

CHAPTER VII: THE REVOLUTION IN 1918

The enemy started his propaganda among our soldiers. From 1916 onwards it steadily became more intensive, and at the beginning of 1918 it had swollen into a storm-flood. One could now judge the effects of this proselytizing movement step by step.

Gradually, our soldiers began to think just in the way the enemy wished them to think. On the German side there was no counter-propaganda.

At that time, the army authorities, under our able and resolute Commander were willing and ready to take up the fight in the propaganda domain also, but unfortunately, they did not have the necessary means of carrying that intention into effect.

Moreover, the army authorities would have made a psychological mistake had they undertaken this task of mental training.

To be effective, it had to come from the home front, for only thus could it be successful among men who for nearly four years now had been performing immortal deeds of heroism and undergoing all sorts of privations for the sake of that home.

But what were the people at home doing? Was their failure to act due merely to lack of intelligence or bad faith?

In the summer of 1918, after the evacuation of the southern bank of the Marne, the German press adopted a policy which was so woefully inopportune, and even criminally stupid, that I daily and with growing fury used to ask myself the question, 'Is it really true that we have nobody who dares to put an end to this process of spiritual sabotage which is being carried on among our heroic troops?'

What happened in France during those days of 1914, when our armies invaded that country and were marching in triumph from one victory to another?

What happened in Italy when the Italian armies collapsed on the Isonzo front? What happened in France again during the spring of 1918, when German divisions took the main French positions by storm and heavy long-distance artillery bombarded Paris?

How enemy propaganda whipped up the flagging courage of those troops who were retreating and fanned the fires of national enthusiasm among them! How their propaganda and their marvellous aptitude in the exercise of mass-influence reawakened the fighting spirit in that broken front and hammered into the heads of the soldiers a firm belief in final victory!

Meanwhile, what were our people doing in this sphere? Nothing, or even worse than nothing. Again and again. I used to become enraged and indignant as I read the latest papers and realised the nature of the mass-murder they were committing through their influence on the minds of the people and the soldiers.

More than once, I was tormented by the thought that, if Providence had put the conduct of German propaganda into my hands, instead of into the hands of those incompetent and even criminal ignoramuses and weaklings, the outcome of the struggle might have been different.

During those months, I felt, for the first time that Fate was dealing adversely with me in keeping me on the fighting front and in a position where any chance bullet from some Negro's rifle might finish me, whereas I could have done the Fatherland a real service in another sphere, for I was then presumptuous enough to believe that I would have been successful in managing the propaganda business.

But I was unknown, one among eight millions. Hence, it was better for me to keep my mouth shut and do my duty as well as I could, in the position to which I had been assigned.

In the summer of 1915, the first enemy leaflets were dropped on our trenches. They all told more or less the same story, with some variations in the form of it.

The story was that:

- Distress was steadily on the increase in Germany; that the war would last indefinitely;

- That the prospect of victory for us was becoming fainter day by day; that the people at home were yearning for peace, but that 'militarism' and the Kaiser would not permit it;

- That the world was not waging war against the German people but only against the man who was exclusively responsible, the Kaiser;

-That until this enemy of world-peace was removed there could be no end to the conflict;

-But that, when the war was over, the Liberal and democratic nations would receive the Germans as collaborators in the League for World Peace. This would be done the moment 'Prussian Militarism' had been finally destroyed.

To illustrate and substantiate all these statements, the leaflets very often contained 'Letters from Home,' the contents of which appeared to confirm the enemy's propaganda message.

Generally speaking, we only laughed at all these efforts. The leaflets were read, sent to base headquarters, then forgotten until a favourable wind once again blew a fresh consignment into the trenches. These were mostly dropped from aeroplanes which were used specially for that purpose.

