their experience to use in future struggles. The organisation is growing. There have indeed been other isolated strikes in big factories to prevent fresh attacks on living standards.

Workers, soldiers! Many foreign workers, tricked by the bourgeoisie's lying propaganda, believe that all of you are fascists. They believe that you wanted the war. They reproach you for not having thrown down your guns as they have. They do not understand the cocktail of lies, terror and espionage which have driven you to take up arms. Talk to them, wherever possible! Explain your situation to them! Tell them that you hope for the end of this war no less than they do! Tell them that you are reading yourself for this outcome and the proletariat's settling of scores with the class enemy! In doing so you can guarantee the future proletarian revolution today. In doing so you will help its spread across Europe. In doing so you will be leading a better and more effective foreign policy than all the bourgeois ministers!

## Do you remember?

1. That in July 1917 there was a powerful working-class demonstration in Petrograd? At the time the Bolshevik Party, led by Lenin, was a revolutionary party. The Bolsheviks had understood that the countryside and the front were not yet ripe for the conquest of power by the proletariat and that the movement had gone too far in Petrograd and Moscow. That is why they tried to hold back the action. This showed itself to be a mistake when the leadership of the masses then fell into the hands of anarchists and provocateurs. Realising their error they soon corrected it. The party tried to limit the movement to an armed

— but peaceful — demonstration, which was a partial success. Thanks to its thought-through conduct, after the defeat of the action the party won the confidence of the best working-class militants. Despite this there was soon a massive campaign of lies. The Bolsheviks were falsely accused of being agents of Ludendorff. Lenin and Zinoviev were forced into hiding. Trotsky, Lunacharsky and others were thrown into prison. However, three months later, they seized power and the Second Congress of Soviets could take charge.

2. That in July 1932 the von Papen government sacked the Prussian Social-Democrat ministers Braun and Severing? The Social-Democrat bureaucrats held back the workers. Indeed, the Reich government had acted in a perfectly "legal" fashion, and there would soon be elections. In place of the armed struggle, the ballot paper. The KPD called a general strike. But no-one listened. Why? Because less than one year previously it had called for workers to vote with the Nazis in a referendum against these same Prussian ministers. Because its policy of splitting the unions (RGO) had isolated it from the workers in the factories. Because its theory of social-fascism had divided it from Social-Democrat workers who wanted to fight. That was how it prepared the worst of all defeats, defeat without a fight.

## Once again, feed your mouth with their promises

"Dear compatriots, rations will now be increased further still. The excess in the Ukraine which already this year has... etc. etc." Thus spoke the party propagandists, Hitler, Goering, Goebbels and others last winter. Long-term continuation of the war and continuing military profits depended on the maintenance of the front. That is what Messrs Krupp, Siemens, Roehling and others, the suppliers in heavy industry, wanted to see.

But promising something and having the means to supply it are not the same thing. Now they have cut the meat ration by 100g a week: not of course without rubbish excuses. Workers are tightening their belts and clenching their fists: with which, when the time is right, they will one happy day feed their mouths.

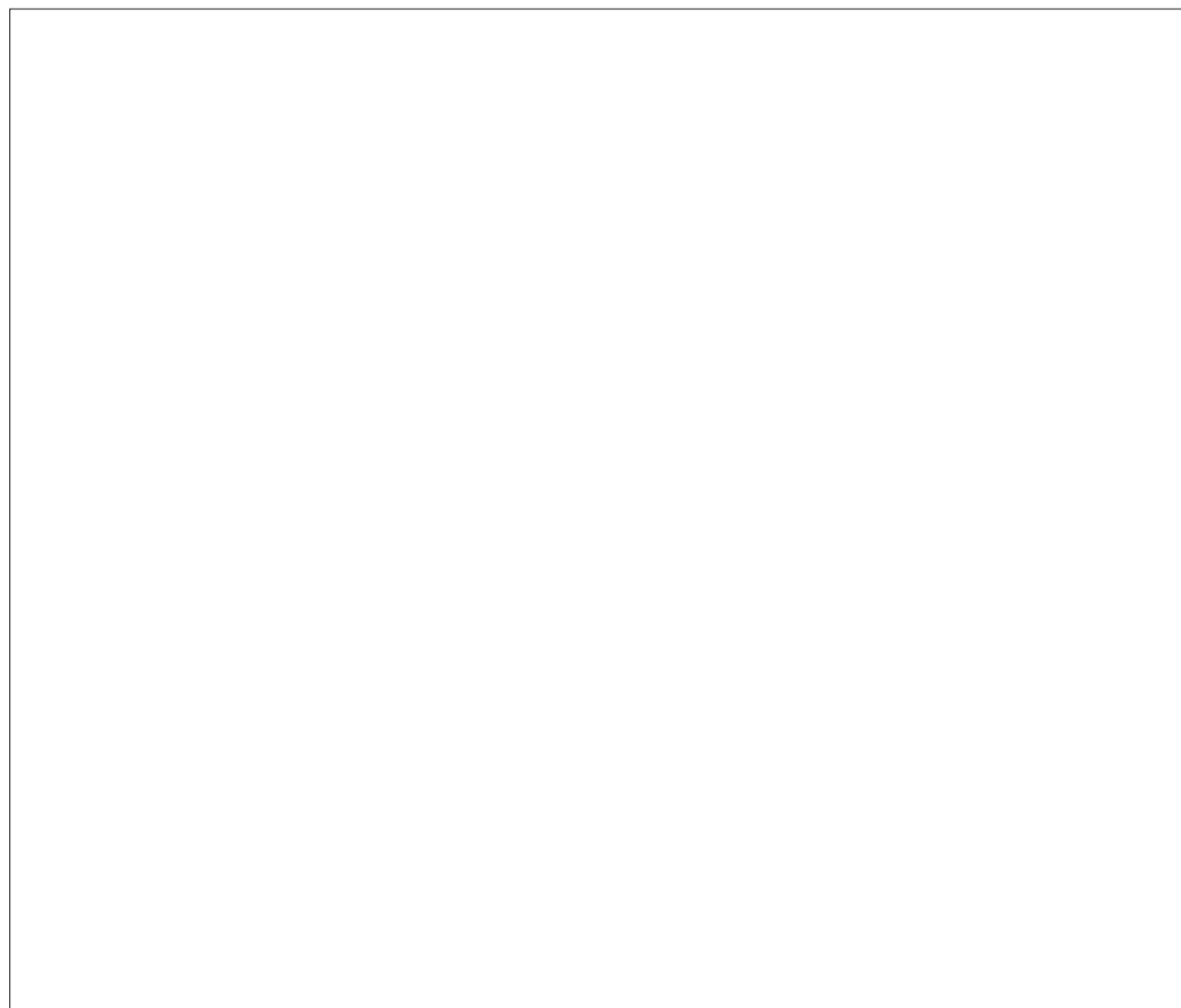
## Peace! Freedom! Bread!

Peace: Only world proletarian revolution can bring us peace and the end of all wars.

Freedom: This is not possible for all the exploited except in the framework of a Socialist Republic of Soviets.

Bread: Only the expropriation of capital and the establishment of a socialist planned economy can guarantee bread for all and an end to economic crises.

A burnt out truck left outside Notre Dame cathedral by fleeing German soldiers, 1944



# The agenda of global capital

No. 2 AUGUST 1943

The outbreak of the workers' revolution in Germany nears. Already the Italian workers are taking action; in the Balkans, in Portugal and in Spain military régimes and fascist dictatorships are collapsing. How much time can be left before the German workers and soldiers break the chains of fascism and the great struggle between the exploited and the exploiters consumes Europe?

It is high time that the Anglo-American capitalists come to the aid of German and European capital. If the brothers of high finance are now determinedly and stubbornly making war with the blood of their respective working classes, they will all the more determinedly and fraternally help each other when they need to defend their sacred rights to private property and capitalist exploitation. The bosses know full well that working-class revolution can be contagious, now more than ever.

But arms alone will not be enough to bat down the European revolution. The people on the ground on the Anglo-Saxon side carrying the weapons are themselves workers and peasants. Of course they have been able to mobilise them to fight against a fascist Germany. But would they let them push them into fighting a proletarian Europe? Didn't the bourgeoisie already have a tough time in 1918-19 when it tried to strangle the victorious workers' and peasants' October revolution in Russia? The mutiny of the French fleet in the Black Sea as well as the strike by British dockers who had to ship arms to Russia may well have left as much trace in the minds of the wealthy capitalists as they have in the memory of the global working class.

What has changed over the last 25 years? The British working class has been radicalised. In 1926, betrayed by the union bureaucrats, the miners held a year-long strike. During the capitalist crisis the American paradise was transformed into a hell for 13 million unemployed workers. Even during the war there has been news of strikes by miners, armaments workers and transport workers in Britain as well as a 600,000-strong strike in America. Will the British and American workers want to fight the revolutionary workers — who will have made clear their interests and their real objectives — after having fraternised with them? This problem is not as simple as Messrs Churchill and Roosevelt would have us imagine. They know that perfectly well themselves, which is why they do not want to confront the revolutionary masses of Europe, above all those of Germany, with tanks and machine guns alone, but with a much more effective weapon: poison.

