

THE KAISER GOES: THE GENERALS REMAIN

BY

THEODOR PLIVIER

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

BY

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(Scanned from the Faber and Faber edition published in London, May 1933)

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A very brief introduction to the digital edition

I first became aware of the works of Theodor Plivier when I noticed some quotations from this novel in *Working Class Politics in the German Revolution*¹, Ralf Hoffrogge's wonderful book about the revolutionary shop stewards' movement in Germany during and just after World War I.

I set about finding a copy of *The Kaiser goes: the generals remain*, read it, and immediately wanted to make it more widely available by scanning it. The results are here. The libertarian communist website libcom seemed like a good place to publish it.

At the end of the novel I've gathered together all the most readily accessible information about Plivier that I can find. Hopefully, the sources referenced will provide a useful basis for anybody who wants to do further research. For further context about the events described in this book you could do a lot worse than start with the historical materials on the libcom site:

<https://libcom.org/tags/german-revolution-1918>

Dan Radnika

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¹ *Working Class Politics in the German Revolution – Richard Müller, the Revolutionary Shop Stewards and the Origins of the Council Movement* by Ralf Hoffrogge, Koninklijke Brill, Leiden, 2015. Available from good bookshops or an appropriate piratical website near you.

THE RULERS

It is coming.

He does not dare to raise his head above the edge of the shell-hole, but he feels it coming. He hears it sink gurgling into the hollows of the earth, shovel out again and push on over the level stretches.

Quick-firing guns. Machine-guns.

And audible amid it all, that heavy lumbering movement and the dull rumbling earth – Tanks. A squadron of oncoming tanks; one of them must be quite near. Will it pass by? And if it does pass by...

Then what? And then what?

Advancing, attacking, retreating, those things are done by sections, platoons, companies. Dying is for each man alone. There lies Number Two of the machine-gun crew. His tunic is open, the shirt beneath it grey and worn. The neck and back of his head are half-buried in the earth. His mouth is open, the teeth are showing. The stubble of the beard will go on growing, the finger-nails too, for a little while. The mouth – where has he seen a mouth like that before? Teeth so bared by the lips. Yes, of course, that was it – when Truda was having her baby – Like a woman in childbirth.

But the wide-open mouth of the soldier chatters no longer. The outspread legs are without movement. Number Two is dead; Number Three is dead also – Karl and the fellow from Hamburg. Karl was firmly convinced that peace was coming at last: “Max my boy,” he would say, “the bloody show is over, I can feel it in my bones. Once we get back to Berlin...!”

The man from Hamburg had been scooping up water from the shell-hole to cool the envelope of the machine-gun that had become hot with firing. Now he too lies with his head in the puddle, the bully-beef tin still in his hand.

The machine-gun stands abandoned on the edge of the shell-hole.

The tuft of grass beside it looks impossibly large.

If only he could see the tank, if he, if very cautiously... good God! Five of them, eight, in a row! and a second, a third squadron – more tanks than there are heads in all no-man’s-land! And on the skyline flights of dark aeroplanes rise over the earth and climb droning into the sky.

The weight of oncoming material is too much. The man sags down on his knees. In mad haste he scoops out two spadefuls of earth from the side of the crater and thrusts his head into the hole. A lump of flesh glued to the wall – And so he waits.

The Americans are landing 300,000 troops a month on the French coast, ten thousand fresh soldiers every day. And tanks, aeroplanes, war material. The Germans have lain now four years in the trenches; the six million sent out have dwindled to two and a half. The casualty lists show 1,600,081 dead.

Gunner Max Müller? – Here, Herr Captain!

Blacksmith, 46 Boxhagener Strasse, Berlin.

Married? – Yes, sir!

Children? – Only one, sir! A clanking.

A rumbling.

The earth trembling.

The man cannot stop himself-he withdraws his head from the hole; he looks upward, and sees the tank.

He sees it above him, over his head. The tank makes a clumsy cradling movement against the arc of the sky, hovers a moment, its prow in the air.

Gunner Müller feebly raises a hand as if to ward it off. The great belly rocking downwards upon him-the livid, striped steel armour, the double rows of rivets, the caterpillars dripping earth-all these are etched on the retina of his eyes as on photographic plates. The tank weighs three to four tons, sixty to eighty hundredweight. The human body may withstand a pressure of six hundredweight; with seven the breath goes out of it; eight and the bones crack; eighty.....

The lips draw back. The teeth are bared. Max Müller's face has the same expression as the dead Number Two; the same anguished mouth as a woman's in childbirth.

The tank slides smoothly down into the crater.

Two dead Numbers and one living, it irons them out flat. Then it lifts itself up again to the level ground and rolls on in line with the rest of the squadron, clanking and firing, against the retreating German Front.

A dug-out, rafters, and above them a few feet of earth. Below a lieutenant seated before a field-telephone. A man comes down the steps, he clicks his heels and reports: "Machine-gun posts have retired, out of touch with Müller's group."

The message arrives before the tanks but hardly before the bombing planes. Telephonic communications are still intact. The lieutenant takes up the receiver and reports to Battalion Headquarters: "Front line evacuated." Battalion H.Q. where the messages from all parts of the sector are assembled, telephones yet farther back to Brigade: "Broken through on the whole sector – Yes, four kilometres! Tank attack on a front of four kilometres!"

The face of the lieutenant in the dug-out is ashen grey. He is dirty, lousy and, like his men half-starved. He has been for weeks in the front line without relief.

The officer at Battalion H.Q. looks spruce and well shaven. He still gets enough to eat, he sleeps regularly and at times may even have a bath in his private quarters. The Brigade Major, who passes the messages yet farther back to Army, inhabits a villa with every comfort – conservatory, garage, stables.

The Hindenburg Line, to which the people pinned its faith as if it were a new evangel in concrete, has been broken. The Hindenburg Line, the Wotan Line, the Siegfried Line, the Hermann and Hunding-Brunhild Line, built up with such unremitting, titanic toil, have been overrun and now lie behind the advancing Allied troops. From the flooded regions of Flanders to the Vosges the German Front is in full retreat.

The Germans leave behind them each day a few more miles of country, each day a few more thousand dead.

But behind the lines of defence the Generals and staff officers forever reassemble the fragments of broken divisions, reorganize them in new formations, fill them out with scratch drafts from home and throw them again into the battle.

The military machine is still intact.

Only at the Base, indeed, not at the Front.

In the platoons and sections the collapsing system is relinquishing its hold. But behind the line sergeant majors still require to be saluted, they still bully, they still drill. Quartermaster-sergeants still issue rations, still arrange fatigues, still supervise the digging of burial pits, still serve out schnapps – half a litre a head – to the men going up the line.

And 100 miles behind the Front, behind Battalion, Brigade, Division, and Army, at GHQ, where all the threads meet, in a room of the Hotel Britannia at Spa, a man is stooping over maps and sheets of figures—he is of the same Prussian sergeant-major type, with the same sergeant-major's features but better tended, a closely-shaved heavy jowl, and a little turned-up moustache, a uniform with the red stripes of a general staff officer, the star of an order on his breast. He scans once more the lines, the hatchings and points which represent armies, strong points, reserves; then he bundles together a number of hastily-made sketches and memoranda and hands them to a colonel.

A soldier helps him into his cloak; he takes down his cap and in company with the colonel leaves the room.

Outside the hotel stands a motor-car. At the station a special train is waiting. The two general staff officers climb in.

The heavy engine begins to move. After a short distance it is tearing along with its two carriages, one telegraph and one saloon car, at top speed across the country. Trains come from the opposite direction – coughing engines, seemingly endless columns of trucks – trains laden with cement, with trench-supports, munitions, and a stream of troops dragging forever westward.

The line is cleared at congested stations; troop trains and goods trains are shunted on to side

tracks; hospital trains destined for home stand waiting. On the platforms soldiers stand round the fountains and at the flying kitchens of the railway service. Every station presents the same picture. Soldiers stamping about to keep warm or seated on their packs and bundles. And all of them talking of the self-same things – of food, of their officers, of peace. They gaze curiously after the special as it races by with curtained windows.

“A big bug!” they all agree.

Only when passing through the larger cities does the locomotive slacken its pace, then rushes on again always at top speed. After four hours the train rolls thundering over the long bridge which crosses the Rhine at Cologne.

The man from Spa is sitting in the saloon, the forgotten stump of a cigar between his lips. An orderly comes in and lays the newly-received telegraphic tapes on the table: Americans attacking heavily between Argonne and the Maas – army group crown prince Rupprecht driven back behind the Lys – Ostend, Tourcoing, Roubaix, Douai evacuated – between Le Cateau and the Oise the battle in full swing.

The orderly goes back to the colonel at work in the telegraph car. The man in the saloon car, who through two years of unceasing activity has directed the movements of the German troops-he, who eight weeks ago dismissed sixty generals on the Western Front, is in no hurry to read the incoming reports. Without looking at them he knows that every passing hour is a fresh hammer-blow against the German Front. He leans back and stares into space. He is feeling the burden of his flesh, heavy and strange. He has grown weary.

One day later, 17th October, 1918.

The man from Spa is approaching the Imperial Chancellery. The guard presents arms. The flunkeys behind the tall glass doors stand motionless as statues. After the man with the general's cord has gone by, one of them whispers: “That's him – that's Ludendorff!”

The Chief Quartermaster-General, Ludendorff stands before the members of the War Cabinet, the members of the newly-appointed National Government. The meeting is presided over by the Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden. Beside the Chancellor sits the Vice-Chancellor, von Payer, on either side of the table are the ministers and Secretaries of State. The patriotic Left is represented by the Social Democrat, Scheidemann.

The members of the Cabinet are putting questions. The defeated General answers:

“War is not a matter of simple arithmetic – no one can really tell what will happen. ... Germany's luck may easily turn again. ... Gaps four miles wide have been made in the front, it is true, nevertheless the enemy has not broken through We have been pushed back, but it came off all right. . . . One should not overestimate the Americans The 41st Division? That was a matter of morale. The Division had had influenza. They were short of rations I have every hope that the present fear of the tanks will in time be overcome. Once the morale is restored; the troops will make short work of them-as it is, the Jäger battalions and the Guards have rare sport shooting them up... If the army can get through the next four weeks successfully, and winter comes, then we are well away... It all depends on what the homeland can still give us. It is a question of man-power.”

The Western Front is collapsing; the allies are defaulting; the reserves of men are exhausted; yet the General still begs for a last 600,000 men.

There he sits – a uniform, decorations, the “pour le mérite” on his breast. His heavy, fleshy face is expressionless. When he looks at the members of the War Council his glance is sidelong under half-closed eyelids. The Minister for War, the Secretary of State for the Navy, Admiral von Scheer, General Hoffmann who has been summoned from the Eastern Front, all these are fighters. The Imperial Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden also ranks as a general, but he is not wearing his uniform. The rest – the Vice-Chancellor, the Secretaries of State and the various ministers are civilians. One is a barrister, another a judge, a third a journalist; the Social-Democratic Secretary of State was once a printer.

What is the matter with the fellow? What is biting him now? Gröber, the leader of the Centre Party, an octogenarian with a long white beard, turns his great gleaming spectacles upon the Chief Quartermaster-General.

He begins to talk of the depressed mood of the troops. "It is primarily a matter of feeding.

Take the

officers' canteens, for instance – understand that the officers can get additional supplies and even luxuries; but if a private soldier comes in, he is told it is not intended for him. Cannot such glaring contrasts be avoided?"

Ludendorff surveys the ministers – neither have these gentlemen the appearance of drawing their midday ration from the soup-kitchens – but he replies patiently to the question. "In the trenches both officers and men eat from the same field-cooker. But the Staff is situated differently and it is only natural if they arrange things better. It is hardly to be expected we should eat from the field-kitchens. Whatever is fair and just we enforce. The mischief is that rumours are circulated which are injurious to our reputation"

The Chancellor calls the gentlemen to order: "I must ask you not to go into details; we have not time for that."

They discuss the position on the Western Front, the occupied regions in the East, the possibility of withdrawing troops from the Eastern Front to strengthen the West.

"What is the precise value of the Ukraine as a source of food?"

"Well, we bought up a million and a half tons of grain there which are already beginning to rot!"

"It is no longer possible to get any considerable quantity of grain, fodder or cattle from there, so I suggest we abandon the occupation of the Ukraine, and in case of necessity supplement our supplies by smuggling."

But then there are political considerations: "We must hold the Ukraine as a concentration-point against the Russian menace, against Bolshevism."

Dr. Solf, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, has a report from the Consul on conditions in the Ukraine and informs the meeting that the economic value of the country to Germany is very considerable. "I also asked Herr von Mumm what would happen in the Ukraine if we withdrew the German troops. He was sure, so he told me, that the Bolsheviks would then gain control and behave in the most savage and terrible manner. All the well-to-do would be executed."

"We should have to chance that; even though it were against our pledged word," retorted Ludendorff. "Is the evacuation necessary or not necessary for Germany? If it is, then it must be done, no matter what the consequences."

But General Hoffmann requires three months to withdraw his divisions from the East. And it is generally agreed that the troops, infected as they are with Bolshevism, are no longer suitable to fight in the West.

Therefore the Western Front must be reinforced from home.

The Chancellor breaks off the debate on the Ukraine: "I pass now to the second question: Is the country prepared to place the necessary man-power at the disposal of the Higher Command?"

The Minister for War and the Chief of Staff, Colonel Heye, who has accompanied Ludendorff from Spa, speak in reply to this question. The Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor and the various Secretaries of State ask questions.

Ludendorff follows the arguments brought forward with ever growing concern. In his hand he has the agenda drawn up by the Cabinet as a basis for the discussion; he sets it down on the table and restlessly shoves it hither and thither– Yes, His Excellency the Quartermaster-General who has overthrown Cabinets and meditated Dictatorship; who has already prepared a political programme for the repopulation of the country after the conclusion of the "victorious war", according to which the Government and the General Staff shall supervise domestic life, regulate propagation, education, sanitation and housing-reform; organize the struggle against decreasing birth-rate, gonorrhoea and syphilis, against celibacy and promiscuity, against the use of contraceptives, against excessive attendance at cinemas and against the use of tobacco and alcohol by the young; who has a politico-military programme which beginning with bonuses for nursing mothers, and by means of patriotic instruction, a law requiring military training in schools, an extension of the period of military service, a tax on bachelors, and by the granting of privileges to patriotic organizations, is to transform German citizens into soldiers and the begetters of future soldiers– Yes, His Excellency

General Ludendorff who would turn Germany into one vast barracks, German industry into a body of army contractors, and make the entire population of the country the compulsory inmates of this great barracks, his Excellency, who has sent 1,600,000 men to their death for this "Greater Fatherland", his Excellency has become nervous and is now fidgeting with a piece of paper. He looks around in search of help, his glance stops at the face of the Secretary of State, Scheidemann, and he hangs on those watery blue eyes.

Scheidemann, thin, a great shining skull, tufts of grey hair on the temples, straightens up in his chair: "I believe it may still be possible to round up a few hundred thousand more men for the Army, but he would be deceiving himself who imagined that those hundreds of thousands would in any way improve the morale of the army...."

Scheidemann, representing the Social Democracy, the last political capital of Imperial Germany, is General Ludendorff's last hope.

"Could not your Excellency contrive to raise the spirits of the masses?"

His Excellency Herr Scheidemann replies: "It is really a question of food. We have no meat, we cannot bring up potatoes because we are short four thousand trucks daily, we have practically no more fats. The shortage is so great that it is a puzzle how Berlin North and Berlin East are to get their food. So long as this puzzle remains unsolved, it is impossible to raise the spirits of the people."

When Scheidemann talks of the masses, he speaks as a professional, as a technical expert, to advise the Government what pressure the body politic can support without danger of an explosion. The explosion now appears to be inevitable. The duration of the war, the defection of the other allies, the ever increasing misery at home, the transport crisis, the food shortage...

The army has only sufficient oil for another six weeks.

Admiral von Scheer expresses his readiness to hand over to the army the navy's oil stocks, of which it has sufficient for another eight months. At this point Drews, Minister for the Interior, reminds the meeting of the paraffin lamps of the civil population: "Ten thousand tons of oil monthly are the minimum requirement, if the people are to be kept even moderately quiet through the winter."

The Secretaries of State see no way out. The seventy one year-old Vice-Chancellor von Payer sits there with knitted brows. Secretary of State Gröber has sunk down into his chair. The eyes behind the great spectacles stare wearily, ever at the self-same spot. Dr. Solf looks again and again across at Ludendorff who, through his insistent demand fourteen days ago for an armistice, has brought the Cabinet to this desperate pass, and yet who today suddenly advances the opinion that the Front may yet be able to hold out until the early spring. But the situation report which he has just given refutes this opinion, and above all it admits of no strong reply to President Wilson's humiliating note. The discussion continually returns to the general depression in the army and to the desperate condition of the people.

"One must not overemphasize the question of the morale of the army – it is, after all, a very uncertain factor," interposes Under-Secretary Haussmann.

The Vice-Chancellor supports him: "I do not see things quite so gloomily as His Excellency Herr Scheidemann. If our note is framed in such a way that the people can gather that, though we are in a difficult position, still we are not throwing up the sponge, then all is not yet lost."

The Quartermaster-General makes a sudden movement: "The Vice-Chancellor has expressed my own feelings. The whole question is, can we do it? I can only repeat my request: Stir up the people! Rouse them! Could not Herr Ebert do it?"

New factors are introduced.

The Chief of Staff, Colonel Heye, is reading out figures from which the sorely diminished strength of the divisions on the Western Front and the steadily increasing superiority of the enemy becomes only too evident.

General Ludendorff points out on the other hand, that the war weariness is growing in France and the Allied countries also.

"Can the army still hold the enemy, or must we accept Wilson's conditions? That is the question

we have to answer.”

Prince Max hands over the chair to the Vice-Chancellor and leaves the meeting. Scheidemann follows the Prince with his eye and exchanges a knowing glance with Secretary Haussmann. The Prince has gone to consult his private secretary, Hahn, whom he has brought with him to Berlin, but who, having no official status, has not access to the meetings of the Cabinet.

On his return the Prince resumes the chair and proceeds with the discussion.

Ludendorff is speaking about the question of the note in answer to Wilson: “...I feel that, rather than accept terms which are too hard, we should say to the enemy: You must fight for it!”

“Would that not only make matters worse?”

“Nothing could be worse!”

“Oh yes, they could break through into Germany”

“We have not come to that pass yet.”

Dr. Solf stands up: “It is my responsibility to advise the Chancellor. At the beginning of this month the political leaders of the Reich were compelled by the Higher Command to ask for an armistice. Now Wilson’s answer has come, and at once the scene is changed and we are told that we can still hold out, that, indeed, we are in an even better position than before. I am bewildered. What is behind this? Why is a thing possible now which but a fortnight ago we were told was impossible?”

Ludendorff reiterates always the same demand: Men! More men! A final levy, the class 1901, must be called up. Let the Minister for War comb the country, the Base, and industry once again.

The Chancellor tries to sum up the facts. Again and again he breaks off in astonishment as General Ludendorff interrupts with vague phrases: “If the army ... one might ... I hope ... luck ... chance... It is possible, but we should not count on it – that would make more trouble for ourselves.... Italy is war weary ...then again, the Americans have the influenza badly ...By next spring we should be in a better position ...” The Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, concludes: “This is not the considered report of a responsible Field-Marshal to a responsible Government, this is mere propaganda. Any turn of events in our favour is out of the question. The enemy has the superiority both in men and material. The exchange of notes with Wilson must proceed. Should the conditions of armistice prove dishonourable, then we shall have to make the appeal for a last defence. But this last desperate struggle must not be led by General Ludendorff!”

Prince Max stands up: “Has anyone any further observations to make upon the questions which we desired to put to His Excellency General Ludendorff?”

There is no response.

“Then the discussion is closed.”

His Highness Prince Max of Baden is the fourth War Chancellor. The first Chancellor had to go because he was too “slack” for the militarists; the second, because he was unable to bring the requirements of the Higher Command into accord with the growing war-weariness of the people; the third, a dying man, resigned when the German armies were already in full retreat.

Prince Max was summoned only after the Higher Command had decided to accept President Wilson’s Fourteen Points and to ask him to arrange an armistice.

To the Higher Command the Prince seemed the only man fitted both for the forthcoming negotiations with the enemy and for the conduct of domestic policy during the period of transition from war to peace. He had taken practically no part in active war service. Since 1914 he had directed the prisoners’ welfare organizations and had laboured for a humane treatment of war prisoners. In the interests of German soldiers interned in France and Russia, he appealed again and again, and often successfully, to influential men and to the conscience of influential women abroad; for the large contingents of German war prisoners on the Murman coast, he turned to his cousins, the Queen of Sweden and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, and even tried to influence the Dowager Empress of Russia.

“The spirit of the Red Cross goes hand in hand with the martial spirit.”

“He who denies quarter to a disarmed foe, is as much a traitor as he who refrains from doing his utmost to overthrow that same foe armed.”

These and similar statements were known abroad and had gained for the Prince the reputation of a humanitarian. And when the Reich began to crack and crumble, his liberal views made him tolerable to his own people.

Heir to the Duchy of Baden, Prince Max is not only a future monarch, he is a monarchist also. He accepts the democratic principle, but an amalgam of the two forms of government seems to him not impossible: "Aristocracy is the salt of democracy!"

Prince Max is an aristocrat, a democrat and a Christian.

But as his democracy is salted with aristocracy, so is his Christianity salted with imperialism. He recommends a practical Christianity, which lays upon the strong the duty of guarding the rights of humanity. The memoir, *Ethical Imperialism*, prepared by him during the third year of the war, proposed to "temper the German sword with German culture; then in this twofold strength let Pan-Germanism march on to world conquest!" The self-complacency of the enemy he has pronounced to be "heathen", and he feels the necessity of reminding them: of the Sermon on the Mount. His own policy he based upon the text:

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness!"

In 1914 the Emperor's slogan prevailed:

"Now we shall thrash them!"

Nor were the aims of German foreign policy any more spiritual throughout the years 1915 to 1917. During that period yet other ambitions held the day. The Junkers coveted the East as so much new German agricultural land. Thyssen, Stinnes and Krupp bespoke the iron-fields of Longwy and Briey for German industry. The Generals demanded Belgium as a pledge and Antwerp as a bridge-head against England. The business of the politicians was to popularize these demands; for these the soldiers had to fight, the workers to sweat and the whole people to starve. Germany desired to annex land and to exact war tribute. So the *Ethical Imperialism* of Prince Max lay unheeded in the archives of General Headquarters.

In the spring of 1918 the Emperor was still disinclined to accept the Prince as Chancellor. By the autumn of the same year he seemed to everyone the only possible man. The defeated Generals furnished him with his programme of government already outlined-instead of a lost war was to be a swift peace, instead of a collapsed military offensive a moral offensive, instead of the threatening revolution from below the "revolution from above" planned at General Headquarters.

The Prince was against the immediate demand for an armistice. He consulted his advisers, the ministers of the German states, the representatives of GHQ, he telephoned General Ludendorff, he entreated the aged Field-Marshal von Hindenburg. It availed him nothing; the Generals insisted: "The fighting must stop! The army cannot wait another twenty-four hours!"

For three days the Prince hesitated, on the fourth he took office. The same night he sent out the request for an armistice. During the following days doubt and vain misgiving gave him no rest. Through his call for an armistice, with the implied acceptance of all the enemy's points, he had laid bare to the whole world Germany's desperate condition. If he had refused, then the Vice-Chancellor, who only a few days previously had spoken against Wilson's Fourteen Points, would have been obliged to sign the request, otherwise there would have been no option but for the Generals themselves to go and beg it of the enemy, and that would have meant surrender in the field.

During a sleepless hour in the night 15th-16th October the Prince wrote a letter to his cousin, the Duke of Baden:

"...the total collapse of the Prussian system became clear to me only when I arrived here. I shrank in horror from the task when I realized that my policy would be backed by no military strength, that we stood bankrupt on -the battlefield. I accepted it, because I was regarded on all sides as-the only man able to carry out the great liquidation with a good face. I believed I should come at five minutes to the hour, but I have been called after it has struck. We are in the midst of a revolution. If I succeed in giving it a peaceful turn, then we may still continue to exist as a state. If I do not succeed, then comes the "revolution by force" and with it ruin... Even so I have hopes of saving the Emperor and the Hohenzollern Dynasty ... The Conservatives are talking openly of his

abdication. Thank God, in the Social Democrats I have men on my side – for they are the least against me – upon whose loyalty I can completely rely. With their help I hope to save the Emperor. Wedged between merciless enemies in the West and a plague of Bolsheviks in the East, our last hope of deliverance appears to be Wilson's desire to play a big role. I have written you this, because I feared lest you at home should not have realized what my task is. You also may have been deceived, as has the whole German people. I have long known it... From tomorrow I go out to the bitterest stations on the way to Calvary up which I now climb..."

Seventeen days have passed since the Prince undertook the government, and five since the meeting of the War Cabinet to which General Ludendorff was invited.

Prince Max is standing on the ministerial platform of the Reichstag. He is wearing, not his general's uniform, but the unfamiliar mufti which was so favourably commented upon by the press on the occasion of his first speech. The house is not as well attended as it was seventeen days ago. But the galleries are full-officers, exempted men, profiteers, and scattered here and there a few soldiers. A Hohenzollern Prince has taken his seat in the Royal Box.

The Chancellor is discussing foreign affairs.

About him are ranged in full strength his personal advisers and the members of the Cabinet – von Payer, Dr. Simons, Dr. Solf, Haussmann, the ministers with portfolios, Erzberger and Gröber of the Centre Party, the Social-Democrat, Under-Secretary of State Bauer – only Secretary of State Scheidemann is wanting.

Scheidemann has been detained outside by one of the members of his party. The two are seated on a bench in the Lobby.

"But I was there, I tell you I fetched him from Luckau. There is no doing anything with him, he has

not changed an atom."

The man is speaking of Karl Liebknecht, who was released from prison yesterday and who arrived in Berlin at the Anhalt railway station just an hour ago:

"Exactly as in 1915 on the Potsdamer Platz, exactly the same words with which he ended his speech then. No sooner had he reached the barrier and seen the waiting mob than he yelled out: 'Down with the Government! Down with the war! Long live the revolution!'"

Scheidemann knocks the ash from his cigarette:

"And you say the workers carried him shoulder-high?"

"Workers and soldiers, some of them with the Iron Cross even! They hoisted him on their shoulders and carried him out into the street. And the people outside were beyond control. They broke through the police cordon and rushed over the lawns to the entrance of the station...."

"Soldiers with the Iron Cross! A fortnight ago who would have dreamed it possible!"

Scheidemann gets up meditatively and goes back into the House. He takes his place on the Government Bench to the left of Bauer.

Prince Max is talking of the peace negotiations:

"...A just peace or the peace of the vanquishedThe contest is not yet concludedPresident Wilson's last note is not clear on that point. Perhaps the new note will give final certainty. Until then, gentlemen, we must be prepared for either of two possibilities – either the enemy powers want war, in which case no choice remains but that we must undertake our own defence with the whole strength of a nation driven to extremities. If that is so I am sure that the Government may appeal to the German people to make a National Defence ..."

Unlike most of the parliamentarians seated below, the Prince is no orator. He sticks close to his text. These last sentences are heavily underlined in his draft; accordingly the Prince in uttering them has raised his voice. The Conservatives applaud. So do the profiteers in the gallery.

But these patriotic sentiments are interrupted by a tumult of noise from the Independents, which spreads gradually over the seats of the Social Democrats and Centre Party. For four years the deputies have consented to the war. They have sanctioned all the loans and passed all the war measures demanded by General Headquarters – the compulsory truce between Capital and Labour,

the bill for the conscription of the auxiliary services, the deportation of Belgian workers, the capitalist exploitation of prisoners of war. The Social Democrats are indeed still full of their old theories of self-determination. Yet they expressly agreed to the imposed Peace of Brest-Litowsk, and they said nothing against the Peace of Bucharest. The advance in the East was financed from the funds of the last loan which they sanctioned. As a result fifty thousand workers were shot down in Finland, and gallows were erected for the revolutionaries in the Ukraine.

Nor did the Independents raise any effective protest against the arbitrary measures of the Government. They contented themselves with the role of parliamentary opposition. And most of the deputies would even now sanction this new call to a National Defence, comb out the older married men and the youngsters from the schools and put them under arms – had they not now to reckon with the mass of the people.

For the people is at the end of its tether. The people can bear no more sacrifice.

Below him the Chancellor sees as in a mist the throng of deputies, four hundred heads, ranged according to party. His eye takes refuge on the great chandelier of the House. He pauses and with a handkerchief mops the sweat from his brow. He has influenza-this pestilence which has crept out from the trenches and concentration camps to gather new victims from the ranks of the healthy and well-fed. He feels the slow pulsing of his illness, and the languor which for days has been growing upon him weighs like lead in his arms. He winces at the sound of the President's shrill bell as if it were a physical smart.

The Prince is speaking of the Wilsonian terms, and the spirit in which the German people must approach the negotiation table. He speaks of the proposed League of Nations as a "source of comfort and new strength"; he quotes, though somewhat belatedly for collapsing Germany, the central theme of his *Ethical Imperialism* – "mere struggle for existence leaves great resources of strength still untapped. We must incorporate into our national will the happiness and the rights of other people...."

"As at Brest-Litowsk!" interjects an Independent.

"Right of secession!" shouts a Dane from Schleswig.

"Poland for the Poles! – the dead cry out for it!"

Noske the Social Democrat turns on the Pole:

"On that principle America would belong to the Red Indians!"

Prince Max feels as if he were in a seething caldron. He observes the officers standing behind him and the ministers seated beside him whispering together and passing notes. He remarks the groups of deputies arguing softly in the doorways and passages, and sees the Social Democrat Noske draw himself up and glare through his spectacles at the Polish Deputy Stychel. Noske, a great tall fellow, with a long flowing beard, formerly a carpenter. The Prince has difficulty in picturing this man armed with a plane and a glue-pot, he sees him rather with rolled-up shirt-sleeves chopping firewood. Noske, Ebert, Wels – these lights of "common sense"! What an irony of fate! These maligned Social Democrats are the very men who now ensure the smooth continuance of public business. They have, moreover, what is so necessary today, credit with the masses: There are the Independents, it is true-the masses might go over to the Independents. That is the one danger which makes uncertain even the patriotic attitude of the Social Democrats.

The Chancellor turns to the Social Democrats and, with a more casual gesture, to the Independents also:

"Gentlemen, whether the next days call us to further struggle or the road to peace be opened to us –only a definite breach with the old system will fit us for our task, be it war or peace. And this brings me to the question of domestic policy...."

And now the Prince stands at the rostrum as Chancellor of the Revolution, as spokesman of the "bloodless revolution from above". He proclaims liberties which the "Left" has demanded ever since the foundation of this House, and which until this day have been obstinately denied by the "Right". Civil liberties for which men have sacrificed their lives, for which thousands under Bismarck went into exile-the control of government by Parliament; diminution of the royal prerogative; liberty of assembly; removal of the censorship of the press and private correspondence;

an amnesty for political prisoners; franchise reform in Prussia.

The Prince feels the influenza shake his whole body. His eyes are bloodshot, his bald head moist from weakness. He takes up his notes and reads: "The German people is in the saddle, now let it ride. German local self-government has ever been the envy of all; the electorate for the Reichstag the freest in the world. The Reichstag has always possessed the powerful weapon of the budget vote, yet the German people made no use of its power. He to whom a master violin is given, does not thereby become master of the violin...."

The Chancellor is at the end of his speech. In a hoarse voice he announces the price which the Generals demand in exchange for these liberties: "... if we are still to develop our national character it behoves us to defend our own house. The enemy is at the gates. Gentlemen, today our soldiers have their backs to the wall. Let us give them our thanks and our trust; let us say to them: The Fatherland will not forsake you! Whatever you need, whatever we can give of men, materials or courage, you shall have!"

Applause from the benches. Loud applause from the galleries. And the House adjourns.

Parliament is the perfect expression of the bourgeois state. Each party represents some definite interest either of property or power – landed interest, capitalist industry, the Church, the nobility, the Crown. The Social Democrats, elected by those with neither property nor power, occupied from the outset an anomalous position. Two alternatives were open to them: they might form either a permanent parliamentary opposition based on principle alone, or a coalition with the representatives of the existing propertied classes. During the war this old quarrel of principle split the Social Democratic Party into "Independents" and "Majority Social Democrats". The Independents after approving three or four war loans passed into opposition. The Social Democrats by supporting the war policy secured to themselves influential positions within the existing order. But neither Independents in opposition, nor Social Democrats on committees and in cabinets, in any way influenced the war policy or changed the fate of the people one iota.

And even now the leaders of the Majority parties follow one another to the rostrum and pledge their support to the Government. The Social Democrats also stand firmly behind the Government and declare themselves in principle not opposed to the new appeal for a National Defence.

Ebert, the party leader, is at the rostrum. Friedrich Ebert who by diligence and tenacity has worked himself to the top of the greatest party in Germany. In party councils he has controlled the field of social policy. Since 1913 he has been, together with Haase, Party President. Throughout all the years of his ascent he rarely espoused any idea which was in flux and still undecided. Thus he became the immobile centre to the field of conflicting opinions within his party. As to war policy, he remained always "the tower".

Ebert is now speaking: "As on August 4th, 1914, so now we pledge ourselves to the defence of the Fatherland ..." But he is the spokesman of the majority and expresses only what is generally acknowledged and already beyond dispute. So he now turns upon the despotic position of GHQ – a position which the Generals, in their efforts to evade responsibility for the collapse, have already voluntarily surrendered – and in tones of unshakable conviction he declares: "The despotic position of the General Staff is no longer to be tolerated!" He goes even farther and gives the already waning authority of the Emperor a parting kick: "...nor is there any room in Germany now for a personal rule!"