One feature of this propaganda was very striking, namely, that in sections where Bavarian troops were stationed, every effort was made by the enemy propagandists to stir up feeling against the Prussians, assuring the soldiers that Prussia, and Prussia alone, was the guilty party, who was responsible for bringing on and continuing the war, and that there was no hostility whatsoever towards the Bavarians, but that there could be no possibility of coming to their assistance so long as they continued to serve Prussian militarism and helped to pull the 'Prussian chestnuts out of the fire.'

This persistent propaganda began to have a real influence on our soldiers in 1915. The feeling against Prussia grew quite noticeable among the Bavarian troops, but those in authority did nothing to counteract it.

This was something more than a mere crime of omission, for sooner or later, not only the Prussians were bound to have to atone severely for it, but the whole German nation, and consequently the Bavarians themselves also. In this direction the enemy propaganda began to achieve undoubted success from 1916 onwards. In a similar way letters coming directly from home had long since been exercising their effect. There was now no further necessity for the enemy to broadcast such letters in leaflet form.

The Government did nothing to counteract this influence from home except to issue a few supremely stupid 'warnings'. The whole front was drenched in this poison which thoughtless women at home sent out, without

suspecting for a moment that the enemy's chances of final victory were thus being strengthened or that the sufferings of their own men at the front were thus being prolonged and rendered more severe.

These stupid letters written by German women eventually cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of our men.

Thus in 1916 several distressing phenomena were already manifest. The whole front was complaining and 'grousing,' discontented over many things and often justifiably so. While they were hungry and yet patient, and their relatives at home were in distress, in other quarters there was feasting and revelry. Even at the front itself everything was not as it ought to have been in this respect.

Even in the early stages of the War the soldiers were sometimes prone to complain, but such criticism was of a domestic nature. The man who at one moment grouched and grumbled ceased his murmur after a few moments and went about his duty silently, as if this were a matter of course.

The company which had given signs of discontent a moment earlier hung on now to its bit of trench, defending it tooth and nail, as if Germany's fate depended on those few hundred yards of mud, and shellholes. The glorious old Army was still at its post.

A sudden change in my own fortunes soon placed me in a position where I had first-hand experience of the sharp contrast between this old Army and the home front.

At the end of September 1916 my division was sent into the Battle of the Somme. For us, this was the first of a series of heavy engagements, and the impression created was that of a veritable inferno, rather than war. Through weeks of incessant artillery bombardment we stood firm, at times ceding a little ground but then taking it again, and never giving way.

On October 7th, I was wounded, but had the luck to be able to get back to our lines and was then ordered to be sent by ambulance-train to Germany.

Two years had passed since I had left home, an almost endless period in such circumstances. I could hardly imagine what Germans looked like except in uniform. In the clearing hospital at Hermies, I was startled when I suddenly heard the voice of a German woman who was acting as nursing sister and talking with one of the wounded men lying near me. To hear such a voice for

the first time in two years!

The nearer our ambulance-train approached the German frontier, the more restless each one of us became. En route we recognised all these places through which we had passed two years before as young volunteers—Brussels, Louvain, Liege—and finally we thought we recognised the first German homestead, with its familiar high gables and picturesque window-shutters. Home!

In October 1914, our hearts had been afire with wild enthusiasm as we crossed this frontier. Now silence and profound emotion reigned supreme.

Each one was happy to think that Fate had permitted him to see once again this land for the protection of which he had offered his life, and each one was almost ashamed to allow the other to see his eyes.

Almost on the second anniversary of my departure for the front I entered the hospital at Beelitz, near Berlin.

What a change! From the mud of the Somme battlefields to the spotless white beds in this wonderful building! One hesitated at first before entering them. It was only by slow stages that one could grow accustomed to this new world again, but, unfortunately, there were certain other respects in which this new world was different.

The spirit of the Army at the front appeared to be out of place here. For the first time I encountered something which up to then was unknown at the front, namely, boasting of one's own cowardice, for, though we certainly heard complaining and grouching at the front, this was never in the spirit of any agitation to insubordination and certainly not an attempt to glorify one's fear.