The poison to which we refer is that which the bourgeoisie used to paralyse the revolutionary struggle of the German working class in 1918. It was the Social-Democrat leaders themselves who disoriented the working class with their lies and false promises, dressing one part of the class against another and little by little destroying the gains of the revolution. But this was just the tip of the iceberg for the Social-Democrat bureaucrats. In 1933, after Hitler's seizure of power, they showed the German workers their true colours. This time around, global capital needs someone else to inject poison into the workers' blood in Germany and Europe: it is now the task of the bureaucrats in Moscow, brought to power by the isolation of the victorious October revolution. Despite all the little disputes about where borders should lie, it was in the interests of global finance capital that the Russian bureaucracy recently hurried to inject a dose of poison in the arm of the German revolution.

### AN APPEAL FROM MOSCOW

The Moscow transmitter has announced the creation of a "National Committee for a Free Germany". This committee is composed of an émigré poet (its chairman), some captured generals, etc. The ex-Communist poet and the ex-fascist generals have published a manifesto, with five particular points of interest for German workers.

1. They claim that the terrible hardship the German workers have suffered is the work of one man, Hitler.

2. All partisans of Hitler who distance themselves from him will be pardoned.

3. The German soldiers on the front should — under the



# We the soldiers and the events in Italy

German soldiers have received the Nazi press's paragonous news on events in Italy with bewilderment and with anxiety. But through the intermediary of comrades returned from Italy who report on the goings-on there, they know that they have been denied the right to know the truth about the collapse of this most pitiful of fascist régimes in case the parallel which jumps to mind might lead them to more clearly understand the situation in their own country.

Fascism has collapsed because of its inherent weakness, its totally corrupt system of party chieftains which can have no objective other than to exploit the Italian people, above all the Italian workers.

When the British and Americans landed in Italy tens of thousands of fascist militiamen threw down their weapons and fled. Is this all there is to the fascist force so often trumpeted by Mussolini?

German soldiers in Sicily have to suffer and spill their blood in the interests of the Nazis who sent them down there and the fascists who have betrayed them. But what exactly is going on in Italy? Can we hold the Italian workers responsible? As the lamentable failure of the "fascist art of governance" and the repugnant corruption of the bloody party bureaucracy became ever more obvious, an ever-stronger resistance grew among the Italian workers. As popular discontent became ever more sharply posed, finally resulting in strikes which gave it its clearest and most determined expression, the army and the King acted to stave off revolution and save what could be saved at the last minute. The strikes were drowned in blood and a state of emergency was declared. But while these measures could for a while postpone the just victory over fascism and imperialism of all stripes, in the long run this victory is inevitable.

Knowing what happened in Italy, and the speed with

which Mussolini's clique broke up, it is easy to understand the sombre discretion of the Nazi press's reports on Italy. German soldiers must not be allowed to draw parallels. They must be bombarded with propaganda, filling his head every day and stopping him from thinking. They know well enough in Berlin that such thoughts can become, and have been proven to become, dangerous for the leading Nazi party dignitaries. Although some of you talk of untrustworthy allies, it is not the Italian people who are to blame. Fascism is at fault. The whole world is today the victim of the folly of the fascist powers and capital's quest for profit. Stalin, who betrayed the proletarian revolution, is the right-hand-man of this imperialist-capitalist clique.

But the current war, in its terrible absurdity, lays the ground for the future workers' revolution in every country. The Fourth International will lead it to victory.

*By an infantryman*

## Editor's comments:

We wholeheartedly agree with the comrade's letter. But we would go even further. There can be no question of the 'blame' of the Italian people, but only its merit. If in this war — fought not in the interest of the workers but in the interests of capital — the proletariat revolts, whether that be in Britain or America as in Germany, or in Russia as in Italy, there can hardly be any talk of betrayal. We must not talk about the faults of the Italian workers but rather the weakness of the German workers who are still letting themselves go under the butcher's knife in the name of Hitler and in the interests of the Krupps and Borsigs of this world.

All of you who are in contact with our comrades, tell *Arbeiter und Soldat* about your opinions and your experiences. It is your paper!

leadership of their generals — march on Berlin and overthrow Hitler.

4. A "strong", "independent" and "national" government must be established.

5. Legally acquired property is safeguarded.

German workers and soldiers! Cast your minds back! What happened in 1918? The Kaiser fled, the generals stayed in place. A superficial facade of democracy. We are seeing the same today. In the interests of big capital Moscow is offering you a repeat of the tragedy of 1918, with one small difference: this time around the democratic spectacle will soon come to an abrupt end. What will the German workers do? They will put Moscow's poison in an envelope and post it back to Stalin with the note: this time, that is not going to work!

For their part, they will make five proposals:

1. When the scores are settled across the globe, Hitler will certainly not get away. But nor will we forget that he and his clique were acting in the service of big capital. The wealthy barons of industry and the German bankers wanted and led this war just as much, and they will cause a third war if we do not one fine day remove their power to do so.

2. If Goering, another Nazi leader or some Gestapo executioner shits himself and decides to distance himself from his once beloved Führer, that will be no reason for sympathy.

3. We ourselves will decide the way forward for our country, even without our generals. We already let them get away with that in 1918, which is why again in 1939 they were able to lead us to war far from home. On the first day of the revolution we will get rid of ranks and we will sack all the officers. We will elect soldiers' committees with the power to give orders and control all our affairs.

4. We do not want an "independent and national" government! Such a government would not be independent either of the conquering capitalists or our own capitalists, in fact it would be... independent from the control of the workers! On the contrary, we want a government of the workers themselves. We can best achieve this with a system of soviets. This time we will not let them take our soviets from us like in 1918.

5. The petty traffickers and wealthy war profiteers in large-scale industry have made their profits in a perfectly "legal" fashion and have made their giant fortunes in a more or less "legal" fashion. That is because they made the laws themselves. However, the workers will confiscate their businesses and will furthermore make laws obliging everyone to work and abolishing all exploitation.

## Talk of politics forbidden!

The closer we come to the end of the war, the quieter are the men up above — Adolf, Hermann, Joseph and co. But more and more clearly do those down below, the workers and soldiers, raise their voices in protest. Everywhere people are talking about what is going to happen tomorrow when the war is over. The high authorities themselves who, according to Goebbels, know everything, have now commented on this. They are trying to make use of tried and tested methods, banning soldiers in various units from talking about politics. But the old charm is not working any more. They are talking about politics more and more angrily, now more than ever before. This murmuring and chatter is the distant echo of the coming revolution.

Peace! Freedom! Bread!

## Soviet Germany: how we want it and how we don't

The degeneration of the Russian revolution of 1917 resulted from numerous particularities of the situation in Russia. The fact that it was a backward agricultural country with a politically weak bourgeoisie with shallow roots in society and the existence of a Bolshevik Party of fierce will and unbreakable energy facilitated the working-class seizure of power. Once power was taken these circumstances showed themselves to be obstacles too. The heavy social weight of the huge, ignorant peasant masses made the industrialisation and administration of the country difficult. The postponement of the European revolution, particularly in Germany, added to the difficulties. The Bolshevik Party was torn apart by internal feuding. It gave birth to a bureaucracy which rules over the masses just as the Tsarist clique used to. What exists in Russia today — the absolute rule of a bureaucracy which appropriates the guise of Bolshevism as a claim to tradition — has nothing in common with socialism.

But the conditions of the German revolution and the construction of a socialist society in Europe are not the same as what existed in Russia. Below we outline how we conceive of this different type of system developing in Germany:

We want a real dictatorship of the proletariat, which means a democracy of all workers. The basis for workers' democracy will be the widespread establishment of workers' and poor peasants' soviets. The soviet is the most important public body. As the most conscious section of the working class, the party must do its work within the framework of the soviets.

We do not want the soviets to be the powerless tools of a party which is itself the submissive stage army of a clique. We oppose the substitution of the rule of the state bureaucracy

and its party for the rule of the working class.

*We want* the greatest possible democracy for the workers, with no constraints on faith or religion, freedom of the press or freedom of speech, with unlimited rights of association and coalition for all parties who work within the soviet system.

*We do not want* the tyranny of a party. We oppose the repression of any workers' party which stands in favour of a workers' government through the soviet system.

*We want* people's tribunals composed of workers which deliberate and make their judgements publicly.

*We do not want* a GPU which arbitrarily throws people in prison, deports and shoots them in secrecy. We do not want a legal system which does not recognise rights but only brute force.

*We want* workers' control of all public officials, who should be subject to recall at any moment.

*We do not want* the arbitrary rule of a bureaucracy which does not allow the workers any degree of freedom.