Ebert turns to the Independents. In profile one can see the fat on the back of his neck lying in a heavy fold along his collar. He raises his voice and in a dramatic tone which echoes through the House he proclaims: "The proposals for the change of the basic principles upon which the Empire rests do not go far enough. Freedom alone can heal the wounds which the war has dealt us. Germany must be free or go under!"

Then follow Stresemann, Westarp, Solf... The new Minister for War, von Schlöcher, comes forward.

Even the enemies of the Reich get a hearing, the Alsace-Lorrainers, the Poles, the Danes, the Independents. They demand the cession of large parts of Germany and the radical transformation of the whole character of the State.

“We now come out of our retirement...” “Now we can speak openly...”

“The sword must be returned to the scabbard and preserved hereafter in a museum for antiquities.”

“Alsace-Lorraine has become an international question.” – “We demand a final settlement of the North Schleswig question on the basis of self-determination...”

Their Excellencies on the Government bench confer together.

“The chorus of the jackals!”

“Finis Germaniae!”

Secretary of State Haussmann quotes the poet Heinrich Heine:

“Alt Deutschland wir weben Dein Leichentuch. Wir weben hinein den dreifachen Fluch!”²

Dr. Solf turns toward the Poles: “I would remind you of the sacrifice the German Army has made. They laid the foundation upon which Polish liberty may now be built...”

“Hear, hear!” shout the Social Democrats.

The Centre applauds, the Right also.

The Pole Korfanty cries in a high-pitched voice: “They looted and plundered us!”

“Out with the dog! Kick him out!”

A number of deputies jump up and make for the Pole. The visitors in the gallery stamp their feet. The President rings his bell.

The Minister for War is speaking, and his voice at last penetrates the tumult: “These are dark days, bitter days, for a War Minister especially bitter. But they are not desperate days... in our army, our people, our commerce there is still strength enough to enable us to make the final resistance...”

Loud laughter bursts from the Independents.

The Minister for War grips his sword-pommel more tightly. There is a frown between his brows. “This laughter will not lessen that strength, rather will it serve to increase it. Gentlemen, it shall be my honourable task to sound the rally to that strength and to lead it out to the battle.”

“Bravo!” shout the Conservatives.

“Bravo!” shouts the Centre.

And “Bravo!” shout the Social Democrats.

“...and now I must protest against the utterance of the leader of a great party – I am surprised he should so far have forgotten himself – regret to say that I found it confirmed in the shorthand report – as to liken the Commanding Generals to raving madmen ...”

“So they are! Sabre-rattlers!”

“The system has not changed!”

“We are still under the heel of the Prussian army boot!”

The white-haired Independent, Ledebour, remarks:

“I would remind you of the report by the Military Commission of October 2nd and urge the Minister for War to go himself to the Front where military prowess would seem to be at a premium! ...”

The President rings the bell.

The Minister for War is constantly interrupted. Even the Social Democrats become restive and join the hecklers. Many leave their seats and go out to the restaurant. Groups stand about in the lobby discussing the newly arrived note of President Wilson.

Then Haase, the Leader of the Independents takes the floor.

The Deputies return to the Chamber to listen to the speech of the Independent. Haase is talking of the various opportunities for peace which arose in 1915 and 1916 and the one in 1917 inspired by the Pope; he declares all parties from Westarp to Scheidemann guilty of prolonging the sacrifices of the war.

“Shame!” yell the Conservatives.

“Monstrous!” the Centre.

² “Old Germany, we weave thy shroud. We weave therein the threefold curse.”

A number of Social Democrats come forward, surround the rostrum, and try to create a disturbance. They realize that Haase is no longer addressing the members of the House but the discontented masses outside Parliament whose leadership the Independents wish to win from the Social Democrats.

“Haven’t you taken an active part in our policy, Comrade Haase?”

“Didn’t you vote for the loans too?”

“What about 1917 when the sailors mutinied ...”

“You wouldn’t have anything to do with it!”

“You were too much of a coward!”

“You protested your innocence!”

“You dug yourself in behind Naumann!”

“And even behind a Trimborn!”

“Outrageous!”

“Hypocrite!”

“Opportunist!”

“That’s only flinging oil on a burning house!”

Ebert is not among those who have come out to the front. He has kept his place and now, apparently bored, has taken out a newspaper – but he is not reading it. Not a word of Haase’s speech escapes him. He thinks of the days when he used to serve as proxy for Haase in the party council – Haase, a barrister, being frequently kept away on professional business.

Hugo Haase is strictly the legitimate president of the Social Democratic Party. After Bebel’s death in 1913 Ebert was made president along with Haase. In 1915, when only the party officials, but not the mass of the workers who had been called up for military service, could vote, he had superseded him. Bebel had himself given warning against Ebert, the industrious official – so conversant with all the details of the party structure, yet to whom the letter means so much more than the spirit – and had begged his friends never to leave the fate of the party in Ebert’s hands alone.

Ebert, the faithful servant and chief errand-boy of the organization, in abnormal times risen to be its master – Ebert has not forgotten that.

But Ebert has his points: he has never used his position for personal interest. He is undeniably a great tactician, and has understood well how to extricate his party from most difficult situations. Then again, he really believes in the idea of the Fatherland-he has sacrificed two sons to it...

As for the barrister, Haase, did he not as first president of the party stand at this same rostrum on 14th August, 1914? Did he not then bow to party discipline and, despite his dissent in the party council, did he not announce: “We shall not leave our Fatherland in the lurch in the hour of danger. In taking this stand we do not feel ourselves to be in any way disloyal to the International, which has always acknowledged the rights of National Independence and Self-Defence. Guided by these principles we give our sanction to the necessary war loans.”

That has been the steady policy of the party.

By a breach of discipline Haase had abandoned it.

But Ebert still remained loyal through the most difficult times.

Now he has regained his self-confidence; he folds up the newspaper, and in the imperturbable calm of his fat he sits still in his seat and listens to the words of Haase as he stands at the rostrum, the accuser of the war policy, pronouncing the funeral oration of the Empire. With every sentence that Haase utters, the tumult in the House grows.

“...The call for an armistice was made on Ludendorff’s initiative. The documents must be published. The appeal for a last effort of National Defence is utterly irresponsible. Crowns are today rolling in the dust; republics are rising up everywhere about us. Does Germany mean still to be ruled by the wearer of a crown, or rather by the wearers of many crowns and coronets?”

Ebert twiddles his thumbs. The beard of old Molkenbuhr, who sits beside him, is trembling. For a moment the deputies are speechless. The “noble House” seems to be holding its breath. Then the storm bursts. This speech is pure treason! It is a battle-cry against the existing order! an open call to

the mob!

It looks as if the uproar will never end.

And yet at heart Haase is not belligerent, but yielding and pacific. Still he feels himself compelled to speak out, and in no ambiguous terms to declare what he considers to be the truth. With a wide gesture of both arms he gets the ear of the House once more for his final sentences:

“Your shouts, gentlemen, merely show that you have learned nothing. Not one thing has been changed in our military bureaucratic system. It depends upon the will and solidarity of the workers whether the liberation of mankind shall not soon be achieved.”

The Chancellor, after finishing his speech left the house to drive back to his office at the Chancellery. At the Brandenburg Gate he meets a patrol of mounted police who have just ridden down and dispersed a workers’ demonstration. The square beyond the Brandenburg Gate and the “Linden” is now almost empty. Shortly before reaching Wilhelmstrasse the Prince’s car gets a puncture. The chauffeur does not swear – he is too well-bred for that – but he does not miss the opportunity of offering an explanation: “Synthetic tyres! Had to hand in the others to the army depot.” He says this hastily to his off-sider as the car stops, yet loud enough for the Chancellor to hear.

Next moment he is on the running-board.

The Prince signs:

“No, not another car, it is not necessary. I shall walk the short distance to the Chancellery.”

The driver opens the door. He and his companion stand waiting-unimpeachable in deportment, immaculate in uniform-until the Prince has climbed out and gone; then they light up cigarettes. A cab-driver gives them a match and gazes at the flat tyre. “On her uppers”, explains the chauffeur.

“Yes, on her uppers, all Berlin on her uppers,” goes on the cabman, elaborating the theme. The triumphal street of the capital, the street “Unter den Linden”, looks like a wide, waste field. No hurrying streams of traffic, no throngs of idle people. The wind is driving along the leaves which have fallen early this year. Only a few men are about, groups belonging to the recently dispersed demonstration.

The Chancellor is overtaken by a couple of fellows in military greatcoats, their heavy boots clattering on the pavement. As they pass the Prince hears them say:

“Only got till tomorrow night.”

“My leave’s up too.”

“And there might be peace in a week.”

“Yes, that’s the devil of it!” rejoins the other.

The men hardly look like soldiers, more like workers coming out tired from a factory. Their greatcoats hang loose from their shoulders. Under the dim light of the farther street lamps their silhouettes become uncertain; then they disappear. The Prince is grateful for the accident and really glad to be able to walk these few hundred yards alone. But his thoughts return immediately to the beaten track:

“Ludendo if only he would listen to the other Commanders! No, he must go. If Wilson really means what he says, parliamentarization ought to give him all the guarantees he wants... And if he does not mean what he says, then we must call his bluff. If we cannot there will be no National Defence, that is sure.

The abdication of the Emperor. No, we are not at that pass yet. The German people is not so broken, so demoralized.”

The influenza hammers in the Prince’s head. He gazes absently at a broken window-pane stuck over with paper. He sees an outstretched hand, but it is ten paces before he realizes that it was a woman with a child standing there, and that the woman was too well dressed for a beggar-of course, that will be why she was standing so diffidently in the shadow.

After a short distance he turns into Wilhelmstrasse which with its government buildings is even at this early hour completely abandoned and engulfs him like a gloomy, wet sack.

Exactly one hour later the Prince is in bed.

His aide-de-camp calls a doctor at once.

The doctor feels his pulse-fifty-five; takes his temperature – 103.6; he percusses, listens to the heart and lungs, detects a murmur over the sternum and a whistling in the bronchial tubes. He gives him a restorative and leaves him a headache powder for the night.

Next day the Chancellor is unable to get up, and so for the days that follow. His advisers, the liaison officer with GHQ, agents from abroad, ministers from the Confederate German Princes, captains of industry; politicians, all are received in his room. In his bed he is kept posted in both the foreign and domestic situations.

Wilson's third note has come.

Austria is suing for a separate peace.

Turkey has collapsed.

General Ludendorff has been dismissed.

Groener is appointed his successor.

Then there is the abdication question. The abdication of the Emperor is now being openly debated in the press, and secretly by a large number of persons in authority. Wilson's note is taken to mean that Germany can only come to an understanding with the enemy and get peace on terms of the Emperor's abdication. Even the Government Socialists are beginning to raise the question. The Chancellor contents himself with submitting to the Emperor without comment such

opinions and memoranda as he receives on this subject. He wishes to use no pressure on the Emperor, who must be allowed to renounce the throne on his own initiative.

The Chancellor considers this great gesture to be necessary in the interests of the monarchical idea.

But the Emperor turns a deaf ear to all hints. To the Secretary of State, Dr. Solf, who brings to his notice these opinions on the question of abdication he replies:

"What is it the people are asking of me? As an old soldier I cannot simply abandon the trenches..."

Six days have passed. The Prince has had a bad day.

His head is like a red-hot coal. He lies restless on his bed and turns from side to side.

The officer on duty comes in:

"Baron von Grünau urgently wishes to speak to your Highness."

Von Grünau! one of the Emperor's aides-de-camp. "Good, ask Herr von Grünau to come in."

The baron enters the room immediately: "His Majesty is going to Spa today."

The Prince starts up from his pillow:

"What? Going to Spa? The Emperor going to Spa? And I knew nothing of it! Are you sure? You are

not just making a poor joke?"

"I heard of it myself only half an hour ago. Major Niemann called me up in Berlin to say that his Majesty is going to GHQ today and I am to go with him."

"But it's not possible!"

"I asked the Major whether the Chancellor had been informed and the journey approved."

"The Emperor may be needed here at any moment.

Much hangs on his quick decision, perhaps everything."

The Prince leaves his bed, puts on a dressing-gown, flings open the door and strides through the next room; he throws open a second door and comes back. He wants space, he must move about. He turns on all the lights. But in spite of the wide, lighted rooms, he still feels as if he were in a prison. He darkens the room again immediately, the light hurts his eyes.

"I warned them against it. The sudden departure will only alarm the public and be taken to mean that the Emperor is putting himself under the protection of the army," continues the Baron.

The Chancellor does not reply.

He takes up the telephone and speaks first with Dr. Solf, then with the Treasurer of the Royal Household, the Chief of the Civil Cabinet, the Minister for War.

The Prince rummages through the papers on his desk – letters, memoranda, reports on the military situation, on the growth of the revolutionary movement among the workers, dispatches

from foreign diplomats, drafts of the note to Wilson. He picks up a query from the Social Democrat, Hoch: "Influenza and porridge! In the districts where influenza is rampant, it is no longer possible. What does the Chancellor think should be done about it?" He reads over hurriedly the Emperor's proclamation, which the Chief of the Chancellery brought last evening, and to the publication of which he cannot make up his mind: "...old forms decay to give place to new growths... Does the German people desire that he should have no prerogative... I agree to the proposals for the extension of the franchise ...the Emperor is the servant of the people!"

The various headlines of the proclamation and "Wilhelm I.R." signed below in great capitals, dance before the Prince's eyes. He feels the pain more severe at the back of his skull, the black spots before his eyes become thicker.

What is the point of this "Proclamation to my People"? What does the Emperor mean? What else but: I do not intend to abdicate. I intend to remain at my post. And if there is nothing else for it, then I shall work loyally with the Government.

The Chancellor pushes the document aside. The Minister for War is at the phone.

"Did you know the Emperor is going to the Front today?"

The Minister for War has heard nothing of the Emperor's departure. But the Chief of the Military Cabinet, who is with him at the moment, confirms the report.

"In two hours, so Baron von Marschall tells me!"

"You must prevent it at all costs!"

"But, your Highness – why does the Chancellor not do it?"

"I don't really feel equal to it, just now."

"It is merely a matter of an absence of two or three days," interposes the Chief of the Military Cabinet. "The Emperor's presence is required at General Head-quarters; besides he ought to show himself to the troops."

The Minister for War tries to pacify the Prince:

"If the Emperor stays away only three days, no harm can possibly come of it."

But the Prince is full of misgivings:

"He must not be allowed to go. I don't believe in the three days. Mark my words, if the Emperor goes, he will not come back again."

An hour later the Prince is calling up the Emperor:

"I am perturbed at your Majesty's decision. Particularly that it should have been taken so suddenly, and without my knowledge."

"Quick decisions are necessary in war. And the Higher Command desires my presence."

"But I would respectfully ask that you postpone your departure. During the next few days..."

"It is quite impossible. I have already been away for almost a month from my hard-pressed armies. The Emperor belongs to his soldiers."

"But I find it a very astonishing decision."

"The Empress is equally astonished at the decision." The Chancellor notes that the Emperor speaks in no tone of personal hostility. On this he now builds his hope. He must dissuade him, he must prevent this journey, he needs the Emperor in Berlin, so he persists: "But your Majesty is indispensable at home, too. During the next few days the weightiest questions will have to be settled. Questions it would be impossible to deal with by telephone"

"No, it can't be done. You have dismissed Ludendorff; now I must install Groener. Ludendorff's dismissal is a heavy loss to the army. It is my duty to make that good, it is essential that I should see his successor established. I shall leave this evening."

"But surely Field-Marshal von Hindenburg can do that himself! Most difficult days are ahead of us. Your Majesty cannot possibly be absent."

"No, I am going this evening."

"But Your Majesty, I implore you"

"It is settled, I am going."

The Chancellor is at the end of his arguments. Should he hand in his resignation? He dismisses

the idea at once. Twice already during the last eight days he has meditated resignation. But he must still keep this last card in his hand. There is nothing for it but to go himself and see the Emperor in the Neue Palais. But in that case he will have to break silence on the subject of abdication, and, as Chancellor, put the question to the Emperor.

The Prince has made up his mind.

"I should be glad if your Majesty would grant me an audience."

The Emperor declines:

"No, that would never do. You have influenza. My physicians would not allow it. They are afraid of infection. And besides, you must take care of yourself."

"All the same, I would request...."

"No, not today."

"Your Majesty, I would request ... Hello, hello..."

His Majesty does not answer. The connection is broken – broken by the Emperor. The Chancellor puts down the receiver, smashing it hard on to the hook. The Emperor has-after all, he is not merely Chancellor and first officer of the Empire; he is a Prince Royal, future Grand Duke of Baden!

The Prince wanders from room to room, his illness forgotten. He pauses by a window and notices how the wind rocks the treetops against the dark night sky.

Surely he must hand in his resignation now?

He remembers a picture, a colossal painting by Anton von Werners, covering half the wall of the state-room in his Schloss Salem in Baden – the coronation of the Emperor in the "Galerie des Glaces" at the Palace at Versailles. The King of Prussia surrounded by the Confederate German Princes, at the head of them all the Grand Duke of Baden, his great-uncle.

Resign? No – it is not now a question of the Emperor merely; it is no longer the concern of one individual, nor yet of the injured pride of one individual. The dynasty, the very monarchical principle is endangered.

The survival of the Empire is at stake. He will stick to his post, to the post to which he has been called. Yes, that he will! Loyal, indeed, but to more than the mere person of the Emperor – loyal to the principle...

Next morning Scheidemann is seated at his bedside.

Scheidemann has written a letter to the Chancellor, wherein he says that he feels himself obliged to move a resolution in the Cabinet – not to be published in the press – to the effect that the Secretaries of State desire the Chancellor to advise His Majesty the Emperor to abdicate voluntarily.

The Chancellor sits up wearily:

"I have done everything. I have informed the Emperor of the state of opinion both at home and abroad. You ought not to force my hand in this way, after all, it is a very difficult decision!"

Neither does Scheidemann wish to see the Emperor put in a humiliating position; Scheidemann and the Social Democrats also desire to leave open to the Emperor the possibility of the grand gesture of a voluntary abdication.

"On the other hand, though our papers have been very reticent in the matter until now, they are not to be restrained any longer."

Scheidemann then goes on to discuss the state of public opinion:

"...it is going from bad to worse. I have hardly met a soul who has spoken in favour of the Emperor's remaining. I have discussed it not only with workers and business people, but with several well-known statesmen also. One of the members of the Upper House told me that even one of the ruling princes had said to him in a letter: 'He must go!' "

"It is a very difficult decision."

"But it has to be made-and made soon!"

The Chancellor at last succeeds in persuading Scheidemann to take back his letter. When Scheidemann has gone he receives the Vice-Chancellor and Dr. Solf who give him an account of the debates in the Cabinet. All problems which the Cabinet has to settle, resolve into one dilemma: The Emperor must go-or there can be no thought of a National Defence.

All that day and the next a string of personages – statesmen, diplomats, courtiers, even a Hohenzollern Prince – each of whom the Cabinet has called in the hope that he would consent to propose abdication to the Emperor, sits down by the Chancellor's bedside. But all decline the task, even the Generals, even von Dryander, the Court Chaplain, whom the Prince tries to persuade that he, as spiritual adviser and friend of the Emperor, is the person most suitable for this mission. The Court Chaplain protests that he does not stand sufficiently in the Emperor's confidence to make him the natural intermediary in such a matter.

At last Drews, the Minister for the Interior declares himself willing.

Prince Max, who is out of bed for the first time for several days, meets the Minister after the session of the Cabinet and says:

“So you are going today as a Minister of the Prussian Government to inform your King of the state of public opinion in the country?”

The minister returns the Prince's handshake, but can hardly utter a word. The task before him seems all too heavy – when the Prince has gone Drews leans heavily against the banister, his resolution almost broken. The Chancellor, shaking his head, goes back into his office.

He calls up Count Lerchenfeld, tells him he has grave doubts whether that very matter-of-fact official, Drews, will be able to carry his point in the unfamiliar atmosphere of the Court, and asks the Count to accompany the minister to Spa. The Count agrees, but an hour later reports to the Chancellor that he cannot get the necessary permission from the Bavarian Government. Next day Prince Friedrich Karl of Hesse, the Chancellor's cousin, comes to Berlin. He is willing to follow the minister to Spa.

A special train is ordered. The secretaries get together the necessary documents. Prince Max attends a meeting of the Upper House, and spends the whole day giving interviews. During the evening Prince Friedrich Karl is announced.

The Chancellor supposes he has come to take his leave. But Friedrich Karl has weakened. In involved sentences he explains to his cousin that, though flattered by the trust which he has placed in him, he nevertheless feels grave doubts whether he is the person most suited to the task.

Prince Max sends for Dr. Simons who has prepared everything for the journey, and tells him of the Prince of Hesse's feelings.

Dr. Simons looks at the Chancellor sitting exhausted in his chair, he looks at Prince Friedrich Karl walking to and fro in indecision, then losing patience he exclaims: “Unless your Highness is prepared to face the Emperor as Luther faced the Diet of Worms, saying:

‘Here am I, I can do no other, so God help me!’ then the journey had better not be undertaken.”

“I cannot convince the Emperor of what I am not myself convinced,” replies Friedrich Karl.

Dr. Simons goes back into the anteroom to cancel the special train. There he is surrounded by the rest of the conspirators. Wahnschaffe, the Chief of the Chancellery, von Prittwitz, Secretary to the Legation, Hahn, the Prince's private secretary, the aide-de-camp on duty, all try to persuade him:

“Go in once more.”

“The Prince is our last hope.”

“It must not fall through.”

“No, don't phone yet.”

One even tries to take the receiver out of his hand. Dr. Simons shakes off his tormentors, strikes with his fist on the table:

“Let me be, I say! I will force no man! If the representatives of the monarchical principle let themselves down at this hour, then comes the Republic. This much I will do – I will not cancel the special train yet, then after a while I will go in again and tell the Prince of Hesse he can still go if he will.”

But the Prince of Hesse stands by his refusal.

He takes leave of his cousin Max, who after the exertions of the day can now stand only with difficulty, and quits the Chancellery to go back to his hotel.

Dr. Simons returns to the Foreign Office.

The Secretaries of State also leave the Chancellery. Only Herr von Prittwitz remains in the

anteroom.

The Chancellor has overtaxed himself during the last two days. The doctor warned him against a relapse, but he imagined he could match his will against the illness.

His reserves of strength are being used up, but momentous decisions still lie before him, questions of utmost importance are yet to be resolved: the collapsing Front, the armistice, the exchange of notes with Wilson, the abdication of the Emperor.

He must keep his nerve – a few days longer.

But the fever is there, and it shakes him more fiercely than ever. With every pulse-beat his brain reels. He considers calling in Herr von Prittwitz, and he ought to get hold of Hahn, too – but he rings for his valet.

“The doctor, if you please, the Herr Professor – ask him to come at once.”

The Prince remains seated bolt upright.

Only when the valet has gone does he get up and stagger across to his room. He throws off his clothes and climbs into bed. After a while he sits up, drops a sleeping-powder into a glass of water and drinks it off.

But the dose is not strong enough. It lessens the pain but brings no real rest, no complete forgetfulness. The Prince sinks into a half-stupor. His activities as Chancellor, as Director of the Prisoners' Welfare Organization, his negotiations with persons in authority, his meditations, his doubts as to imperial policy-nothing of all this leaves him. Four weeks Chancellor of the Revolution, four years of War, forty years of Empire – all this surges through his head, bashes through his over-worked brain, wild confusion of disconnected thoughts, trains of broken sentences somewhere heard, somewhere formulated – We all want peace. But the request for an armistice was a mistake. We must defend ourselves, tooth and claw, horn and hoof! Rathenau is right, and Solf and the Vice-Chancellor are right. But consider, Your Excellency – the superiority, the tanks! Of course, there are the Guards – yes, the Guards and the Jäger battalions. Every man jack with a tank on his horns. But soldiers must eat. Else they will leave the trenches, and greet the troops going to their relief with cries of “Scab”. You see, it is a matter of potatoes. But Herr Scheidemann understands nothing of foreign politics. General Groener? The very man, with his knowledge of the railway and transport system, admirably qualified for the withdrawal of the troops.

No, not a real claw, of course, not a claw, only a hand, a timid outstretched hand. The widow's portion has been eaten. The inheritance of the orphan has been taken from him and given in war loans. The aged have not wherewith to cover their nakedness, and at the barracks' doors the children stand hungry...

Alas, where is carpentry, there also will be shavings.

Man perishes, the work abides.

The Christian Empire! But he is here to liquidate that. Prince Max – Receiver in Bankruptcy! Chancellor of the Revolution! But his great-uncle in the “Galerie des Glaces” in the palace of Louis XIV of France – the Grand Duke of Baden and the Confederate Princes, Bismarck and Moltke. All Germany from the Memel to the Bodensee knit together forever! *Up ewig ungedeelt!*³

That was Versailles, January, 1871. That was the beginning: Germany built herself ships. Germany bought herself colonies and coaling-stations; by peaceful penetration she won herself a place in the sun.

The Programme: Heligoland-Baghdad.

German Emperor – Hurrah!

But the old methods of colonization won't do any more. The happiness of other races, remember – yes, and the happiness of the coolies in Kiautschou and of the Hereros in South Africa. But those statistics, those terrible statistics! 100,000 Hereros, and only 21,000 of them left. The report please. Look at the seal and the signature! Precisely 7,000 men, 9,000 women, 5,420 children...

Prince Max groans aloud in his sleep.

He groans for the natives, who with their herds of cattle, their wives and children have been

³ This is a reference to the Treaty of Ribe of 1460, and means "Forever Undivided" in Middle Low German.

driven from the prairies to die of thirst by the dried-up waterholes. Can a cow bellow so loud as that? And the face of a negro become so white?

Stay, wretched man! Who would deny to a disarmed foe... We must have a Ministry for War Prisoners! War and imprisonment, they must be organized on humane principles. A most damnable fact: even German soldiers have been known to shoot down unarmed prisoners! A boatswain split with a hatchet the skulls of foreign sailors swimming for their lives!

“Understand me. Let there be no quarter. No prisoners. Carry your weapons so that in a thousand years...” But that was a mere rhetorical slip on William II’s part. The fact remains: he who denies pardon to a defenceless foe is a traitor.

But consider, Your Excellency – our own prisoners! Anyway, we must take reprisals against France; against England they are unnecessary; and against Russia, useless. The Russian pays no attention to the sufferings of his own people! Any reprisal must strike back a hundredfold on our own prisoners. There is nothing for it in Russia but to appeal to influential persons.

Seventy thousand, Your Ladyship!

Seventy thousand German war prisoners building the Murman railway! They have no boots on their feet, Your Ladyship! Yes, I know, those mujiks – they have no boots either. But think of the latitude, the cold and the blizzards in the far north. The soldiers’ greatcoats are threadbare and give no protection against such a climate. And the food, dearest Grand Duchess Elizabeth – the prisoners eat like pigs. I am sure it is only because they have no spoons that they dip into the containers with their hands. And if they are greedy, it is only because the food is insufficient to go round. Do not take it amiss that I seek to enlist Your Ladyship’s influence in a matter of this kind. There are no doctors, no medicine, no sick parade at all. If a man’s feet are frozen, he must hobble along as best he can, he must still keep his place in the line, still keep on harrowing the dirt, lugging sleepers and rails. Any man who breaks down is lashed to his feet and driven again to the work. What is the sense of such methods? Neither can I understand it, Anna Elizabeth! No, I was not aware that a man’s skin may become so cold that the stroke of a whip can be a warming caress. I do not understand the economics of it, but it seems to be something like this: A man lives but once, and he should not live in idleness. And the hours of ten thousand dying men are enough to carry the railway ten thousand yards forward.

Seventy thousand prisoners are engaged in constructing the railway. And so far 25,000 have died.

No protest has availed. I appeal to you and your husband, Konstantin Konstantinovich – who is a Russian poet, and has translated *Hamlet*! On the strength of our youthful friendship, Anna Elizabeth – remember the days we spent together at Schloss Salem! Intervention on the part of the Dowager Empress might bring some relief to the unfortunates!

What, the Empire in danger? And the Czar’s throne, too! By the gentle teaching of Jesus, by the wisdom and righteousness of the Sermon on the Mount – yes indeed – but who would have imagined a cow could bellow so, dearest Anna Elizabeth? And who would have guessed that the belly of a dead soldier would look like that? Died of starvation, obviously. Only the bellies of the starving swell so. With scurvy the teeth drop out. And beriberi softens the bones. Yes, unfortunately – it does happen, even in our own prison camps – it is not entirely preventable.

Nor is the international character of the armament industry entirely to be prevented. Krupp sells steel, Zeiss-Jena firing-directors, the Magdeburg Cable Company barbed wire. They all sell to the foreigner. Krupp, Thyssen, Stinnes, all of them – and cheaper than to the Supreme Command!

The German soldiers attacking Douaumont were hung up in barbed wire from Magdeburg, and in Flanders German marines were blown to bits by English shells with Krupp’s fuses. No, no, steady on! that is going too far! Pardon me! Examine the documents for yourself. The Prussian Minister for War enquired into the matter. Unfortunately it cannot be helped – you see, the Entente supplies us with rubber, copper, and nickel in exchange.

And these men? Oh dear no, these men have not been selling steel to the enemy, nor infantry shields, nor firing-directors! These are Belgian unemployed. There is no occasion for the women to trail after them so; they have no reason to weep. Compulsory levies like this are necessary on

grounds of security and they are permitted by international law. You see, the German heavy industries want 20,000 Belgian workers a week. And what the heavy industries require, the Supreme Command must supply. But the Supreme Command gets nothing in exchange, it makes nothing out of it, you understand; it does it from pure patriotism. The Supreme Command and the War Ministry are the most humane powers in Germany.

What, man! are you out of your wits?

The Grand Duchess Elizabeth murdered?

Reports admit no doubt of it, Your Highness. Anna Elizabeth dead. The Czarina, the Cesarevitch, the Czar – all dead. Murdered in a cellar, their bodies cut in pieces, soaked in petrol and burned. An officer has brought the remains to Europe. A small suitcase full – bits of bone, precious stones, a few rings melted to one lump, two almost intact still....

There is something fishy about it. Don't come to me with such yarns! Won't have it, understand? What's that you say?-the emerald still perfectly transparent once the soot was wiped off? One emerald, three onyx, fourteen gold settings, all melted, one hundred and twelve pieces of bone, two corset-ribs, almost perfect- and that is all that remains of the Court and the Royal Family?

Well, well, it will make excellent propaganda, no doubt, against Bolshevism! Was he well paid for it, this prince, this officer?

Anyway, there is no disproving it.

And every labourer is worthy of his hire.

Man perishes, but the Murman railway abides.

Krupp's steel for the Entente. Zeiss lenses for the English fleet. Magdeburg barbed wire for our soldiers at Douaumont. Shells with Krupp's fuses for our men in Flanders.

And the Emperor travelling in a sealed carriage. Deputy Ebert – no, I don't believe that! He will never make a courtier. Just look at his fat, hairy hands! But the fellow is doing what he can...

And His Excellency the Minister for the Interior, Herr Drews, too.

Baghdad – all change!

After you, Your Ladyship! Long live the Czar! Hurrah for the Emperor!

Drews!-Good God, the man is under the wheels! ... The Prince tosses on his couch. His face is hectic red.

Thick sweat is on his brow. Gathering his strength he wrenches himself free and utters a cry of relief.

The doctor is waiting with Hahn in the next room.

They had found the Prince already asleep and decided not to disturb him. But now they have heard the groaning and the cry.

They knock on the half-open door and enter immediately.

The Prince is sitting bolt upright shouting: "Drews! Drews!"

"His Excellency, Herr Drews, has just telephoned. He has been received by the Emperor, but his mission has failed. He was told off roundly..."

The Chancellor has slipped half out of bed, his feet on the floor. He looks at the secretary, then at the doctor – gradually he comes to himself.

"Yes, of course, Drews... So the report has come?"

"No, only a verbal message, by telephone. The Minister for the Interior will be back in the morning."

"Give me something to drink, will you, please?"

The doctor hands the Prince a glass of water. "Ask Dr. Solf to come, please."

"Dr. Solf has gone from the House. He left a message that he would be back at midnight."

"Pulse 70 – the fever has increased a little. Your Highness needs absolute rest. Let us try a sleeping draught."

"I must speak to Dr. Solf first."

"In your Highness's weakened state – pardon me, but your Highness absolutely must have one night's uninterrupted sleep."

"Very well then, but something a little stronger, if you please. I have taken one already."

The doctor gives him a dose – three times the usual strength.

The Prince scribbles a note:

“For Dr. Solf. And I must be called at eight in the morning.”

He sits up once again:

“What is that noise? Is it a demonstration?”

“No, Your Highness – it is the wind in the trees.”

The Prince closes his eyes, and the potion begins to work. The confused noises in his head become a dark moving multitude. He feels them passing over him. Now it is the boots of a marching army, now the hooves of a herd of cattle stampeding in a frenzy of thirst. Now it lies down upon him – an immense cow, much larger than life, settling down on its knees and slowly crushing him. He can still see the enormous horns and the great, bony skull, as it sinks lower and lower toward his face. Then he knows no more.

The doctor observes the Prince’s breathing. Little by little it becomes quiet and regular.

He makes a sign to the secretary. They turn out the lights and softly leave the room.

The next morning at eight the valet is unable to waken the Chancellor; neither can his secretary, Herr Hahn. Nor does the doctor who is then summoned succeed in recalling the Prince to consciousness. For thirty-six hours the Chancellor is lost in heavy slumber.

And during that time history takes its head.

THE RULED

Berlin, Boxhagenertrasse 46, Centre Block, Third Floor.

On the door-plate is written: Max Müller, Blacksmith.

Frau Müller is sewing army greatcoats for which she gets eightpence halfpenny a piece. It was eight o'clock when she sat down to work; and by nightfall she had finished three. Then she lay down to sleep But she cannot rest. The noise from the street penetrates to the courtyard and enters at the windows. There are her neighbours, too, on the same corridor.