Out there at the front a coward was a coward and nothing else, and the contempt which his weakness aroused in others was general, just as the real hero was admired all round. But here in hospital the spirit was quite different in some respects.

Loud-mouthed agitators were busy here in heaping ridicule on the good soldier and painting the weak-kneed poltroon in glorious colours. A couple of miserable human specimens were the ringleaders in this process of defamation.

One of them boasted of having intentionally injured his hand on barbed wire entanglements in order to get sent to hospital. Although his wound was

only a slight one, it appeared that he had been here for a very long time and would manage to remain here indefinitely, just as he had managed to get sent here in the ambulance-train through swindling.

This pestilential specimen actually had the audacity to parade his knavery as the manifestation of a courage which was superior to that of the brave soldier who dies a hero's death.

There were many who heard this talk in silence, but there were others who expressed their assent to what the fellow said.

Personally I was disgusted at the thought that a seditious agitator of this kind should be allowed to remain in such an institution.

What could be done? The hospital authorities here must have known who and what he was, and actually they did know, but still they did nothing about it. As soon as I was able to walk once again I obtained leave to visit Berlin. Bitter want was in evidence everywhere. The metropolis, with its teeming millions, was suffering from hunger.

Discontent was rife. The talk that was current in the various places of refreshment and in the hospices frequented by the soldiers was much the same as that in our hospital. The impression gained was that these fellows purposely singled out such places in order to spread their views.

In Munich conditions were far worse. After my discharge from hospital I was sent to a reserve battalion there. I felt as if I were in some strange town.

Anger, discontent, complaints met one's ears wherever one went. The morale of the men in the reserve battalion itself was indescribably bad.

To a certain extent this was due to the infinitely maladroit manner in which the soldiers who had returned from the front were treated by the instructors who had never seen a day's active service and who, on that account, were partly incapable of adopting the proper attitude towards the old soldiers.

Naturally those old soldiers displayed certain characteristics which had been developed from the experience; in the trenches.

The officers of the reserve units could not understand these peculiarities, whereas the officer home from active service was at least in a position to

understand them for himself.

As a result he received more respect from the men than officers at the home headquarters. But, apart from all this, the general spirit was deplorable.

The art of shirking was looked upon almost as a proof of superior intelligence, and devotion to duty was considered a sign of weakness or stupidity.

The administrative offices were staffed by Jews. Almost every clerk was a Jew and every Jew was a clerk. I was amazed at this multitude of 'warriors', who belonged to the chosen race, and could not help comparing it with their slender numbers in the fighting lines.

In the business world the situation was even worse. Here the Jews had actually become 'indispensable.' Like leeches, they were slowly sucking the blood from the pores of the national body.

By means of newly-floated war-companies an instrument had been discovered whereby all national trade was throttled, so that no business could be carried on freely.

Special emphasis was laid on the necessity for unhampered centralisation. Hence, as early as 1916–17, practically all production was under the control of Jewish finance.

But against whom was the anger of the people directed? It was then, that I already saw the fateful day approaching which must finally bring the débâcle, unless timely preventive measures were taken.

While Jewry was busy despoiling the nation and tightening the screws of its despotism, the work of inciting the people against the Prussians was intensified and just as nothing was done at the front to put a stop to this venomous propaganda, so here at home no official steps were taken against it.

Nobody seemed capable of understanding that the collapse of Prussia could never bring about the rise of Bavaria. On the contrary, the collapse of the one must necessarily drag the other down with it.

This kind of behaviour affected me very deeply. In it I could see only a clever Jewish trick for diverting public attention from themselves to others. While Prussians and Bavarians were squabbling, the Jews were taking away

the sustenance of both from under their very noses. While Prussians were being abused in Bavaria, the Jews organised the revolution and with one stroke smashed both Prussia and Bavaria.

I could not tolerate this execrable squabbling among people of the same German stock and preferred to be at the front once again. Therefore, just after my arrival in Munich I reported myself for service again. At the beginning of March 1917, I rejoined my old regiment at the front.