*We want* the workers themselves to manage production and distribution. The organisms of the workers' state will carry out the production and distribution plans drawn up by the unions and workers' associations in collaboration with the latter.

*We do not want* dictatorial management of production and distribution by a bureaucratic caste which pockets whatever it so pleases. This is however what exists in Russia.

## Hamburg: and next it's Berlin's turn

There were fronts in the last war. But now there is another front: back home. That is the bitter experience of the workers in Hamburg. As the British chemicals trusts pocket millions of pounds' worth of profits, the British planes drop thousands of kilos of their explosives on the German workers and their families. But we should have no illusions. Our own exploiters and warmongering hyenas are no better: far from it. If the German High Command had been able to do so it would have done exactly the same to the workers in London. If we want to put a final stop to such horrors we must march alongside the London workers against our common enemy, German and British capital. We have not yet achieved this goal. Down with the Nazi bureaucrats! Down with the war! Down with capitalism!

## One less, but only one

According to one comrade's report the mayor of Wuppertal has been sacked. He fled to the country in the evening, hearing the alarm, and in the morning returned to the ruins sozzled. That is why the Nazi clique sacrificed him. But how many of those men who escape into the night are so canny as to come back to the town in the morning and still go unnoticed? One of them has been sacked, but how many such men are left? Time to send the whole Nazi clique to hell.

## Do you remember...?

1. That when the First World War broke out in the opening days of August 1914 on the one side they said "Fight the Tsar" and on the other "Fight the Kaiser"? In reality both sides were capitalist, fighting over profits and markets and looking to carve up colonial territory between capitalist slave-owners. This time only the slogans have changed. The real goals and content of the war are exactly the same again: it is a war for colonial profits, not a war between 'democracy' and 'national socialism'. Lenin said back then that "either the proletarian revolution will triumph or there will be another, even more terrible conflict". This comment of Lenin's is true now as then.

2. That the Constitution of the Weimar Republic was drawn up in August 1919 as a grand plan for 'national unity'? In this Constitution of lawyers, professors and party bureaucrats etc. there was much talk of freedom. But it also included the infamous Article 48 which made all these fine freedoms dependent on the mood of the Reich President. The 1930 emergency decrees were thus prepared in 1919. It was very 'constitutionally' that Hindenburg appointed Hitler as his Chancellor. But even the best Constitution could not have offered guarantees against that. The question which really matters is who rules, capital or the workers? In 1919 the Freikorps were able to crush the nascent proletarian revolution in the egg. In 1943-44 it must be soviets, the revolutionary organs of workers and soldiers, which draw up a new Constitution under the protection of workers' Red Guards.

## Four years of world war

### 1. THE MILITARY BALANCE-SHEET

First and second year of the war: victory after victory across Europe. Clear Axis superiority.

Third year: first clashes in the East. Retreat in the harsh

winter. In summer, however, a significant new offensive. In Africa the advantage shifts between the two camps, before a German advance as far as the Pyramids. Balanced forces.

Explanation of these developments: from 1933 all production, economics, politics and all life in Germany was systematically directed towards war. This gave it a significant advantage.

But the enemies in this imperialist war had much more significant reserves to hand: powerful American industry, vast sources of raw materials across the greater part of the world, and the extent of the huge Russian reserves. Our own were small in comparison. Mr Goebbels placed his hopes in the collapse of the Russians (or at least, acted like he did). It is true that in Russia there is a lack of basic goods. But the Americans send enough goods for them to hold on. The Russians are constantly on the advance. Without doubt the third winter of the war will bring them significant territorial gains, allowing them to threaten eastern Germany.

There is no argument in favour of prolonging the war, except in the eyes of those profiting from it, big capitals and their military and political valets, the Nazis and the generals.

### 2. THE BALANCE-SHEET FOR THE WORKING CLASS

The seventy-hour week, paper-money as wages and empty slogans. Deterioration of food, a lack of clothes and of the most necessary home equipment. Destroyed houses and a lack of accommodation. Families torn apart and fam-

ily well-being reduced to nothing forever. Limbs mutilated, cut up or frozen. Deformities and diseases. Millions of deaths: burnt, shot, stabbed, suffocated and drowned. Men, women and children. How many families still have no loss to mourn?

### 3. THE BALANCE-SHEET FOR BIG CAPITAL.

On 1 September, the anniversary of the beginning of the war, the newspaper of the Berlin stock exchange reported its figures on capital and German stocks. Here we add the corresponding figures for 1939. In billions of marks:

|   |            |             |  |
|---|------------|-------------|--|
| <b>Total capital:</b>   |            |             |  |
| 1939: 20.29   | 1941: 24.9 | 1942: 29    |  |
| <b>Total capital of businesses whose capital is more than [illegible] million marks</b> |            |             |  |
| 1939: 7.97  | 1941: 11.2 | 1942: 14.1  |  |
| <b>Percentage of total capital</b>  |            |             |  |
| 1939: 39%   | 1941: 45%  | 1942: 48.5% |  |

The bottom line is of particular interest for the working class. It shows that big capital has grown more quickly than small capital. Even apart from new business, big capital has absorbed part of small and middle capital.

Capital is getting richer with the blood and sweat of the workers. One thing is missing from this balance-sheet: an account of the revolutionary proletariat.

Peace! Freedom! Bread!

# We want defeat

## NO. 3 SEPTEMBER 1943 (THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THE END OF THE FOURTH YEAR OF THE SECOND WORLD IMPERIALIST WAR)

**W**e want the defeat of our own ruling class in this war. The horsemen of industry and the barons of the banks, the Nazi bureaucrats and the generals, and all those still tricked and blinded by them will shriek that we are "traitors to the fatherland" and "agents of the enemy". But we will hold firm. We want the defeat of our own capitalists, preferring it to their victory.

The imperialist war is not a war which serves the interests of ordinary people. It is a war of big capital, on both sides of the front. After the last war people talked of victorious peoples and defeated peoples. This was a lie. The "victors" were the capitalists of all countries; the "defeated" were the workers of all countries.

In the so-called defeated countries — we German workers were well placed to see it — the masters of industry used inflation to lump the costs of the war and reconstruction on the workers and the middle classes. Even in the worst moments the big capitalists and the underhand speculators were able to enrich themselves. On the other side, in the victorious countries, the working class had to fight hard struggles to win itself a bearable standard of living.

But the imperialists' victory over the working class was not only economic, it was also political. The capitalist class (and all ruling classes in general) have always been able to take advantage of their military success to put new chains on the oppressed classes. Think back a little! In its two years of conquests over the peoples of Europe, did the national socialist state loosen our chains even a millimetre? Did we have even the slightest freedom to express what we think and [illegible]? Were our brothers in the Gestapo any less aggressive or sure of themselves?

So let us read what Goebbels admits in one of his rare flashes of honesty:

"The freedom which one people denies another will necessarily mean a certain degree of constraint back home" (*Das Reich*, 29 August 1943). Could that be any clearer? The freedom denied the foreigner, that is to say the oppression of the French, Poles, Russians, Blacks and Hindus, means a "certain degree of constraint", which as we all know means the Gestapo and the Nazi whip for the German worker.

But even if Germany had won the war and German capital had filled its huge pockets with the profits taken from the exploitation of hundreds of millions of colonial slaves, [illegible], that would still have meant oppression and exploitation for the German worker. Certainly, some people [illegible] would have been able to achieve a "better" position watching over the slaves or as henchmen of our capitalist masters' police. It was with this goal in mind that the Nazis, certain of victory, created the theory of the superiority of the German race.

Class-conscious workers want nothing to do with that. They struggle for the emancipation of the colonial slaves and for the abolition of all oppressions, not to become whip-holders in the service of the masters of industry. "A people which oppresses another cannot itself be free" wrote Marx. He who fights for colonial conquest is, in the last instance, fighting for his own oppression. It is this unavoidable truth which obliges us to say openly and unflinchingly: we do not want our own country's capital to emerge victorious from the rapacious imperialist war.

Furthermore, we are not only opposed to the victory of our own country's bandits, we are also opposed to the victory of the brigands on the other side. We want their defeat! It was defeat in reactionary wars which caused the first uprisings of the working class: France in 1871, Russia in 1905 and 1917, and 1918 in Germany. That is why Lenin stressed this one principle for workers of all countries: in a reactionary war, the revolutionary class must wish for the defeat of its own government.

Any prolongation of the imperialist war will mean further sacrifices, above all for the working class, impacting on its strength and on its health, on its supplies and on its lives. That is why we want the soonest possible defeat of our government. But neither desertion, sabotage nor terrorism are the means which could bring about this defeat and a quick end to the imperialist war. Proletarian class struggle is the only means which can lead us to victory. During the the 1917 Russian Revolution one soldier said "sticking your bayonet in the ground still won't get you peace". To hasten the end of the war we must everywhere create revolutionary proletarian organisations.