And in her room a child's empty cot.

Her little boy is just five.

It was yesterday that she took him away.

At night after she finished her sewing, she had wrapped him in a blanket and taken him to the hospital. Her neighbour, Lange, had gone down first and called up the hospital to find out if there was a bed empty. She took the 68 tram to the halt at Schillestrasse; from there she had only to carry the little lad across the road. "Influenza – with inflammation of the lungs," the doctor had said.

"Consumption – but they don't want to admit it. The kids are going down to it like flies!" That is what neighbour Lange had said when she returned with the empty blanket over her arm. And Lange ought to know – because he is Vice-President of the Bio-chemical Workers' Union. That was yesterday.

Now she is lying in her bed and cannot sleep.

She hears her neighbour fussing about in the kitchen -and now her neighbour's husband. The wall between the two apartments is so thin that one can hear every sound and distinguish every noise.

"Has the subscription to the Cremation Society been paid yet? Hasn't Lucy sent in the money to Concord III?" The man stumps about in his boots, getting ready to go to work. He is a smith at the General Electric in Volta Strasse. He has the third shift this week, from midnight till eight in the morning.

Truda Müller cannot get the hospital out of her thoughts. Again and again the images reappear- the path through the gloomy garden, the office with the high glass doors, the tiles on the floor, the tubs, the cot, everything white, and the room so warm. If only her room had been as well heated, and not so draughty- then she might have kept the little chap at home instead of sending him to the crèche. That is where he caught the 'flu!

A tram rattles past, a door bangs in the house. The child in the room overhead has ceased crying, but its grandmother still repeats monotonously the same words: "Be quiet now, be quiet. Mother is coming soon...."

Frau Lange next door has heard the grandmother.

"That Möhring woman upstairs, she ought to be downright ashamed of herself! – gadding about with a soldier and her husband not six months dead!"

Lange makes no reply, but starts scolding his daughter.

"How much longer are you going to sit there writing?

It's just waste of paraffin – there's no sense in it!"

"All right, all right, I have just finished the letter 'I'"

Now her mother joins in:

"Leave Lucy alone, man, leave her alone!"

"You mind your own business. Haven't I always told her there's no sense in it? He's no man for the girl! A sailor – what's a sailor? Once the war's over, he'll find a ship and leave her sitting!"

"I'm old enough to know...."

"You're no better than a two-year-old for all you know!"

Truda Müller hears the man make a few steps across the kitchen and stand by the table. She knows the whole routine of the next-door flat. The woman is standing at the stove now, filling his

billycan with coffee. He is putting the packet of sandwiches into his pocket:

“Nothing but jam again? Is nobody going for meat today, either?”

“Yes, Lucy is going as soon as she has finished her letter. She can post it as she goes.” And then to her daughter she says: “Knock at the Hanks’ as you pass; Lena is going, too.”

A few minutes’ silence.

Then the door bangs loudly.

The man is groping his way down the stairs. A little later and the door bangs again. Now the daughter is going to wait in the meat queue. The City Abattoir issues meat twice a week without coupons-half a pound per head, until the supply is exhausted. Lucy knocks at the door below and takes Frau Hanke’s thirteen-year-old niece with her.

All is quiet next door at last.

And gradually the rest of the house settles down.

Truda Müller stares into the darkness and listens to the last echoing sounds.

The water-pipes gurgle. Somewhere or other a chair tumbles over. Now a child cries out suddenly in its sleep. Then the Möhring woman comes up the stairs with her soldier. The two endeavour to walk softly, but the man has heavy boots. Sometime later when she has at last fallen asleep, she is startled into wakefulness again by the loud booming of the tower clock-four clear harsh strokes and then another. One o’clock.

The strokes boom across from the church tower which stands wedged in among the apartment houses a couple of blocks distant. Truda Müller knows the church well – the children’s crèche is in the crypt.

It was there she used to take her little boy each morning.

She would lead him by the hand down the street – as far as the arched brick doorway which yawned like a great open mouth to receive the little ones and then shut grimly behind them. And beyond all was grey and drab. A table, benches... singing, playing, sitting still – everything according to rule, hard and fast. The children sitting sleepily by the wall, singing: “...I am Jesus little lamb!”

She had seen them there. When she had delivered her sewing she would go there sometimes on a visit, and she always went in the evening to fetch the little boy home.

It was there, at the crèche, that he caught influenza; and here in her room it developed into pneumonia. The sister at the hospital had looked at her so strangely; and as for the doctor: “I am sorry I cannot give you much hope!” that is all he had said to her.

She listens into the night, but hears only the droning in her own head. Why does a door not open? Why does a chair not fall over? Why doesn’t somebody cough, at least? Möhring is lying immediately overhead with her soldier, but they make no more sound. Lange next door, Hanke below – forty families around this one courtyard, making two hundred, perhaps three hundred people in all. And all lying as if poisoned in their holes. It is so still that one can hear the plaster trickling behind the wallpaper. Perhaps it isn’t plaster, perhaps it’s bugs.

Surely it is time the clock struck again. Why doesn’t the clock strike anymore?

There is a mirror hanging over her bed which suddenly shows a dim light.

A window has lighted up across the courtyard.

A woman comes down the stairs, an old woman with an oil-lamp in her hand-going to the W.C., which is on the landing so as to serve two floors. She does not go in immediately; she sits down on the stairs and presses a bag of warm sand against her sick stomach.

Truda Müller sits on the edge of her bed and looks out over the courtyard. She sees the figure crouching on the steps, she takes in every detail of the apparition with startling clearness – the thin hair that looks as if it were stuck on; the faded yellow dressing-gown, the thread-bare flannel nightdress, the wooden clogs, the withered hands, the fingers clasping the bag of sand.

Truda Müller is a vigorous, healthy woman; but for three years she has been sewing soldiers’ greatcoats, and when she lay down she was faint with hunger; her husband is on active service, her child in the hospital...

Suddenly she seems to hear the sound again – it is not plaster trickling, it’s not bugs; it is that old

woman! Those ceaselessly kneading fingers, and the grains of sand grinding together in the bag. And it comes through walls and windows, it grows louder, stronger, until the droning fills the whole house. Truda begins to fear for her reason; but she reassures herself – It is only old mother Nauken – she started going out washing again a month ago. She came down the stairs in the ordinary way, of course, with the lamp in her hand. But what about her clogs – they didn't make any noise! No, they certainly did not make any noise! Only when she has assured herself that not only the hands, but the old woman's head too is moving slightly, and sees that after straightening up again, the old woman goes on slowly down the stairs, does her fear leave her.

But she thinks no more of sleep.

Neither can she endure to remain in the house any longer; she gropes for her stockings and shoes, and dresses herself without turning on the light. Then she can think of nothing to do but to go to the slaughter-yard like her neighbour's daughter, Lucy Lange, and queue up for a ration of meat.

Within half an hour she has reached the slaughter-yard – an immense wilderness surrounded by an endless brick wall, situated between the Circular Railway and the poorer districts of East Berlin. The sheds and stalls behind the wall are wrapped in darkness. At the railway crossing in Eldenaerstrasse, she encounters the queue – women, soldiers on leave, old men, who have already taken up their places so as not to be late for the meat-issue in the morning. The first were there at noon but had been driven away by the police; and again at five and six the crowd was dispersed. Only after it had become quite dark would the police permit them to assemble. By eight o'clock several hundreds were ranged along the wall, and by ten they already numbered more than a thousand.

They have lined up four deep, one behind another. Some of the women have brought things to sit on – little chairs, camp stools, hassocks – and many have blankets about their shoulders. During the early hours of the night they still try to keep up a conversation. The soldiers on leave produce cards and play skat together. But little by little all are silenced and settle down, one leaning against the other.

Truda Müller takes her place at the end of the queue. She has brought nothing to sit on. Against the coldness of the night she has a soldier's greatcoat which is much too big for her. Her hands are clasped within in the sleeves of the coat and so she stands. Farther ahead under the light of a gas-lamp she sees Lucy Lange with the little girl Lena. The child is holding her head to one side so as not to disturb the curling-papers of the woman squatting beside her. That is because of lice – her aunt has impressed upon her that she must be very careful.

The woman beside Truda Müller is complaining of her neighbour:

"His stinking pipe! enough to turn a woman's stomach!"

The old man does not even look at the woman. He goes on stolidly smoking his pipe and with expressionless eyes stares at the back of the man in front of him. It is not merely the October night and the pallid light of the street lamps that make all faces here alike. It is the war, the self-same troubles and cares:

"I haven't paid my gas bill — Three pounds of potatoes cost threepence and the cabbage was twopence halfpenny; if I can get half a pound of meat to go with them ... Schulz's husband is in luck – got a wound in the leg – I wish I could come by another bed; I can't have the boy sleeping with me now I've got consumption. Lizzie is quite a big girl now; if only I could take her from school, she might help to earn a bit..."

The ranks wait on, all merged in the gloom.

Only when a woman has to leave the line, or a child comes from home bringing a stone bottle of hot water to warm the feet, or someone collapses from exhaustion – as happens not infrequently – then those near wake from their doze.

A fine rain begins to fall, and they huddle still closer together. They have brought with them the atmosphere of their overcrowded dwellings, the distinctive effluvia of the various diseases which are devouring them – lice, scabies, boils, rashes. There is no more soap to be had in Germany, only substitute stuff made from clay and sand without fat. The stench of open sores, the smell of unwashed clothes, the cold odour of bad tobacco, mingle with the vapours of the slaughter-yard and

hang like a foetid cloud over the people.

There is a disturbance among the crowd by the street lamp. A few young communists are pushing their way through; they have a pot of paste and a bundle of posters, one of which they stick on the wall. Those around Truda Müller have been wakened, too; "Look out what you're doing, treading on my feet!"

"Sorry, you shouldn't have such a pair of stilts!"

"What do you mean, sorry? Like me to put my feet in my pocket I suppose, eh?"

"The young people of today...."

"What are you doing pushing in here?"

"Don't get excited! I've got my own place a long way forward. I only want to have a word with my neighbour here!"

Lucy Lange has vacated her place and come back to have a yarn with Truda Müller.

"Did you see them, Frau Müller, the fellows with the posters? And yesterday evening too, while it was still light, they had a meeting again at the beer house, the "Schusterkeller" at the corner, and the professor from our house – you know, Duncker, second floor, front – he was there, with his wife too! These Independents, what do they want I wonder – Yes, and that porter woman of ours, pity she doesn't mind her own business! I bet she knows where the rabbits in the cellar disappear to. Feeds them with a few potato-peelings, and then, hey presto, and they're gone – And that Möhring woman too, with her soldier man! Why the whole house is talking about it...."

Truda Müller casts a warning glance in the direction of the little girl Lena.

But Lucy goes on, with a wave of the hand:

"What, her! She is all there, don't you worry! But that's a fact, what I was saying about Möhring. And her soldier, too – a deserter, I dare say. And her husband killed not six months ago! – By the way, how is your husband doing? – I say, my father had such a row with me. Said I mustn't write to Karl Raumschuh ... that's my fiancé, you know – because he's a sailor! ..."

One of the leave-men turns round, and a woman also:

"My hat, but can't she talk, eh?"

"And such things!"

"What do you mean, such things? Can't I talk with my neighbour about my fiancé if I want to? The sailors aren't such a bad lot anyway; they do want peace!"

She turns to Truda Müller again:

"Karl wrote and told me he means to come to Berlin when he is demobilized. He's going to look for work here. Yes, and your little boy, how is he getting on?"

Truda Müller is only listening with half an ear. She is troubled that she cannot picture dearly to herself the face of her child: "I don't know – I ought to have telephoned"

A herd of cattle surges along on the far side of the wall of the slaughter-yard. One can hear the curses of the drivers, the blows of the sticks against the flanks of the animals, and quite near, the hollow bellowing of an ox.

Now a light, like red smoke, shows from one of the sheds, and there are sounds of activity in the yard.

The queue numbers over two thousand.

And before the markets and retail shops of Berlin are standing perhaps as many queues. In Munich and Hamburg and Dresden, everywhere the same. Coal-less days, bread made of sawdust, shirts made from stinging nettles, boots made from paper. In some country districts the fire-stick has been introduced.

There is food to be had, of course, from the smugglers. Soldiers' wives, if they have two children, get an allowance of only 48 marks; if more, then 50 or 60 marks-hardly enough to enable them to pay the extortionate prices asked. So they go to work in the munition factories, and clothe themselves in old army clothes which they remake. In wooden-soled shoes they stand in queues – for meat, for margarine, for synthetic jam, for potatoes, for substitute stuffs of every kind...

Business has begun in the slaughter-yard.

The first wagon rolls out through the gate. It is laden with sides of pork. Tender and newly

washed the carcasses lie in the grey light of dawn.

The gas-lamp at the corner has gone out. And the police are there again.

The people along the wall begin to stir-like hens waking on the perch and preening their feathers. The women remove their threadbare coverings. The men lift their noses from the collars of their coats and set their caps back from off their faces. "Hey, stop your pushing, you!"

"It's the kid there – they are always trying to worm their way in. You stay where you are, and don't go making trouble!"

It is the woman beside the little girl who says this, the one with the curling-papers – she has long skirts on too. Lena can't abide women with long skirts. She knows from bitter experience – the longer the skirts the longer the tongue. Least of all can she stick being called "a kid". As if she wouldn't be leaving school soon, and didn't do most of the housework already! You see, her uncle goes to work and her aunt – she's got a proper fat belly already – it can't be long now. Then will come all the bother with the napkins...

The "Carry on" propaganda for the war has found a place even here. On the wall, which is surmounted by broken glass and three strands of barbed wire, are posted appeals for the Ninth War Loan-signed by Field Marshal von Hindenburg, Prince Max of Baden, Secretary of State Erzberger. There is even a placard signed by Scheidemann, an exhortation in beautiful gothic characters:

**Let everyone who has money subscribe!
It is no sacrifice
To invest money at 5 per cent
where it is safe as a ward in chancery!**

Diagonally across the paragraph is pasted the propaganda strip of the Spartacist League which the young fellows with the paste pot put up during the night. Two lines of crude lettering:

**The war is for the rich!
The poor pay for it in corpses!**

The meat-issue has begun at last.

The people are admitted in batches, a hundred at a time. The police count off twenty-five rows, and each person gets a half-pound of meat. The meat is that of cattle which the inspector has condemned; the meat from healthy animals passes through other channels, through the butchers' shops, to that section of the population which can pay the high prices asked there.

It is another hour before Truda Müller reaches the shed. And behind her are seven hundred people. She receives her meat, as does the file behind her, also. Of the next row only one receives his ration – the rest get nothing.

The supply is exhausted – Sold out.

And 700 persons still standing in the street.

The police cannot hold back the mob. They surge up to the gate, and in to the sheds. They must see with their own eyes that nothing more is left. They gaze at the meat-hooks around the walls and at the empty counters. The foremost force their way in to the very chopping-blocks where an assistant is busy sweeping away the last splinters of bone.

The shed resounds with the angry cries of the crowd.

"Dirty swindlers!"

"Profiteers!"

"Hoarders!"

"They put some aside before they started."

"Yes, if you've got money, you can get anything." – "...And without queuing up too!" – "When is the swindle going to stop?"

“Smash up the whole gang!”

The women stand, following with their eyes those who have received their portion. An old man with a last wisp of grey hair on his head has taken off his cap and is trying to conceal his piece of meat within it. The cap he covers with the palm of his hand.

The women edge up close to the old fellow. He can feel their hunger and lowers his eyes.

“And the likes of him eat what little there is.”

“Yes, and even get extra milk off the Council.”

“I don’t know what they go on living for.”

“Don’t talk rot! They feel hunger, same as you do. It’s the big slugs as eat up everything.”

“And our children...”

With a sense of guilt the old man, quite persuaded his life is not worth his meat, looks for a way of escape through the angry mob.

The police clear the shed. “Move along! Out of it!”

“D’you think I’m deaf?”

“Out of it! Move along!”

“Steady on there, constable!” – “Dare say you still get plenty to eat, what?”

“The police? You bet! But if the likes of us want a little bit of meat....”

“They ought to be in the trenches with our husbands!”

“Hey, you take your hands off me!”

“Hands off be damned – you hop it!”

The police-blue uniforms, spiked helmets, truncheons in hand, scatter the mob and drive them along the streets. The women in their heavy cloaks, laden with footstools and blankets, move along with difficulty.

The gate of the slaughter-house is closed once more and the crowd gradually lost in the side streets.

Truda Müller has gone to the nearest telephone box.

Lucy Lange and Lena Hanke have come with her. She calls the hospital and asks in the children’s ward after the condition of her son. She has to wait for an answer; then she hears a calm, matter-of-fact voice from the hospital:

“He died last night at eleven o’clock!”

Truda Müller gazes at the telephone, timorously she hangs the receiver back on the hook.

“Well – how is he?” asks Lucy Lange. The woman makes no answer.

Yesterday, at eleven – no, that is beyond her to picture. She does not want to think the thought to its end. Suddenly she wants nothing. She opens the door. Once outside she begins to run, without being sensible of the weight of her body, without feeling anything at all. In an open place she comes to a standstill – *Forckenbeck Platz*, she reads absently. Bewildered she still holds the basket of meat in her hands. The almost leafless branches of the trees are swaying against a leaden sky. Truda Müller sees all things as she has never seen them before, as if she were now seeing them for the first time.

At eleven o’clock-she was in bed; it was at eleven that neighbour Lange stumped out in his heavy boots, banging the door after him. She suddenly remembers her husband. It is over a year since he was home on leave. So long since he saw the boy, and now he will never see him again... She does not know how she found her way back, but here she is again in Boxhagenerstrasse, in front of the baker’s shop. Never again will the boy flatten his nose against the window-pane; never again ask for a penny with which to buy a piece of fruit tart. Never again.

He died at eleven.

She arrives at her house; she climbs slowly up the stairs, shuts the door after her. The dim light from the courtyard falls upon her unmade bed. And there is the cot, and beneath it the little shoes; she stoops and picks them up. They had been kicked out at the toes; only yesterday she had them back from the cobbler.

With the shoes still in her hand she sits down on the edge of the bed.

And so her neighbours find her – Frau Lange, and Hanke, and the porter woman.

“Frau Müller”

“Lucy told us. . . .”

“Come, Müller, bear up!”

“It might be worse, you know-just think if anything should happen to your husband. He’s still out in the trenches remember!”

“...And all the trouble one has to rear them!”

“Consumption it was, of course – my husband said so from the beginning.”

“Children are such weaklings these days.”

“One must be thankful he was still so little. When they’ve grown up and you’ve had so much more trouble with them, then ...”

“You know Frau Duncker? the professor’s wife in the front block. Well, she says: So long as the war lasts and the workers have to sweat their guts out for a starvation wage, the women should go on strike and refuse to have any more children.”

“What does she know? She only gets it out of books.”

“Never mind, she’s right all the same – so we ought.”

The porter woman looks at Frau Hanke, who has folded her hands over her stomach:

“Yes, no more war, or no more children.”

“And when is the funeral?”

“Goodness me, if she hasn’t left the meat in the basket all this time! Why, it will go bad!” exclaims Frau Lange unwrapping it. She fills a pot with water and puts the piece of meat in it. “There now, it will be cooked at least. So. And now a pinch of salt.”

Truda Müller gets up and fetches the salt.

Now Lucy has come in, and Möhring and her soldier. “Everybody has his pack to carry these days,” says the soldier. “I had a daughter once, and when I came back from the Front....”

“And Max was such a darling little boy,” says Möhring.

“It’s all the fault of the war,” continues the soldier.

“But it won’t stop of itself. If only those fools at the Front would take a pull and turn the guns”

Truda Müller stands helpless in the middle of her room until the women have gone at last

“Müller, dear, you know you can knock on the wall if you want any- thing,” says Frau Lange as she leaves.

But Truda Müller cannot stay in the house. She hastens out into the street again.

At the door she meets a woman with a savoy cabbage under her arm, who nods to her just as if nothing had happened. And at the tram-stop over the way people are waiting for the tram, just as on any other day.

She hurries along the street not conscious whither she would go. With unusual precision she sees the persons and things which she passes by, but only as so many unrelated incidents. She loses herself in external phenomena, and remains utterly absorbed until fresh ones appear, then they in their turn take automatic possession of her. Now it is a tattered poster on a wall; now a number on a house-?6; a man picking up bits of paper and lugging after him a sack already half-filled; a schoolgirl with skimpy pigtails pushing a pram full of mended uniforms; two policemen – their tunics, grown too big for them, hanging slackly about their bellies; a pedlar with a hand-barrow, trading little bundles of kindling-wood for potato-peelings.

“Peelings-potato-peelings!” he cries.

“Peelings-potato-peelings ...” it goes singing monotonously, endlessly through her head. Until she pulls up suddenly in front of two straining horses and is almost caught beneath the wheels of a dray.

“Silly ass! – why don’t you look where you’re going!”

“You were lucky that time, miss!”

She sees the dusty face of the driver, she sees the wagon, piled high with rolls of ration-paper, as it reels past her and turns in at a gateway. And wagon and driver and passers-by, all seem unreal to her and far away.

Everything appears to her unfamiliar and meaningless.

Yet it is all the same, just as on any other day.

Berlin standing in queues, mending soldiers' uniforms, printing newspapers; discussing Wilson's latest note, studying the latest saccharine and fat ration-cards just issued by the Food Office, arguing about the collapse of Turkey, the defection of Austria, and the peace.

Everyone in his place, everyone going his accustomed way.

To her surprise she finds herself standing outside the hospital.

She follows the same route as two evenings ago when she carried her little boy to the children's ward. How long the way seemed to her then! how heavy the boy in her arms! how gladly would she carry him now! and the way need have no end!

She climbs the same stairs; stands in the same corridor as two days ago. She looks through the glass door into the ward-two rows of white beds. A child in each one of them – in the second on the right also. But the child in this bed has dark hair; her child was fair.

The night-sister is not there.

And the day-sister knows nothing about it.

Frau Müller then finds herself standing in the office, giving her name. A smart young woman is dealing with the visitors and disposing of cases leaving hospital. Behind a wooden barrier there is a high desk. To right and left of it on high stools sit two clerks.

"Max Müller,

"And the father?"

"The same, he is Max, too."

"No, I have no money; I cannot pay anything!"

"Pauper's cemetery," enters the clerk.

She signs a paper at the place indicated. She continues to stand there.

"That is all, thank you – or do you wish something more?"

"I should like – yes, may I not see him again?"

She is given a card with a number by the young lady.

She goes down the stairs following a woman leading by the hand her little child who is leaving the

hospital. Now she must walk through a long, bleak passage. At the end of the passage is a low house. A man in clogs and a striped blouse opens the door. He asks no questions, he merely takes the card from her, goes to the next room and returns with the dead child in his arms.

Doubtfully she draws back the cloth.

There, stark naked, stretched full length, lies her boy.

She had never realized before he was so tall. But how thin and how sharp the nose has become! She lifts up the lolling head and holds it in both her hands.

The man does not look away, no, not even as the mother stoops to press a frightened kiss on the forehead of her child. But then the woman is wearing mean, threadbare clothes and, according to the register, the body is to go to the paupers' cemetery.

The woman follows the man with her eyes as he carries his load back into the hall. She catches a glimpse of rows of outstretched forms lying there in the blue light, and she fancies she feels an ice-cold draught.

She waits no longer.

On tiptoe she goes out.

At the hollow sound of the shutting door she starts suddenly. Only then does she realize she will never see her child again.

Returned home, she seats herself at the sewing machine.

She takes up from the floor the several pieces of an unfinished greatcoat and fits them together. A soldier's greatcoat is made of many pieces; many stitchings and restitchings are required: binding, lining, quilting. Long hours one must treadle, and long hours must the fingers guide the grey cloth steadily, patiently beneath the needle before one coat is finished and eightpence halfpenny earned.

Truda Müller sits bent over the work. Millimetre by millimetre the stitches move under her

hands. It is well that the machine hums, that the needle moves up and down unceasingly, that the grey track appears endless beneath her fingers. She sees nothing, only the endless cloth of field-grey. She hears nothing of what is passing in the apartments around her. She only sews until it grows dark. Then she bends still lower over the work and sews on. Until the last glimmer fades, until the four walls of the room draw together and darkness like a heavy cloak lies over her shoulders.

With dry eyes she stares out into the courtyard.

At eleven o'clock the smith, Lange, had banged the door of his apartment behind him. Disgruntled with his wife who will always have the last word, and displeased with his daughter who wants to bring this fellow Raumschuh into his house, he stumped off down the stairs.

In the courtyard he stumbles over a heap of garbage.

He curses the landlord and he curses the Garbage Company. "Collecting the rent, that's all they're good for And what does the Garbage Company think it is paid good money for I'd like to know? – it's this that brings the rotten infections into the house."

He slams the outer door also behind him.

No! he will have none of that! It is not for the likes of him that he has kept Lucy all these years, and scraped and saved for her too. Has he not put aside one bond for her out of every war loan? Nine that makes so far. And he could not have done that had he not been promoted to have charge of the big hammer and so been able to earn more. Now she must bring along this fellow – what does anyone know about him anyway? Ran away from home and went to sea – nice sort of fellow that is, if you like! And with such monstrous ideas! Says we must have workers' and soldiers' councils, same as they do in Russia!"

All he knows, the young puppy – hasn't learned to wipe his own nose yet! It's all the doing of these secret agitators – that Dr. Duncker there, he's one of them! What does he know about the Workers' Movement? – Same as in Russia! – at this time of day, when things are beginning to move, and our fellows gaining power step by step!

Take Gustav Bauer – a cabinet minister.

Comrade Scheidemann – a Secretary of State.

"There is no room in Germany now for personal government." Old Fritz Ebert made that clear enough. With them in the Reichstag there. That will make them sit up.

Getting on? Of course we're getting on – even a blind man can see that.

What more do these windbags of Independents want, anyway? Brantschke for example, the new assistant on the big hammer – what does he expect? Haven't our chaps forced through the amnesty – why, even Liebknecht has been let out of gaol! We're advancing all along the line, I say. And how have we done it? By our weekly subscriptions, by house-to-house canvassing, by mass meetings, demonstrations, by pamphlets distributed broadcast all over the country, by the debates in the Party and in the House. And now victory is in sight; and we've nothing to do but sit tight and await developments.

Lange has to wait for the tram.

It comes late. The muffled figure in the driver's compartment is a woman; the guard also is a woman. There are few people in the car and it bumps shockingly. The window-panes rattle, one is missing altogether. All the brass fittings and leather straps have been removed, and the light is miserable. Lange takes "his place directly below the only lamp; he fetches out his newspaper, opens it and reads as well as may be.

Wilson favours an armistice-Socialist Deputies call on Clemenceau – Civil Power versus Military Power- The fateful hour for the Fatherland is the hour which demands the utmost sacrifice! Subscribe to the Ninth War Loan!-Potato-digger fined for stealing a quarter sack.

Hello-Here's a sign of the times, if you like – Circulation of the *Vorwärts* doubled! – Influenza on the increase – 1,780 new cases today as against 1,731 the day before yesterday. Gas shortage. No remedy for the coal shortage. I say, but this is good. Old Noske has told the War Minister where to get off. He'll think twice next time before he tries breaking up another meeting.

Lange has not far to go, and at the corner of Voltastrasse he gets out.

This branch of the AEG, the General Electric Co., occupies almost the entire block. It is here that are built the marine engines, condensers, turbines, dynamos. Upwards of 6,000 men are employed in the building, though at the moment work is suspended in most of the sections. But there is light showing from a few windows at the back.

The smithy lies at the rear, opening on the court-yard. Lange checks in. He feels his way across the dark yard and down the few steps into the changing-room-a low- roofed place with a long washing trough down the middle, above which is suspended one guarded light. The lockers are along the walls and almost in darkness. The thirty men of the night shift drift in one after another; they take off their coats and pull on overalls that are stiff with old sweat.

A few have changed already and are sitting around smoking or dozing.

At two minutes to twelve the bell rings.

The men knock out their pipes and shut the doors of the lockers. Then the group makes for the exit. Not a word is spoken all this time. Only the dull rhythmical stroke of the heavy hammer reverberates through the air and, now that the door to the smithy is open, drowns all other sounds.

Work is begun in silence.

Lange is serving the great No. 1 hammer.

In company with three assistants he relieves the other shift. He raises his arm and turns a counter-weight. The door of the furnace swings open. The assistant, Brantschke, wheels a trolley to the furnace mouth. With long-handled tongs the other two seize a block of metal, pull the glowing mass on to the truck and wheel it toward the steam hammer.

The heat radiated from the milk-white block keeps the men with the tongs at a distance. Brantschke has dragged the trolley away and now himself takes up a pair of the long grapples. With united effort they steer the glowing iron, which must be worked immediately, on to the anvil. Lange has his hand on the steam lever, a pressure nicely calculated-the hammer drops with all its weight. Once, twice, ten times-the hammer obeys each lightest pressure of the controlling hand, strikes harder, strikes softer; the weight of its twelve and a half tons descends with almost playful lightness smoothly upon the mass beneath, which, as it cools, takes on its first rough form; after repeated processes in other departments of the shop it appears at last as the crank-shaft of a ship's engine.

A fresh block is taken from the furnace. Again the hammer falls. Amid a rain of sparks the mass hisses and lengthens, and billows of heat sweep over the men. Lange gives his orders to the assistants by quick brusque movements. His brow is steaming, the goggles protecting his eyes are frosted with moisture. The sweat is trickling in rivulets down his neck and into the grey hair on his chest.

Amid a circle of fire at the other end of the smithy stands Group 2. The heavy hammers stamping, the drumming of the feather hammers in a rapid, deafening rhythm, and the light ringing blows of the hand hammers on the anvils....

So one hour passes; then a second.

No. 1 group has worked seven blocks to their first rough shape.

Now they must wait for the next block which is not yet ready. Lange and his assistants unwrap their sandwiches. Brantschke, his mouth full, is chewing as he reads a newspaper. After a while he walks over to Lange to show him an open page:

"Here, look at this! Turnips to be rationed now."

An announcement in the *Vorwärts*.

Lange looks: "Yes, they're going to be rationed, too."

"We'll be eating rats next," says the second assistant.

"Synthetic rat, you mean."

"But where everything is short, you must be rationed."

"Will you never see through it, Lange? Listen here, I'll tell you what it means. They'll set up a new ration depot, then the turnips will go rotten – same as potatoes do now – and we'll get them only when they are rotten. You wait and see!"

“You can’t get anywhere without system.”

“Get away – it’s all pure political jobbery – some boss or other of the Social Democrats wants a job, so they make him Controller-in-Chief of Turnips, as a reward for faithful service to the Fatherland.”

Lange swallows down his jam sandwich resolutely:

“Well, somebody has to get it. What we have to do is to co-operate, constructively. Your hooligan socialism won’t get us anywhere.”

“Work constructively – what do you mean? Vote for war loans and all that, eh?”

“Yes, that too – war loans too,” retorts Lange.

Then he swings about, strides to the furnace and shouts:

“Come on, she’s ready.”

Before the others can come up he has already turned the counter-weight. The furnace maw is open and a pencil of violet light pierces the half-gloom of the smithy.

Brantschke brings up the trolley, the other two take up their grapples, seize a fresh block, haul it out of the furnace and steer it under the hammer.

The hammer descends, blow upon blow. The iron hisses and sparkles, then loses its milk-white colour, turns red, grows darker and darker; and the hammer stamps harder and harder. And to every blow of its twelve and a half tons is added the weight of Lange’s anger. Hooligan socialists, that’s what they are making trouble – they are only doing themselves harm. Who was it got the Amnesty? and Universal Suffrage? and Right of Assembly? – who is it then that stands for the rights of the worker?

The great hammer stamps:

The Social-Democratic-Party! – the SPD – SPD – SPD ...

At the other end of the city, surrounded by waste land on the one side and the network of tracks belonging to Berlin’s largest railway depot on the other, beyond the black silhouettes of the coal-stacks, glow the yellow lighted windows of the Rummelsburg Power Station.

This is the station which supplies East Berlin with light and power. The firemen, the trimmers and slag-runners of the night shift came on at midnight. At that hour the great finger in the middle of the boiler-room, indicating the number of kilowatts consumed over the entire system, was standing at 20,000. By one o’clock, when the last trams stopped and the greater part of Berlin’s meagre street lighting was turned off, the indicator had fallen to 12,000. The firemen then locked the rotary grates, banked the fires to smoulder slowly, and shut the furnace doors.

Now they may rest awhile.

There are seventy men in the boiler-room; most are now sitting about eating the bread they have brought with them. Others are standing in twos and threes talking together. One group is engaged in the eternal dispute-Social Democrats versus Independents, SPD v. USP Another lot in front of No. 3 furnace is discussing the Union and the wages question.

An engineer comes in from the engine-room. He joins the group before No. 3 furnace and listens to the discussion.

“They haven’t even the guts to insist on extra pay for night work.”

“Nor for Sunday work, either.”

“What do they think we pay our subs for, I wonder.”

“... and forbidden us to strike, too, they have.”

A trimmer joins the argument:

“Listen to them, Comrade Sült. Overtime pay for night work, extra for Sundays – that’s all they can think of.”

“No harm in that, if they would set about getting it for themselves, and not wait for the Union bosses to give them everything.”

“They’ll never strike, especially if it has to be done in spite of the bosses. And as for purely political demands, they wouldn’t stir a hand.”

The two – Sült, the engineer, and Primelsack, the trimmer – walk across to the larger group in

the middle of the room, where the discussion is of the war policies of the two socialist parties, and the opposed views are being hotly disputed.

“Yes, and what have you gained? Right of assembly, you say. That’s all eye-wash! If you’d seen the cops hoeing into us with their sabres you’d have known better.”

“Four more meetings they’ve broken up!”