Towards the end of 1917 it seemed as if we had got over the worst phases of moral depression at the front. After the Russian collapse the whole Army recovered its courage and hope, and all were gradually becoming more and more convinced that the struggle would end in our favour. We could sing once again. The ravens were ceasing to croak. Faith in the future of the Fatherland was once more in the ascendant. The Italian collapse in the autumn of 1917 had a wonderful effect, for this victory proved that it was possible to break through another, front besides the Russian.

This inspiring thought now became dominant in the minds of millions at the front and encouraged them to look forward with confidence to the spring of 1918. It was quite obvious that the enemy was in a state of depression.

During this winter the front was somewhat quieter than usual, but that was the lull before the storm. Just when preparations were being made to launch a final offensive which would bring this seemingly eternal struggle to an end, while endless columns of transports were bringing men and munitions to the front, and while the men were being trained for that final onslaught, then it was that the greatest act of treachery during the whole War was accomplished in Germany.

Germany must not win the war. At that moment when victory seemed ready to alight on the German standards, a conspiracy was arranged for the purpose of striking at the heart of the Germany spring offensive with one blow from the rear and thus making victory impossible.

A general strike was organised in the munitions factories. If this conspiracy had achieved its purpose, the German front would have collapsed and the wishes of the *Vorwärts* (the organ of the Social Democratic Party) that this time victory should not rest with the German banners, would have been fulfilled.

For want of munitions, the front would have been broken through within a few weeks, the offensive would have been effectively stopped and the Entente saved. Then international finance would assume control over Germany and the internal objective of the Marxist betrayal of the nations would be achieved.

That objective was the destruction of the national economic system and the establishment of international capitalistic domination in its stead. This goal has really been reached, thanks to the stupid credulity of the one side and the unspeakable cowardice of the other.

The munitions strike, however, did not bring the final success that had been hoped for, namely, to starve the front of ammunition. It lasted too short a time for the lack of ammunition as such to bring disaster to the Army, as was originally planned, but the moral damage was much more terrible.

In the first place, what was the Army fighting for if the people at home did not wish it to be victorious? For whom then were those enormous sacrifices and privations being made and endured? Must the soldiers fight for victory while the home front went on strike against it?

In the second place, what effect did this move have on the enemy? In the winter of 1917–18, dark clouds hovered in the firmament of the Entente. For nearly four years onslaught after onslaught had been made against the German giant, but had failed to bring him to the ground. He had to keep them at bay with one arm that held the defensive shield, because his other arm had, to be free to wield the sword against his enemies, now in the East and now in the South. But at last these enemies were overcome and his rear was now free for the conflict in the West.

Rivers of blood had been shed for the accomplishment of that task; but now the sword was free to combine in battle with the shield on the Western Front, and since the enemy had hitherto failed to break the German defence here, the Germans themselves had now to launch the attack. The enemy feared the attack and trembled for his victory.

In Paris and London conferences followed one another in unending succession. Even the enemy propaganda encountered difficulties. It was no longer so easy to demonstrate that the prospect of a German victory was hopeless. A prudent silence reigned at the front, even among the troops of the Entente. The insolence of their masters had suddenly subsided. A disturbing

truth began to dawn on them. Their opinion of the German soldier had changed. Hitherto they were able to picture him as a kind of fool whose end would be destruction, but now they found themselves face to face with the soldier who had overcome their Russian ally.

The policy of restricting the offensive to the East, which had been imposed on the German military authorities by the necessities of the situation, now seemed to the Entente a tactical stroke of genius.

For three years these Germans had been battering away at the Russian front without any apparent success at first. Those fruitless efforts were almost sneered at, for it was thought that in the long run the Russian giant would triumph through sheer force of numbers. Germany would be worn out through shedding so much blood, and facts appeared to confirm this hope.