Such organisations could allow the widespread extension of the early expressions of working-class anger directed against oppression by big capital and the Nazi clique and against their absurd war, causing an abrupt collapse of the system. It is for this reason, among others, that fascism has repressed all independent working-class organisations, helping it to make war for as long as possible and as easily as possible. But it should therefore be clear enough that every new local group and every new cell we build is a brick in the wall we must build. Not only to end this war, but to end all wars. For the revolutionary proletarian party fights in the first rank to lead the revolution to victory, which means replacing the capitalist system with socialism.

Down with the war!

Down with the Nazi tyranny!

For a soviet state!

To achieve this we fight for the defeat of our own capitalism. We know, as revolutionaries, that this will rain down much hate and many calumnies on our heads. Was Lenin not accused of being an agent of Ludendorff? Did the lying bourgeois press not throw calumnies against Liebknecht and other worthy partisans of the proletarian revolution, having us believe that they had been bribed by the enemy? Knowing that the truth told by the revolutionary class will break through all these pathetic reactionary lies, we raise the standard of the defeat of our own capitalism, the standard of working-class victory.

## The real face of the war

The Wehrmacht High Command reports: "We were stationed around 50 km from Charkow. After a difficult fight we made a forward path for ourselves. One morning we took over the post office. There was a newspaper there, and to our surprise it announced in large type the seizure of Charkow [illegible]. It was only eight days later that we took Charkow."

From the front:

"My brother had several frozen fingers and similarly his feet were freezing. That didn't stop the bastards sending him back to the East. That is where he is staying..."

Extract from a letter from Hamburg:

"The dead were piled up in a huge mound and burned with flame-throwers. I can only say: don't come back here, you won't recognise the place..."

The birth of children brings joy to the fatherland:

"We had to stay in the line of fire for fourteen days. Then we had eight days' rest. Many were those who stayed back afterwards. Sch. and K. learned the news of the birth of their children just when they had to go back to the front line. Halfway there, they turned on their heels. I never saw them again: soon after they were shot."

The family is the cornerstone of the national socialist state:

"My two brothers were killed, one in Russia and the other in Africa. My wife and my son also perished in the last bombardment of Berlin. I knew nothing about the fate of my parents. When I went to the lieutenant to ask for information his only response was: we have more important things to do. Now I know for sure: my father and mother are dead."

From a soldiers' paper produced by Fourth International comrades we reproduce one comrade's appeal:

"You know, comrades, how Hamburg suffered the most violent of attacks on 23 July 1943. Not only once have these criminals with their incendiaries attacked: no, it has been five times. This is no longer a war: it is just murders and more murders. 280,000 women, children and workers lost their lives just because they were Germans.

"I have lost everything. And for what? Just so that these capitalist bastards can have a better life and bask in their own grease."

"Dear comrades, we must put an end to this murder and tell people that none of it makes sense. They made us promises which they still haven't fulfilled. Dear comrades, we can't go on like this. So join us. Together we will finally put an end to this war."

## Zeitung für Soldat und Arbeiter im Westen

### No. 2 SUMMER 1943

[Illegible] I came back from leave a few days ago and I was amazed by the situation in Germany. What I saw is not easy to describe.

First off, the town where I grew up has been totally destroyed. Only very few houses are still habitable — you could count them — and only a few have been spared by bombs thus far. Next, the morale of the population. You can only imagine what has happened. Our women and daughters have been totally morally corrupted by the many workers from abroad [illegible].

And then there are the traffickers, who have set themselves up almost openly in the streets to run their black market, offering their seedy wares with price increases of 500% or 1,000%. So the situation in Germany is catastrophic. It is clear to everyone that morale is sinking day by day.

In brief, the people want an end [illegible] to the war.

Comrades, the Fourth International has shown me the way forward, and you too can participate in it and add your contribution to the effort to bring an end to the war without delay.

Listen to what I say, because things are not getting better for your wives and children back home. Join us, join the Fourth International. We are fighting for peace, freedom and bread.

*by a German soldier*

Can things go on like this? My wife and children write me letter after letter to complain about the situation, and I can do nothing for them. They can't even console themselves with the idea that the end of the war is near. It breaks my heart when I read that.

That is why I believe that we must put an end to this appalling war. And we soldiers on the front can do something about it. I know a sure means of doing so, which will be good for you too. Alone I can do nothing, but you can cooperate and work with me. Listen carefully and think about what follows.

I am a member of the Fourth International and my main

priority is to put an end to the war. We fight against capitalism and for fraternisation the world over. Fighting for this goal we will make it impossible for any state to rule or exercise its dictatorship over Germany, which would result in the partition of the country and massive tax increases.

Comrades, the Fourth International fights so that no-one should have to fear another even worse way of life.

Think of your wives and children.

Imagine a real and [illegible] peace.

Do you not want to fight for that?

Join the Fourth International.

*by a comrade.*

The famished and martyred proletariat of Europe cannot put a rapid end to its distress unless it makes a clear break with world imperialism, avoiding any collaboration with its own bourgeoisie and rejecting Stalin's so-called "union sacrée". Destroy fascism by destroying capital.

For the real freedom of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Only under the banner of the Fourth International will the masses be able to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat across the world, in Germany, Poland, Spain, Belgium, [illegible], Greece and above all [illegible] in Italy and in France [illegible] sections of the Fourth International [illegible] for the building of the struggle for socialism in Europe and proletarian revolution across the world.

*by the Fourth International.*

Comrades!

It is rather difficult to understand all this at a glance, but fundamentally it is quite simple. These are nothing other than the ideas of the Fourth International. Above you will see the little cartoons representing our German capitalists. There are not many of them, but they are some of the biggest ones. There are hundreds of such capitalists whose constant aim is to fill their wallets with our money. The government is under their thumb and produces the propaganda these capitalist dogs need. To prolong the war, for more and better armaments, etc. Do we soldiers want to fight for these people? No.

Think about it. Join the Fourth International.

Fight for peace, freedom and bread.

# A day of significance for the German workers

## MAY 1944

The SPD leadership's treachery in the First World War left the German working class disarmed. Talk of revolution was smothered by the state of emergency. Therefore it was liberating when on 1 May 1916 Karl Liebknecht organised a demonstration in Potsdamer Platz with the support of thousands of workers from Berlin, to remind the workers and particularly the German workers that this war is not our war. It had to be transformed into a proletarian revolution. The enemy was in our own country. Of course, Liebknecht was thrown in jail by the capitalist state's machinery of repression. But his liberatory ideas had already got out.

Revolution came with the Kiel sailors' uprising, putting an end to the war. All of Germany was covered with a network of workers' and soldiers' soviets. The bourgeois order was shaken to the core. German capital had to take action to hold on to power, most importantly using the help of the Social-Democrat bureaucracy. The soviets were dissolved or transformed into a shadow of their former selves as factory councils. In the place of peace, freedom and bread the German workers were given ballot papers, inflation and the Reichswehr.

In the following period there were two 1 May celebrations in Germany: that of the reformists, who for all their treachery still had the confidence of thousands of workers, and that of the young Communist Party, the German section of the Third International, whose task was to win over the majority of the working class to the goal of socialist revolution and lead it to power. Of course, the Third International's centre of gravity was in Russia, where the workers had taken power under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party. But the Russian workers' and peasants' victorious revolution was left isolated by the failure of the German revolution. In addition to the economic backwardness of the country, this situation inevitably led to the bureaucratisation of the workers' state and the Bolshevik

Party itself. There was sclerosis at the very heart of the Third International. The German CP, the strongest CP outside Russia, was itself transformed into a wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy without connection to the working masses.

This was made clear on 1 May 1929. In the interests of its domestic policies, the centre in Moscow declared from its ivory tower upon high that a new revolutionary period had begun. This was far from being the case. But to justify its line it had to stage all sorts of "revolutionary demonstrations". For this purpose it chose 1 May. The workers in Berlin and many other regions of Germany were called on to build barricades. The police chief Zoergiebel, a Social-Democrat, seized upon this excellent opportunity to send his troops against the isolated communist workers. Despite putting up heroic resistance they were crushed. The result of this senseless adventure was to demoralise activists and leave the Social-Democrat workers indignant and appalled.

The bureaucrats never learned anything, even from the bloody defeat of their supporters. The errors of the Communist Party increased in number. Disoriented by the theory of social-fascism, its policy of splitting the unions and the tactic of united fronts from below, the revolutionary proletariat was led to defeat after defeat, up until the decisive one: the victory of the Nazi Party without a fight.

The Nazis made 1 May 1933 a national holiday. One more time — and this would be the last — the Social Democrat leaders and the union bureaucrats showed themselves in all their crapulence. Attempting to curry favour with their new masters, these Judases called on their members to participate in the Nazi rally.