“Yes, and if it weren’t for the split....”

“If it weren’t for the split one more party boss would be holding down a cabinet job, eh?”

“And shaking hands with the Emperor, like old Scheidemann,” adds Primelsack.

“Now listen here, mates – don’t you let anybody persuade you to anything rash. Not even the Independents can run their heads through a brick wall. We must all stick together and then, when the men at the top give us the tip, sail in as one man.”

“And what if the men at the top never give us the tip?” asks Sült.

“Don’t you worry – it’ll come all right-the great thing is to sit tight.”

“Yes, but for how long? Until every man jack of us is dead in the trenches, eh?”

“We must force the leaders’ hand.”

A Social Democrat begins to spout:

“The old Party is what it has always been, a powerful advocate of our interests. The SPD has always worked for us....”

“Traitors, that’s what they are!”

“Traitors, eh? Which are more traitors – those who voted for three loans, or the others who voted for five?”

“Nine, you mean, you’ve forgotten four.”

Primelsack is trying to persuade a fireman that there is only one weapon to use against the Government and the leaders of the SPD in league with it-and that weapon is a hand-grenade.

Sült has returned to the engine-room; on the hard, white-tiled surface stand the turbo-generators which supply one part of the Berlin complex with light and power – three gloomy, humpbacked monsters rising almost to the glass roof of the engine-room. The paddle-wheels in their iron bellies revolve continuously under pressure of the incoming steam, and the steam becomes motion, and the motion, electricity.

Sült takes a rag from his pocket and wipes off the oil which has dripped from one of the plates. It is the duty of the engineers to check the number of revolutions, the oil supply, the temperature of the generators, and every hour to make corresponding entries on the slates. Sült stands fixed on one spot, fascinated by the high-pitched humming of the machines. Here his mind is at home; here he is rid of the feeling of impotence which overtakes him in political gatherings and in the fruitless arguments with colleagues.

The workers’ organizations, the Unions, have failed of their purpose; have turned even into their very opposites. They have taken from the workers their one defence – the right to strike. And the Social Democratic Party, in which is concentrated the political will of the working class, has handed over the masses who created it for their own emancipation, to exploitation and the firing-line.

The truce between Capital and Labour, the bill conscripting the auxiliary services, the political strikes, and above all the strike of the Berlin metal workers in January, 1918, have shown on which side the leaders are. They have become servants of the capitalist state, have accepted the task of turning the workers into a smoothly-running part of the existing order.

Sült is still a member of the Party, still in the Union even. One must be where the masses are. Who but the masses can do it? It is only those at the head who have sold themselves, and they must go! Strike, that’s the thing-strike against the war, against the system, against everything and everybody that supports the system. He considers the revolutionary group which Primelsack wants him to join – representatives of the most divergent socialist views, they have come together into one organization, all pledged to the achievement of one end – the overthrow of the system which brought about the war. All members are recruited exclusively from the factories. They have had the wits to keep their illegal work from coming to the knowledge of the professional leaders. But of what use are a few thousand revolvers, and a few dozen hand-grenades? It is the masses we need,

and the power of the masses, which lies in their work and in the machines that they serve.

Sült surveys admiringly the enormous belly of the turbine, the shaft of the generator quivering blue under the strain of its revolutions. He senses in the metal all the strength of the firemen, all the toil of a whole pitful of coal-miners, here concentrated, vibrating, and being translated into living power.

Sült understands every technical process of the electric power plant, understands the mechanism of switches, the twofold system of cables which carries the current to the factories and drives the machinery of Berlin. The turbines of the power station, the network of electric cables, the lathes and steam hammers in the workshops – this, the power which drives all the rest, this is the foundation of the capitalist state. The other – whether government, parliament, or military power – is mere political superstructure. The working class can free itself only if it begins here, where its combined strength is made operative – here in the workshops. Economic power, that is the lever. If we but use it, then the cities are without light, the railway trains idle on the tracks, the military without munitions. Let the general strike last but three days, the economic circuit is broken; then all generals, ministers, and bosses will become amenable. Let the general strike last eight days, then the whole superstructure will collapse, and the political masters fall. Once we have the power in our hands we can regulate our production and switch it over to the real needs of society. Economic power, that is the lever. If we pull it over...

Sült does not need to look at the kilowatt-indicator. He has already heard the droning of his engines

growing heavier.

The invisible paddlewheels are still making the same number of revolutions but the load upon them has become greater. The trams have started again, and with the dawning of the day ever more and more factories hitch on to the source of power.

The consumption increases.

The kilowatt-indicator shows 18,000.

A bell rings in the boiler-room, simultaneously red lamps begin to glow beside the indicator.

Work has begun again – the fires are raked, the hard-baked slag is broken up, the rotary grate set in motion again.

The consumption curve rises gradually to 36,000 kilowatts.

The normal day's work has begun.

The firemen have all they can do. They regulate the temperature, adjust the water and CO content of their boilers, open the draught, give the fires the necessary fuel. Columns of trimmers replenish the bunkers and barrow out the ash into the yard.

The third shift makes the steam, and the steam is converted into current.

And the current drives the trams, laden first with workers, to the factories; an hour later it carries the clerks, the stenographers and shop girls to the offices and stores. The current is driving the engines, the cranes, the lifts in hotels; it fills the telephone and telegraph wires with humming life.

The third shift is spent – seventy exhausted figures moving about in the grey light which falls obliquely from above into the boiler-room. At eight o'clock comes the relief.

A week has passed.

Primelsack has gained a new member for the "Revolutionaries" – Lange has been appointed representative of the Social Democratic Party in the smithy of the General Electric Co. – His assistant, Brantschke, has been called up for military service – The police have raided a meeting of Revolutionaries at the "Schusterkeller", the beer house at the corner, Boxhagenerstrasse, 46 – The woman porter of the same house has been taken to hospital as the result of an unsuccessful abortion. Truda Müller has buried her son in the paupers' cemetery at Buch, in one of the long rows of common graves where the occupants are identified only by letter and number; On the same evening that Frau Müller was coming home by the outer railway, two men might be seen creeping through the narrow strip of woodland on Schonholzer – Heath the trimmer, Primelsack, and Ernst Daumig who is in charge of the military operations of the Revolutionaries.

The two men are moving cautiously, but they cannot prevent the crackling of the twigs beneath their feet. They pause from time to time and listen.

One of them stumbles over the root of a tree. "Cripes."

"It's all right."

"Better give me the thing."

The "thing", which Daumig is carrying under his arm, resembles a large bottle, but is made of cast steel and comes from one of the Berlin munition factories. It is the nose of an aerial torpedo. A pin projects from the top of it and the belly contains a charge of high-explosive, a mixture prepared by some colleagues in a powder magazine.

At a clearing the two men halt.

"This'll do – let's try it out here."

"Yes, we can get under cover quickly here."

"Eight seconds, it takes – but heave it as far as you can."

"There, over toward that tree."

Primelsack presses the pin home; then he pitches. The bomb sails through the air and lands with a dull thud. The two men crouch behind a stack of wood, their pulses hammering. They count to seven.

Then the wood stands out in sudden light. The top of one of the trees sways unnaturally. A moment later comes the explosion. It is dark again and the immediate profound silence is like a great hole suddenly gaping. Then the tree crashes down full length upon the ground. And branches fall from the other trees around.

"Man, but she's a beauty! and how far she spreads!"

"See, there's a branch! Pieces have landed right over here! Good over a range of at least thirty yards," declares Daumig.

They are standing by the uprooted tree.

"Fifteen inches diameter."

"We'd better be pushing off. If we catch a tram at once, we shall still be in time for the meeting."

The leaders of the Storm Detachments—a dozen or so metal workers from the Berlin heavy industries, whose business it is to organize the fighting squads of the Revolutionaries and to lead them on—the day of the revolution—have already reached the last item on their agenda. Some are standing, others seated on garden chairs around a table in the cheerless skittle-alley of a workers' tavern. When Primelsack enters, the discussion is interrupted.

Primelsack immediately makes his report.

"All O.K. – Ernst has gone over to headquarters in Schicklerstrasse. Uprooted a tree fifteen inches across! And twigs and branches fell from the other trees over a radius of thirty yards."

"Boy, but she did make a hole!"

"A thing like that landing plumb on a column..."

"It's not possible, of course, to pitch it from the street level. We'll have to get into the houses and throw from the upper windows," says the leader of the group, a brawny, black-haired fitter.

"What if the people won't let us into the houses?"

"We must get in. If they refuse, then we must smash in the doors, that's all."

"How long does it take to go off?"

"Count to six and then heave it."

"A hand-grenade takes five, though, doesn't it?"

"This won't go off before eight. With our first fuse it took sixteen, but now it's eight."

"And how many of them have we?"

"Sixty at present, with explosive for more."

The chairman returns to the last point on the agenda and talks with a few of the comrades about the issuing of the stock of revolvers, hand-grenades and ammunition.

The rest occupy themselves discussing the progress of the movement in their several factories; new recruits for the fighting squads; their president, Emil Barth; and the likelihood of an early

outbreak. A turner from the Kombusch Factory, the Revolutionary Oestreich, is telling Primelsack how he took a case of rifle ammunition to one of their colleagues at Weissensee. "You know what a case looks like of course-like a box of herrings, except that it has handles at both ends. Well, I got my brother Richard-! knew I could trust him-and then we took the box just as it was, without wrapping it up or anything, went straight to the station, got into a train and just took it as if it were any harmless parcel. I don't understand now how it came off without a hitch, or how we could even have thought of doing such a thing...." Oestreich is instancing this casualness and assurance in taking the thing openly by train under the very eyes of the other passengers as an example of how blind faith is more important to success than the most deliberate and long-thought-out preparations:

"Go straight at it, that's always the best way. I simply said to Richard: 'Have you got your Browning?' 'Sure,' says he, 'here in my trouser-pocket. I've only to slip the safety-catch and she's ready to pump.'"

"It is time we were going over to Schicklerstrasse, comrades."

Some are already on the stairs, making their way up into the bar.

There they split up, leaving the house casually one and two at a time.

At No. 5 Schicklerstrasse, on the second floor giving on the courtyard, tucked away among tailoring establishments, hat-makers and paper-bag manufacturers, are the rooms of the training school of the Independent Socialist Party, the USP. In one of the rooms some forty workmen are wedged in between the narrow school benches. Twenty more are standing round the walls. The members of the Storm Detachments, arriving one by one, also have to stand.

This is the full session of the Revolutionaries.

The Revolutionaries it was who led the Berlin workers in the strike of January, 1918, protesting against the iniquitous peace of Brest-Litowsk, and calling for an end to be put to the war on terms of no annexations and no reparations. This movement developed into the first concerted effort against the imperialism of the government – then the bureaucrats of the Unions got the upper hand, and Ebert, Scheidemann and Bauer – all of them members of the Reichstag – took over leadership of the strike, and under their direction the fight was turned into negotiation. The Minister for the Interior, who was willing to treat only with the parliamentarians, would have no dealings with the workers themselves and placed a ban on all mass meetings. The General Officer Commanding the Marches put Berlin under strict martial law and set up an emergency military tribunal.

Four hundred thousand workers had obeyed the order to strike. After the collapse of the strike two hundred were imprisoned and forty thousand sent up to the trenches.

After that first failure eighteen of the leaders had come together to rebuild the organization. Richard Müller, the president, had been called up by the military. But to the first meeting he brought with him Emil Barth who, on Müller's departure, assumed the leadership of the Revolutionary Organization.

Emil Barth is now seated at the teacher's desk.

He is listening to the chief of the Storm Detachment leaders who is reporting to him on the findings of the meeting which has just been concluded.

Barth has a different appearance from that of the metal workers seated on the benches. They are thickset, slow of speech and movement. Barth on the other hand loves fine phrases and will miss no opportunity for a speech. Richard Müller introduced him to the circle at a time when it was impossible to have as secretary any man already known to the police on account of his political activities. Müller later nicknamed him "the windbag"; Haase diagnosed him as a braggart; Liebknecht, as a "mad revolutionary dilettante"; Duncker of the Spartacist League, as a "pathological case of a man striving for power out of a sense of inferiority". But Barth countered all abuse by denouncing the rest as "the highbrow generals of the workers' movement", who sat all day at their writing-desks apart from the world and had not the faintest idea how revolutions are made. When he first joined the Revolutionaries he walked with the aid of two sticks and gave himself out as a shell-shock case. But he is shell-shocked no longer – nor does he instruct others in that art. He has climbed up from the lowest social stratum, possesses considerable organizing ability and is consumed with ambition. Every opportunity for political action he has seized upon with fanatical

zeal, and his activities as head of the secret organization absorb him completely.

The Revolutionaries are well content with their chief. He gives his whole strength to the cause, and his excessive talkativeness they tolerate as a necessary evil.

Barth opens the meeting:

“Comrades! I have first a communication to make. We of the Council have invited Karl Liebknecht to the meeting to-night. I am sure you will approve of that. But I should like to remind you beforehand, that within our circle Liebknecht is to be treated as the representative of any other political party would be treated – that is, as a guest, and one to whose opinions we are ready to listen. At the same time I would ask you not to be dissuaded from the straight path of our policy by the sudden appearance of Liebknecht in our midst. The hour is not far distant when we must fulfil our task. The confidence of the upper classes in victory is giving place to a wail of disillusionment. The divinity of the Hohenzollerns, the infallibility of Ludendorff – all that has gone. Hunger, wretchedness, anxiety, bereavement, poverty have raised in every heart the cry for peace – the cry for vengeance upon the guilty.

“Our preparations are complete. The plan of attack has been elaborated and confirmed in every smallest detail. Arms and ammunition have been distributed by the leaders of the Storm Detachments to the various factories. At the signal for battle all work will stop; the workers will march in close column on the centre of the city; workers within the city limits will barricade the main thoroughfares. Within a few hours Berlin will be swarming with vast crowds of men.”

“And what about the police?”

“Who will the soldiers side with?”

“I shall call upon Comrade Daumig to answer those questions.”

Ernst Daumig-Prussian deserter; French foreign legionary; conductor on a railway sleeping-car; journalist; until the split in the party, editor of the *Vorwärts* – he speaks briefly and to the point:

“The police are absolutely loyal to the Government, but they will be overpowered by the armed Storm Detachments allocated to the various columns. The second question is more difficult. With the few weapons at our disposal we could not do much against the military. I have tried to win the soldiers over to our side in the coming struggle. I have succeeded in establishing contacts in a good many of the barracks and have gained considerable agreement and support. Many are on our side. But it is very difficult to form any reliable estimate of their attitude as a whole. Especially so, in view of the fact that the military authorities are constantly shifting the troops about – during the last few days, for instance, they have filled up the garrison with men from the provinces who are wholly ignorant of the political situation. The military must be isolated by the masses coming in from all sides, and the crowd must then fraternize with the soldiers and win them over to us.”

“When do we get going? That is the main point.”

“We ought not to delay much longer.”

“Delay can cost us all our heads.”

A motor mechanic states that the workers at the Daimler factory have arranged matters with the soldiers in the Dragoon Barracks. “We are to march through Tempelhof and the soldiers will join us outside the Halle Gate.”

At that moment the door opens. Liebknecht!

The workers turn round. Most of them know him by sight, but it is a long time since they have seen him – before the war perhaps, at some meeting or other – a few were on the Potsdamer Platz in 1916 when Liebknecht made his appeal to the workers to fight against the war and called for the revolution. This is not the place for noisy demonstrations; those nearest the door are already shaking him by the hand, others wave:

“Karl!”

“You have come just in the nick of time.”

“Things are beginning to move. The fun starts soon.” Barth observes with displeasure that Liebknecht, though he particularly asked him to come alone, has brought along four colleagues from the Spartacist League – Pieck, who arrived only yesterday from Holland, and the former travelling secretary of the party, the long-legged professor and private coach, Duncker – the other

two he does not know.

Barth cuts short the subdued ovation.

“I shall now ask Comrade Ledebour to speak.”

Ledebour had been first among the parliamentarians to recognize in the Revolutionaries the vanguard of the coming revolution, and in the interests of the Independent Party he had kept in close touch with the group. He now endorses Daumig’s view of the situation as regards the military, and emphasizes the danger, already hinted at, of any delay in coming into action.

After Ledebour a second Independent addresses the meeting:

“It is obvious, of course, that we should not enter upon the conflict before the final preparations have been made. In Berlin we have to deal with the Government in its strongest position. And we must make absolutely sure before we begin that we have sufficient strength behind us. Particularly must we be sure of the military. Everything is at stake. Comrades, beware of too precipitate action...”

The Independents, so far as the law would permit, have given expression both in Parliament and the press to the feelings of the mass of the workers and soldiers. In proportion as the masses grew weary of the war, the Independents dissociated themselves from the policy of the old order. Their speeches became more and more radical, and they looked about for every legal means of overthrowing the Government and the leaders of the old Social Democratic Party, and of filling the ministerial and high official posts with their own people. For the achievement of this purpose the Revolutionaries might well prove the most convenient lever; but they desired to accomplish that purpose with the minimum of risk. And so on the very threshold of revolution they drew back.

The Revolutionaries begin to interrupt the speaker:

“Aha! Got the wind up, have you?”

“Like to put on the brakes, eh? – now that we have come so far.”

“Sail right in, that’s the only way – same as me and Richard with the ammunition box.”

“If we were to listen to the Party leaders, we should still be making preparations in our graves.”

Lieb knecht signals the Chair.

Karl Lieb knecht – son of Wilhelm Lieb knecht. But he is more than that – he has his own history. On August 4th, 1914, when in obedience to the resolution of the Party majority, he voted with the rest of the Social Democrats in favour of the War Budget, he had come back to the Party committee room with tears in his eyes. It was then that Rosa Luxembourg told him he must break with Party discipline and, single-handed and alone, follow the dictates of his own conscience. Ever since then he has been following the same hard road. He refused to vote for the Second War Loan. Already in 1915 he had gathered about him a small group of revolutionaries. He was ejected from the Party, called up for the army, and sent to the Front as an infantryman. At the beginning of 1916 he published an “open letter”, which he signed with the pseudonym: Spartacus. On May 1st, 1916, he stood on the Potsdamer Platz, the first open accuser of the Government policy, and, surrounded by a small band of demonstrators, he made a speech against the war. He was arrested and vanished into Luckau prison.

Karl Lieb knecht. Infantryman. Convict. Tribune of the Revolution.

Here he now stands and speaks:

“...From various sources I have heard of your existence, of the existence of an illegal revolutionary organization. But I must say I am disappointed in your activities. Frankly I imagined both your action and the pace of it to be other than I find it. I came here on Wednesday last; I then witnessed a demonstration the like of which, for enthusiasm, has not been seen in Berlin before. There had been another of almost equal enthusiasm the day before in front of the Reichstag and Unter

den Linden. I have been here three days now and there has been no fresh demonstration!”

The Revolutionaries sit silent in their places, all eyes turned upon the emaciated face of Lieb knecht which under the greenish light of the one solitary gas-flame looks even paler than in fact it is. Emil Barth has removed his pince-nez; he polishes the lenses and puts them on again. He watches his comrades anxiously – Today will decide whether the Revolutionary Organization is to

stick to its programme or not. Barth has always been opposed to sporadic action, as a mere frittering away of strength. He has divided his organization into various sections according to the several requirements of propaganda, espionage and direct fighting. He has collected money for the purchase of arms, made journeys throughout the length and breadth of the country in order to spin the web wider, dashing from one meeting to the next, and putting all in readiness for the one great blow. It is nine months since he has had a good night's sleep. Stupefied with schemes and unsuccessful combinations, reeking of tobacco smoke, he would crawl wearily after nights of sleeplessness from the kitchen of his apartment at Neukölln to the room in which slept his wife and his two growing sons. Still half-dressed he would drop down on the bed and sleep a few hours, only to leave the house again as soon as he awoke and renew his conspiratorial activities. And now, just as the power of his adversary, Ludendorff is on the point of collapsing; now, when the moment has come for the realization of all his great schemes – at this critical moment who should appear but Karl Liebknecht!

The Revolutionaries had called out 20,000 workers to welcome Liebknecht at the Anhalt Railway Station. During Liebknecht's triumphal progress through Berlin Barth had stood at his side on the lorry. The day before yesterday he had been a guest at the banquet given in Liebknecht's honour by the Russian Embassy-liveried waiters, long tables spread with damask cloths, decked with red silk streamers and strewn with red roses and carnations.

And what people! the intellectual spear-head of the revolution! and what toasts! – enough to make a man sick – the adulation and mutual admiration, it had been horrible! The Russian ambassador had raised his glass:

“At this very hour in Moscow hundreds of thousands of workers are parading with torches to the Red Square in front of the Kremlin to do honour to Liebknecht – Liebknecht, the herald, the creator of the German revolution; Liebknecht, the hero of the revolutionary proletariat of Germany and of the world!”

Liebknecht, creator of the revolution! hero of the German proletariat! – and he, Barth, stuck away down at the other end of the table beside the one-armed Glöbig and other nameless proletarians!

The voice of Liebknecht grows still more reproachful: “It is incredible! it is irresponsible! But still more incredible, still more incomprehensible to me is it that you should be sitting here now and yet not be considering how to ensure that tomorrow, and the day after, and every day during the next week, there shall be demonstrations in every city throughout the whole country. How else is the revolutionary energy, the revolutionary will to action, to be engendered? Surely you do not imagine that by verbal propaganda, by addresses delivered to however many secret meetings... “

“What about all we have done in the factories?”

“...the arming of the working classes?”

“No, neither by the arming of a few thousand enthusiastic comrades – comrades ready to risk their lives – comrades to whom one has given even a rifle, but always with strict instructions that they must not use it until they shall receive the order – no! neither will that bring the revolution nearer. No, I say, a thousand times, no!”

Liebknecht fixes his eye on Emil Barth:

“It is a Utopian dream to imagine that the victorious revolution is to be achieved at one single great blow. Nay, it is worse than a dream – it is a crime even to think such a thing, to spread such an idea. The revolutionary energy, the revolutionary will to action is begotten only in the actual struggle itself. What is revolution? It is revolutionary acts, it is demonstrations, riots in the streets, general strikes...”

“We have heard all this before. Bukharin told us the same thing a month ago.”

“All that is mere training, mere revolutionary gymnastics!” cries Barth.

Liebknecht ignores the interruption. He continues – his eyes now looking straight before him. A tension has spread over his face, through his whole body – he is in the grip of his vision – a vision of the great masses where they live one perched above another in the vast blocks of tenements, where they wait in queues for starvation rations, where they toil for profit in the factories – this

entire great mass must be set in motion, and the Revolutionaries can be no more than the leaven. Each individual, each Revolutionary, must go down among the masses and revolutionize them from within. Liebknecht talks with ever-growing excitement. He is fired with his dream of the people marching, the people breaking its chains. Each new sentence he emphasises with a peculiar gesture of his left hand.

“I implore you to see to it that tomorrow there shall be not meetings merely, but riots. And not riots merely, but armed riots. There must be collisions with the police; there will be bloodshed; arrests will follow. That in turn will call forth protest strikes. The Ludendorffs and the Scheidemanns will try to break them. Then more blood will be spilled, with fresh arrests; then declarations of solidarity, bigger strikes, strikes in new places, fresh demonstrations, more brutal repressions, extension of the struggle, growing tide of revolutionary energy, of the will to revolution; revolutionary fighting in the streets, disorganization in the army, and at last – Revolution! In this way and in this way only is the schooling in revolution to be gained; in this way and in this way only is the ultimate triumph of the revolution to be assured. ..”

Each new proposition is accompanied by the mechanical thud of his left hand. Liebknecht believes in the masses – those masses whom Barth has come to know only on their worst side; the same who in 1914 shouted loud “Hurrahs!”; the masses who are to be set in motion only with utmost difficulty and who respond only to economic strikes; the masses whom every setback makes only more and more helpless. Barth has learned to know them only in their most deplorable circumstances – in their overcrowded tenements, in hospitals, in the criminal sections of the state prisons. And he has carried the bitterness of his experience over into his estimate of the whole working class. He does not believe that they would ever of their own free will rise up and fight for an ideal. At the appropriate moment they must be compelled and led, like soldiers. To this end the organization of the Revolutionaries has been built up. This is the role which Barth intends them to fill.

Barth rises to his feet:

“There must be no repetition of 1914 – when the leaders toppled over and the masses followed suit. As I see it, the time is ripe, the clock is about to strike-it would be madness, sheer lunatic dilettantism, to betray our preparations to the enemy now-giving him the chance to strike us down, to stultify us, so that when the time does come to act we shall merely lie down and do

nothing. Comrades, I appeal to your reason! Strike, yes – but neither too soon, nor too late!”

Liebknecht turns once more to the Revolutionaries:

“I beg you, consider, examine my proposals, decide as I advise. The time is ripe-but not to venture the last desperate struggle-that is mere Utopianism! The time is ripe to begin our struggles, the real, revolutionary struggles, the first struggle which bears the others in its lap, struggle upon struggle, ever growing, blossoming at last into victory!

“The people with us, the victory ours!”

KIEL

29th October, 1918.

On the same night that the Emperor fled from Berlin to General Headquarters, at the hour when Karl Liebknecht was addressing the meeting of the Revolutionaries and advocating mass revolution, the German High Seas Fleet received the order to put to sea.

“Effectives of the High Seas Fleet to attack the English Fleet!” reads the order as issued by Admiral von Scheer from General Headquarters to the Admiral of the Fleet. The Admiral of the Fleet then summons the squadron commanders to a conference on the flagship. And squadron commanders, having returned to their formations, call the commanders and officers of their ships and tell them: “The effectives of the High Seas Fleet are to move to the English Channel to relieve the right wing of the German Line. If we meet the English Fleet we are to give battle.”

The reconnaissance forces have gone out already.

The battle squadrons are still at anchor in the Jade Basin – four of them, thirty-two ships with a complement of 30,000 men.

At Schillig Roads, on the outer wing of the fleet, are the four ships of the Lightning Division belonging to the Third Squadron—the *König*, *Kronprinz*, *Markgraf* and *Grosser Kurfürst*.

SMS *Grosser Kurfürst* is lying between the *König* and the *Markgraf*.

As on the rest of the ships the lights are blinded to seaward, the sailors are lying on the linoleum-covered decks of the mess-decks, or crouching behind the loaded guns under the glow of the electric lamps. Their clothes and boots they still have on. They are waiting, as they have waited four and a half long years, waiting-for the morning, or for something to happen.

With the stokers it is different, they have things to do.

“Steam for twelve knots!” the order has come from the bridge. The ship has twenty boilers, 200 square yards of grates with sixty furnace-mouths, and before them stand the stokers of the watch with fire-rakes and shovels. They open the doors, stoke the fires, fish out the slag. The trimmers drag up the coal. The half-naked bodies are red in the glare of the fires and the sweat runs in white rills over the coal-dusted skin.

“Hey, Job, fetch the coal. Make a start, can’t you?”

“Everything seems to be wrong today-what’s the matter?”

“The matter? You blokes can’t get a move on – that’s what’s the matter.”

“Can’t we? Then it’s the cole-cabbage for lunch today. And the jam this evening – what sort of stuff is that to feed a man on!”

“I spewed up the cole-cabbage right away – stinking muck!”

“Come, shake a leg with that ash, shift the blasted stuff out of the road. How long are you going to leave it lying around here?”

Job fills the iron pail with ash. He calls a second trimmer. The two drag the bucket to the elevator shaft and hang it on the hoist.

“Look out!” shouts a stoker, a great, tall fellow, as he hauls out a poker which has bent as he tried to lever up the slag. He flings it down on the stone-paved floor. “What sort of a slice is that! the damned thing; it’s made of putty!”

The stoker wipes his brow:

“Pass us the nigger-sweat, Job.”

Job brings the coffee-can. First skimming the coal dust off the black brew with the back of his hand the tall man drinks.

“Steam for twelve knots” – that is easy going. A man can take his time and even have a breather every now and then. Twenty-four knots is a very different matter – the stokers don’t waste any time talking then. Their sweat-soaked breeches cling to their thighs, muscles tremble and the tongue lies like a lump of wood in the mouth.

“Twelve knots – that’s all, isn’t it?”

“Yes, may be more once the anchor’s up...”

“Beats me what we’re going out at all for.”

“Won’t be far, anyway – Heligoland, perhaps.”

“We’re going as cover for the minesweepers.”

“There are ninety submarines out still. Don’t know the channel. We have to fetch them in – I had it from the watch on the bridge. And he heard it from the Commander.”

Raumschuh, the tall stoker, produces a quid of tobacco: “Here Job, help yourself.”

Jacob is the trimmer’s proper name – his full name, Jacob Bonczyk, but the stokers call him Job for short, or Brummschick, or Brummschädel.

“And once the submarines are in that’s the end, eh?”

“Yes, the end of the whole bloody business – then peace!”

“Peace, eh? My God, boy! – Sounds queer, doesn’t it?”

“What will you do afterwards, Brummschädel?”

“Me? Go back to Herne, to the coal-mine again.”

“I picked up a perfect little darling last time I was on leave in Berlin...”

The Warrant-Officer on duty enters the stokehold. In his bright uniform he contrasts sharply with the black-smeared figures before the fires: “Haven’t you anything to do? Open up that furnace, Raumschuh!”

Stoker Raumschuh opens the furnace door. “There’s a pretty little fire for you – would the Warrant-Officer like to have a look for himself.”

“Don’t stand around here doing nothing, anyway – open her up – shake a leg,” says the Warrant-Officer, moving off.

The stokers fetch their long slice-bars, open the dampers, ram the pokers deep into the glowing mass and slowly break up their fires.

“A perfect darling, I tell you.”

“What’s the difference? A hole’s a hole.”

“Rot! I knew her before, as a matter of fact. But from afar, as you might say. This time we got right close, under the skin. But my, what an old man she has! – doesn’t like me a bit, he don’t. A regular old Social Democratic chestnut – you know, stuck up as hell – he’ll have none of your working men – wants ‘something better’ than that for his daughter!”

Raumschuh spits out a mouthful of tobacco juice. The door of the furnace hisses softly: “But we’ll draw his teeth for him. Trust me, eh, Job?”

“Sure, that’s a cert.”

“Lord, yes, Brummschädel – I’ve an idea – why not? You come to Berlin with me – We’re not going to waste any time about it; we’re getting married at once. And you’ll be able to get as tight as a lord.”

“That’s an idea, Karl, a real good idea.”

“You can go back to your dirty old coal-hole at Herne any time. There’s no hurry.”

Bonczyk is called away by the Warrant-Officer:

“That trimmer, come here a minute. Clear these pokers away.”

Raumschuh pretends to be busy with his fire. He discovers a grating which has slipped a bit and fetches a pair of tongs with which to shove it back into position.

The Central Engine Control is called up from the bridge. The Chief Engineer transmits the orders through the voice-pipe to the engine-room and the stokehold:

“Steam for fourteen knots!”

“Steam for sixteen knots!”

The Warrant-Officer hangs up the voice-pipe again: “There you have it. Now let’s see you get busy – Steam, my boy, steam!”

“Steam?-what do they want more steam for?”

“Do you understand, Karl?”

“The devil do!”

"Twelve knots is enough for minesweeping."

"Enough for escorting submarines, too, for that matter."

"What's doing, Herr Warrant-Officer? Why more steam?"

"You mind your job, and don't bother about things that don't concern you."

Raumschuh looks at the Warrant-Officer:

"So? And me thinking it was all over. But we bloody well will bother ourselves about things that don't concern us – you make no mistake about that, old cock! There's some dirty work afoot, lads. Job! – Where's Job?"

"Job!"

"Brummschick!"

"Brummschädel!"

But Jacob Bonczyk has already climbed the ladder and slipped out on deck. Issuing from the gloom of the stokehold he is half-blinded at first and has to grope his way forward. He cannot even see the *Markgraf*. By the after-funnel he encounters an upper-deck rating.

He asks what is doing. The sailor does not know either. Then he collides with someone else.

"Look where you're going, you clumsy dog!"

Bonczyk recognizes the voice.

"That you, Schorsch?"

"Hello, Brummschick! What are you crawling around here for?"

"What are they up to, Schorsch?"

"Orders come through – Prepare battle stations! Heave anchor!"

"That will be for minesweeping though – peace will be here any time now, don't you think?"

"Peace? – a fight, you mean, a bloody big fight, an attack!"

Bonczyk in his light stoker's clothes begins to shiver – he gazes absently out over the water. Now he can recognize the outline of the neighbouring ship. And he can see Schorsch too, standing in front of him by the railing there-his cap is off and his thick mop of hair is standing up in the wind.

Schorsch is suddenly staring fascinated into the grey, drifting mist-not in the direction of the line of ships lying at anchor, but out over the open water. He seizes Bonczyk by the arm and shakes him:

"Look, Job, can you see it?"

"No, nothing, what? Where?"

Now Bonczyk sees it too. It has come out of the mist forward and is drifting close past the squadron at anchor – a great black hull with two enormous funnels and gun-turrets-one of the ships of the formations 'already under way. She has left the line and is now drifting broadside in the waves, out of control.

"Christ, Bonczyk-what do you make of that?"

"That is-no-yes, isn't that..."

"The *König Albert*! But how – hold on, she's signalling now!"

The vessel is swallowed up again into the night. As suddenly as it appeared, it has vanished again. But the Morse signals from one of its great searchlights are now winking out of the darkness. The ship first gives its identity signal, then a Morse message to the bridge.

The two seamen stand pressed close against the funnel. Bonczyk cannot read Morse but the sailor deciphers letter by letter.

"Holy smoke, Brummschädel, man!"

"What is it? What's he saying? Tell us, can't you?"

"She's drifting – they can't steer her – they haven't any more steam!"

.Others who have also seen the ship and read the message come running up from aft.

"Did you see her?"

"They've quit! They're out of it!"

"They are not standing for any attack!"

"The stokers on the *König Albert*."

“How do you mean? What have they done?”