Since the days of September 1914, when, for the first time, interminable columns of Russian prisoners of war had poured into German, after the Battle of Tannenberg, it seemed as if the stream would never end, but that as soon as one army was defeated and routed, another took its place.

The supply of soldiers which the gigantic empire placed at the disposal of the Czar seemed inexhaustible; new victims were always at hand for the holocaust of war. How long could Germany hold out in this competition? Would not the day finally have to come when, after the last victory which the Germans would achieve, there would still remain reserve armies in Russia to be mustered for the final battle? And what then?

According to human standards, a Russian victory over Germany might be delayed, but it would have to come in the long run. All the hopes that had been based on Russia were now lost. The ally who had sacrificed the most blood on the altar of their mutual interests had come to the end of his resources and lay prostrate before his unrelenting foe.

A feeling of terror and dismay came over the Entente soldiers who had hitherto been buoyed up by blind faith. They feared the coming spring, for, seeing that they had hitherto failed to break the Germans when the latter could concentrate only part of their fighting strength on the Western Front, how could they count on victory now that the undivided forces of that amazing land of heroes appeared to be gathering for a massed attack in the West?

The shadow of the events which had taken place in South Tyrol and the

spectre of General Cadorna's defeated armies, were reflected in the gloomy faces of the Entente troops in Flanders.

Faith in victory gave way to fear of defeat to come. Then, on those cold nights, when one almost heard the tread of the German armies advancing to the great assault, and the decision was being awaited in fear and trembling, suddenly a lurid light was set aglow in Germany and sent its rays into the last shell-hole on the enemy's front.

At the very moment when the German divisions were receiving their final orders for the great offensive, a general strike broke out in Germany.

At first the world was dumbfounded. Then the enemy propaganda began activities once again and pounced on this theme at the eleventh hour. All of a sudden, a means had come which could be utilised to revive the sinking confidence of the Entente soldiers.

The probability of victory could now be presented as certain, and the anxious foreboding in regard to coming events could now be transformed into a feeling of resolute assurance.

The regiments that had to bear the brunt of the greatest German onslaught in history could now be inspired with the conviction that the final decision in this War would not be won by the audacity of the German assault, but rather by the powers of endurance on the side of the defence.

Let the Germans now have whatever victories they liked, the revolution and not the victorious Army was welcomed in the Fatherland.

British, French, and American newspapers began to spread this belief among their readers while a very ably-conducted propaganda encouraged the morale of their troops at the front.

'Germany facing Revolution! Allied victory inevitable!' That was the best medicine to set the staggering Poilu and Tommy on their feet once again. Our rifles and machine-guns could now open fire once again; but instead of effecting a panic-stricken retreat, they were now met with a determined resistance that was full of confidence.

That was the result of the strike in the munitions factories. Throughout the enemy countries faith in victory was thus revived and strengthened, and that paralysing feeling of despair which had hitherto made itself felt on the Allied

front was banished. Consequently, the strike cost the lives of thousands of German soldiers, but the despicable instigators of that dastardly strike were candidates for the highest public office in the Germany of the Revolution.

At first it was apparently possible to overcome the repercussion of these events on the German soldiers, but on the enemy's side they had a lasting effect. Here the resistance had lost all the character of an army fighting for a hopeless cause. In its place, there was now a grim determination to struggle on to victory, for as far as it was possible to foresee, victory would now be assured, if the Western Front could hold out against the German offensive even for a few months.

The Allied parliaments recognised the possibilities of better future and voted huge sums of money for the continuation of the propaganda which was employed for the purpose of breaking up the internal unity of Germany.

I had the luck to be able to take part in the first two offensives and in the final offensive. These have left on me the most stupendous impressions of my life—stupendous, because now, for the last time, the struggle lost its defensive character and assumed the character of an offensive, just as in 1914.