It was totally in keeping with the methods of the Nazis to keep 1 May as a day of celebrations. They use such slogans as "German socialism", "the dignity of work" and "the common interest comes above individual interests" to mask the most shameful of exploitation and the most absolute control. They place a shovel in the hands of the German worker so that he can dig — and lie in — his own grave. That is

the meaning of their production of tanks, bombs and warships. War preparations were not enough for the capitalist state to breathe life into the economy, so war itself came.

The period which saw a series of victories — which can be attributed to Germany's weapons advances — is over. We can still not say exactly how many victims the second world imperialist war will have claimed among the German workers. They have been led into the abattoirs in the four corners of Europe, while their families and homes have been pulverised by bombs.

If the war — which had already been lost in advance given the Americans' technical superiority in several fields — does not last ten or fifteen years, as German, British and American capital would have liked, then for this workers across the world will be indebted to the Russian workers who, despite the enormous burden represented by the parasitic rule of the bureaucracy, have repulsed the capitalist aggression against the first workers' state and have thus saved the great conquest of the October revolution, the planned economy.

### WE MUST REBUILD THE CLASS FRONT!

Today, in May 1944, the greater part of the people of Europe is still under the German jackboot. But the course of events, both at home and abroad, show that the final reckoning is imminent. It may arrive one day or the next. But that does not mean that it will just 'happen'. The Nazi clique and its capitalist backers are ready to fight down to the last German worker. Like in 1918 only the working class itself can bring an end to the reign of terror and the war. We can only achieve peace with revolution. But what kind of peace? And what revolution?

The old parties, in particular the Stalinist parties, enter the scene hoping to put the brakes on the revolution as soon as possible. They have formed a so-called liberation committee in Moscow, mainly composed of captured Nazi generals.



The main task set for this committee is to suffocate the revolution like in 1918, installing a bourgeois government and saving the capitalist system. If they succeed in doing so Anglo-American capital and the Russian bureaucracy will dictate a peace to Germany alongside which Versailles will look charitable. And German capital for its part would dump the entire burden on the workers.

In this desperate situation the German proletariat does have an ally; but it will not be able to win it over unless it finally starts fighting for its own interests and fights for them until victory. The emergence of workers' power and the establishment of a government of soviets, whose first task would be to expropriate big capital and wealthy landed interests without compensation, is the only solution to the growing barbarism of decaying capitalism. The pioneering struggle of the German working class will set the tone for the proletarian revolution across Europe. The revolutionary drive of the German revolution will everywhere overcome the chauvinist and counter-revolutionary influence of the Stalinist clique, first of all in Russia itself. It was the defeats of the German working class in 1923 which had dealt the last blow to the morale of the Russian proletariat and shored up the rule of the bureaucracy.

The German and European workers' struggle for the victory of socialism will give the Russian working masses the courage and strength to overthrow the bureaucracy with a fresh revolution, re-establishing soviet democracy and, in collaboration with the more advanced workers' states, climbing out of their miserable situation.

The union of soviet socialist republics of Europe and the Soviet Union, with its hundreds of millions of collective farms and its carefully planned industry, will be an impregnable communist bastion, a base from which communism will be able to spread across the world.

The Nazi press, totally submitted to the régime's gag, makes great play of mass strikes in Britain and in America. The German workers will not conclude from this — as the propaganda machine oh-so suddenly favourable to strikes would like them to — that the plans of their so-called enemies are bad ones, but rather that they are good.

That is because they now see that Britain and America does not just mean Churchill and Roosevelt, the City and Wall Street, but also the striking workers in Yorkshire and Minnesota. Which of them emerges strongest depends on the actions of the German proletariat in the coming revolutionary period.

In the struggle to lead the revolution to victory the construction of a revolutionary party is indispensable. The Fourth International was established before the dissolution of the Third International, and indeed in a long and unflinching struggle against it. Its internationalist communist parties fight, whether openly in democratic countries or covertly in fascist countries and occupied territory, for the unity of the revolutionary proletariat. The struggle for the construction of a new internationalist communist party in Germany has also begun. *Arbeiter und Soldat* is one of the means of this struggle.

1 May 1944 must mark a turn in the fate of the German working class! It must start the development of the class front! Our gun barrels and bayonet points must be turned against the real enemy, capital and its agents in our country.

In this vein, we must build secret four-comrade cells in every workplace and in every army unit! These should bring together the most active militants gifted with the strongest class consciousness. They must follow the latest political developments with the greatest diligence. Everywhere where workers act to resist the apparatus of repression, action groups must go straight to the site of struggle.

They must also prepare for the establishment of soviets when the capitalist war front collapses. That day every unit and every factory must elect a soviet which will be the main organ of struggle as well as the basis for workers' power!

For a long time the German working class was at the heart of the world proletarian movement. After the defeat of the

revolution it lost this central role. But it shall again be at the centre of struggle in the coming period. The eyes of the class-conscious workers of the world are fixed on Germany. Weakness and indecision for a long time kept the German working class in poverty and ignorance, but its confidence in its own strength and its courage driven to the limit will make it the vanguard of the world working class and the whole of humanity.

Workers in overalls and in uniform!

On 1 May there will be strikes in the occupied territories and perhaps also working-class demonstrations. The Nazi clique wants to use you as their executioners.

Sabotage these actions!

Refuse to do this dirty work!

Every blow struck against a European worker is a blow struck against the German revolution!

Fraternise with the workers in struggle!

Their fight is your fight!

On 1 May take up the old slogan of joint action: workers of all countries, unite!

## German train drivers show the way

A train full of SS returning from Russia derailed. Terrorism, or an accident? That hardly mattered to the SS officer. He needed revenge, so put the French train drivers in charge up against the wall, sent troops to arrest all the men who could be found in the village, and had them shot. What did a few human lives matter to this professional killer, accustomed to mass graves of workers?

But he had not counted on the fact that despite five years of war the German workers haven't lost their good sense and still have some idea of solidarity. The German train drivers helped many Frenchmen to escape, thus saving their lives.

When an inquest later found that the accident was not caused by sabotage but rather the poor condition of rolling stock, revolt took hold of the French and German train drivers. They declared a one hour strike to protest against the murder of innocent workers.

The trains stopped for an hour on this line, with the German train crews supporting the French workers and their protest strike.

With their courageous action the German train drivers showed that workers do not feel national hatred and that their sense of solidarity knows no national boundaries.

When all the workers come to realise this and when they have the courage to act on their convictions, the officers can always shout "fire!", but the workers, whether or not they are in uniform, will link arms and march together against the common enemy.

## The Fourth International on the march!

There has already been a great deal of talk about the news of strikes in Britain, which are said to have broken out against the will of the union bureaucrats and on the instigation of 'dubious' elements. Indeed the minister Bevin, that worthy member of the Second International, has called these shadowy figures by their real name: the Trotskyists, our comrades on the other side of the Channel.

At the same time the police were ordered to make the necessary arrests. Poor Interior Minister! Trying to wipe the coming revolution and the growing revolutionary party off the map with arrests sounds like trying to conjure up a tidal wave with a child's rattle.

The British workers are on strike today because they cannot bear their poverty, the other side of the coin of the capitalists' billions in profits. It is easy to understand why the union bureaucrats are opposed to this. The same goes for

the British Stalinist party. The Stalinist bureaucracy has for a long time been selling out workers across the world in the interests of its ally, Anglo-American capital. Only the Trotskyists, the British section of the Fourth International, have taken sides with the British workers' struggle. They must make the British workers aware that their struggle is a rehearsal of the coming revolution, which they must prepare for by uniting their ranks.

The *Voelkische Beobachter* makes fun of Mr Bevin. It has no right to. It has still not "observed" that the Trotskyists are playing an active role in workers' struggles in countries occupied by the German Gestapo. It believes that police tyranny and Gestapo terror will succeed in crushing forever the class struggle in Germany and preventing the creation of a revolutionary party. These illusions will not last for long.

## The Finance Minister's speech

The German Finance Minister spoke on the radio on 9 April on the question of funding the war. He is called Schwerin-Krosigk, and is a count. Such types were saved by the Republic ruled by Noske and Scheidemann, those butchers of workers, and now occupy lucrative public offices, for example the Ministry of Finance. But let him speak for himself:

"In the last world war the Secretary of State Helfferich had to fight against a divided Parliament afraid to take the responsibility of raising desperately needed taxes". Thank you, Mr Minister! At the time the taxpayer's voice could make itself heard — alas, all too weakly! — in a divided Parliament. But now we have the Gestapo, so... shut it! We now know what tasks, among others, the Nazi state has been set by big capital. Look at what followed: "Until now we were able to cover around 50% of total war costs through taxation". So 50% is left which is not supplied by taxes: he must therefore have made recourse to the tried and tested method of credit. This is indeed the case. But how did he get credit? Let's listen!