“What have they done? Sabotage, you fool!”

“Come, don’t pitch me any of your yarns!”

“Can’t you understand anything at all? Well, you know the boiler, do you? And those leaky pipes inside?...”

“The heating coil, you mean?”

“Yes, the leaky heating coil that they’re always plugging up when we go into dock. Well, they knocked out those iron plugs when they were making up the fires. And when she got under way the water came in and drowned the fires.”

“The stokers have mutinied!”

“The sailors, too!”

Schorsch and the sailors run with the news to the forecandle. Bonczyk stands as if nailed to the spot. Four long years he has been lugging coal to the furnaces, heaving the ashes, sounding the boilers. Always he has been the “barrow”, the lowest hand, the last dirt on the ship: “Hey there, Brummschädel! – Coal! Away with the ash! Fetch the coffee! – Trimmer! Clean out the forge ! Crawl into the ash-pit ! Fish out the grate that has fallen down!” At sea, in port, at drill – he has always felt hanging over him the menace of the military code from which there is neither escape nor relief.

Jacob Bonczyk the trimmer is staring into the gloom into which the drifting ship has disappeared. He gazes absently at the *Markgraf* where she lies at anchor, and whence comes that shrill sound of a signal-whistle.

For a moment he is unable to think. Then he turns swiftly about, runs back along the deck and disappears down the gangway into the stokehold. As fast as his wooden shoes will allow him, he clammers down the iron ladder to the boiler-room...

The stokers have mutinied! The sailors, too!

On the bridge the Commander is standing as stiff as a stock. The German Fleet was to be matched against the naval strength of England! The sailing of the fleet was to hearten the country to hold on; it should give a powerful impetus to the National Defence. Once the guns of the fleet began to talk the miserable peace-mongers would be silenced and an end be put once and for all to the humiliating negotiations of the new civilian Government.

But the sailing had been postponed from hour to hour.

And then came the alarming messages:

At the docks the crews have abandoned ship. The sailors on the *Helgoland* have refused to weigh anchor. On the *Thüringen* they dropped the anchor again when it was already up, and the crew have barricaded themselves in the forecandle. And now this Morse message: “Sabotage on the *König Albert* !” The Commander hands the pad with the message to the Signal Officer.

“This message is absolutely secret, Herr Lieutenant.”

“Very good, Herr Captain,” replies the Signal Officer. But the news runs like lightning through the ship, through the mess-decks and the fighting-turrets, through the boiler-rooms and engine-rooms. It brings the sailors at the guns to their feet and sets the stokers busy.

The stokers have mutinied!

The sailors, too!

Bonczyk fetches Raumschuh. Never before have the two travelled so fast from the stokehold, through the smithy and up the iron ladder. They run through the mess-decks, enter the forecandle. There a crowd of sailors has already assembled; the stokers off duty are there also. They are all shouting in wild confusion, they have flung caution to the winds.

“Four years and a half we have sweated here, and now, just when peace is coming...”

“Now when there is a popular government...”

“And Prince Max has asked Wilson to arrange an armistice...”

“An attack now, when the war is already lost!”

“It’s only another latrine wireless.” “We’re only going out minesweeping.”

Schorsch is standing on the chain-locker: "Minesweeping? Are you blind, man? Can't you see what they're up to? Where we're going? The paint there on the gangway ready for painting the funnels, don't you know what that means? And the navigation officer with charts of the English coast all spread out on his table!"

"We're going to England."

"And to drown, every mother's son."

The crowd of faces grows bigger. Still more sailors come in from the mess-decks, still more stokers from the boiler-rooms. Raumschuh has pushed his way to the front and mounted the chain-locker too. Naked to the waist and greasy, with only a sweat-rag over his shoulders, he is standing beside Schorsch.

"This attack is blank suicide-anyone can see that. The officers want to commit suicide because they have lost the war. They are frightened of the future; frightened because afterwards they will be out of a job. And we are expected to be in on that."

"Listen to Comrade Scheidemann!"

"You shut your mouth, or I'll shut it for you."

Raumschuh does not need even to get down from his perch. One of the men below has already fetched the flunkey from the officers' mess a dig in the ribs. "Knock his silly damned head off!" "Scheidemann – all he knows!"

The flunkey makes for the exit, but a couple of men bar his way.

"You stay where you are-I know your little game."

"Going to the officers' mess to sneak, eh?"

"Let him go – what does it matter? We've done playing hide-and-seek now. What we have to do is what they've done already on the *König Albert*. We've stoked long enough – let's do something else now for a change."

Loud shouting is heard without, and a couple of sailors come running to the fore-castle.

"On deck, quick!"

"On deck, the *Markgraf*!"

"What's up?" "What is it?"

"The stokers on the *Markgraf*!"

The exit from the fore-castle and the narrow gangway leading to the deck can hardly contain the mob, all struggling to get through at once. As they come out on deck they are unable at first to see what is happening.

Then they do see – The columns of black smoke from the funnels of the battle-cruiser *Markgraf* suddenly turn to dense clouds of white steam which ascend into the night sky.

They are quenching the fires. The stokers have mutinied.

The ship looks ghostly still and mysteriously lifeless – only the black silhouette with the funnels and gun turrets – not a man to be seen. The men of the *Kurfürst* stand on the deck, fascinated by the apparition and the reality concealed within it. Suddenly the searchlight of their own ship flashes out. The beam feels its way over the deck, then stops, poised above the mob which stands out clear in the vivid light. The sailors stare blindly up at the bridge. They can see nothing, they only hear the voice above them.

The Commander shouts down:

"Those men there-what are they standing about for? Go below, off the decks double-quick! into the ship."

The stokers and upper-deck ratings stand still in their places, with upturned faces-not a soul stirs, not a soul speaks. A mob without voice they stand at the foot of the funnel.

Stoker Raumschuh suddenly stiffens:

"Very good, Herr Captain. Down into the bunkers, but for another reason than usual. We know what we have to do."

Trimmer Bonczyk has found his tongue, too: "Turn our shovels about and bash in their faces!"

"Officer of the Watch! Put that man under arrest! Put those men under arrest!"

"All hands stay where they are!" shouts down the Officer of the Watch.

"You can kiss my arse!"

"Quick, everyone to the stokehold!"

The entire crew turns about, runs through the mess-decks toward the gangways leading to the stokehold- stokers and sailors in wild confusion. They clamber down the iron ladders.

"What can they do to us?"

"Might as well die one way as another."

"If it's now, well and good. But it won't be without taking a few of them along with us."

In the interval the stokers below have kept the fires low. They have not made one ounce of steam more than enough for twelve knots. Raumschuh is first into the boiler-room and the rest surge in after him.

The Warrant Officer has his back to the mob and is shouting at one of the stokers on duty below:

"What do you think you're doing? I'll report you! I have given you a direct order!"

Raumschuh already has a fire-rake in his hand. He jumps to his boiler, opens the door and starts to draw the fire. He works like a fury-with every haul a heap of glowing coals falls out upon the tiles.

"Brummschick – the hose!"

"The hose! – where's the hose?"

"Water, quick, here!"

Someone has brought the hose. Bonczyk holds it over the glowing mass. A third turns on the tap. Clouds of white steam boil upwards, filling the whole room, until the men appear like ghosts moving about in the fog.

For a moment the other stokers stand irresolute.

Suddenly they are surrounded by a crowd of sailors, all arguing with them. In the midst of this confusion stands Raumschuh raking like a madman, and Bonczyk beside him with the hose, grinning like a fiend. And the hissing steam becoming denser and denser.

The Warrant Officer recovers his self-control:

"Are you mad, all of you? Raumschuh! Stoker Raumschuh!"

Raumschuh swings about, the slice in his hands, his eyes flashing. At the expression in his face the Warrant Officer starts back and flies before the red-hot iron, Raumschuh close on his heels. Only the fact that the stoker wears wooden clogs and the Warrant Officer boots, and that the bulkhead doors leading through the boiler-rooms are all open, saves the officer.

Others come running after Raumschuh and the Warrant Officer. No. 2 Stoke hold, No. 3, No. 4, join the tumult.

"An attack? Of course they were going to make an attack – it is as clear as daylight. There can be no two ways about it."

The waverers are persuaded: "*König Albert* is out of it."

"The fires are out on the *Markgraf*."

"Draw the fires, that's the stuff. We can find out afterwards what the game is."

Furnace door after furnace door is flung open. Every available stoker, those on duty and those who have come below with the sailors are labouring as if possessed by a sudden fit of mob-madness, to cripple the ship. And all the while hardly a word spoken. Only an occasional shout somewhere out of the fog.

"Not an ounce more steam."

"What if the English come?"

"That's another matter."

"There'll be steam enough then all right."

The Warrant Officer, who has been to the engine-room to report, comes back-behind him the Officer of the Watch, the Chief Engineer, a navigation officer, deck officers, all with revolvers in their hands.

"Are you mad, you scoundrels?"

"Do you realize what you're doing?"

“This is mutiny in the face of the enemy!”

Loud catcalls are the answer. And now someone has cut the electric-light cable. The boiler-rooms are chaos.

Fires falling out. Billows of steam. Neither bulkhead nor deck is visible. There is no above nor below-only a ball of gas that seems to be rotating wildly, and in the midst a welter of wrestling bodies and the open furnace-mouths like red eyes.

The alarm bell rings shrill:

“Clear the ship for action!”

“To your posts!”

“Clear the ship!”

“You don’t catch us that way.”

“We’ve been had too often.”

“Dirty swindlers!”

“Suicides!”

“Sock him one! sock him!”

Punches! Kicks! Fire-extinguishers are turned on the officers. The engineer, who has drawn his revolver, lands on his behind, slides across the deck and vanishes. The officers take to their heels, and after them go hurtling lumps of coal and boiler scale.

The last furnace is out. And for SMS *Grosser Kurfürst* too, the war is over.

A wireless message from the flagship:

“Fleet to put to sea at all costs.”

“Unable to put to sea,” replies the Commander.

“Unable to put to sea,” reply the commanders of the several squadrons.

The next day: a meeting of the commanders on the flagship *Baden*.

The Admiral of the Fleet has summoned the squadron commanders and is listening to the account of the happenings of the preceding night.

A great string of offences of the most serious order: riotous assemblies of the crews; conspiracy to prevent the fleet putting to sea; sailors refusing to weigh anchor; stokers keeping the fires so low that the ships are unable to move, or even putting out the fires altogether; threats and acts of violence against superior officers; sections of the crews arming themselves with rifles, others taking possession of the guns.

But it is agreed, there seems to have been no single leadership of the movement. The various crews had simply set themselves against their ships putting to sea, and having succeeded in preventing the attack, had returned to their duties.

The Admiral decides on a series of general arrests.

The Norddeutscher Lloyd steamer, the *Frankfurt*, is chosen for the accommodation of a large number of the offenders and the various prisons in Wilhelmshaven are also cleared for their reception. A number of harbour craft are requisitioned for carrying out the order. Special measures are undertaken for the arrest of the mutineers on the *Helgoland* and *Thüringen*, for which purpose a company of marines, a torpedo-boat and a submarine have been allotted. The ships are given orders to fire if necessary into the forecastle, where the mutineers have barricaded themselves. The commander of the Third Squadron to which the *Grosser Kut*, belongs, has obtained permission to proceed with his ships to Kiel, the admiral having explained that he has his men well in hand again, and that once in Kiel they will begin to think better of it.

The arrests are carried out the next day.

The harbour craft returning with the prisoners from the *Thüringen* are greeted with cheers by the crews of the fleet at anchor. The sailors of the flagship “Friedrich der Grosse” dip to the mutineers as they pass.

At the same time the Lightning Division weighs anchor and the four ships leave the Jade. At Red-Sand Light they change course, steam up the Elbe, and at Brunsbüttelkoog enter the locks of the Kiel Canal.

The ships draw slowly along the Canal between the flat fields of Schleswig-Holstein.

The sailors are performing their duties as usual. The stokers are tending the fires as usual.

The petty officers are bawling their orders as usual. A peasant girl is waving as usual from the bank.

And the court-martial officers are at work again – conducting a general enquiry.

Following the mass action of the night before, the crews have disintegrated again into separate groups, into thousands of individuals, each of whom must answer for himself. The stokers and sailors come obediently as they are called, and make their depositions. But the presiding officer cannot glean much from the statements. All the accused say the same thing, all take shelter behind the darkness amid which the events took place:

“I did hear talking, but it was so dark that I could recognize no one – Yes, someone certainly did shout that, but it was in a feigned voice. Everybody was running toward the stokehold, so I ran with them; but once there I could see nothing, because the light was out – I took no part in the meeting in the fore-castle, I went in merely because I wanted to relieve myself; there was a crowd of fellows standing about, but I said to myself ‘This is none of my business’ and went away again. No, I can’t recall anyone in particular – I did hear cartridges rattling in a few pockets, but as I valued my life, I stayed in my hammock. A.B. Sonnenkalb, who sleeps next me, will bear witness to that – I heard a shout: ‘Stokers off duty, to the stokehold! I supposed it was an order, so of course I ran along there.’”

Now it is Jacob Bonczyk’s turn.

“But you were on duty, Bonczyk. You must have seen what happened.”

“Well, you see, sir, I’m a trimmer – my job is to heave the ashes. I was up on deck there unhooking the ash-buckets and thinking of nothing particular, when all of a sudden I noticed that no more buckets were being hung on the hook below and no more ashes coming up. Then by the time I got below, the place was all choc-a-bloc with people....”

“And a lot of people who had no business there, I presume?”

“Yes, there were a lot of strangers, that’s true!”

“Well, and whom did you see, for instance?”

“Oh, a whole lot, but the lights were out, and the place so full of steam, I couldn’t see anyone at all, really.”

The presiding officer groans:

“Dismiss! The next!”

The next is Raumschuh.

Raumschuh is still of opinion that the time is past for playing at hide-and-seek, He stands up to the cross-examiner and answers his questions: “Yes, I did take part in drawing the fires. I considered the attack to be unjustifiable. In my opinion it would have interfered with the peace negotiations – Yes, I was aware that my behaviour laid me open to punishment, but I could not conscientiously act against my opinions.”

“Thank you, that will do for the present.”

The judge orders Raumschuh to be led away.

One at last to speak out – but the rest! He surveys his list of over a hundred offenders, whom nothing short of days and weeks of cross-examination, imprisonment and solitary confinement will suffice to render amenable.

And even he begins to realize that not all Germany’s prisons are enough to accommodate the ever growing multitude of offenders against military discipline.

By evening the squadron has entered Kiel Harbour.

The *Markgraf*, *Kronprinz* and *Grosser Kurfürst* make fast to the buoys in the roads. SMS

König goes farther in to the shipyards, there to enter the great floating dock.

No leave is granted that evening.

The launch only is made clear to put the Commander and Court-Martial Officer ashore. Next morning ferryboats come alongside – ferryboats full of marines with fixed bayonets, just as at

Wilhelmshaven.

The sailors and stokers not on duty are still in their hammocks. They are called on deck one by one and promptly arrested by the soldiers. One hundred and twenty are taken from the *Kurfürst*, two hundred from the *König*, from the *Kronprinz* two hundred also, and from the *Markgraf* two hundred and fifty. Yet another armed company of marines is waiting on the wharf. Escorted on either hand by heavily-armed troops the long column moves off. Almost a thousand men all told – the stokers dirty and still wearing their wooden shoes, the sailors in their grey working rig. In column of route four deep they trot off through the streets.

All talking is forbidden.

It is forbidden also to turn round.

Any resistance is met with blows from rifle-butts. The Commandant of the Fort, Captain Heine, sees personally to the strict observance of the orders. After leaving the wharf the column moves along *Düsternbrooker Weg*, across the *Lorentzendamm* into *Feldstrasse*, and at last finds itself within the walls of Kiel's largest prison house. The prison can accommodate only a portion of the men under arrest, the greater number are marched farther out to the forts, which have been hastily turned into prisons.

A murky, motionless sky is hanging like a pall above the houses which line the road. The dock workers with their coffee-cans under their arms and the women on their way to the powder magazine stand still in their tracks and watch the long line of prisoners.

Not all the stokers and sailors were aboard their ships on the night of the proposed attack. A few were on leave, some ill in hospital, others doing time in the shore prisons.

Heppens Prison, within the fortifications of Wilhelmshaven, has accommodation for one thousand men, and the whole camp, including the huts erected during the last year of the war, will hold about two thousand. It is here that offenders from the shore formations, the patrol flotillas, the torpedo-boat division and the battleships sentenced to short-term imprisonment do their time. At that time it contained some forty sailors and stokers from the various ships of the Lightning Division.

Fourteen days.

Twenty-one days.

Twenty-eight days.

Each corridor houses fifty men, all strictly isolated one from another. Each cell is three paces long by two wide and within that space the prisoners tramp up and down, up and down, hour after hour. Sometimes one will stand still and stare at the wall. Another will listen, straining to hear if any sound from the street can penetrate in to him. A third will polish his boots again and again. A fourth had yet a different pastime-with a nail he scratched on the wall the date and duration of his imprisonment, together with a malediction against militarism. And a fifth contrived to get into communication with his neighbour by means of a system of knocks.

The two neighbours signalled first their own names, then the names of their ships. The one is Otto Papendieck, sailor on the *Grosser Kurfürst*; the other, Rode, cook's mate on the "Baden".

"What are you in for?"

"Insubordination."

"And you?"

"Overstaying leave."

"How long have you to go still?"

"Another eight days close."

"That's easy! could do that on my arse," replies the cook's mate.

So they began to tell each other their stories, which lasted for days and were continued during the sleepless hours of the night. Rode had served as a cook on freight steamers. In 1912 he had been called up for the navy. He made one trip out East with the Foreign Squadron and then joined up again.

"What a mug you were to re-enlist!"

"I've had enough now, anyway!"

"Naturally."

"Happen to know whether the fleet is still at Wilhelmshaven?"

"I heard off a bloke in the latrine yesterday"

Papendieck suddenly stops knocking; Rode also is listening to a noise outside. Footsteps moving in the corridor. After a while they recognize the step of the Officer of the Guard and of a warder.

The warder is counting off the cells:

"Twenty-six – twenty-seven – twenty-eight!"

"That will do!" interrupts the officer. Rode's cell!

The door is unlocked.

"Take your gear and get out!"

His gear consists of a small wooden box, the "ditty-box", in which are stowed his toilet articles, a toothbrush, and the stuff for cleaning his boots.

Rode takes the box under his arm and, together with the inmates of the other twenty-seven cells, marches out into the prison yard.

Papendieck, Cell 29, knocks on the wall.

He wants to know what it is all about. But no one heeds his knocking. He gives up at last and listens into the corridor as before. He overhears the furnace man say to one of the other prisoners: "You're going to have visitors. They're putting seven in each cell."

Papendieck remains standing at the door of his cell. He is still at a loss to explain the new situation or the reason for this fresh influx of prisoners, when another and yet more extraordinary thing claims his attention.

A noise reaches to him from the street. Catcalls, whistling, a hubbub of voices and individual cries. Audible among them the voice of command:

"Party, halt! In sections, right wheel, quick march! Halt!"

The shouting increases steadily until the commands are lost in the general uproar.

Disregarding the rules and at the risk of further detention Papendieck drags his wooden bed to the wall below the window and hauls himself up to the level of the bars. It is not much he can see – only a small sector, a narrow stretch of street. But crowds of stokers! They are still black from their work and wearing their clogs. Some have turnips in their hands. He sees one bite a piece from a turnip and then pass it on to the next man with a grin. Where have they come from? What does it mean?

One of them lifts his eyes, his glance travels up the steep prison wall. Papendieck sees him wave his cap, hears him shout:

"Ahoy! *Thüringen* here!"

Papendieck forgets all discretion. He does not know the next moment how ever he came to do it, and is shocked at his own audacity; for suddenly he catches sight of the fixed bayonets.

But already he has answered: "Ahoy! *Grosser Kurfürst* here!"

His astonishment is still greater when the stokers reply: '*Thüringen* here!' "*Helgoland* here!" "Down with the war!"

"Hurrah for the Fourteen Points!" "Three cheers for Wilson!"

"Three cheers for the Bolsheviks!"

And the marines stand by with stolid faces. The lieutenant in charge of the escort also takes no notice, waiting patiently until the gate of the prison opens and swallows the crowd of stokers.

Papendieck has not to wait long. They are unlocking his door now! And he is marched off.

The yard is crowded with prisoners who have been turned out of their cells to make room for the new-comers. A number have assembled outside the huts where some of the stokers from the *Thüringen* have been lodged, and through the shut doors they learn the cause of the mass arrests. And what they hear from the huts is exciting and alarming, and flies from mouth to mouth.

"Two hundred from the *Thüringen*!"

"And two hundred from the *Helgoland*!"

"They made fast the anchor chains!" "They barricaded themselves in the forecastle."

“They got rifles and ammunition – but a torpedo-boat was sent to blow up the *Thüringen*.”

“And on the *Friedrich der Grosse* the stokers pulled the fires from under the boilers.”

“The whole fleet is in revolt!”

Then a sailor shouts from a window:

“Hey, blokes – come in here everybody-they are giving us our papers. We are being sent back to our ships. They are letting us off the rest of our time!”

“Comrades....”

A stoker thrusts his arm through the barred window of one of the huts. Only the long arm and the top of a shock of hair are visible. And the stoker’s voice is heard calling: “Comrades! Don’t leave us in the lurch, comrades! Don’t forget us. Carry on the good work we have begun!”

“We won’t forget you.”

“We’ll carry on the job.”

“You can count on that.”

A man has mounted a heap of sand:

“We won’t forget you, we promise you that.”

He turns to the prisoners in the yard:

“That’s right, isn’t it, mates? We will stick together? Three cheers for the mutineers of the *Thüringen*!”

“Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!”

The Officer of the Guard comes into the yard: “What’s the matter with you? Are you mad? Do you want to go, or do you want to stay here? You’re being let off the rest of your time. Double up into the office there and get your papers!”

Papendieck, while drawing his papers, meets his cell neighbour, Rode. For the first time he sees him in the full light of day, and is disappointed. That face with the bristling moustaches! Why, the fellow does not only wear a moustache-trainer in his off time on board ship – he has been wearing it in his cell! just the sort of bird who would re-enlist! – But the unfavourable impression does not last long, for Rode is as excited as the rest.

After receiving their discharges they are all lined up in the prison yard:

“Number! Form fours! Left wheel, quick march!”

The gate opens and the released prisoners march out, their ditty-boxes under their arms. They are taken to the barracks of the 2nd Naval Division and there given temporary quarters.

During the lunch hour several companies fall in on the parade-ground, armed with rifles and in marching order. They are recruits mostly, newly called-up lads of seventeen, to whom have been allotted, as section leaders, a few able seamen. Rode and Papendieck, who have just eaten and are returning together from the mess room, walk across to one of the squads.

Papendieck addresses one of the able seamen:

“What’s doing, mate? Where are you going?”

“We are to parade through the town.”

“Parade? What sort of parade?”

“Oh, bands, and all that!”

“So! Just to work up a bit of enthusiasm for the war, eh?”

“Something like that, I guess.”

“Think there may be some shooting, too, perhaps, no? Against the dockers, for instance, who are going on strike?”

“We wouldn’t stand for any of that.”

“We won’t shoot, don’t you worry.”

“But you’ve a lot of recruits with you.”

“They won’t shoot either – we’ve put them wise.”

Rode and Papendieck wait to see the troops march from the parade-ground; then they go back to their quarters. A few of the released prisoners have already stretched out their palliasses, and others are sitting around playing cards. Papendieck’s diagnosis of Rode proves correct – he actually does produce a moustache-trainer from his ditty-box and fasten it on before lying down.

After the midday rest a whistle sounds.

The petty officers on duty are shouting the order:

“Company, fall in for fatigue!”

Not a man of the prisoners stirs. A petty officer

flings open the door:

“Fall in for window-cleaning fatigue! Show a leg! That applies to the honourable prisoners, too.”

Not a soul moves.

Then follow a few shouted words: “We’re through.”

“We’ve had enough.”

“Quick, hop it! If you don’t want a sea-boot after you.”

The Petty Officer reports to the Warrant Officer. The Warrant Officer who has had to report dozens of cases of insubordination during the last few days in his own company, decides not to meddle: “We won’t have to put up with the blighters for long. They are all to be shunted off to their ships to-night.”

During the course of the afternoon Rode rejoins the “Baden” which is lying at Wilhelmshaven. The forty men of the Third Squadron have to wait until evening. Each man is given an army loaf. Then they are marched to the railway station and entrained for Kiel.

On their way to the station they pass Heppens Prison. As earlier in the day, shouts are again exchanged between the sailors and the prisoners who answer from the cell windows:

“Ahoy! *Markgraf* here!”

“*Thüringen* here!”

“Down with the war!”

The warrant officer in charge of the party does not attempt to prevent the sailors in this exchange of greetings, but marches along in silence beside his squad to the station.

Wilhelmshaven.

Oldenberg.

Bremen.

The men doze through the night, they smoke, play cards, gnaw at their loaves of bread, either out of hunger or from boredom. They begin to freeze in their thin clothes and huddle closer together. At small, poorly-lighted stations they get out to stretch their legs. Next day at about noon they reach Hamburg.

There a number of civilians board the train – most are young girls, or women whose husbands are serving in the navy at Kiel, and with whom they purpose spending the morrow, which is Sunday.

Today is Saturday, November 2nd, 1918.

The civilians who are familiar with sailors only in neat, blue jackets and open collars, wonder at the appearance of these men and the prison rig in which they are clad. They begin to ask questions:

“What branch of the Navy are you?”

“How do you come to be here?”

“We’re from the Third Squadron, the Lightning Division, lying at Kiel.”

“We’ve been in prison at Wilhelmshaven.”

It is strictly forbidden to talk with civilians concerning happenings in the navy, but the sailors cannot keep the great news to themselves – they tell everything, all they have heard, and a little more in addition.

Papendieck is seated beside a young woman with a large bun of fair hair. Her husband is a stoker on the *König*.

“The *König* didn’t go out either?”

“No, none of the ships. Everywhere the stokers mutinied and pulled out the fires!”

“And the same with the *Markgraf*?” another asks.

“The *Markgraf*? Sure – they’re a tough lot of lads on the *Markgraf*, I tell you.”

“You should have seen the stokers of the *Thüringen* when they came in. Two hundred and fifty of them were put ashore.”

“But we mean to see it through.”

“We’ll put the finishing touches.”

“Once we get to Kiel.”

The women open their packages and what little they have they share with the sailors – a few sandwiches, apples. The blonde woman works at a canning factory in Hamburg and has brought along a tin of herrings. Papendieck is given one, then she passes the tin around.

Suddenly it occurs to her that her husband may be one of the men under arrest.

“It would be just like him – he is always in some trouble or other.”

“Don’t worry, the war’s over now; they’ll all have to be let out again.”

“Yes, or we’ll go and fetch them.”

“We’ll fetch them.”

The train drags slowly over the rain-sodden fields and through the forests of Holstein. The journey lasts almost another four hours. There are hasty farewells as the train pulls into Kiel station. Beyond the barrier are the sailors waiting for their women-folk.

Still excited by his journey, the talk with the women, and above all by the happenings at Wilhelmshaven which have magnified in importance the more he has talked of them, Papendieck jumps down from the train. Even the prison clothes which he and his companions are wearing seem to him just now to be in some special way significant, and to put him almost on the same footing as the mutineers. He would like to do something big – to cut a figure, so he calls to the sailors beyond the barrier:

“Look out, boys, here come the Bolsheviks!”

But he shuts up again immediately, for he gets no response. A group of officers is standing by and one turns toward Papendieck – but he does nothing.

The transport officer falls the men in and numbers them off. After warning them to go at once to their ships, he dismisses them.

Once clear of the station waiting-hall and finding the streets as quiet and orderly as ever, Papendieck feels an access of retrospective alarm at the memory of his own boldness. He makes haste to escape from the empty square and turns in the direction of the harbour. In Kaiserstrasse he meets a few of his mates from the *Kurfürst*.

“Why, yes, Pipendieck of the larboard watch!”

“Well, Hannes! so here you are again.”

“Done your time?”

“Not quite – they let us all out.”

“Come with us-we have held several meetings today, but they have all been broken up.. The boys from the *Kurfürst* are down at Schulten’s.”

“Meetings broken up, eh? God be praised! Then there has been something doing, eh? And there’s going to be more fun, eh? Excellent!”

They follow the dyke, past quays and warehouses, and torpedo-boats lying at their moorings. They go down “Hinter der Mauer” – a narrow alley lined on both sides with brothels, where women, clad only in stockings and light cloaks, stand in the doorways and beckon:

“Hello, Johnny, come inside.”

“Come along, only one mark today.”

“All right, don’t then! You dirty dog!”

The lamps are just being hung out and groups of sailors go stumbling along the ancient, cobbled street. A drunken man is seated on a doorstep counting his few pence. Opposite the gate in which the street “Hinter der Mauer” ends, stands Prince Heinrich’s Castle, and a hundred paces beyond is the restaurant belonging to Heinrich Schülten.

Papendieck is welcomed back with enthusiasm; he is given a glass of beer and has to touch glasses all round. Then he tells of the happenings at Wilhelmshaven, the reason for his premature release from prison, and the arrival there of the stokers from the *Thüringen* and *Helgoland*.

“You should have been there to see them! Such a row!”

“You should have been on board with us to see the way Raumschuh went for the Warrant Officer

with a red-hot poker! And Bonczyk with the fire-hose...”

“What’s become of Raumschuh?”

“Locked up! A hundred and twenty of us altogether.”

“Yes, and two hundred and fifty from the *Markgraf*.”

“Next morning when we arrived at Kiel we didn’t realize what was happening – they were called on deck one by one – and the rest of us just lying there in our hammocks!”

“If we mean to catch that leave boat, then it’s time we were going,” says one.

“Oh, shut up, you and your leave boat! We’ll be on board soon enough-we can go by the next.”

“Another round, waiter.”

“Good health, Hannes.” “Good health, Fiete.”

“There wasn’t room enough in the prison to hold them. Most of them were taken to the forts.”

“To Ringstrasse and Fort Albert.” “But what is to be the next move?”

“That is just what we have been discussing.” “They mustn’t put it across us again this time!”

“Remember 1917 – how Reichpietsch and Köbis were shot, and over a thousand put into clink. And how, afterwards, the rest got a bit more to eat and then all was quiet again. Dopey fools, once they get enough to eat, they forget everything else.”

Suddenly the door opens and a mob of sailors crowd in, *Kronprinz*, *Markgraf*, *König* on their cap-bands, collars awry and caps on the back of their heads.

They are puffing and sweating from their run, and all talking together in wild confusion.

Bonczyk of the *Kurfürst* is there, and Schorsch, the dark chap. Bonczyk, seizing a man by both arms, says:

“Did ever you see such a dirty swine! Somebody ought to have landed him one. Kept on jabbing him in the leg with a bayonet. Ripped his sea-boot right up, a brand new sea-boot, too!”

“We shouldn’t have run.”

“They would have fired on us if we hadn’t.” “Well, we won’t get any farther by running away!”

Those at the tables are on their feet now:

“What, something fresh happened?”

“Happened? The marines, the swine!”

“We were at the protest meeting!”

“What, has there been another meeting?” asks Papendieck.

“Yes, at the Union Office, against the arrests. We went to the Commandant first, but he wouldn’t give us a hearing.”

“Delegations were sent to all the commanders, too, but they refused to discuss the matter.”

“And the meeting at the Union Office was prevented by the police who were posted at every door. There were placards too: “Entrance forbidden to military. By order, The Commandant of the Fort.”

“I was in at Bellachini’s, the conjuring show, and an officer came in and ordered every sailor out of the place!”

“Pity you hadn’t something better to do at such a time.”

“Lord, man, what do you want? I’d booked a seat, hadn’t I? I reckon they might have told us beforehand that sailors weren’t admitted.”

“Tell us about the meeting.”

“We marched in a column to the parade-ground and we were standing there and a chap had just been speaking...”

“A marine from Flanders!” interposes Bonczyk.

“Who’s telling this story – me or you? – well, as I was saying, a chap, a marine from Flanders, had been speaking. Wanted to be quite sure the dockers would join us, so he said...”

“And there were two others in civvies – Independent Socialists – they said the same. They are willing to support us.”

“We had just given a cheer for the stokers in clink, when up comes a company of marines with fixed bayonets and sails right into us.”

“No, two companies! they came up from both sides.” “We had to run for it, or they would have opened fire.”

“These damned marines! Bloody landlubbers!”

“A taste of wind about their noses is what they need.”

“Too soft a job, that is their trouble; they haven’t had enough war yet.”

“But wait till tomorrow!”

“Why, what’s happening tomorrow? Another meeting?”

“Yes, on the Central Parade-Ground, tomorrow. See, here are the notices – Give us one, Schorsch!”

Schorsch hauls out a packet of leaflets from his sea-boot and Bonczyk hands them round. Papendieck holds one of the diminutive sheets to the lamp:

Comrades!

Tomorrow, Sunday, at 4.30 p.m. Come to the Central Parade-Ground!

To protest against the arrest of our Comrades of the Third Squadron!

Everyone must be there! Let no ship be absent!

The Sailors’ Committee.

Schorsch stands up on a chair:

“There must be no repetition of 1917! Alone we can do nothing; so let us make the most of this opportunity tomorrow. Everyone is to assemble on the parade-ground; then we will march to Feldstrasse and get our mates out of gaol!”

“Yes, that’s right enough for us here – but the mob, the general ruck – they’re too damned stupid – they won’t stand in with us.”

“Given a lead, they would.”

“Exactly – and that is the point of these leaflets here – we take them on board with us and put one in each man’s hammock. Then tomorrow we take the lead.”

“It’s time someone made a beginning!”

“If we mean to catch that last ferry, it’s time we were going, blokes.”

“All right – coming.”