A sigh of relief went up from the German trenches and dugouts, when finally, after three years of endurance in that inferno, the day for the settling of accounts had come. Once again the lusty cheering of victorious battalions was heard, as they hung the last crowns of the immortal laurel on the standards which they consecrated to Victory.

Once again the strains of patriotic songs soared upwards to the heavens above the endless columns of marching troops, and for the last time the Lord smiled on his ungrateful children.

In the summer of 1918, a feeling of sultry oppression hung over the front. At home they were quarrelling. About what? We heard a great deal among various units at the front. The War was now a hopeless affair, and only the foolhardy could think of victory.

It was not the people, but the capitalists and the monarchy who were interested in carrying on. Such were the ideas that came from home and were discussed at the front.

At first this gave rise to only a very slight reaction. What did universal suffrage matter to us? Is this what we had been fighting for throughout those

four years? It was a dastardly piece of robbery thus to filch from the graves of our heroes the ideals for which they had fallen, It was not to the slogan, 'Long live universal suffrage,' that our troops in Flanders once faced certain death, but to the cry: '*Deutschland über Alles in der Welt*'!—a small but by no means an unimportant difference.

The majority of those who were shouting for this suffrage were absent when it came to fighting for it. All this political rabble were strangers to us at the front. During those days only a fraction of this parliamentary gentry were to be seen where honest Germans foregathered. The old soldiers who had fought at the front had little liking for those new war aims of Messrs. Ebert, Scheidemann, Barth, Liebknecht and others. We could not understand why, all of a sudden, the shirkers should arrogate all executive powers to themselves, without having any regard to the Army.

From the very beginning, I had my own definite personal views. I intensely loathed the whole gang of miserable party politicians who had betrayed the people. I had long ago realised that the interests of the nation played only a very small part with this disreputable crew and that what counted with them was the possibility of filling their own empty pockets.

My opinion was that those people thoroughly deserved to be hanged, because they were ready to sacrifice the peace and, if necessary, allow Germany to be defeated just to serve their own ends.

To consider their wishes would mean to sacrifice the interests of the working-classes for the benefit of a gang of thieves. To meet their wishes meant to agree to sacrifice Germany.

Such, too, was the opinion still held by the majority of the Army, but the reinforcements which came from home were fast becoming worse and worse—so much so that their arrival was a source of weakness rather than of strength to our fighting forces.

The young recruits, in particular, were for the most part useless. Sometimes it was hard to believe that they were sons of the same nation that sent its youth into the battles that were fought round Ypres.

In August and September the symptoms of moral disintegration increased more and more rapidly, although the enemy's offensive was not at all comparable to the frightfulness, of our own former defensive battles.

In comparison with this offensive, the battles fought on the Somme and in Flanders remained in our memories as the most terrible of all horrors.

At the end of September my division occupied, for the third time, those positions which we had once taken by storm as young volunteers. What a memory!

Here we had received our baptism of fire, in October and November 1914. With a burning love for the mother country in their hearts and a song on their lips, our young regiment went into action as if going to a dance. The most precious blood was sacrificed freely here in the belief that it was shed to protect the freedom and independence of the Fatherland.

In July 1917, we set foot for the second time on what we regarded as sacred soil. Were not our best comrades at rest here, some of them little more than boys—the soldiers who had rushed into death for their country's sake, their eyes glowing with enthusiastic ardour?

The older ones among us, who had been with the regiment from the beginning, were deeply moved as we stood on this sacred spot where we had sworn 'Loyalty and duty unto death.' Three years ago the regiment had taken this position by storm; now it was called upon to defend it in a gruelling struggle. With an artillery bombardment that lasted three weeks, the British prepared for their great offensive in Flanders. There the spirit of the dead seemed to live again.

The regiment dug itself into the mud, clung to its shell-holes and craters, neither flinching nor wavering, but growing smaller in numbers day by day. Finally the British launched their attack on July 31st, 1917.