"Unlike in the First World War we have not made a public call for war bonds: we obtained most of the necessary credit from banks and financial institutions (read — savings banks!). We think this to be the most discreet means of financing the war. It relies in its greatest part on the savings made by the German people." So, the money the worker takes to the savings bank is taken by compulsion by the state in exchange for a "treasury bond" with no value (a bond on a treasury with no money). The state hands the money over to the armaments factory owners so that they can do their great work. All of this has a wonderful name: 'the discreet financing of the war'. But the German worker calls it stealing, and he is right. Pickpockets work 'discreetly' too!

But wait! When the war is over, surely everything will be reimbursed, mark for mark and pfennig for pfennig? Indeed: "The German saver who does not today spend his money on unnecessary items but takes it to the savings bank is not only helping the war effort but is also acting in the best-advised manner." Thus following in the vein of the usual promises of paradise the Nazis make... to be fulfilled once they have won the final victory. The count tells us: have faith in the Nazi state and you can become its creditor! And don't worry about that inflation, I already have the solution worked out in my ministerial head. Let us listen closely to the idea he has worked out up there. This is what will really make you laugh:

"The Reich's debts are at root a debt the German people owes itself. Consequently, it can and will be paid off at the end of the war, with part of it made up for by raising taxes on newly flourishing private incomes and the other part consolidated in the long term". Listen carefully! The money you saved makes you your own creditor. My debts are your debts, jests this ingenious Finance Minister. In order that the state can pay you back its debt it will have to bleed it out of you after the end of the war. Since the birth of capitalism taxes on private incomes have always hit the poor guy hardest. So: this gentleman has taken something off you but in order to pay it back to you he will have to take it off you again. The rest of the debt will be 'consolidated', which means: the payment will be dragged out forever.

Along with His Excellency we have had a brief glimpse of the paradise the Nazi clique and its capitalist backers are diligently preparing for us for after the war. This is reassuring, as we can see that capital will not win out after this final victory. But what does our dear Finance Minister see? Would he like to draw up, as the Berlin stock exchange papers suggest, fresh tax hikes for the distinguished public? Have they not had enough already with an increase of 30% or more? Or would he like to entice the workers with a new 'savings supplement'?

If so he is kidding himself. The workers will not swallow his April Fools, even on the 9th! He should have economised on his wind and used it to cool the burning hot revolutionary soup which the German proletariat will soon serve up for him, his colleagues and his capitalist masters.

# The future is in our hands!

## SPECIAL ISSUE JUNE 1944

**S**oldiers! Comrades! A new and decisive phase of the Second World War has begun. Anglo-American capital has launched its troops on the offensive on the European continent. With 4,000 warships, 13,000 planes and half a million soldiers they have begun landings on the French Atlantic coast.

"We are ready for all eventualities" lied the Nazi press, trumpeting itself as ever. They are indeed prepared: for a torrent of military disasters. The German military machine will be forced back, more or less slowly, since American war production alone is much greater than German production. The "Allies" could have finished off the war long ago had they so wished. But the British and American capitalists — *just like the Germans* — want to drag out the war as much as possible. The more the arms trade rumbles on and the billions in profits stay at a high level, the more they delay the post-war crisis of declining markets. The more Germany and Russia tear chunks out of each other, the better! The more the German and Russian workers spill their blood, the better!

But happy times for the capitalist vultures are coming to an end. The spring offensive has taken the Red Army to the German border. Its next advance may well take it inside Germany itself, causing the collapse of imperialist Germany. Then American and British capital would have to move as quickly as possible to best position themselves for the carve-up.

But the significance of the "second front" does not stop there.

This front is at the same time *the front of counter-revolution!* The bridge-head between Le Havre and Cherbourg is the bridge-head against the European revolution! The coming collapse of German imperialism will pose in the most threatening fashion the spectre of proletarian revolution in Germany and across Europe; a revolution much greater than any before.

That is why these gentlemen are showing their hand.

A few weeks ago British radio outlined the programme of these sorry gentlemen. Now they have finally shown their real face. As they preached about the well-being and freedoms they wanted to gift to humanity after the war, they were secretly preparing their usual method of keeping down the revolutionary popular masses in Europe: bashing them over the head. To prevent "anarchy", by which they mean the emancipation of the working class, and to defend "order", by which they mean the capitalist system of exploitation, its wars and its crises, they have created an occupation army and a High Command of civil inspectors "who all know how to make use of a

machine-gun". This plan will be crowned with the establishment of military governments across Europe.

In Germany they want to replace Hitler with Eisenhower, replacing one pest with another.

They know what incredible suffering awaits the masses after the war in destroyed Germany.

They know that the German workers, exploited to the limit, will have to sweat out profits twice over, both for his own exploiters and for foreign capital.

But they also know that the proletariat of Europe will rise up together against the party responsible for its poverty, capital and its lackeys.

They imagine that they will be able to stop this formidable revolution with the same old methods as usual.

That is why they want to replace the Gestapo executioners with a Scotland Yard expeditionary force.

That is why they want to nail our traps shut, tie our hands and impose all the post-war suffering on us.

Comrades! Soldiers!

Faced with this situation Hitlerite propaganda calls on us to hold out and defend ourselves. They have decided to do so themselves.

From Hitler in his headquarters far from the front lines to Goebbels in his bombproof office and Goering in his Marshal's villa, all the party clique and the officer caste have decided to hold out. They will stay as long as possible, gripping on to the butter dish! To postpone for as long as possible defeat and the terrible moment when they are thrown to the mercy of millions of German workers.

They are holding out!

The gentlemen of big capital also have heavy hearts. The Krupp, Borsig and Kloeckner trusts, oiled with the blood of the German workers, are quietly going on at a fast pace and producing great profit. The German banks' capital has oh-so discreetly increased from 21 billion marks in 1939 to 45 billion in 1943. This despite the 100% bluff about 6% dividends and despite the supposed taxes on war profits. With such profits it must be a joy to hold out. German capital does not fear being expropriated by its class brothers on the other side of the water. Wolves do not eat each other. There was no problem in 1918 either. At worst, they will have to share the exploitation of the German workers with their British and American colleagues.

They are holding out!

But what of the German soldiers? The workers in uniform? They do not want to hold out, and nor shall they!

For almost five years they have been sent into the battlefield or sent abroad, torn away from their families, parents, wives and children and taken from their workplaces.

Back home their loved ones have been massacred by bombs, the little property they afforded through their labours has been destroyed and their wives have to do terrible jobs just to get a little to eat and some worthless paper-money. All that for profits for the capitalist hyenas and the empty slogans of their Nazi lackeys.

What is left for the German soldier to defend?

Gestapo terror? The socialism of long journeys on troopships, people's soup kitchens, overtime at work, working on Sundays, wage cuts, speed-ups, the most shameful capitalist exploitation, militarism, great promises and the Second World War?

So why don't Hitler and the Krupps, Goebbels and Siemens defend their paradise themselves? We want to go back home!

But if we do not want to fight this hopeless struggle, does that mean that we want to give the reactionary Eisenhower a free ride to Berlin? Hitler or Eisenhower? Are those the only two choices?

There does exist a third: workers' revolution in Germany, Europe and the world, which would kill the capitalist system at its roots and which would put an end to war and crises, and which alone can bring the working masses peace, freedom and bread.

Of course, the British and American bourgeoisie intends to drown this revolution in blood. To do this it will not blush at using the repressive apparatus inherited from German capital, whether that means police, special troops or the old Nazi formations themselves.

But there is a gap in these gentlemen's register! They have not accounted for the British and American workers.

In the first three months of 1943 the British workers had 200,000 strike days. In the same period this year the figure was almost 2,500,000.

Soldiers! Comrades!

Listen to these figures! Understand what they mean! They are a salute from our class comrades on the other side of the Channel, who are shouting to us "We, British workers, understand each day a little better that the capitalists are not fighting this war to get rid of Hitler and the Gestapo but rather in their own imperialist interests and for profit."

The British workers have also taken up the struggle against poverty, war and capital. Faced with a proletarian Germany the Churchills and Roosevelts would be keen to unleash the hounds of reaction.

But they would need them to keep down their own workers.

The question posed is not: Hitler or Eisenhower, but who will defeat Hitler?

## Eisenhower or the German proletariat?

If the German proletariat defeats Hitler before the final military defeat and occupation and establishes its own power across Germany with workers' and soldiers' councils, the American and British military cliques would then have to openly show before the eyes of the world proletariat who they really are: not liberators from Hitler's dictatorship but the executioners of the European revolution and the champions of Anglo-American imperialist military dictatorship. The American and British workers' march towards revolution would thus make a huge step forward.

*The German revolution as a response to the Anglo-American invasion would give the proletariat of Germany, Europe and the whole world a massive advance against world reaction!*

But revolutions do not fall from the sky. They are prepared by innumerable small struggles fought by the revolutionary class. But today there are almost no such struggles in Germany. Struggles over basic demands, for food, for wages, for the most basic rights and freedoms to protest, strike and demonstrate have been crushed by Hitlerite reaction with the bloodiest of terror.