The leaflets are distributed and even Papendieck gets a packet. Then they pay their bill and leave the tavern. Half an hour later the little harbour steamer is along- side SMS *Grosser Kurfürst*. The men returning from leave climb up the rope ladder, give their passes to the sentry and go forward to the mess-decks. Papendieck who has come from Wilhelmshaven and not been on board for several weeks, has to report himself to the Officer of the Watch. He runs him to earth on the starboard side of the quarter-deck – Lieutenant Baron von und zu Guteneck.

“Able Seaman Papendieck reports back for duty.”

“Where have you come from, then?”

“Wilhelmshaven.”

The officer’s tone becomes sharper:

“What have you been doing there?” “I’ve been in prison.”

The Baron bethinks himself of the order of the day, which “having regard”, as it says, “to the grave happenings in the fleet during the past few days”, recommends superior officers to “show a patient and helpful concern for all the difficulties and daily needs of those under their charge”...

So he asks:

“Are you hungry?”

Papendieck stares at the officer. He does not understand the drift of the question. He imagines that he is about to be cornered on some unforeseen count. He thinks of the leaflets in his pocket and is silent.

“Come, don’t look so glum, tell me, what would you like? What about butter and sausage? Or would you prefer bacon?”

Papendieck hesitates, then answers: “Butter and bacon, Herr Lieutenant.”

The lieutenant writes out a chit:

“There, take that to the steward. He is to give you your ration immediately.”

Papendieck clicks his heels, turns sharply and goes amidships to the pantry. Despite the lateness of the hour he gets his butter and a slice of bacon.

He goes off with it to the mess-deck.

The hammocks are already slung, but a number of sailors are still sitting about talking in subdued voices of the latest happenings ashore. Papendieck goes to the lamp with his provender. He smells the bacon, tastes the butter, then slowly shakes his head:

“Extraordinary! Bacon’s all right, butter’s all right! Now I begin to believe things are moving!”

Next day is Sunday. Noon: Leave parade. Tugs and motor-launches tow boatloads of men to the shore.

The landing-stages present the usual picture. Girls are there waving to the men as they approach. The boats come alongside and make fast. The sailors spring ashore in troops-fluttering cap ribbons, blue uniforms. The sailors are to be counted by the hundred, the girls waiting on the piers only by the score. The few who succeed in hooking a girl, stalk off proudly, abandoning their companions who fire volleys of comments after the retreating couples.

“The fair one there, she looks a smart bit.”

“But Fiete, he has got a proper roughie.”

“And the one with Ali – little, but oha!”

Before the next boat comes alongside to unload its cargo of two or three hundred and the same scene is repeated, the first batch has already disappeared into the neighbouring parts of the town. Cigarette-vendors are waiting about as usual on the wharves, and Salvation Army sisters offer the *War Cry* for sale. Naval police with side-arms are patrolling the streets along the water-front as usual – the only difference being that they are not now greeted quite so ceremoniously by the sailors whom they pass. Neither do the patrol officers stop men now for slovenly saluting; and if any sailor is improperly dressed, wears his cap on the back of his head or walks with his hands in his trouser-pockets, they overlook the fact. Another thing that is not quite as usual, though it may appear insignificant and hardly worthy of comment – patrols are now under the charge of deck officers, and are no longer led by marine officers. There is hardly a marine officer to be seen today in the whole town, whereas ordinarily it swarms with them.

Bonczyk and Schorsch had arranged to go ashore together, but Schorsch was unable to go with the steamer, being scheduled for duty aboard and so receiving no pass. Later on, however, he contrived to stow away on a steam-launch going ashore to fetch back one of the bridge officers.

On the landing-stage he meets Bonczyk.

“Hello, Schorsch, you here?”

“Yes, couldn’t get a pass-but I came over in the launch. What about making a round of the pubs? Better see what the lads are doing first; then we can go on afterwards to the “Reichspfennig” – the “Reichspfennig” is the rendezvous of the Third Squadron; there the crews of the various ships of that formation meet together.

The two men climb the steps to the Dusternbrooker Weg and set off toward the city. They pass the Imperial Yacht Club and some private villas standing back in their own grounds. They have not proceeded far before a marine officer approaches, heading in the opposite direction.

Bonczyk is first to see him:

“Here comes a land-fish.”

“We don’t want to see him, do we? Give us a light, Job.”

Schorsch takes out a cigarette and plants himself square in the middle of the footway. Bonczyk holds a match for him in the hollow of his hand. Concern for the burning match appears for the moment to be the whole preoccupation of the two men.

The officer hesitates an instant. He lifts his hand to beckon them to approach, then drops it again. He does not want to get in wrong with these fellows, so he makes a sharp turn and crosses to the other side of the street.

Schorsch smiles to himself:

“You see, they’ve got the wind up already.”

The two resume their way. At the “Nightingale” they call for two beers. Some sailors are playing cards at one of the tables. In the separate boxes are couples – nothing visible of them but the heavy shoes of the sailors and the button-up boots and stockinged calves of the girls.

Schorsch walks over to the card-table and reads the names on the cap-bands. He turns to a sailor from the *König* and claps him on the shoulder:

“Well, how goes it? Anything doing on board with you?”

“With us? We’re in dock.”

“Yes, but what’s the feeling on board?”

“Ach, they’re a poor lot of bastards!”

“You’re coming to the meeting today, of course?”

“Yes, half-past four, at the Central Parade-Ground.”

“Hey, Gustav, get on with it! Your deal!”

The sailor from the *König* shuffles and deals out the cards.

“Eighteen-twenty-twenty-two.”

“I pass – your play.”

“Have another drink, Job?” asks Schorsch.

“Think I’ll have something to eat this time – bring us a pickled herring.”

“Yes, the same for me, waiter.”

Then they pay and go. At the next pub it is the same story; and so at the third, and the fourth. But at the “Reichspfennig” it is different. Here business is brisk – it is full of stokers and sailors and dock workers. Every table is occupied, and at most are groups of men engaged in heated discussion.

There is a noisy crowd at the bar, and over all prevails the droning of the electric orchestration. The war-time beer is incredibly thin; but the humpbacked waiter is sweating as he runs hither and thither about the bar-room with one tray-load after another of brimming glasses.

Schorsch and Bonczyk find two vacant chairs.

The men at their table are talking about their duties, about the food and the leave arrangements on their several ships: “. . . Our division officer’s flunkey has had home leave three times, and yesterday when I put in, I was told that no leave is being granted.”

“Yes, and they’ll have to change their tune about land leave, too.”

“Officers can go ashore at midday.”

“And the steward – he’s been selling stuff ashore – that must be looked into, too.”

“And what about those cigarettes – 400,000 came aboard. Have you seen any of them? That ought to be mentioned in the speeches this afternoon.”

“That’s all bosh!” interrupts Schorsch.

“Pure bosh!” agrees Bonczyk.

“That’s not what the meeting’s for; there are things more important than that to be discussed.

Our mates of the Third Squadron, and the stokers from the *Thüringen* and *Helgoland* in Wilhelmshaven, and the chaps who have been in prison ever since the mutiny in 1917 – they must all be let out.”

“Yes, they must be let out. We must see to that at the meeting.”

“That’s right, of course – but so is that about the leave a dirty business. And the cigarettes, every one of them smoked by the officers! – that’s another thing.”

“Our business today is with politics!” calls a dock worker from another table.

“The whole works must stop. It must all go.”

“The Emperor, too – I saw it printed in the *Vorwärts*.”

“You and your *Vorwärts* – it was in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* long before that.”

A few tables away is Fiete with his girl, a worker from the powder magazine. She has a yellow

face and yellow hands, but to compensate, her blouse and skirt are of artificial silk, and on her head she has a smart little hat.

The humpbacked waiter sets down two glasses of beer on the table.

"From the chap over there," he explains, pointing to Fiete.

Fiete stands up and lifts his glass:

"Health, Brummschädel! Health, Schorsch!"

A sailor is going the round, placing a handbill on each table:

"Read that and pass it on."

In typewritten, hectographed lettering the handbill reads: "Comrades. Do not fire on your brothers. Workers – demonstrate. Hold mass meetings. Do not let the soldiers down."

Other sailors come in with fresh news:

"The prisoners from the *Markgraf* were to be escorted to Fort Herbert, but No. 1 Company of the Marine Battalion refused duty. So they fetched No. 3 Company for the job."

"All portable arms have been sent ashore."

"That was done secretly during the night."

"But the officers have been issued with revolver ammunition."

The group at the bar is becoming excited also. They have gathered about a man who has just entered – a marine from Flanders in a long greatcoat of field grey.

Those at the neighbouring tables turn round and listen.

"What's that? What are they saying?"

"What is it?"

"The Alarm has been sounded."

"Alarm? What for?"

"Nonsense! There won't be any more alarms now, don't you worry."

"No, it's true – I had it myself from the Signal Officer's flunkey. I've only this minute come ashore."

The sailor from Flanders has climbed on a chair – a tall, gaunt fellow with the grey of the trenches still in his face. He addresses himself to those around him.

Ever more and more sailors rise from their places and come over to listen; Bonczyk and Schorsch are there, and Papendieck, he is there, too.

"It's the same bloke as yesterday ..." explains Bonczyk.

"Can't hear a word! Stop that bloody orchestrion!"

"There it goes again, the damn thing! What is he saying?"

"... Workers and soldiers, stand together! The dockers have agreed to back us. The meeting is arranged. We are not going to be put off by any of their little tricks. Remember: Four-thirty, the Central Parade-Ground ..."

The door is flung open.

"Alarm!" shouts someone into the room.

"Alarm!" The cry is taken up by those nearest the door.

The men at the tables jump up.

"There – just as a man was getting comfortable."

"And I've a date with my tart for this evening."

"But what can it mean? – alarm? There can't really be anything doing."

"The Third Squadron is to put to sea again."

The orchestrion has stopped at last. The voice of the man from Flanders resounds through the room: "I can tell you what it means. The officers have got wind of the meeting and intend to prevent it. But we are not falling into that trap! All the bombardments of Flanders have not been able to frighten us—a handful of officers are not going to put the breeze up us now. We are going to demonstrate for the liberation of our comrades. Hands up, those who are coming."

Every hand is raised.

The saloon re-echoes with shouting:

"Free the prisoners!"

“To the Parade-Ground!”

“Hurrah, for peace!”

A roll of drums, a bugle call. A posse of marines appears at the door of the “Reichspfennig”. The patrol leader shouts through the doorway:

“Out of it! Do you sit on your ear-holes? Didn’t you hear the ‘Alarm’? Those who belong in barracks, to their barracks. Those who belong to the ships, to their ships.”

The sailors get up reluctantly. They search for their caps and greatcoats and start paying for their drinks. The patrol waits only until the first begin to troop out; then marches on.

The man from Flanders has posted himself at the exit: “Nobody is going to barracks! Nobody is going to the ships! We are demonstrating!”

“To the meeting!”

“To the Parade-Ground!” “To the Parade-Ground!”

“To the Parade-Ground, lads – but not in a bunch, or we shall never get there. By ones and twos is safer. All reassemble outside Viehburger Wood.”

The man from Flanders selects a few others and dispatches them with this message to the other taverns. Schorsch and Bonczyk go back into the town, boarding a tram going in the Dilstembrook direction. At the wharf they get out and harangue the sailors already streaming back to the ships.

“Not to the ships, lads! We’re demonstrating.”

“For the liberation of the prisoners.”

“We’re all meeting at Viehburger Wood.”

“Who are meeting?”

“Everybody – half the crews are there already! And the garrison, as well.”

“Then I guess we’re not going aboard by ourselves.”

“But the squadron is putting to sea.”

“Yes, and we’ll be left standing.”

“A prize lot of fools we’ll look then.”

“Alarm? Why be alarmed? – damned silly I call it – when the war’s as good as lost already.”

“Come on, to Viehburger Wood.”

One or two groups face about and carry along with them the stokers and sailors coming in the opposite direction. Their numbers grow and grow until soon there is not room enough for them all on the footway and they form up in column on the road. The drums are still to be heard sounding the “Alarm” in the neighbouring streets, but the signal has lost its effect.

Schorsch is leading the procession.

Beside him trots Bonczyk.

The column at last reaches the outskirts of the town.

The Parade-Ground at Viehburger Wood is one vast field of blue caps extending from the wood as far as the “Waldweise” dance hall.

The man from Flanders is making a speech.

Schorsch and Bonczyk shove their way as near to the front as they can, but by that time the man from Flanders has already given place to another speaker.

He too is a sailor and has a newspaper in his hand:

“I have brought along the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* with me. There’s an article in it about our comrades of 1917. Listen – I’ll read it.” He reads out the article.

After him a civilian mounts the slight rise in the ground which does service as a rostrum.

“Comrades! Members of the Party ...” he starts off – a practised speaker – but he is interrupted from all sides.

“Who’s that?”

“Garbe, President of the Workers’ Union.”

“...a similar programme has been drawn up by the Dockers’ Union. Therefore, comrades, and fellow unionists, I suggest that you postpone action for a day or two, when, in co-operation, with united forces we shall...”

A wild burst of shouting and catcalls. “Enough!”

“Sit down!”

“We are waiting no longer!”

“We have waited too long already! And in the meantime they will shoot a few more of us!”

“Remember Alwin Köbis!”

“Remember Reichpietsch!”⁴

The Union official is replaced by a sailor:

“The Party bosses have led us by the nose long enough. Now that’s over. Everywhere our mates are in prison. The gaols are not large enough to hold them all. Why, even here, under our very noses, in the ‘Waldweise’, there is a company of the Naval Division in prison ...”

At the edge of the wood another sailor is addressing the crowd out of a tree. And a dock labourer has mounted a heap of rubbish:

“We are absolutely with our comrades of the navy – We promise to support them, and in spite of the unions, if necessary. Your mates are imprisoned here in the ‘Waldweise’, in the Feldstrasse, in all the gaols. And the best of our own leaders are in prison. We demand the liberation of all political prisoners, and if our demands are not granted, then we shall go on strike. We must act together, comrades-against the officers, against the jingoes, against...”

A tumult has broken out in front of the “Waldweise”. But the distance is too great for the mass of the crowd to be able to see what is happening. Then comes a crash of broken glass. The sentry-box begins to sway, is picked up bodily by the mob and thrown crashing to the ground. Ten thousand men move toward the “Waldweise”.

There is a general shouting and whistling. A sergeant-major has appeared on the steps, revolver in hand, and behind him a few soldiers advance dubiously.

The mob storms up the steps.

The sergeant-major goes down at once and the guards voluntarily surrender their arms. The mob surrounds the building. Doors are splintered and not a window is left whole. One group is attacking a telephone post-hands, heads, shoulders-the post rocks, snaps, and stretches its length on the ground. The wires are kicked off. Connection with Kiel is broken.

Then the air resounds with a shout of triumph from ten thousand voices. An imprisoned sailor is climbing out at one of the windows. Hands are reached to receive him. And then they come – through windows and broken doors – in ones and twos, a dozen, scores of them, the entire company.

Shouts arise from the mob:

“Now back to Kiel!”

“To the gaol!”

“To Feldstrasse!”

Once again the man from Flanders appears above the crowd. He is standing on the overturned sentry-box, waving his cap and shouting over the heads:

“This is only the beginning, comrades! There are hundreds more in Kiel and Wilhelmshaven, and in Rendsburg gaol and in the citadel at Cologne. March! Free the prisoners!”

The mob takes up the cry: “Free the prisoners!”

The head of the column begins to move. Now they are marching, the sailors and stokers of SMS *König*, *Markgraf*, *Grosser Kurfürst*, *Kronprinz*, and the sailors released from the “Waldweise”. Dock labourers and women also join the procession, which follows the main Hamburg Road a short distance and then turns into the Sophienblatt. At last the town is reached.

Windows are flung open. The inhabitants of the houses crowd to the doors – workers’ wives, men on leave in old service uniforms. Children run along beside the sailors.

“Peace!”

“Freedom!”

⁴ Alwin (or “Albin”) Köbis and Max Reichpietsch were two sailors sentenced to death by naval court-martial in August 1917, and executed a few days later. They were held responsible for a strike and demonstration by hundreds of sailors from the *Prinzregent Luitpold*. Plivier’s book *The Kaiser’s Coolies* is dedicated to them.

“Free the prisoners!”

Towels are waved from windows in upper storeys, and voices call down: “Bravo!”

“That’s the way!” “Carry on!”

And the sailors shout back: “Down with the war!”

“Down with the Emperor!”

“Long live the Republic!”

“Hurrah for the International!”

At the railway station the procession meets a patrol – an officer and a dozen torpedo-boat men – they approach at the double.

“What is the meaning of this? What are you doing here?”

“What is that to do with you?”

“To the Feldstrasse!”

“To the gaol!”

“Free the prisoners!”

“I put you all under arrest!”

A shout of derision is the only answer. The officer attempts to place himself and his men at the head of the procession as if he were escorting them to gaol. “Don’t be silly!”

“Who the hell do you think you are?”

“Hop it! Quick!”

The man from Flanders, who is leading the procession, thrusts the officer aside.

The torpedo-boat men are armed with revolvers.

“Prepare to fire!” orders the officer, at the same time putting his hand to his pocket.

“Put that shooting iron away-it might go off, you know!”

“Sock him one!”

A quick blow and the revolver falls to the ground:

The patrol is disarmed. The officer in charge is elbowed to the rear and pushed into a side street.

The procession goes on down Holstenstrasse as far as the Market Place, and so into Brunswickstrasse. Other patrols encountered on the way make no resistance but abandon their leaders and join the column. Sailors issue from the coffee-houses and picture-palaces and march with the rest. The doors are immediately shut behind them, and the restaurants also draw down their shutters.

The column marching in the gathering gloom between the rows of houses fills the whole width of the street. Outside the “Hoffnung” the procession comes to a sudden halt. The head of the column has reached the opening into the Feldstrasse, but there a cordon of sailors is stretched across the line of march and bars the way.

Two ranks – rifles at the ready.

A young lieutenant is in command.

The man from Flanders notices that he is suddenly alone. The rest are hanging back. He turns round:

“What, comrades? these few rifles! Surely we are not to be stopped by that! – March on!”

A handful of men detach themselves from the front of the procession and come nearer, then others follow – hesitatingly at first, still they do follow. Those behind press forward and the whole is moving again. Snatches of song arise from the midst of the crowd.

“Halt! not a step farther!”

And again, sharp and hysterical: “Halt! No farther!”

The man from Flanders sees a woman run forward and talk to the lieutenant. He hears the agitated voice of the young lieutenant, sees the set faces of the patrol cadets they are, aspirants for commissioned rank. The man from Flanders lifts his arm in a gesture of appeal:

“Comrades! ...he cries.

“Fire!” commands the officer.

The salvo clears the heads of the crowd.

The sound shatters against the house-fronts and reverberates along the converging streets.

Beyond the lifting smoke of the powder stand the cadets with grey faces, rifles again at the ready.

Once more the hysterical command:

“Prepare to fire – Ready – Fire!”

Screams and curses!

Those behind can see nothing. Those in front rush forward. Brickbats, punches, strangleholds. The cordon is broken. The guns are wrenched from the hands of the cadets and the lieutenant goes down under a blow from the butt of a rifle.

Those behind do not realize what has happened. They have heard only the crackle of rifle-fire, the multiple echo and the peculiar repercussion of the shots against the walls of the houses.

A panic breaks out. “They are shooting!”

“Ach, it’s nothing! Only blanks!”

“No, it’s machine-guns!”

“Steady, lads! Steady!”

“Don’t run!”

“Cowards! Damn you!”

“Stop! Don’t run!”

But the demonstrators are dispersing. A fire-engine cleaves its way through the mob. As the crowd opens to give it passage, the dead and wounded are seen lying stretched on the pavement. The crowd is to be stayed no longer... sailors fly for safety into the side streets, seek shelter in the taverns and run down to the wharves.

Once again, on November 3rd, authority has triumphed.

Eight dead and twenty-nine wounded are left in the square.

10 p.m., No. 4 Wharf.

Freezing sailors at the end of the pier. They stand in groups, side by side, and gaze into the softly lapping black water below, or stare out over the broad surface of the bay. A pallid ribbon of light trembles across from the opposite shore. Midway in the stream the green starboard light of a harbour steamer glides past.

A motor-launch appears out of the darkness with two boats in tow. Launch and boats draw alongside the pier.

Exactly as on any other night. A voice calls out:

“This way, SMS *Markgraf*.”

Twenty or thirty men detach themselves from the crowd and clamber into the boats. The next launch takes the men for the *Kronprinz*. Then those for the *Kurfürst* are taken off.

Gently the boat moves off into the darkness; no sound but the water plucking at the boat’s strakes or gurgling beneath the keel. Coat collars turned up to their ears the sailors sit on the coils of rope, one huddled close beside another. A red light appears, moves obliquely past and disappears.

Papendieck removes the pipe from his mouth.

“He was such a good chap – Schorsch.”

“Yes” replies Bonczyk.

And again nothing but the water and the soft regular chugging of the motor forward. The smooth surface drawing away beneath the boat is like black velvet.

Papendieck tries again:

“And you saw him, close up?” “Yes, close up – it was Schorsch.” “You’re quite sure he was dead?”

“Think I don’t know his shock head when I see it? One stoker had him by the arms and another by the legs, and his head was dangling down on the pavement.” The boat slackens speed.

The first of the ships shows up; it is moored to a buoy forward. Like a mountain it lies there, heavy and lifeless – its crew of fourteen hundred men already asleep. The boat glides close under the ship’s lantern hanging low from the rope ladder and shedding a dim light over the water.

Then the second ship of the squadron appears. Then the third, the *Grosser Kurfürst*. The men returning from leave climb up the ladder. On top, half-asleep, stands the sentry and takes the leave passes. The leave men go forward, Papendieck with the sailors to the forecabin, and Bonczyk with

the stokers to the mess-deck amidships.

Those who stayed on board are already asleep in their hammocks. Bonczyk and the rest fetch their hammocks and spread them, but do not turn in at once. Here in the warmth between decks they begin to thaw again.

"If only we hadn't run!" says one.

"What we should have done was to take their guns from them."

"Yes, but we are too cowardly – we have found out that much anyway."

"I had just run into my uncle who works in the docks, and he was saying to me: 'Why, Hermann,' he says, 'what are you doing here? What's all this about?' And then suddenly there was a rattle, and everybody started running, so of course I ran too."

Somebody sits up in his hammock. Then a second, and a third.

"Don't make such a bloody row!"

"This is the place to sleep!"

"Can't you talk more quietly?"

"Talk quietly? Don't you know what's happened?"

"Why, has something happened?"

"They opened fire on us!"

"Opened fire?"

"Yes, the marines!"

"No, they weren't, they were officers in disguise."

Others now begin to take notice. They climb out of their hammocks and clad in under-breeches and shirts crowd round the solitary night-light. One tells of the meeting on the Central Parade-Ground, of the storming of the "Waldweise", of the demonstration procession, of the encounter at Feldstrasse, and of the death of Schorsch.

"You remember him, the tall, dark chap."

"First they want us to go and have a cut at the English, and, because we wouldn't, this is what they do."

"Four years we've been here on these ships together, and now they shoot us down."

"Murder the sods!"

"Pitch them all into the Baltic!" Papendieck enters the mess-deck.

"Listen, lads! We've been having a discussion up in the latrine. First thing in the morning a sailor is going to pipe all hands aft. Then everyone off duty must go aft to the quarter-deck; shore rig: greatcoat, blue uniform. The First Officer must see to it that the guilty are punished."

"Yes, that's right – they must be punished."

"They must be shot!"

Papendieck talks it over with Bonczyk, then passes on to the other mess-decks. Excited groups are squatting under the hammocks there also. Fresh faces are continually appearing under the red glow of the emergency lamp; ever fresh details come to light and are duly discussed. It is almost dawn before the group dwindles and one after another they climb back into their hammocks.

Over a hundred men are asleep in the mess-deck; in the whole ship, over a thousand. The air is thick with their breathing and sleep comes like a stupor. While the crew sleeps the ship lies like a prison house on the still water. It is as if the blood in the vast iron body had slowly ceased to circulate.

And yet there is a prevailing unrest. Somewhere a door is opened and cautiously closed again. Footsteps move secretly about the darkened rooms. Someone speaks in his sleep. Choking sounds. Groans.

A couple of neighbours are whispering from hammock to hammock:

"Do you think the war is really going to end?"

"We shall have to fight our way home again, rifle in hand."

"The quarter-deck – first thing – shore rig: greatcoat, blue uniform."

Seven o'clock. The yellow electric light flashes on. The boatswains of the watch pipe the

reveille. They go through the decks chanting: “Up, up, show a leg! Let each man kick his neighbour and each man say to other: All hands lash up hammocks!”

Petty officers have no difficulty in waking the men this morning; they spring out of their hammocks, lash them and stow them away.

“Cooks to the galley!” shout the warrant officers. Tables and benches are set.

The orderlies fetch the turnip-coffee and put the jam on the tables, at each of which are seated from ten to a dozen men. They gulp down their coffee and eat a couple of slices of bread.

The routine of the ship goes on as usual until the “All Hands” is piped:

“All hands to the quarter-deck!”

The order passes from man to man, from room to room: “All hands to the quarter-deck-shore rig: greatcoat, blue uniform.”

The First Officer is shaving.

He calls the runner, and when he does not come quickly enough, rings for his batman: “What’s the

trouble? Who gave the order for ‘all hands’? Fetch the Officer of the Watch!”

The Officer of the Watch reports.

“Who gave the order for ‘all hands’, Herr Lieutenant? What is the meaning of it? The Commandant is not on board?”

“Herr Captain....” stammers the Lieutenant... “Is there anything about it in orders?”

“No, Herr Captain, nothing.”

“My God, what is it now? Axe we never to have discipline on this ship again?”

The men assemble on the quarter-deck. The First Officer hears the trampling of many feet on the deck overhead.

“What are the men doing here? Be so good as to go up and send them away.”

The Officer of the Watch comes on deck:

“There was no order to assemble. Dismiss!”

But the men do not dismiss. They fall in by divisions – No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, No. 4 Division. They form up as they have been trained to do, as they have done through four long years. Most are wearing blue uniforms, ready to go ashore. Now the First Officer has come up too: “What, may I ask – what, I should like to know, is the meaning of this? Any complaints or requests, step forward.”

Twelve hundred men, six ranks on the starboard side, six ranks on the port side. The faces, all motionless, look straight ahead. A gentle breeze is playing with the ribbons of their caps. Yonder in the sky the first red beams.

Papendieck is in the front rank; he is looking out over the grey water, and feels the blood pulsing in his temples. The man behind gives him a gentle shove, the man beside him says under his breath:

“Shoot, Hannes! tell him all about it.”

He hesitates a moment, then braces himself, steps six paces forward and stands before the commander. Several others immediately advance from the ranks and range themselves alongside him.

“Now, what is it you want?”

“We were demonstrating yesterday for the liberation of the men who have been imprisoned, Herr Captain, and we are fired on!”

“Who fired on you?”

“We were fired on by order of the Commandant of the Fort, by order of Captain Heine, Herr Captain.”

“Impossible – I simply do not believe it!”

“But I was there! saw it myself – with machineguns, Herr Captain.”

The First Officer turns to the next man:

“And what do you want?”

“We want a leave boat – we want to go ashore immediately.”

“And you?”

“We demand that the Commandant of the Fort be punished.”

“What are you talking about? – a leave boat – to go ashore!”

“We want to speak with the Admiral.”

“But this is not the way to go about it. And what do you mean by ‘we’? There is no such thing! Every man must speak for himself.”

“Do you think so?”

“That may have been, once upon a time!”

“We intend to go ashore!”

“Free the prisoners!”

These shouts come from the ranks. A movement travels down the line and the formation breaks. The crowd swarms about the First Officer.

The other officers reach toward their trouser-pockets. The gesture is met with loud catcalls.

“Comrades!” The First Officer turns toward the crew, at the same time signalling deprecatingly to the officers.

“Comrades, the matter will be looked into.”

More whistling and catcalls, more shouting:

“Ashore!”

“To the Admiral!”

“Quite – but for that we must first get into touch with the shore and obtain instructions. Call up the station, Herr Lieutenant.”

The First Officer turns again to the crew:

“Come round me, lads! Now listen all of you – I am communicating your wish to the station. Within half an hour I should have the reply. In the meantime, I must ask you to dismiss.– Dismiss!” He turns away and goes down to his cabin. The officers follow, and the crew left to themselves stream back again to the rooms forward.

Hardly half an hour has passed before the searchlight on the station is flashing back the Admiral’s reply: “Leave steamers are being placed at the disposal of the crews.”

Boatswains’ whistles are blowing; boatswains’ mates are shouting:

“All for leave, get ready.”

“Draw leave passes.”

“Fall in, the leave parade.”

The sailors and stokers off duty pour down the rope ladder, some five hundred men all told. The Officer of the Watch, whose business it is to inspect the men before leaving the ship, arrives too late and finds only a few belated stragglers. Bonczyk, who had run back to get himself a jam sandwich, is one of the last. The lieutenant pulls him up:

“Have you a pass?”

“Oh, yes, Herr Lieutenant!”

“Show it me!”

Holding the sandwich in one hand, he gropes in his pocket with the other. Those already on board the steamer become impatient.

“Come on, Brummschädel!”

“We’ll shove off in a minute!”

“You’ll be left on board!”

Bonczyk leaves the lieutenant standing. He is the last aboard.

As the steamer casts off, the First Officer leans over the railing and calls down: “When will you be returning, comrades? At what time will you be wanting to eat, and what would you like to eat?”

The men on the steamer gaze up open-mouthed at the First Officer. Never have they heard the like before, never dreamed even that such questions might be possible.

For one moment there is profound silence. Then a stoker shouts back:

“Nightingale, I hear thee singing!”

The steamer casts off and is soon discharging its load at the wharf. About three hundred men form up in close column and march on the town. The rest scatter through the neighbouring streets,

each to spend the day after his own heart.

The company halts in front of the Feldstrasse.

The windows of the “Kaiserkaffee” are broken and the pieces still lie strewn about the street. And on the pavement may still be seen bloodstains from the evening before; drips of blood lead to the door of the cafe whither the dead and wounded were carried after the affray. A stoker is making a speech. The inhabitants throw open their windows, and a passing patrol stops to listen. The stoker ends with three cheers for the dead and a vow to avenge them.

“Hurrah!” shout the assembled sailors and stokers. – “Hurrah!” shout the women from the windows.

The men of the patrol join the general shout, waving their caps: “Hurrah!”

That was at 8 a.m.

An hour later the men from the *Kurfürst* are standing outside the barracks of the Torpedo Division. They cannot gain admittance, because the gates are held by a double guard. Sailors from other ships and land formations have also assembled there. Rumour after rumour circulates through the crowd, yet nobody knows for certain what has happened.

The facts, however, are as follows:

Earlier in the morning a company of sailors belonging to the garrison had broken open several cases of munitions, armed themselves and marched to the gaol to set free their mates. Outside the prison they had been met by a strong detachment of recruits of the Docks Division and dispersed. On returning to their quarters they had been disarmed and taken away as prisoners under escort of the Torpedo Division, who *en route* had themselves sided with the mutineers and let them go. The Torpedo Barracks has become in consequence the centre of attraction for all sailors and stokers at large in Kiel. Nobody is admitted, but the throng outside the gates continues to grow larger and larger. Within the barracks itself there is great activity.

Bugles are sounded in the barrack square. Orders are shouted through the dormitories:

“Division, fall in by companies on the parade-ground!”

The Division comprises seven companies, and each company is lined up in front of its own building. The men are of the classes 1911, ‘12, ‘13, all old hands who have seen six or seven years’ service, and have fought in Flanders or served with the patrols in the North Sea.

There they stand in ranks, unarmed.

Confronting them on the opposite side of the square is the entire Docks Division, two thousand seventeen-year-old recruits, all armed.

“Attention! Right dress! Eyes front!”

In the midst of the square is a table. Upon this table mounts the Division Commander, Captain Barthels.

“Soldiers” he begins his speech.

The companies stand rigid as stone walls – the officers have taken up positions in the rear to watch for any movement on the part of the men.

A few of the sailors besieging the barracks without have climbed up on the walls. Only an occasional word or phrase reaches them. But at the close of his speech the Commandant raises his voice and they hear distinctly: “We soldiers know nothing of politics. Therefore soldiers should not meddle in politics.”

“Soldiers should obey. Soldiers must obey.”

“Soldiers do obey.”

From the wall comes a long-drawn whistle, on two fingers. It is followed by another. The tension of the companies in line relaxes. They still keep their ranks, but the military bearing has gone and they also begin shouting. It is not long before the whole square is a bedlam of jeers and catcalls.

The recruits drawn up on the opposite side of the square begin to move their heads nervously, to grip their rifles tighter.

But they receive no command. They simply stand, their rifles at the order.

The Commandant gets down from the table-almost too quickly for a man of such bulk. He gives the officers the order to dismiss the parade and accompanied by his adjutant goes back into the Division Office.

“Dismiss!” “Dismiss!”

Without making the regulation right-turn, the men disperse. A few go into the barracks, only to be recalled by those on the parade-ground. Groups form on all sides, discussing, arguing, breaking up and forming again. The man from Flanders, so much in evidence yesterday, is here again – the Torpedo Division is his original unit and many of the men here know him.

“Look, there’s Karl!” “Karl Artelt!”

“Let’s go and hear what he has to say.”

The crowd around Artelt grows bigger. Papendieck, Bonczyk, and some of the Third Squadron, as well as a few from the *Markgraf*, have entered over the wall.

The sailors discuss every imaginable topic.

Those around Artelt are talking of the censorship of letters:

“Every piddling lieutenant reading what a man writes to his wife – that is a thing should be put a stop to!”

“And letters only once in a blue moon, that’s another thing!”

“And if a man wants to go out of Kiel on a Sunday, he is blocked every way.”