We were relieved in the beginning of August. The regiment had dwindled down to a few companies, who staggered back, mud-encrusted, more like phantoms than human beings. Besides a few hundred yards of shell-holes, death was all that the British gained.

Now, in the autumn of 1918, we stood for the third time on the ground we had stormed in 1914. The village of Comines, which had formerly served us as base, was now within the fighting zone.

Although little had changed in the surrounding district itself, the men had become different, somehow or other. They now talked politics. As everywhere else, the poison from home was having its effect here also. The fresh drafts

proved a complete failure. They had come directly from home.

During the night of October 13th–14th, the British opened an attack with gas on the front south of Ypres. They used mustard gas whose effect was unknown to us, at least from personal experience. I was destined to experience it that very night. On a hill south of Wervick, on the evening of October 13th, we were subjected for several hours to a heavy bombardment with gas-shells, which continued throughout the night with more or less even intensity.

About midnight a number of us were put out of action, some for ever. Towards morning, I also began to feel pain. It increased with every quarter of an hour, and about seven o'clock my eyes were scorching as I staggered back and delivered the last dispatch I was destined to carry in this war.

A few hours later my eyes were like glowing coals, and all was darkness around me. I was sent into hospital at Pasewalk in Pomerania, and there it was that I was to hear of the Revolution.

For a long time there had been something in the air which was indefinable and oppressive. People were saying that something was bound to happen within the next few weeks, although I could not imagine what this meant.

In the first instance I thought of a strike similar to the one which had taken place in the spring.

Unfavourable rumours were constantly coming from the Navy, which was said to be in a state of ferment, but this seemed to be a crazy notion put about by certain individuals, rather than something which concerned many people.

It is true that at the hospital they were all talking about the end of the war and hoping that this was not far off, but nobody thought that the decision would come immediately. I was not able to read the newspapers.

In November, the general tension increased. Then one day disaster broke in upon us suddenly and without warning. Sailors came in motor-lorries and called on us to rise in revolt. A few Jews were the 'leaders' in that combat for the 'Liberty, Beauty, and Dignity' of our national existence.

Not one of them had seen active service at the front. By way of a hospital for venereal diseases these three Orientals had been sent back home. Now they

were hoisting their red rags here.

During the last few days I had begun to feel somewhat better. The burning pain in my eye-sockets had become less severe. Gradually, I was able to distinguish the general outlines of my immediate surroundings, and it was permissible to hope that I would at least recover my sight sufficiently to be able to take up some profession later on. That I would ever be able to draw or design again was naturally out of the question.

Thus I was on the way to recovery when the frightful hour came. My first thought was that this outbreak of high treason was only a local affair. I tried to spread this belief among my comrades.

My Bavarian hospital-mates, in particular, were readily responsive. Their inclinations were anything but revolutionary. I could not imagine this madness breaking out in Munich, for it seemed to me that loyalty to the House of Wittelsbach was, after all, stronger than the will of a few Jews, and so I could not help believing that this was merely a revolt in the Navy and that it would be suppressed within the next few days.

The next few days brought with them the most terrible certainty. The rumours grew more and more persistent. I was told that what I had considered to be a local affair was in reality a general revolution. In addition to this, from the front came the shameful news that they wished to capitulate! What! Was such a thing possible?

On November 10th, the local pastor visited the hospital for the purpose of delivering a short address, and that was how we came to know the whole story.

I was in a fever of excitement as I listened to the address. The reverend old gentleman seemed to be trembling when he informed us that the House of Hohenzollern should no longer wear the Imperial Crown, that the Fatherland had become a 'Republic,' that we should pray to the Almighty not to withhold His blessing from the new order of things and not to abandon our people in the days to come.

In delivering this, message he could not do more than briefly express appreciation of the Royal House, its services to Pomerania, to Prussia, indeed to the whole of the German Fatherland, and at this point he broke down. A feeling of profound dismay fell on the people in that assembly, and I do not

think there was a single eye that was not wet with tears. As for myself, I broke down completely when the old gentleman tried to resume his story by informing us that we must now end this long war, because the war was lost, he said, and we were at the mercy of the victor.