We can only speak one language, the language of weapons

The German workers hold these weapons in their hands already.

But individuals or little units throwing themselves into struggle out of desperation is not very effective. They just make themselves into the disarmed victims of the most brutal of terror. The struggle must be planned and organised, with sufficient size that it can become the signal for revolution across Germany. When the British and Americans invade the revolutionary temperature will reach boiling point. In this situation an uprising by one garrison, in one town or one province, or in one section of the fleet could be the spark which sets off the social explosion.

The time of the Kiel sailors and dockworkers will return!

But this time around the German revolution will be followed by proletarian uprising across Europe!

*Therefore the most important slogan now is: organise to prepare revolutionary struggles!*

Form secret cells of three or four people! Bring into these groups all workers who understand the need for revolutionary struggle and want to participate in it!

Comrades, you who believe in your unity, form committees for revolutionary struggle!

*On each ship, in each barracks, in each trench, we must create*

*revolutionary cells and committees for struggle!*

Build links with comrades in other units! Encourage them to form their own cells!

Make contact with the local workers, with the French, Belgian and Dutch workers in the West! Our struggle is a common struggle!

Keep up contacts! Do not go into struggle without your comrades' agreement! When struggle breaks out, have the courage to build it as much as possible! Spread news of the struggle by all means to all countries!

Comrades! Soldiers!

As much as we want a repeat of the Kiel days we must not allow the creation of a second Weimar. The workers' and soldiers' soviets which at the time of the revolution spread far and wide at home and on the front must not again be dissolved; on the contrary they must be the foundations of workers' power. But in the struggle for the establishment of workers' power the revolutionary proletarian party is indispensable. The Second International and the former Third International, the reformists and the Stalinists, are planning, on the orders of world capital and the Moscow bureaucracy, to destroy the proletarian revolution from within, as they have in the past. We must fight this project!

The Fourth International, the Trotskyists in America, Britain and the occupied territories of Europe, are holding fast on the side of the working class in its struggles, despite

### Eisenhower gives orders in occupied Germany

the terror of the Gestapo and Scotland Yard, and preparing the class for its future revolutionary tasks. In Germany too, revolutionary workers are organising themselves under its banner and are building the centre of a new internationalist communist party.

But all the revolutionary cells and committees for struggle must work with all workers — even if today they are still reformists or Stalinists — who sincerely want to fight the current system to the last. The future course of the revolution, and the struggle itself, will attract all these comrades to our ranks!

The German workers' response to the British and American capitalists' invasion must under no circumstances be defence of Hitlerite barbarism! The German workers must respond in the Russian manner — not in the manner of Stalin, but that of Lenin and Trotsky. Their slogans are:

*Revolutionary fraternisation with the British and American soldiers against the German, British and American Generals and their capitalist masters!*

*Revolutionary fraternisation with all European workers in our common struggle!*

*For a workers' revolution in Germany, Europe and the world!*

Long live the Soviet Socialist Republic of Germany!

Long live the Soviet United States of Europe!

Long live the Soviet Socialist Republic of the World!

# Down with the war! For immediate peace!

JULY 1944

THE Nazi press's propaganda sees the hand of Providence everywhere. Each day they expect the miracle without which victory is now impossible. Even the attack Hitler survived, an attack made by circles of high-up officers and a section of the big bourgeoisie who have realised that Germany's situation is desperate and want to replace the Hitlerite state with another bourgeois state. But the bureaucrats do not want to give up power so quickly; on the contrary, they want to hang on to the butter dish as long as possible. They are defending themselves with the most brutal of terror, Himmler having received carte blanche to exercise it freely; in the big cities of Germany and even in the occupied territories in the West there have been incidents and bloody clashes between the Gestapo and the Wehrmacht. The Hitlerite state is falling apart, which is why they are calling on German soldiers to hold out until the last.

Hitler's fall means revolution in Germany. Only the inhuman terror of the Gestapo, SS and other gendarmes is keeping the German soldiers on the front. All German soldiers and workers have had more than enough of the war and want to go home, above all now that they know that victory is unthinkable. They only have one slogan in their heads:

*Down with the war, for immediate peace!*

Hitler can rely on the German army less and less. He has to send Waffen SS, parachutists and other shock troops all over the place to stave off collapse.

Signs of discontent in the German army are becoming more numerous and more visible. Everywhere we find fraternisation between German soldiers and French and

Belgian workers. Many soldiers have joined the maquis. The courts-martial are in full flow.

### BLOODY FIGHTING, RETREATS ON ALL FRONTS

German troops are being forced back by the formidable strength of the Americans. But the British and American "liberators" do not want to race ahead, since this would cause the decomposition of the front in Normandy and even the end of the German occupation of France, that is to say, the German revolution, which the American capitalists do not want. These formidable battles are not only happening in France; in Italy too each day more and more significant areas have become battlefields. The Red Army is still progressing: it is in the heart of the Baltic States, it is marching on Warsaw and it has arrived on the borders of East Prussia.

Germany is in an absolutely desperate situation

Hitler, Goering, Goebbels and their lying propaganda put their only hopes of winning the war in some God-given miracle, Providence and secret new weapons. We have already heard such talk once before in the war, from Reynaud, President of the French Council, who said such things a few weeks before the French disaster of June 1940. Like Hitler and German capital today, he was relying on a miracle. But this is hopeless. No miracle is now able to save Hitler and his capitalist backers. Hitler has been pushed back onto his last lines of defence. The domestic situation worsens daily. The more critical Germany's situation becomes, the more the capitalists and the bourgeoisie are

divided and turn away from Hitler.

But who will come after Hitler?

After five years of endless, pointless killing, the soldiers on the front as well as German workers constantly threatened with being sent to the front, unable to voice their discontent and forced to work under constant bombardment, have had more than enough of this war which has taken from them everything they worked so hard to achieve. They can see that they have nothing to gain from this war. German soldiers, workers and peasants want to send the Hitlerite régime to hell, along with the inhuman Gestapo terror which forces them to shoot at the workers and peasants on the other side. Each man is wondering how he can save himself from this hellish war. The Nazi bureaucrats, Goebbels and his henchmen, know that German soldiers no longer want to go and fight abroad. So to get them to hold out for longer the lying propaganda warns of a new, even worse Versailles Treaty in the aftermath of the war in the event that Germany loses.

All the British and American propaganda comes to Goebbels' aid with its unrelenting attacks on the German soldiers, with its plans for a military occupation of Germany of indeterminate length, under American military dictatorship (Eisenhower shall rule over occupied Europe) and even talking of a carve-up of Germany. None of this surprises us. It only proves that the British and American governments are no better than the Nazi clique, that they are doing as they please and that we must rid ourselves of the whole system of capitalist rule, whether that be in Germany or Britain, France or America. That can only be achieved by a victorious workers' revolution in Germany,

Europe and the world.

The nationalist policies of the ex-Communist Party aid the reactionary plans of the Americans

But the worst thing is that the British and American capitalists' plans have found solid backing from the nationalist politics of the so-called Communist Party. In Moscow Stalin has created a "Committee for a Free Germany" composed of barons, counts and captured Hitlerite generals. These gentlemen's goal is to replace Hitler's vacillating régime with a national bourgeois government and so save German capitalism from proletarian revolution.

The ex-Communist Party and Stalinist degeneration have cast the Leninist programme of international class struggle and international revolution into the dust. Stalin has dissolved the Comintern, the international leadership of the world revolution, and in every country has introduced a nationalist and chauvinist policy attacking German soldiers. The ex-Communist Parties have replaced the policy of revolutionary fraternisation with fraternisation with their own exploiters, and have united with the reactionary de Gaulle. They would have the workers believe that Churchill and Roosevelt will liberate them. By not calling on the international proletariat to defend the workers' state, instead allying with the capitalist Great Powers and not calling for international fraternisation between workers, Stalin strengthens Hitler's hand, since German soldiers who everywhere meet with hatred and unable to find any solution are ultimately thrown into the arms of Hitler, who tells them that Germany must conquer Europe in order to survive.

Only the transformation of the imperialist war into proletarian revolution can bring peace

Neither Roosevelt-Churchill nor Hitler can bring peace or bring an end to the war. Their peace can only be directed against the international working class.

We must end this war: for immediate peace! Only the will of the exploited working masses can end it, again taking up the struggle against the capitalist rule which caused the war, which is responsible for it, which dragged it out and which will bring more wars if we let it.

Hitler and German capitalism can only be overthrown by the working class. The latter must take its destiny in its own hands and turn the imperialist war into a civil war.

The bourgeois parties have already proven their inability to save Germany from crisis, and all of them have oppressed the working class and thrown it into ever greater poverty. We must not allow the Hitlerite régime to be replaced by another bourgeois government, however "democratic" it

might be, whose main tasks would be to save German capitalism and oppressing the workers and peasants to an even greater extent. For this struggle, hang on to your weapons.