“Yes, guards wherever you turn; you can’t move in Kiel for patrols!”

They all talk at once, noisily, and in utter confusion. Artelt has a writing-block and a pencil in his hand. He notes down the more important demands and reads them out:

“Point two: abolition of martial law.”

“And what about the stokers of the Third Squadron?”

“They must be set free.”

“They must all be let out, every one of them.”

“Immediately.”

“And if they’re not, then we’ll go and fetch them.”

Artelt writes, and reads out what he has written:

“Point three : liberation of our comrades of the Third Squadron.”

“And what about the chaps of 1917?”

“And the dock workers of the 1918 strike?”

“Out!” comes the chorus.

Artelt writes: Point four. Point five.

“And then we demand universal, equal suffrage for both sexes, and secret ballot.”

“Hurrah!” they all yell. “Now for the Commander!”

The first, the second, the third-seven companies – a few armed with rifles which they have taken from the recruits – line up before the Division Office. They extend across the whole width of the barrack square.

The Commander does not wait for a deputation, but himself appears at the door, comes down the steps, and asks Able Seaman Artelt, in whom he recognizes the leader, what he wants.

“I have to present you with the demands of the men.”

And Artelt hands the Commander the six points duly set out:

1. Abdication of the House of Hohenzollern.

2. Abolition of martial law.

3. Liberation of our comrades of the Third Squadron.

4. Liberation of all men of the mutiny of 1917 now in prison at Celle.

5. Liberation of all political prisoners.

6. Secret ballot and universal, equal suffrage for both sexes.

“Yes, gentlemen – this, of course, is a political programme!”

“You have just told us, Herr Captain, that soldiers have no business with politics. We have

accordingly given our political programme first place.”

The Commander studiously ignores the sailor’s impudent retort. He turns the paper over in his hand, examines it on both sides, and then says:

“I shall inform you later of my decision.”

Commander Captain Barthels goes back with the sailors’ demands to his office and calls up the chief of the naval station, Admiral Souchon.

The sailors outside throng around Artelt. “What do we do now? What’s next?”

Artelt is in a fever of anxiety. He knows that this is the critical moment, that any hesitation now will be dangerous and that only by a sudden assault is the power to be wrested from the officers.

In a booming voice he shouts across the square:

“Now to choose a Soldiers’ Council!”

“Everybody to the mess room!”

But the mess room cannot contain them all, so the several companies assemble in the barrack square and each elects four Soldiers’ Delegates. Then the first session of the Provisional Soldiers’ Council is convened in the mess room. The entrance is guarded by armed sailors. Artelt is unanimously chosen President; then they proceed to the election of the Committee. While they are still busy with the constitution of the Committee, a petty officer enters bearing a message from the Division Commander: “Able Seaman Artelt and two other men are to go and negotiate with the Chief of the Station, Admiral Souchon.”

Meanwhile the men outside in the square have busied themselves breaking open cases of ammunition, and collected every available rifle and revolver. They have also commandeered an automobile. The driver, a sailor, has furnished himself with a red arm-band, and a signaller has brought a great red flag which is fixed to a long pole and made fast to the back of the car. The newly-elected President, Karl Artelt, the Vice-President and the Secretary of the Soldiers’ Council come from the mess room.

“This way, Karl!” shouts the driver. “Come on! Climb in!”

The automobile sets off across the parade-ground, the red flag streaming behind; it goes out at the barracks gate and down the main street of Kiel toward Station Headquarters. Kiel is still an imperial fortress and the pedestrians stand in their tracks and stare open-mouthed after the rapidly moving car with the waving red symbol of revolution, as if it were some incredible apparition. Station Headquarters bristles with arms. A company of marines is drawn up on the street. An officer springs forward to the car as it pulls up abruptly.

“What do you mean, appearing before Station Headquarters in this turn out?”

The three sailors climb out:

“Mind your own business, and don’t get so excited! Show us in to the Governor, please – he is expecting us,” explains Artelt.

The sailors are conducted to the council room.

A lieutenant opens the door and the Governor, Admiral Souchon, enters; behind him the Chief of Staff, Admiral Küsel, a couple of general staff officers and a gentleman in civilian attire, the head of the Station Court Martial.

The Governor offers his hand to Artelt:

“I thank you for having had the courage to come.”

“Do you recognize us as a Soldiers’ Council?” Artelt asks him.

“Yes,” replies the Admiral.

They sit down. At the head of the table is the Governor, on his right the officers, on his left the three delegates of the mutinous sailors.

At the outbreak of war Admiral Souchon was in command of the *Breslau* and *Goeben* shut up in the Strait of Messina. The bold dash of the two German ships past the English Fleet into the Dardanelles brought him sudden fame. Later, he commanded the Turkish Fleet, and subsequently was made Chief of the Fourth Squadron. It is only a few days since he was appointed to the Governorship of Kiel. But he has been left entirely uninformed to the latest turn of events and without instructions as to the more conciliatory measures being adopted elsewhere.

He has already telephoned the Government in Berlin, but Prince Max's cabinet has been able to offer him no assistance beyond the dispatch of two members of the Reichstag to leave Berlin immediately.

For the rest, he has been left to his own devices. His first intention of crushing the rebellion by force he abandoned in view of the reports from subsidiary stations telling of the spread of the mutiny through ever increasing numbers of troops. In order to gain time and prevent further development of the revolt until support and advice should arrive from without, he has decided to treat with the sailors.

The Governor turns politely to the sailors. He cannot himself settle the major questions, he explains, but the Secretary of State, Herr Haussmann; and Deputy Noske are at the moment on their way from Berlin and should arrive in Kiel this evening. They will then be able to negotiate in concert..

In the meantime a delegation has arrived from the Third Squadron. The stokers sent from the ships agree with Artelt that the fulfilment of the demands can wait no longer. Three points in particular must be accepted, at once:

The abandonment of the proposed attack by the fleet.

The punishment of those responsible for the shooting on the previous day.

The setting-free of the prisoners of the Third Squadron.

While the Governor is negotiating with the sailors, and the staff officers sit in silence contemplating these soldiers' councillors who have so suddenly appeared from nowhere, the movement outside is developing farther.

The sailors of the Torpedo Division have dispatched delegates to the other barracks; and the garrisons, both of the forts and of the suburb of Wik, have armed.

Souchon's aide-de-camp brings in one report after another:

"The sailors of the Second Docks Division have armed."

"A party is approaching with four machine-guns."

"Torpedo-boats attempting to leave harbour have been fired on."

Once again the aide-de-camp enters and hands the Governor a telephone message. The Admiral returns the message to the officer.

"Read that out, if you please, Herr Lieutenant."

"Ten thousand sailors are attacking the prison. Most of the guards refuse to fire. But an infantry company of the Neumünsters is advancing to defend the building." The Governor turns to the stokers and sailors: "What are we going to do about that, gentlemen?" Soldiers' Councillor Artelt replies:

"If you wish to avoid bloodshed, order that the infantry be withdrawn immediately."

To which a stoker of the Third Squadron adds:

"I should inform you that if any infantry or other outside troops are brought to Kiel, the ships of the Third Squadron will open fire on the railway station." "Indeed, gentlemen! And you are willing to undertake responsibility for so grave an action?"

"If you are willing to take the responsibility of allowing infantry to fire on the navy, so are we prepared to accept responsibility for protecting our own skins!"

"I must inform you that infantry are already on their way to Kiel. But I shall stop them, and undertake to see that no fresh troops are brought in."

It is agreed to set free the prisoners of the Third Squadron at once. The Governor merely asks that the liberation shall be carried out in an orderly way, and for this purpose puts the services of the chief legal officer of the station, Councillor Eichheim, at the disposal of the sailors. The remaining questions are postponed until the arrival of the deputies from Berlin.

The deputation leaves Station Headquarters.

Artelt accompanies the stokers of the Third Squadron as far as the wharf. Then the three soldiers'

councillors of the Torpedo Division set off in the direction of Wik. Outside the post-office at Wik they meet a column of infantry armed with machine-guns.

The automobile with the soldiers' councillors pulls up alongside the column.

Artelt stands up and addresses the soldiers: "Comrades! Militarism in Kiel has been smashed.

The power is now in the hands of the sailors. Comrades, you have been sent here to shed the blood of your brothers. Twenty thousand sailors, armed to the teeth, are resolved to die in defence of the liberty they have won. Comrades, do not fire on your brothers!"

"Hurrah for the International!"

"Hurrah for Freedom!"

"Down with the war!"

The car with the waving red flag sets off again. The column of infantry is left behind, exploded, turned suddenly into a mob of wildly gesticulating disputing men.

"The Admiral has conceded the demands!"

"The prisoners are to be set free."

"The fleet is not to go out."

"The war is over."

"Peace!"

"Peace!"

"Elect Soldiers' Councils."

The news spreads like wildfire through the barracks, it bursts upon the ships. The dam is broken at last, there is no holding it any more. The barracks empty. Ferries cannot come quickly enough to the ships at anchor in the bay. The crews make clear the boats. The stokers clamber up from the boiler-rooms and the sailors abandon their stations. Just as they are, they climb into the boats, board the steamers and go ashore.

The whole aspect of the city has changed. Great throngs of men move through the streets-sailors, dock workers, women. Trams stand wedged in their tracks by the mob. The passengers dismount, the drivers and the women conductors quit their posts and join the processions. Across Wilhelmsplatz, through Holstenstrasse and Dammtorstrasse march the columns – "To the Feldstrasse! To the gaol!"

The entire complex of buildings is beset by a countless multitude. The prison guard, a company of the Sea Battalion, is still under arms. Inside the building the soldiers' councillors, accompanied by Geheimrat Eichheim, are going round with the warders opening the cells.

And then they come – the grey procession of prisoners. A roll of drums, bugles sound the "International": *"Arise! ye starvelings, from your slumbers!"*

The company which had been declared "loyal" but an hour ago, springs to attention and presents arms. And once more the throng is in motion – bands of music, the Sea Battalion, the prisoners, women, stokers, sailors. And others are continually joining them. The houses empty. From both gates of the Union Office a thousand and more workers pour out to swell the passing procession.

Only one direction is possible through the narrow streets – the crowd sweeps all before it like an irresistible flood. Above them floats the banner – a red blanket nailed to a long pole and resembling some monstrous bird of night.

Darkness descends over the city of Kiel.

Only a few lamps are lighted.

From all sides processions converge upon the railway station and pile up before the entrance. The lofty waiting-hall with the great springing dome seems to be floating toward the throng.

And again resounds on the air:

"Arise ye starvelings, from your slumbers..."

Comrades, come rally!

And the last fight let us face!

The International

Unites the human race!"

A train slowly enters the station. Then another on the opposite side of the platform. In the first train are the infantry who have come to win back Kiel for the authorities. They are received by the sailors with a rousing cheer. The officers are disarmed and led away. The passengers by the second train are also overwhelmed in the tumult. Everywhere are sailors carrying rifles slung butt upwards.

Deputy Noske, who has also come by this train, is at once surrounded. His bag is taken from him. A railway official addresses him and one of the disarmed officers tries to explain something:

“Things are not so bad.”

“It will right itself shortly.”

“Everything has gone quietly until now.”

“Come on, Comrade Noske, we are waiting for you!”

The sailors push the deputy gently forward.

Secretary of State Haussmann and a secretary of the Kiel Workers’ Union, who have come with Noske, are thrust aside and parted from him.

Noske passes the barrier and reaches the steps which lead down to the entrance.

“Here he is! Noske!”

“Comrade Noske from Berlin!”

“Noske!” someone shouts down to the crowd.

The cry is taken up. The whole waiting-room reverberates with the sound; it echoes from the lofty walls and re-echoes from the dome: “Noske!”

“Hurrah!”

“Hurrah!”

Noske sees the crowd below, outstretched hands, upturned faces, waving rifle-butts.

He had not dreamed of this reception. But he is allowed no time for reflection. Those beside him shove him forwards. Step by step they worm their way through the crowd. He hardly knows how he escaped out of that waiting-hall.

And outside on the streets is a countless multitude.

Noske is hoisted into a car. Some sailors climb in after him. At the back squats another waving a red flag. He is already hoarse from shouting, but still he bawls:

“Long live Freedom! Long live Freedom!”

Artelt has seated himself beside Noske.

“There are 20,000 sailors in Wik, all armed. The rest of the troops, the ships too, are with us. The officers are powerless. There’s no turning back. We are going to a meeting at the Union Office now and afterwards to the Governor.”

The crowd becomes denser and the car moves more slowly.

“Wilhelmsplatz – a demonstration,” explains Artelt.

At a walking pace the car pushes on down the lane which opens up through the crowd. The Wilhelmsplatz, like the rest of the city, is in almost complete darkness. In the middle is a lamp-standard with several lamps, only one of which is lighted. A scaffolding has been erected in front of it, and on this a man is standing addressing the crowd.

The headlamps of the car flood portions of the scene in sudden white light – the speaker on the platform, a cluster of men perched among the branches of the lamp-standard, a section of the mob of sailors all crowded cheek by jowl. The houses about the four sides of the square resemble a distant, threatening coastline.

The automobile drives up to the platform.

“Long live Freedom!” bawls the man with the flag.

“Noske!” roars a voice out of the lamp-standard. “Noske!” repeats the crowd.

Noske stands up in the car and speaks. He does not know what to say about the events in Kiel, so he merely indulges in a few observations on the political situation in general and urges the crowd to preserve law and order:

“...In a few days the armistice will be concluded. Then the just demands of workers and soldiers will receive speedy satisfaction. We in Berlin will see to that. Peace and goodwill, these are our

:first duty. Let there be no useless acts of violence, which can only injure the cause of the workers and soldiers. It is for the masses now to prove that they know how to control themselves.”

Renewed shouts from the lamp-standard: “Peace!”

“Liberty!”

And the crowd answers:

“Peace!”

“Liberty!”

“Bread!”

A sailor offers Noske a sabre which he has taken from one of the officers. Noske accepts the sabre but has not the faintest idea what to do with it and holds it awkwardly in his hand. The blade is bare. A tall stoker, one of the prisoners who have just been released, jumps on the running-board of the car: “Christ, man! Better give me the thing!” Noske surrenders it gladly.

The car moves on again in the direction of the Union Office and the crowd is left behind. Bonczyk, who has been standing near the platform, recognizes the tall fire- man in the prison uniform who took away the sabre from Noske – Karl Raumschuh! Here, on the Wilhelmsplatz, he has found him at last. Bonczyk worms his way through the crowd so as not to lose sight of him again. He had searched in vain for him outside the prison.

“Are you crazy?” Raumschuh is shouting as he holds the sword aloft.

“Noske, Noske and a sabre! –you would have done better to have given him an umbrella!”

“What are you getting at? He’s our man, ain’t he?”

“Noske! He’ll show them!”

“Leaders, that’s what we need!”

“Leaders? Yes, proper leaders. We must get Haase, or Ledebour. You’re all balmy, I tell you. You don’t know a bee from a bull’s foot!”

“Hello, Brummschädel!”

“Well, Karl, so there you are!”

The two men shake hands. Papendieck is there, too, and he and Bonczyk tell Raumschuh all that has happened both ashore and afloat since he left. They talk in short, stumbling sentences, and mix everything up hopelessly. The crowd is beginning to break up into separate groups. The groups divide and others form again; everywhere there is argument, and ever new rumours arise.

“They say troops are marching on Kiel.”

“The Wansbeck Hussars are on the way now.”

“Anyway, we have the ships.”

“We’ll shell the railway station.”

“Blow it to bits!”

“That is all very well, but what about during the night? Not a sentry anywhere – all the approaches open!”

Kiel is a citadel unguarded in the midst of the enemy country. At this very moment the War Minister at Berlin is consulting with his generals as to what action shall be taken. And troops are already under way from Ninth Army Corps Headquarters to recapture the city.

Sailors with red arm-bands are calling for volunteers to mount guard throughout the night and to patrol the streets. And now squads are marching out to Friedrichsort, Eckernförde, and the Lübeck and Pritz high roads to cover the approaches to Kiel. Raumschuh, Bonczyk and Papendieck take a party to the Upper Sophienblatt. The “Eighty-Fourth” are expected to come by this route from Schleswig; and the sailors propose to go out to meet them.

At three o’clock in the afternoon the “Eighty-Fourth” had been lined up in marching order on the square in front of the Palace in Schleswig. An hour later they found themselves boarding a train which was waiting in readiness to receive them.

The train drags slowly across the darkening landscape.

Where are they going? Is it manoeuvres? An alarm? To the Front? Nobody knows why or whither. At a little siding where the train waits a while, they hear the first news:

“There have been disturbances in Kiel.”

“The sailors must have mutinied.”

At about 10 p.m. the train halts on the track. A lantern, a closed barrier over a level crossing, farther on are houses, a street losing itself in the darkness.

The train waits a long time.

The soldiers sit and smoke, others are squatting huddled together on the floor, dozing. A few get out and walk along the line to the crossing.

Beyond the barrier are women and children standing. “What place is this?”

“Flemhude – half an hour from Kiel.”

“What regiment are you?”

“Eighty-Fourth Schleswigers.”

“The Lübeckers are there already. Some from Neumunster and Rendsburg too, they have all gone over to the sailors.”

“The sailors hold the entire city.”

“The trams have stopped.”

“It is all quiet again now, though.”

After half an hour’s delay the train starts again and slowly approaches the precincts of the city. To right and left of the line one can see rows of suburban houses with here and there a yellow, lighted window. Then the train stops finally. The troops get out and form up. Ammunition and iron rations are issued.

“At ease, quick march!”

The column, headed by the Captain and other officers, moves off down a side street toward the Upper Sophienblatt. Stray sailors appear out of the darkness and run beside the column.

“Say, mate, you won’t shoot, will you?”

“Haven’t you had enough, too?”

“I suppose you’re half-starved like the rest of us, eh?”

“You’ve the same sort of officers.”

“They’ve put it over you for long enough.”

“We’ve shown ours where they get off.”

“We hold the whole town.”

“The ships, as well.”

At the Sophienblatt a sudden check passes down the column. The infantrymen set down their cases of ammunition, fill their pipes, stand now on one foot, now on the other. A few leave the ranks and go forward to see what is the matter.

The Captain at the head of the column is arguing with a sailor – a tall fellow in a grey prison uniform with an officer’s sabre in his hand. Beside him is a little chap with a rifle reversed, slung over his shoulder. On the ground, ten paces ahead, is a group barring the cross- road, a machine-gun mounted ready for action in the midst of them.

“The battalion must give up its arms and go back to Schleswig,” the tall man is saying.

“We have the ships,” explains another.

“We can shell the whole town to blazes,” threatens a third.

The Captain looks awhile at the sailors. He turns about and summons the officers. While he is conferring softly with his subordinates, the sailors swarm along the column on either side.

“The war’s over at last, mate.”

“You don’t need rifles anymore.”

“Come on, mate, give us it.”

The sailor reaches for the rifle-barrel, and the infantryman slowly relinquishes it. The war is over now – is it so easy, and it sounds so convincing, too. And before the officers can reach a decision, the sailors are coming back laden with rifles and putting them down under cover of the machine-gun.

“The officers are under arrest!” announces the tall fellow. “Halt! Stay where you are!” Bonczyk and Papendieck seize an officer who is trying to escape to the rear.

“Hand over your sword, Herr Captain.” “Herr Lieutenant. But quicker than that!”

The troops stand around and do nothing. The Captain gives one look at the dissolving column and his resolution is broken. Unresisting he permits himself and his officers to be disarmed. Only when swift hands reach suddenly toward their shoulders to cut off their shoulder-straps with a slash of a bayonet, do they make a vain protest. The officers are escorted into the city. The troops who remain are told to go back to the station and return whence they came.

So, during the course of the night, the various detachments of infantry sent by the Ninth Army Corps to recapture the fortress, entering the city without any concerted plan of action, were met and disarmed piecemeal by the sailors. The transport trains were surrounded by bluejackets the moment they entered the station and the men given no time to form up as they detrained. No sooner did they arrive than they were lost again in the crowd.

A provisional watch had been installed in the station waiting-room—here pickets were organized, patrols sent out, and passes issued. In the midst was a table covered entirely with swords taken from officers and a waste-paper basket full of shoulder-straps.

Here Admiral Souchon was brought shortly after midnight.

He had been arrested by order of the Soldiers' Council to discover if he were in any way responsible for the military measures which had been directed against Kiel. But it transpired that Admiral Souchon had acquainted the General entrusted with the suppression of the rising in Kiel, that he, Souchon, was and would continue to be the one final authority within the limits of the Imperial Naval Station of Kiel. It was this question of precedence, preventing any agreement between the Governor of Kiel and the officer commanding the incoming troops, that enabled the sailors to dispose of the several detachments one by one as they arrived.

After a few hours' detention in the second-class waiting-room the Admiral was allowed to return to his house under protection of a sailors' escort.

A second patrol of barely a dozen sailors happens to pass the office of the Commandant of the Fort. There is no longer any guard and the sentry-box at the entrance is empty.

The sailors knock at the door. No answer.

They rattle the door; it does not yield. But they are determined to enter – they must somehow get hold of Captain Heine, the Commandant. He it is who signs all orders valid within the region of the fortress, and who is in the habit of himself seeing to it that his orders are strictly obeyed. At his door is laid the blame for the maltreatment of the prisoners from the Third Squadron, and he is held responsible too, for the loss of life on the previous Sunday. Not one of the sailors now standing at the door but has suffered light or severe punishment at the hands of the Captain.

“Damn it, we must get in!”

“We must get old Heine!”

“Yes, even if I break every bone in my body against this blasted door – Six months labour battalion – there wasn't a day but some one of us went under – plain starved us, they did – the dirty swine”.

A light appears at a window on the first floor. A sailor comes down and opens the door:

“The Commandant isn't here, he has gone home. Yes – to his house – some hours ago.”

“Then we must go and fetch him – It is all his fault!”

“We must get him now; he'll be gone tomorrow.”

The sailor gives them the Commandant's private address and they set off again.

Before long they are outside a block of flats on the Lorentzendam. With the butts of their rifles they smash in the outer door and mount the stairs. They knock at the door of the flat; they keep on knocking until the valet opens to them. “The Herr Captain is asleep!”

“Very good – then we'll wake him.”

They grope their way through two or three rooms which are in darkness. The glimmer of a pocket torch glides lightly over pieces of furniture and along walls.

Some object falls to the floor with a crash.

Then a door is broken in, and the interior of the bedroom lies open.

The Captain is hastily pulling on his tunic and calls out in a furious voice:

“What is it? – who’s there?”

“Herr Captain, you are under arrest!”

The sailors come nearer, they push their way into the room.

“What do you want? How did you get in here?”

“Don’t you remember me, Herr Captain? Eight weeks ago, at the Court Martial–”

“And me? Solitary confinement, then the labour battalion.”

“Did you ever have your arse kicked because your bed wasn’t properly made? Were you ever made to parade with a piss-pot in your hand?”

The Captain steps back against the wall. He knows nothing, he remembers no one. For him sailors have been without faces–mere fellows whose duty it was to obey. And now, here they were, coming for him, with flashing eyes! The Captain suddenly pulls himself together: “Enough! Heels together; man! About face – march! I’ll teach you!”

So powerful is the suggestion latent in the tone of command – so often during the six or seven years of their service have the sailors had to listen to it in silence – that even now it is not entirely without effect. For a moment the men stand nonplussed – but it lasts only a moment. Then they go for him:

“Come, no more of your monkey tricks!”

“We’ve had enough of that!”

“Button your tunic – you’re coming along with us.”

The Captain reaches towards his trouser-pocket. The gesture infuriates the sailors, who seize him by the wrists, by the shoulders, and fling him across the room and out the door. They lead him down the stairs. As they reach the ground floor sounds of shooting in the town are heard.

“That will be the officers.”

“He has put them up to it.”

“Let’s finish him off.”

“Damn me, if the blighter hasn’t got another shooting-iron!”

There is a struggle in the darkness of the hall. Kicks, punches. The Captain sinks down upon the tiled floor. A torch is flashed upon his distorted face. There is blood trickling from his mouth into his reddish beard.

Someone raises a rifle and the butt descends:

“Just as well to make sure – he won’t lock anybody up any more!”

And another adds:

“It’s better so – he has got it over.”

Raumschuh, Bonczyk, Papendieck and the sailors at the Sophienblatt, having posted sentries on the out-skirts of the town, lodge themselves in a gymnasium for the remainder of the night. Next morning they take the arrested infantry officers to the Union Headquarters, making a slight detour *en route* to find out what is doing down at the harbour. The sun has just broken through the curtain of cloud and the broad surface of the bay is sparkling with light. As far as the eye can see the red flag is flying at the masthead of every anchored ship.

From the gaff of SMS *König* alone the battle flag is still flying. It has been hauled down to half-mast and has wrapped itself around the halyards. Below the flag stand three officers armed with revolvers, the Commander, the First Officer and the Adjutant. The battle-ship is lying high and dry in the dock and is visible from either bank, both from the dock side and from Quay Street.

The Commander has shot down a sailor.

And now the whole crew is coming aft – it surges like a wave along the deck and mounts to the quarter-deck. Fists, capstan bars. Shots from the shore. The First Officer falls wounded, the Commander and the Adjutant are lying dead on the deck. The crew sweeps on over the bodies–one thousand sailors, raw-boned, unshaven. The battle flag sinks and amid a forest of up-lifted arms the red flag runs up.

The last red flag to be hoisted over Kiel. And the only battle flag to be defended. The rest all fell

without a struggle.

So, too, with the land stations.

So, too, with the imperial standard on Prince Reinrich's Castle. Overnight the power had fallen wholly into the hands of the sailors.

Raumschuh and his troop at last reach the Union Office, which is the centre of the sailors' rising. In front of the building is posted a double line of sentries, and at the entrances machine-guns have been mounted. In the street there is a wild confusion of sailors, soldiers, dock workers – men forming up into squads and marching off to God only knows where; disarmed soldiers in field grey standing idly about and freezing with cold; a group of Russian prisoners with immense numbers on their backs, squatting together in the midst of the crowd – their camp has been opened, and now here they are staring up at the building, awaiting the next development. A heavily-armed squad of sailors comes up, bringing the officers of their ship under escort. The leader, a red-haired sailor, goes in to the building to find out whither he should take his prisoners.

Raumschuh goes in with him.

His slung rifle is sufficient password.

Raumschuh opens the door to the council room. Dense clouds of tobacco smoke, a gesticulating, shouting mob. The refreshment room also is full of sailors, soldiers, workers, all disputing together. The Sailors' Council has taken refuge in some offices on the next floor.

In the rooms and the corridors there is ceaseless coming and going – soldiers wanting to know where they can get rations, where they can find billets, when the next train goes. The commander of a patrol boat wanting boots and underclothing for his crew. The steward of a light cruiser, who was given too little margarine last time, wants it made good now.

Here passes are being issued.

There telephones are ringing incessantly.

Yonder sits a sailor listening to the endless succession of calls, each of which he answers as best he can, at the same time trying to sift out the more important information and pass it on to the Sailors' Council.

A guard asks to be relieved immediately.

The Prünte wants a machine-gun.

The Wandsbecker Hussars are coming (this for the seventh time since last night).

Officers are shooting from the houses in the Bergstrasse. A steward has stolen a bag of flour.

Shots have been fired from the Hansa Hotel.

A ship asks that a representative be sent them from the Soldiers' Council. The munitions depot at Friedrichsort is without a guard.

The battleship *Schlesien*, manned by cadets, has left the harbour; and the sailors have closed the boom behind her.

An attempt has been made to loot the Q.M. Stores.

Can the fort at Fleembrook have a motorcar?

A cinema proprietor wants to know until what hour he may keep his show open.

There have been burglaries in Fleethornstrasse. Farther on down the passage passers-by are continually interrupting the telephonist: "Where can I find Comrade Popp?" "Who is issuing discharge papers?" "In which room is the Sailors' Council?" "Did Comrade Artelt come this way?"

In the rooms everyone is talking, a dozen at a time; all have suggestions or communications of the utmost importance to make. Even the corridors are chock-a-block with people so that it is impossible to pass. And yet in all this confusion there is perceptible the will to a new order.

In one *room* the Sailors' Councillors are deliberating. In another the leaders of the Workers' Union.

The shore formations and the ships send delegates to receive instructions and get some plan of action. On all the more urgent questions a definite policy is being formulated.

Raumschuh is determined somehow to get rid of his prisoners; so, too, is the red-haired sailor with whom he entered.

But no one will tell him where to take them.

“Oh, to some prison or other – they’re all empty.”

“I don’t know – do as you think best.”

At that moment a door opens. A civilian, a bony fellow in spectacles, comes out cursing – Deputy Noske – and after him the Union President, Garbe.

“What sort of a madhouse is this? We must bring some order into it somehow. Where’s Artelt?”

Noske is at once surrounded by sailors. “Comrade Noske...”

“Yes, so it is on board with us – everybody doing just as he likes.”

“That’s so – what we need is some central leadership.” “We must organize ourselves – If the troops from outside once get in, it may easily cost us our heads!” The red-haired fellow also appeals to Noske:

“I’m looking for a prison for fourteen officers, comrade.”

“Officers, are they? Better let them go again,” advises Noske.

The sailor is taken aback. “You don’t like the idea?”

“But if we let them go, they’ll soon be on top again. Then we shall be in a mess,” says Raumschuh.

But Noske is already surrounded by others, all with questions to ask him, or proposals to make; some want to take him off with them to their ship to address the crew on the political situation.

“Eight 12-inch and sixteen 6-inch guns – why, we could blow a whole army to bits at twelve miles’ range if necessary! There are fourteen hundred of us on board, all good lads, too. All they need is a short speech, Comrade Noske, explaining to them what it is we are after, which way the course lies. You know, it really beats the band – there they are at their posts still, quite ready to do as they are told again...”

“There’s no need to worry about a counter-attack – not now we have the fleet. We could smash them to pieces!”

The great mass of the sailors are, politically, entirely without sense of direction – Noske, Haase, Ledebour – Social Democrats, Independents, Spartacists – it is all one to them: socialism, peace, revolution.

But again sounds of firing without.

Noske flings open the door to the room where Soldiers’ Councillor Artelt is sitting: “This butchery must cease! Listen, Comrade Artelt! will you come with me and put a stop to this shooting?”

Artelt remains seated at the table: “I don’t propose to interfere if officers are being shot for trying to break the revolution.”

Raumschuh elbows his way along the corridor, goes down the steps again, searches about for Bonczyk and the sailors, who are still standing guard over the infantry officers. The red-haired fellow and his men have already let their officers go. Raumschuh explains to his mates what Noske has said, and tells them that there seems to be nothing for it but to release their prisoners.

He turns to the officers: “You can go. But clear out of Kiel, and damn quick. Don’t let us catch you here again.”

A great mass meeting has been called for one o’clock on the Wilhelmsplatz, when the situation will be explained both to the troops and to the ships’ crews. Shortly before the appointed hour it starts to rain heavily. Noske looks out of the window into the street below and remembers having read somewhere that a revolution can hardly be made if the people must carry umbrellas.

He places his hope in the bad weather and persuades himself there will not be many at the meeting. He has conceived the plan of getting himself elected at this meeting, President of the Soldiers’ Council. He understands how such things are to be manoeuvred. He has not been in the Party twenty years for nothing. And he has already talked it over with the Union President, Garbe, and with a few officials of the Social-Democratic Party.

All the same – the fewer the better!

He has no faith in the creative power of the masses.

And he has no intention of becoming the mouthpiece of the masses, nor of putting his powers of organization at the disposal of this insurrection which has burst up so suddenly out of the elements.

But Noske is deceived in his calculation.

When he arrives, half an hour later, he finds the square filled to overflowing with a countless throng of sailors. And fresh processions, all carrying the red flag before them, still pouring in.

First a member of the Soldiers' Council addresses the meeting.

Then Deputy Noske is called on.

He begins by telling the meeting that he had no share in the starting of the movement – This is not calculated to injure him in the eyes of the sailors; it is merely by way of striking the right note, and Noske knows how to word it so that it shall be accounted to him for modesty. And, on the other hand, the statement will cover him with the Party and the Government.

Noske speaks next of the widespread character which the movement has assumed, and then begins to steer for his goal:

“But what we are most urgently in need of now is a firm hand. During the course of the morning no one has been found able to give instructions. So a number of the comrades have asked me to undertake the duties of President of the Soldiers' Council, in order to watch over your interests.”

“A number of the comrades...” says Noske. That the proposal had been made by Garbe, the Union President, who only two days ago was urging them to wait and who had then and there been howled down by the sailors, that he does not tell the meeting.

“It is impossible in such an enormous gathering as this to discuss what should be done. I would recommend therefore that the various formations choose representatives and send them this afternoon to Station Headquarters, where, with their assistance, I shall set to work – That is on the assumption, of course, that this meeting entrusts me with the necessary authority.”

That is the cue for the representatives of the Social Democratic Party who have been judiciously distributed over the crowd.

“We want a leader!”

“Centralized leadership is what we need!”

“Noske has the political experience!”

“Hurrah for Noske!” they shout. And the crowd takes up the cry.

The rain lashes the upturned faces. A sudden movement sweeps over the whole gathering—arms uplifted, caps waving in the air. Only a few here and there oppose Noske's nomination – but their voices are drowned in the hubbub.

A member of the Reichstag—it is almost as good as a legalization of the whole movement! The timid, and those who go with the crowd, feel a sudden sense of relief and begin to be less fearful of punishment to come.

Artelt raises objections and urges that no binding decision be made until Deputies Haase and Ledebour arrive and have also been heard. But Noske is not staying for any further developments, and certainly not for any further debate. Amid the cheers of the sailors he leaves the square. He does not go to the Union Building, where the Soldiers' Council is installed, but to Station Headquarters. And while shots are still to be heard without and officers are firing from the houses upon the sailors streaming back from the meeting, Noske is already within negotiating with Admiral Kusel, the Chief of Staff, begging him and his officers to remain at their posts. A suite of rooms in the Station Building are placed at his disposal, and, with the assistance of the officers, he settles in. Of the sixty men elected by the various formations as their representatives, he chooses nine, whose looks he approves, to assist him.