The Fatherland would have to bear heavy burdens in the future. We were to accept the terms of the Armistice and trust to the magnanimity of our former enemies.

It was impossible for me to stay and listen any longer. Darkness surrounded me as I staggered and stumbled back to my ward and buried my aching head between the blankets and pillow.

I had not cried since the day that I stood beside my mother's grave. Whenever Fate dealt cruelly with me in my young days the spirit of determination within me grew stronger and stronger.

During all those long years of war, when Death claimed many a true friend and comrade from our ranks, to me it would have appeared sinful to have uttered a word of complaint. Did they not die for Germany?

And, finally, almost in the last few days of that titanic struggle, when the waves of poison-gas enveloped me and began to penetrate my eyes, the thought of becoming permanently blind unnerved me, but the voice of conscience cried out immediately—‘You miserable fellow, would you start howling when there are thousands of others whose lot is a hundred times worse than yours?’

And so I accepted my misfortune in silence, realising that this was the only thing to be done and that personal suffering was nothing as compared with the misfortune of one's country.

All had been in vain. In vain all the sacrifices and privations, in vain the hunger and thirst for endless months, in vain those hours that was stuck to our posts though the fear of death gripped our souls, and in vain the deaths of two millions who fell in discharging their duty.

Think of those hundreds of thousands who set out with hearts full of faith in their Fatherland, and never returned; ought not their graves to open, so that the spirits of those heroes bespattered with mud and blood might come home and take vengeance on those who had so despicably betrayed the greatest sacrifice which a man can make for his country?

Was it for this that the soldiers died in August and September 1914, for this that the volunteer regiments followed their older comrades in the autumn of the same year?

Was it for this that those boys of seventeen years of age were mingled with the earth of Flanders? Was this the reason for the sacrifice which German mothers made for their Fatherland when, with heavy hearts, they said good-bye to their sons, who never returned?

Had all this been done in order to enable a gang of despicable criminals to lay hands on the Fatherland?

Was this, then, what the German soldier struggled for through sweltering heat and blinding snowstorm, enduring hunger and thirst and cold, fatigued from sleepless nights and endless marches?

Was it for this that he lived through an inferno of artillery bombardments, lay gasping and choking during gas-attacks, neither flinching nor faltering, remembering only that it was his duty to defend the Fatherland against the enemy?

Certainly those heroes also deserved the epitaph: "Traveller, when you come to Germany, tell the mother country that we lie here, true to the Fatherland and faithful unto death."

And at home? But—was this the only sacrifice that we had to consider? Was the Germany of the past a country of little worth? Did she not owe a certain duty to her own history? Were we still worthy to partake in the glory of the past? How could we justify this act to future generations?

What a gang of despicable and depraved criminals! The more I tried then to gain an insight into the terrible events that had happened, the more did I burn with rage and shame.

What was all the pain I suffered in my eyes compared with this tragedy?

The following days were terrible to bear, and the nights still worse. I realised that all was lost. To depend on the mercy of the enemy was a precept which only fools or criminal liars could recommend.

During those nights my hatred increased—hatred for the originators of this dastardly crime.

During the days which followed my own fate became clear to me. I was forced now to scoff at the thought of my personal future, which hitherto had been the cause of so much worry to me.

Was it not ludicrous to think of building up anything on such a foundation? Finally, it also became clear to me that it was the inevitable that had happened, something which I had feared for a long time, though I really had not had the heart to believe it.

Emperor Wilhelm II was the first German Emperor to offer the hand of friendship to the Marxist leaders, not suspecting that they were scoundrels without any sense of honour.

While they held the imperial hand in one of theirs, the other was already feeling for the dagger. There is no such thing as coming to an understanding with the Jews. It must be a hard-and-fast 'Either-Or.'

For my part I then decided that I would take up political work.