You should hang on to the weapons they have given you to fight for the interests of the Hitlerite clique in order to turn the imperialist war into a war against capitalism, a civil war. The uprising of the German working class, which will create workers' and soldiers' soviets and organise fraternisation with the workers and peasants of Europe, will cast aside any fresh Versailles Treaty and all the rapacious plans of capitalism. The proletarian revolution will overthrow capitalism across Europe and establish in its place the Soviet Socialist United States of Europe.

Fraternise with the Russian, American and British soldiers.

Fraternise with the workers of the occupied countries. Do not break their strikes, which signify the struggle against capitalism. On the contrary, show them that you are also exploited workers and peasants, that you are for peace and against Hitler and the war.

Fraternise with the French and Russian prisoners and with the millions of foreign workers in Germany, who are forced to work far from home, far from their wives and children. Invite them back to yours, and try and forge mutual understanding. Together, take home to Germany the struggle for better living standards, against the war and for peace.

Create secret cells of three or four people! In these cells, discuss the situation in Germany. With secretly advertised slogans fight in your units for better living standards and for more leave, and in regard to all issues raised by soldiers. Discuss the illegal papers and circulate them clandestinely among the other soldiers. Explain the situation in Germany and Europe to your comrades.

Comrades, you who believe in your unity, organise yourselves in committees for revolutionary struggle. Wherever you can, help the local workers. Try to build links with them.

Do not think that you are isolated. The proletarian revolution is mounting in every country in Europe, and everywhere the working class is fighting hard, even on the underground, against its own exploiters and against police and fascist terror.

Keep up contacts! Do not go into struggle without your comrades' agreement! When struggle breaks out, have the courage to build it as much as possible! Spread news of the struggle by all means to all countries!

Long live the Soviet Socialist Republic of Germany!

Long live the Soviet United States of Europe!  
Long live the Soviet Socialist Republic of the World!

## FOLLOW KARL LIEBKNECHT'S EXAMPLE

On 1 May 1916 Karl Liebknecht came to Berlin and gave a speech in Potsdamer Platz. He was arrested and put before a military tribunal. To explain his opposition to the imperialist war he wrote a series of texts, one of the most important of which we reproduce here:

"The German government is in its social composition and historical character an instrument for the oppression and exploitation of the working class; at home and abroad it serves the interests of junkerism, of capitalism, and of imperialism.

"The slogan "Down with the government!" is designed to brand this entire policy of the government as fatal for the mass of the population...

"This slogan also indicates that it is the duty of every representative of the interests of the proletariat to wage a most bitter struggle – the class struggle – against the government...

"The present war is neither a war to defend the nation's territorial integrity nor a war to liberate oppressed peoples or assure the well-being of the masses.

"From the standpoint of the proletariat this war only signifies the most extreme concentration and extension of political suppression, of economic exploitation, and a blood bath of the workers in the interests of capitalism and absolutism.

"To all this the workers of all countries can give but one answer: to engage in a bitter struggle, the international class struggle, against the capitalist governments and the ruling classes of all countries for the abolition of all oppression and exploitation by establishing a socialist peace. In this class struggle the socialists, whose only fatherland is the International, fight for all that socialists fight for. The slogan "Down with the war" signifies that I wholeheartedly condemn the present war and declare myself an enemy of the current war because of its historic nature, because of its general social causes as well as the specific way in which it originated, because of the way it is being carried out and the goals for which it is being waged. That slogan signifies that it is the duty of every socialist and every representative of proletarian interests to participate in the international class struggle in order to end the war."

## Class conscious workers and the USSR

Soldiers who fought in Russian remain confused about the contradictory character of Soviet life: on the one hand great, undeniable progress in the cities, including new houses, large roads and modern and rich factories, and on the other hand miserable shacks — particularly in the countryside — peasants living in poverty, ignorance and without any comfort. But above all it is the policies of the rulers of the Soviet Union which confuse the German soldiers and workers: their chauvinist policies and their collaboration with the worst representatives of world imperialism, Churchill and Roosevelt. How can we explain it? The Soviet Union is a workers' state, born of the proletarian revolution of 1917 and in which private capitalist property has been expropriated and nationalised.

The USSR, which is a workers' state and not a capitalist state, is defending itself against German imperialism and is fighting a just war.

It is every worker's duty to defend it against imperialism.

But while the USSR is a workers' state, it is at the same time a degenerated workers' state ruled by a parasitic bureaucracy which grew out of the country's backwardness and the postponement of socialist revolution in other countries.

Stalin is the representative of this bureaucracy of party and state functionaries, specialists and army men. Class-conscious workers are for the USSR, for the country which thanks to its economic system is closed off from imperialist exploitation and which because of the nationalisation of private property allows the development of productive forces.

But class-conscious workers are also opposed to Stalin's political régime in the USSR, which hampers the country's economic progress and which leads reactionary policies contrary to the interests of the Soviet people and the international proletariat. The capitalists, whether fascists or democrats, equate the USSR's social system with Stalin's current policies in government. But class-conscious workers, who defend the USSR's economic system against imperialist aggression in this war, also fight against Stalin's political régime. That is to say, class-conscious workers both fight to defend the USSR and criticise

Stalin's reactionary policies, encouraging the Soviet masses to overthrow the bureaucratic caste which rules over them.

They do not however allow any let-up in the class struggle in the countries allied to the USSR, declaring the necessity of overthrowing the capitalist régimes of Churchill, Roosevelt and the other "Allies".

In Germany they are against Hitler and the German capitalist class who support him, and are for fraternisation with the Red Army, all the while calling on it to take part in a common struggle to overthrow Stalin.

## Soldiers, hold on to your weapons

(A LETTER FROM A SOLDIER)

So comrade, what do you think of the new people who arrived yesterday? Yes, it's the latest reserves: without receiving any training they have been mobilised, given uniforms, wage booklets and identity plaques and been sent to the front, albeit without any weapons. It is as if there were no weapons left in the country. But there are.

But listen for a moment. When I was mobilised four years ago in B., a big industrial town, we too had to wait for our guns, and no artillery arrived until 11 days later, which our instructors bitched about. Mine, a chief-brigadier, a salesman by trade and an SA member, said: "We have to wait around, but down there they always have the best and newest equipment first". He was referring to the Waffen SS who had a brand new barracks not far from our own.

Yes, you know, now he would be able understand why the SS always get the new equipment first, and why the ordinary conscript is sent to the front without any weapons. It is clear that the Hitlerite régime is scraping the bottom of the barrel and that Hitler and his henchmen can only hope for a miracle to allow them to cling on to power. For this reason they must send the SS around the country: on one hand they can keep down the youth with the SS, since they're tough chaps, eh?!, and on the other hand they are the most loyal bedfellows of Hitler, and in the case that the proletariat rose up he could send them in with the Gestapo to crush them. Perhaps you think that they could use their new recruits to do this instead and so you had better ask them what they think about it?

Rubbish, when Hitler's bastards are gone the war will be over! And they say we still have to risk our necks for Hitler and the Nazi bureaucrats, so that they and their backers, the big German capitalists, can continue to rule?!

Do you still believe that they can train up soldiers back home? With weapons? The capitalists and their Nazi lackeys are too afraid to do this. They would prefer to terrorise the masses: that is why the Red Army is already almost at the border, that is why they are already shitting their pants and that is why they are hurrying to dispatch the last workers and agricultural toilers to the abattoir. They think they can cut down the women and children with their Gestapo executioners. As for the soldiers, they will only give them weapons if they can be sure that there is no chance that they will come back, if they are where they have to fire at the enemy and there is no danger that a stray bullet will strike a Nazi bureaucrat, where they can only fire at their opposite numbers, the comrades on the other side. The officers and that reactionary crowd are still in place. Yes, we're forced to do this, what else are you going to do? I know as well as you do that all of us, including the new people, have had more than enough of this senseless carnage, of the great massacre of the international proletariat, but here's the signal that the last hour of the fascist gang has arrived, the moment when Hitler and his bandits will be overthrown by the coming social revolution, the moment when these dogs will pay for the crimes they committed against millions of workers. For that moment, comrade, take care of your weapons! If necessary mend them, and don't let them out of your hands, since you will need them when the time comes for you and us to hunt down the capitalists and the fascist gang of Hitler, Goering, Himmler and their Gestapo executioners. This gang will not give up of its own free will, knowing that doors are closing all around it. It would rather kill the last living thing and destroy the last house before perishing itself! But we will stop this last act of folly by this unruly mob! Comrade! When the last hour sounds, we will all march forward to the socialist revolution with arms linked, carrying the banner of freedom which will bring us peace and bread. We all want to create the free state of all workers, a free socialist Germany of soviets, from which base the socialist revolution would then spread victoriously across the other countries of Europe, until the creation of a free Soviet Socialist European Union! Comrades! Keep your weapon by your side, until you hear the call: arise for the final struggle!