Then he sets to work. He has a broadsheet printed in which he makes it known that he is the President of the Supreme Soldiers' Council. His next concern is the sailors under arms. He issues a decree demanding that all arms and ammunition shall be surrendered. He establishes guards at all hotels in which officers live.

And any Soldiers' Councils which may set up elsewhere and refuse to recognize his authority, he stigmatizes as “false councils”, and declares them to be illegal. He telephones to Berlin and informs the Secretary for the Navy, Ritter von Mann, that for the moment quiet prevails in Kiel. Great importance is attached by the sailors to the sanction of the amnesty. The retirement or abdication of the Emperor is deemed absolutely necessary.

“Yes, Your Excellency, provided suitable concessions are made, I believe the old order can be re-established...”

“It must be remembered, Your Excellency, that my hand is forced by the belief of the sailors that I am watching over their interests, and it is as their mouth-piece that I am obliged to insist on the abdication of the Emperor and an amnesty for the mutineers.”

“Yes, the mutineers of 1917, too.”

“I must be in a position to announce the amnesty by the morning, else I shall not be able to stay in Kiel any longer.”

After his conversation with Noske, the Secretary of State for the Navy returns to the meeting of the Cabinet. The ministers have just learned that their measures against the Russian Embassy, undertaken at the instigation of Scheidemann, have been successful. A box containing diplomatic documents was, according to plan, “accidentally” dropped in transmission at the Silesian Railway Station, so that it burst open. Then, at the police station, again according to plan, certain material was brought to light from the box, which gave the Government a lever wherewith to evict the Russian Embassy from Berlin.

The Secretary of State for the Navy now has his chance.

He tells the Cabinet of his conversation with Noske and concludes:

“I have serious objections to granting the amnesty.”

Von Scheuch, the Minister for War, is also against the amnesty:

“We should not pledge ourselves not to take steps against the promoters of these disturbances. The powers of military officers are limited by military necessity only.”

Secretary Haussmann, who, in the meantime, has returned to Berlin, replies:

“The course taken by Noske will most quickly bring us to our desired end. We should be most careful not to stab him in the back.”

The Secretary of State for the Navy persists:

“But the plain fact is that the workers and soldiers have the situation absolutely in their hands. Both the telephonic and telegraphic services are strictly watched. And I say it behoves us to make an example. The sailors will not be brought to heel through hunger. There is nothing for it but we must attack with superior forces and shell Kiel from the ships.”

“But the ships are sailing about the Baltic under the red flag.”

“And as things are, we have no troops to put in against 40,000 well-armed, well-fed and thoroughly rested sailors.”

“Exactly – and the General Commanding the Ninth Army Corps has already sent an urgent message for military forces to protect other places along the coast. Five hundred sailors have landed at Lübeck.”

The Secretary of State, Erzberger, has a suggestion.

“Let aeroplanes drop proclamations over Kiel threatening the severest punishment and at the same time denying that Haussmann gave any promise of an amnesty.”

But the Cabinet comes to no decision.

The Vice-Chancellor reads a resolution from Friedrichsort:

“Ten thousand soldiers demand equal suffrage.”

One minister expresses the opinion that under the circumstances the immediate return of the Emperor to Berlin is imperative.

“As to that,” observes Dr. Solf, “the Prince has pulled every wire.”

A further conversation with Noske is reported:

“Noske replies that it could only result in unnecessary bloodshed. Forty thousand men are not to be over-powered. Any attempt to do so would only make a settlement impossible.”

The Minister for War adds in a tone of resignation:

“The available troops are insufficient.”

“But Noske has managed to put an end to the shooting so far as the crews are concerned; the

officers have also been induced to stop. He has every hope of getting all weapons safely under lock and key once more.”

Suppression of the revolt by force is accordingly postponed, until such time as the Minister for War, Von Scheuch, can get enough troops from the Front for the purpose. It is resolved to inform Deputy Noske that the Government is willing to accept certain of the demands. For the rest, the Government is confident that Noske will do his utmost to improve the present “shocking state of affairs” in Kiel. Prince Max of Baden particularly asks that he shall at all costs remain at his post. Next day, in Kiel the sixty members of the Soldiers’ Council, supplemented by representatives of the Unions, have duly assembled and Noske has outlined the situation. Summing up, he says:

“Taken all in all, things look to me to be very gloomy. Kiel is threatened from every side. We must return as soon as possible to a state of law and order.”

“We must spread the revolution,” retorts someone.

“We must get broadsheets printed and have aeroplanes distribute them in every town on the coast.”

“The republic must be proclaimed over all Schleswig.”

“Let us be practical – don’t let us bite off more than we can chew,” interposes a union delegate.

“We must think of our responsibilities.”

Responsibility has already crippled a considerable section of the delegates; and the union officials present do nothing to encourage enthusiasm. The sailors gathered outside the building are giving vent to far more radical views:

“All the officers must be arrested.”

“Yes, and put on a ship and taken out into the North Sea and sunk – the whole damn lot of them – 200 fathoms ought to be enough, I should think.”

“And the rest of the ships – let’s coal them and put to sea, and steam off to the Bolsheviks.”

“And take all the big Hamburg-America liners with us – and come back with an army.”

“Yes, that’s right, and then clean ‘em up, the whole bloody shoot, clean ‘em all up!”

“Make a new start, that’s the thing – an absolutely new start, with absolutely new men at the head.”

Raumschuh and Bonczyk are among the crowd outside the building.

“You know Ali, of the 2nd Watch? He’s left already along with half a dozen others – rifles and ammunition with them – heading for Hamburg or Lübeck, so I’m told.”

“That’s right, that’s the thing to do now – spread the revolution. Kiel can’t hold out alone forever.”

“Oh, Kiel – there’s nothing more to be done here. We have the power, and Noske will soon get things ship-shape – but Hamburg and Bremen”

“Berlin is the main thing – We won’t have succeeded until Berlin falls.”

“That’s true – what do you say if we pull out too?” suggests Raumschuh. “Let’s make for Hamburg first, and then see what happens – Who’s coming, lads?” “To Hamburg? That’s good for me! We might go out to St Pauli while we’re there, eh?”

“Yes, and look up old Vater Lampel again on Davidstrasse, what?”

“Aye, and them fat Hamburg wenches, eh, Maxe?”

“I dare say we might drop anchor for a bit and do a night shift or so. But the revolution’s the main thing, you know, spread the revolution,” persists Raumschuh. “How many are we, then?”

“Brummschick’s coming, of course, and Maxe, Fiete, Hein... nine altogether.”

“That’s not so bad – now for the station. And if there’s not a train, then we’ll push off on foot – agreed?”

“And afterwards go to Berlin and depose the Emperor.”

Within the building Noske is reading out the points which the Government is prepared to concede to the sailors on condition that they go back at once to the ships and barracks and re-establish the old system:

1. Freedom from punishment for all participants in the present mutiny.

- 2. Amnesty for those imprisoned on account of the mutiny of the preceding year.**
- 3. Acceleration of the conclusion of the armistice.**
- 4. Speedy settlement of the abdication question.**
- 5. Extensive reforms including the democratization of the State.**

Artelt jumps up:

“Don’t let us climb down, comrades! We can wait. It is not for the Government to make conditions; it is for us....”

Noske leaves Artelt to talk himself out. His head slightly sunk into his shoulders he stands there and waits. Then, afterwards, he says quite slowly:

“The revolt in Kiel has succeeded, but Kiel is alone – isolated. If the supply of foodstuffs is cut off, if Berlin sends no more money, what then?”

The officials, grown grey in the service of the Union, look with troubled faces at their leader and nod their agreement.

The Independent Socialists demand parity with the Social Democrats:

“An Independent Socialist leader must be associated with Noske.”

“Why hasn’t Haase arrived yet, I’d like to know.” “The telegram to Haase has been intercepted – that’s certain.”

The sailors clamour again for broadsheets, for aeroplanes – they want to spread the revolution. Let the republic be proclaimed throughout Schleswig. But Noske is against aeroplanes, against the spread of the revolt, against the proclamation of the republic. In contradistinction to the sailors, he speaks not of a revolution, but of a revolt. Again and again he demands a return to order and ordered conditions. He paints the situation in the gloomiest colours, and talks of the “terrible situation with which our people is faced in consequence of the military defeat”.

Again Artelt jumps up:

“We have not come here to be frightened, comrades! We have a great task before us. Our mates on the ships and in the barracks are looking to us to take steps to perpetuate and spread the revolution...” He attacks Noske vigorously and at last carries his point that the Government’s terms shall be rejected. Even Garbe, the head of the Union, agrees with him and expresses the opinion that there is no need to be in a hurry to accept.

But Noske brings his fist down on the table:

“This Kiel mutiny – which, personally, I condemn in the strongest terms-is going to be put an end to!”

The representatives of the sailors and workers are thunderstruck.

“Why did he put himself at the head of it, then?” “He allowed himself to be elected president!”

“There must be some good reason at the back of it!”

“If our first president talks like this, we must indeed be in desperate straits!”

The timid are in the majority and the Unionists see in Noske only their old and proved leader. All day long the minds of most of them have been haunted by the fear of troops arriving from without, and now during the hours of compulsory inaction this fear has taken complete possession. The workers already see Kiel encircled by troops, and the Sailors’ Councillors who, by their signatures, have taken upon themselves responsibility for the revolt, already see themselves condemned for high treason, and dangling from the yard-arms of their ships.

Then Noske allows the pusillanimous to breathe once more:

“The political demands for which we are all fighting must, of course, be conceded. The amnesty too – but, as you see, the Government is already open to treat on that score.”

He reads out the Government’s terms once again. The delegates are now ready to discuss them. This willingness is all that Noske requires; he merely wants to keep the delegates, and the thousands who stand behind them, busy; so he now says categorically: “No, no discussions now! Go back to your barracks and your ships and discuss with your mates what you have heard.”

So the councillors leave the meeting in chastened mood to go and argue with their comrades, and the re- volt of the sailors is finally switched off from action to inaction and localized in meetings

and dis-cussion.

Noske has all the experience of the Social Democratic Party behind him. Mass movements are not to be controlled from without. To enter into them and put oneself at the head of them, these are the proved tactics upon which the Social Democrats have always acted in the interest of the Fatherland. In all the great political strikes throughout the whole course of the war, at Brunswick, at Leuana, at Vienna, at Berlin during the metal workers' strike, this had been their policy and every time it was completely successful. And in every one of those instances the task had been incomparably more difficult than here; for there the leaders had to deal with workers thoroughly schooled in politics; whereas these are mere sailors, men who have been in the navy since the age of twenty, and who possess, therefore, neither trade-union, nor political, experience.

The Independents alone gave Noske any trouble. But they had no brain to match against his, for Haase had still not turned up in Kiel.

And yet the movement was spreading.

By nightfall fresh reports were coming in:

Soldiers' councils at Rendsburg, at Lübeck, in Schleswig, Schwerin, Cuxhaven, Brunsbüttel.

And Deputy Noske, who did nothing to lead the movement; who, on the contrary, has opposed its spread, goes one step higher! Convening a meeting of the union officials and party leaders in Kiel, he nominates himself Governor of Kiel. The old parliamentary trafficking for positions of power finds a place even here. Popp, the Independent, demands as compensation that he shall be President of the Soldiers' Council, a post which Noske willingly resigns to him.

The next day 800 delegates assemble.

The discussion on the ships has far exceeded the limits of the Government's "five points" communicated by Noske, and today the delegates are resolved upon forcing through their more radical demands, in spite of Noske. The feeling against Noske is growing.

But Noske anticipates the opposition.

He opens the session and then announces:

"Lübeck, Bremen, Cuxhaven, Rendsburg, Flensburg have all joined us, and, like us, have setup Workers' and Soldiers' Councils."

The sailors burst into a storm of applause.

Noske has difficulty regaining a hearing. He raises his hand, then continues:

"I have further to announce that all those imprisoned as a result of last year's mutiny are to be set at liberty...." Like the Government's "five points" of yesterday, this also is true only in part; but as an announcement it has its designed effect.

The sailors leap up in their places.

A voice from the other end of the table shouts:

"Our mates of 1917 – Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!" yell the eight hundred delegates.

Outside the building there is the usual crowd. A window is flung open.

One of the delegates shouts down into the crowd:

"Good news! Our comrades, who have been rotting in prison since 1917..."

He is not able to finish; those below have already guessed the news. Caps are flung into the air. Cheer after cheer roars up toward the building, and it is some time before there is even moderate quiet in the council room.

Noske is sure of himself now. His face is wreathed in smiles:

"Yesterday Comrade Popp of the Independent Socialist Party was elected President of the Soldiers' Council. I shall now call on Comrade Popp to make some concrete proposals for the strengthening of our organization."

Few of those present know Popp – but he is one of the Independents, and for the coolies that is enough. And the mere fact that Noske should of his own free will call on an Independent to speak, reconciles many who had resolved to stand out against him today.

Papendieck is one of the members of the Soldiers' Council.

"You know, Noske is a tower of strength, all the same," says he.

“A bit too cautious, perhaps.”

“He wants to be quite sure before he will do anything.”

“But then, we can’t do with anyone at the head who is not cautious – there is too much at stake.”

“There’s the right spirit about today anyway.”

“Yes, things are beginning to move.”

“We shall do it yet.”

Lothair Popp, the Independent, who, in accordance with the agreement of the previous evening, is to get his presidency of the Soldiers’ Council only at the price of the governorship for Noske, goes straight to work:

“Comrades, I propose first of all that the present Governor, Admiral Souchon, be deposed, so that the machinery of administration can be made to function again. A large number of officers and officials, including even one admiral, have expressed their willingness to work under the direction of the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Council. As the new Governor, I would now propose Comrade Gustav Noske, deputy and member of the Reichstag.”

“What did I tell? – things are moving, eh?”

“The prisoners set free.”

“A workers’ and soldiers’ council at Lübeck.”

“And at Brunsbüttel and Cuxhaven.”

“Souchon gone.”

“Noske Governor.”

A Social Democrat and member of the Reichstag as against an Imperial Admiral – that is an easy choice.

Even the opposition is silenced.

“Hands up, those in favour. Thank you!”

“Those against? I declare Comrade Noske unanimously elected Governor.”

The meeting proceeds.

Noske excuses himself – there are things he must see to; he must familiarize himself as speedily as possible with his new duties as Governor. To the President he leaves a host of questions which must be settled and which promise to keep the meeting busy for a long time.

He goes back alone to the Station Headquarters, summons Admiral Souchon and the staff officers to an interview. While expressing regret that he should be under the necessity of placing such gentlemen as Admiral Souchon in so embarrassing a situation, nevertheless, in the interests of the country, of the soldiers, of the inhabitants of Kiel, he now asks the officers to stand by him and lend a helping hand.

He then draws up his first proclamation to the troops and inhabitants of the Fortress of Kiel.

He telephones to Berlin:

“I have been obliged to assume the governorship and have already achieved considerable success.” His election to the post by the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Council is not enough; it must be sanctioned by the Chancellery of the Reich – nor does he rest until he has received formal confirmation of his appointment from the Secretary of State for the Navy. Now he is covered on both flanks. Supreme Commissar of the Revolution – but always with the approval and formal sanction of the Imperial Government.

Souchon could never have done that.

An imperial admiral has principles – he believes in a definite political ideal which he is prepared to defend to the utmost of his power; he would certainly never betray it. He may die for it; he may even decide to go over to the other side, but in that case only with the object of subduing that to his – that is to say, to the old – ideal.

But with the Social Democrats it is otherwise – they stand in principle for peace, yet they have served war. They stand for the overthrow of capitalist society, yet they have served the capitalists. They stand for the Workers’ International, yet they have placed their entire press at the service of nationalist propaganda. Their programme aims at a free, class-less society, yet their leaders are an integral part of a class government. For the advantage of the moment they are ready to forgo any or

all of their original principles in exchange for positions of power within the State.

Noske at Kiel is fully justified of his party. Two swift bids and he has captured the post of supreme authority – yesterday, indeed, a position without significance, powerless – but Noske has understood how to recreate it, how to reinvest it with power. He has done it with the aid of the revolutionary sailors, and with the help of the very officers against whom the revolt was made. To achieve a position of power based on two such opposed forces belongs to the peculiar tradition and schooling of social democracy alone.

For that is required the man with two faces-on the one hand, the popular orator who, in trade unions and political gatherings and, as occasion demands, from the very rostrum of the Reichstag itself, will thunder against capitalism, militarism, junkerdom, against the mischievous powers of the Church and reaction; and on the other hand, the parliamentarian and statesman, who will sit on committees and in cabinets side by side with the representatives of those very powers against which he has just been invoking the wrath of millions of credulous workers-the man who will tend and keep running the machinery of the State. This two-facedness is the secret of social democratic power and at the same time the reason of its political sterility.

In Kiel, Noske triumphed, and with Noske and social democracy, the officers thrown down by the revolt of the sailors.

There has been only one small fly in the ointment: Haase.

Noske met him the evening of the day on which he became Governor, in the same room which he had occupied when he had been President of the Soldiers' Council. Weary and spent with his long journey, Haase had reached Kiel at last. The final stage of his journey he had made in an open car. He realized at once that he had come too late to influence the course of events in Kiel, and on reflection decided not to give battle. He set out again next day for Berlin.

Noske telephoned to Scheidemann in Berlin:

"Haase has just been here. If there were any dispute, it would, of course, be impossible to handle the situation. Haase has given me his assurance that there will be no split. He expects *quid pro quo* in Berlin."

THE MUTINEERS GO INLAND

Raumschuh, Bonczyk, Fiete, Hein – the nine sailors who, like many others, had banded together to leave Kiel either by train or on foot, and to spread the revolution – found a train at the station about to leave for Hamburg.

The organization of Noske's regime had not yet penetrated to the humblest posts, and the sailors on guard at the station merely examined the faces of those outward bound. The faces and the slung rifles were sufficient passport.

So the nine men took their seats in the train.

"Well, here we are."

"There was to be a big meeting at Hamburg yesterday. The dockers are going on strike. Pity we, weren't there."

The sailors are afraid they may arrive in Hamburg too late for the fun. It does not occur to them that they may equally arrive too early and be greeted with shots at the station.

The way is through a peaceful countryside. Here a farmer follows his team, ploughing the greasy furrows of the Holstein earth; there the sails of a windmill slowly turning against a background of massive, gleaming clouds; children standing at the barrier of a level crossing – a half-grown, untidy little girl waving her hand. A village street in the soft light of the November sun.

At a little siding some munition workers board the train, young women between the ages of twenty and thirty.

"We are on strike," explains one of the women.

"We are going home to Hamburg."

"This will see the end of it; it is sure to come now."

"The chaps at the top are taking their time about it though."

The journey, which normally takes under three hours, drags on interminably. The train halts again and again, and the nearer to Hamburg, the slower it moves.

They have no newspapers, but there is news notwithstanding:

"The Hamburg workers have downed tools."

"Have you heard that the red flag has been hoisted over the docks at Blohm and Voss's?"

"There was a big demonstration this morning in the Heiligengeistfeld."

"Sailors set free the prisoners at Holstenglacis."

"Soldiers from the Bundesstrasse barracks threw stink bombs among the demonstrators."

"There was shooting, too. Some people were killed."

"Blast it all, is this train never going to move again?"

"Hey, guard, when are we going on?"

At last someone has found a newspaper – two of them, both yesterday's the *Berliner Tageblatt* and the *Vorwärts*. There is not a word in the *Tageblatt* about the spread of the revolution, nor in the *Vorwärts* either. "Declaration by the Inhabitants of Posen – They want to remain German," reads out one, looking over Bonczyk's shoulder.

Bonczyk turns the pages in the vain hope of finding some mention of the sailors' mutiny – anything at all about Kiel or Hamburg. Suddenly he jumps up, his hands to his head: "Am I crazy? Do I see straight? Pinch me somebody, to see if I'm here!"

"Hey, steady! not so hard."

"What's the matter with you?"

"Well look! Just you read that."

He points to a notice printed in large type in the *Vorwärts*:

THE LAST CHANCE!

Wednesday at one o'clock the subscription list of the War Loan will be closed. Those who have not yet subscribed, should do so immediately!

“And there were chaps killed in Kiel on Sunday.”

“And Monday we elected a soldiers’ council.”

“And Tuesday Noske was made President,”

“And this paper is Wednesday’s!”

“Can you beat it! We must go to Berlin, boys – that’s where we must go. The pity is that we can’t take a couple of naval guns along with us and put a few rounds, into the *Vorwärts*. That might wake them up, perhaps.”

“Is this train never going to move?”

“If it doesn’t start soon, I propose we get out and walk it.”

“How far is Hamburg from here?”

“It would be night-time before you got there,” interposes one of the women.

At last the train does move. The carriages clash together once or twice. The springs creak and the wheels squeak. The engine, like everything else, appears to be war-weary and on its last legs. But in the end it does manage to get going again and the train rolls on slowly once more.

A few potato-scroungers join the party, and an infantryman returning home from his garrison at Eckenforde.

The trees along the line have lost their leaves – a gaunt, lifeless column, they file past the windows. A cold, brown wetness lies over the sticky fields. The sun has gone and a sea of mist obscures the landscape. But the four walls of the compartment are defence against the decaying world. Here it is cosy and warm, with the animal warmth of a cowshed. The occupants sit or stand side by side, packed closely together, and the several couples soon become conscious of more than mere clothing.

The compartment is full of smoke and stiff with dirt.

The clothes of the women are of a coarse military material. But that is only the shell-the skin beneath is smooth still, despite the work at the lathes. Hands grope towards it. After all have they not been imprisoned for six and seven years in the mess-decks? Neither have the women died utterly among the belts and wheels of the munition factories. Their husbands maybe are rotting in the common graves, or have caught syphilis. Perhaps not even that – they may merely have been living awhile with someone else and have caught nothing. In a fortnight or three weeks, many of them will be back again.

But that is uncertain and still very far away.

The sailors are close at hand, and their bare chests and brawny arms make an impression on the women. Waste no time thinking, miss nothing good that is going – that is always best. But even the longest railway journey ends sometime. “That last place – was it Burgwedel?”

“Only twenty minutes more,” says one of the women with a suspicion of tears in her eyes. Another tidies her hair, tucking it away again under her cap.

The infantryman has lowered the window.

“Eidelstadt, we’ll soon be there,” he shouts.

“Remember, we stick together, lads,” warns Raumschuh. “That’s agreed, isn’t it?”

“The morning will be plenty of time! There’ll be lots doing tomorrow,” says the girl beside Bonczyk – a young woman with heavy cheek-bones and a mass of brown hair.

“Make an appointment with the others to meet them somewhere. And you can bring your pal with you, can’t he, Hannah? The two of us live together, you see.”

The young woman addressed as Hannah is standing up putting on her cloak. But she has not buttoned it yet. Her long legs are visible under her dress. And she has eyes only for Raumschuh.

“She’s from Vierlanden – they are all like that! doesn’t want to give herself away, that’s all.”

And even Hannah has to smile.

She has a fine row of white teeth, and hazel eyes, and her long thighs stand out so because her waist is so small. She now buttons up her cloak hastily, smiling again into Raumschuh’s eyes as she does so. She reminds him of Lucy in Berlin. But then all women with long legs who are fair and please him, remind him of Lucy Lange, whom he has seen only once or twice when on leave, and

then but for a few hours.

“Well, what do you say, Karl? We can think it over, anyway,” says Bonczyk.

“No, we must see first what is doing in Hamburg.” And there are all manner of things doing in Hamburg – they see that the moment they arrive. Here, just as in Kiel, there are sailors everywhere. Sailors with red arm-bands, rifles in their hands.

“Hey, mate, take off that cockade! I guess you don’t know the lie of the land yet, eh?”

The sailor has taken the infantryman’s cap and plucked off the cockade:

“Here’s a red flower, put that up instead.”

“Move on there – the station must be cleared at once.”

Those who have come in by the train – women, sailors, soldiers, potato-sellers – all stream toward the exit in one broad flood. At the far end of the platform a machine-gun has been mounted. A sailor on picket accosts two officers and obliges them to hand over their swords; then with his bayonet he hacks off their shoulder straps and pitches them on the platform.

“Where have you come from?”

“Us? From Kiel.”

Then they meet an acquaintance – the chap who used to clean the latrines on the *Kurfürst*.

“Hello, Brummschädel! Karl! Fiete!”

“How did you get here so soon?”

“Me? I’ve been in Hamburg since yesterday. Things are all right here, I tell you. There was a bit of a shoot-up today, but the GOC⁵ has run for it now. A Soldiers’ Council has been elected already. You have rifles, I see; we swiped some today from the Armoury. Go and report to the picket on the station and find out where you can get grub.”

They mount the steps again to the waiting-room.

The women have gone; one or two of them have managed to make appointments. The brunette has given Bonczyk a card with her address. “It doesn’t matter how late. The tram is the best way. But bring your friend with you, the tall chap!” she calls after him.

The nine men join a squad which is escorting a deputation from the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Council to the Town Hall. The streets of Hamburg are unusually busy. Everywhere they meet armed men wearing red bands, and the streets leading to the market-place in front of the Town Hall are all held by lines of pickets.

The deputation from the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Council enters the Chamber where a meeting of the Hamburg City Council is being held. The President of the Council is in the act of introducing a measure of the Senate to establish a Labour Bureau in the town. He breaks off his remarks with a wave of his hand toward the door:

“These, I presume, are the representatives of the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Council...”

Three men walk slowly across the room, a Hamburg workman, a sailor from Kiel, and Hugo Haase, the leader of the Independent Party who has stayed at Hamburg on his way back to Berlin. A movement passes along the benches where sit the members of the City Council; the light from the candelabra gleams again on the shining bald heads of the councillors and in the lenses of their spectacles. The Bürgermeister, von Melle vacates the chair and receives the representatives of the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Council. After a brief conversation with the Vice-President he goes with the delegates, accompanied by Senator Dr. Petersen, to another room.

Dr. Buehl, the Senate Syndic, proceeds with the discussion. They pass to the next point on the agenda: the appointment of a Director of Cemeteries. Just as the meeting has decided to reclaim from the Front the head gardener of the city, with the object of giving him the job, the Bürgermeister and Senator Dr. Petersen return to the Council Chamber.

The Bürgermeister reverts to the question previously under discussion. But before opening the debate, he makes a few observations on the political situation:

“...a new order has been established for the internal organization of Germany. The Senate is prepared – and I presume that the citizens are also prepared-to support the new order. The Senate,

⁵ General Officer Commanding

having regard to the special interests of Hamburg, is disposed to look with favour on the social and political changes which are now taking place throughout the length and breadth of the Fatherland. It desires that all the sturdy democratic forces latent in this our ancient and free community should join in what we believe will prove a great and lasting communal effort. But that will be possible only if we all stand solidly together, and if each and every one of us is continually mindful of his duty to see that public peace and order are preserved under all circumstances.”

At the conclusion of these remarks the Burgermeister makes a short pause, he wipes the perspiration from his brow and adjusts the papers lying before him; then in a business-like tone he resumes: “We shall now continue the discussion of the establishment of a Labour Bureau...”

Outside the Council Chamber a sailor is delivering an harangue from the balcony.

The face of the speaker is lost in the conflicting light of the two lanterns high up in the grey air. The words flutter down and are lost upon the wide, crowded square. Though not one word is distinctly audible, the crowd gives it a meaning of its own:

“The Senate has capitulated!”

“The Soldiers’ Council has taken charge!”

“Hurrah for socialism!”

“Hurrah for the world revolution!”

But there are malcontents here, to men passing through on leave and not knowing to whom they should turn for information as to where they can obtain rations or billets; civilians wanting passports to some place or other, or permission to be abroad on the streets after nine o’clock.

“It all takes time!”

“Surely you can understand that?”

“Why there’s Zeller hasn’t been asleep for two nights!”

“It will all come right in time – only be patient.”

“Oh, to hell with patience! Before, we did at least have something to eat, even if it was only a crust.”

But the sailors who accompanied the soldiers’ councillors to the Town Hall, have already pushed off. They have been joined by sundry of the pickets stationed in front of the Town Hall and other soldiers and workmen, and are now heading along the Old Ramparts across Roding Square toward the harbour.

A gloomy, wet sky hangs low over the water. The outlines of a giant crane and the Reiherstieg floating dock are alone visible on the opposite shore, all else is obscured.

The procession stops at the harbour gate.

To the left lies the Elbe, to the right a hill commanding a view of the harbour-low, bare shrubbery at the base and a grassy stretch above. On the summit is a building-the office of the Hamburg-Amerika Line, the place where the crews are signed on. How often prior to the war, when they served on merchant ships, have the sailors and stokers stood penned up together there in the Employment Bureau of the HAPAG – the Hamburg-Amerika Steamship Co. And glad enough they were, too, if after weeks of waiting they did get a ship in the end-to work at the boilers or before the mast, to sleep in a hole below the waterline, to live on ship’s biscuits and dried vegetables, all for sixty marks a month. And the ships getting ever bigger and bigger, their speed ever greater, and the work demanded of the seamen ever harder. And though the comfort in the passengers’ quarters improved as new ship succeeded new ship, the sailors and stokers were still left in their same old holes. To gain a few marks rise in pay, a few cubic metres more air in their quarters, straw palliasses for their beds, they were obliged to fight desperately through their unions. Many among the demonstrators here still remember the struggle, especially the great strikes of 1906 and 1907 which were so brutally crushed by the police. The Hamburg Amerika Line led the van in every fight against the sea-going worker.

The sailors cannot simply march by the Employment Bureau of the HAPAG, where it stands on the hilltop there, the sign and symbol of the entire German merchant service. There is not: enough room for them all on the steps which lead up to it; they break through the hedge and storm the hill.

They gather about the flag-pole.

The red flag goes up over the HAPAG.

Then on again.

Half an hour later the procession is heading for the General Offices of the Hamburg-Amerika Line on the Alster, to take over the building in the name of the Soldiers' Council.

The sailors burst noisily into the building. But there is nothing for them to do – everywhere painfully clean offices, each divided from the other by a glass partition, stairs with carpets, the Board Room. Only a porter is there and a few clerks, who come running out. But no resistance – the intruding throng meets no opposition.

The attack is spent on empty air and loses itself in the vast rooms of the lower floor. The directors' rooms above are left undisturbed.

In one of these rooms, furnished with decent luxury, sits a decrepit little man, the renowned head of the Hamburg Bourse, one of the chief exponents of German commerce, one of the pillars of the Empire – Albert Ballin, General Director of the Hamburg-Amerika-Paketschiff-Fahrt-Aktien-Gesellschaft.

Today Ballin took a walk through the streets of Hamburg. He witnessed the great demonstration by

which the General Officer commanding the city had been put to flight. In the harbour he had seen the red flag flying from the mastheads. It was not mere chance that led him to the offices of the firm of "Morris and Co.", which he had originally joined as a partner at the age of twenty-two years on the death of his father.

"Morris and Co., Emigration Agency."

There it had been his business to get steerage passengers for English merchant lines – those emigrants from Austria, Poland, Lithuania, Galicia, who formed the mainstay of transatlantic shipping during the 'eighties and 'nineties. He worked up his father's business until at last it was a serious competitor with the Bremer Lloyd and the Hamburg-Packet. For a whole decade English, French, Belgian, Dutch and finally German shippers had competed for the emigration trade. During this struggle fares fell so low that the HAPAG was at last obliged to appoint its little rival, Ballin, to the supreme and absolute control of its entire passenger service to and from North America.

That was his first step. The foundation of the "Pool", an international arrangement whereby the various shipping firms agreed to divide the passenger and freight trade between them on a basis of tonnage, was his second great stride. There was to be no more competition – which operated only to the advantage of emigrants and traders – but co-operation, by which was meant agreements of the proprietors among themselves for the keenest exploitation of workers, passengers and traders – and in this sign Ballin had conquered; in this sign, as General Director of the HAPAG, he had built up the greatness of German shipping.

The ever sickly Ballin – contracting party to so many trade-union agreements, co-founder of the North Atlantic Pool, despotic ruler of the world's greatest shipping combine, intimate adviser of the Emperor and of the Imperial Government – now sits back wearily in his chair and hears the people in revolt moving noisily about in the rooms below. The police, whom he might have summoned yesterday, today no longer exist. The military authorities have decamped.

The corridors and suites of empty rooms echo to the noisy clatter of sailors' boots. Ballin's gaze rests on a vase of Bohemian glass, on the bizarre shapes of the white orchids renewed daily in his room. He looks at the life-size portrait of the Emperor above the fireplace.

In a letter a few days ago he had written:

"One could hardly make the success of the revolution more apparent to the ragtag and bobtail, than by claiming as scapegoat the man whom they hold to be responsible for the war. I do not imagine that the Emperor would be very sorry if he could now retire into private life with some noble gesture..."

The Emperor may, if he likes, retire "into private life". But the Empire is broken, gone, and with the Empire, German shipping, and with German shipping Ballin's life's work – twenty-eight triumphal years... Emigrants – a whole exodus of peoples at five dollars a head – steerage

passengers, stateroom passengers, tourists, bankrupt merchants, cargoes, transports, wars – he had made something out of them all.

Today the reckoning is to be presented.

Ballin had still one appointment unfulfilled on his calendar – a meeting of the Union of “Hamburg Shippers”. To this meeting he now went. It was not entirely without irony that he recommended the merchants to discharge as speedily as possible from their naval charters all ships still lying in port. The all-important thing now is to bring in foodstuffs from Sweden and Norway; for the greater the hunger in Germany, the more bloody the revolution.

After the meeting he went home.

The telephone rang a few times more – a senator, a merchant, politician want his advice. But Ballin has no more interest, whether for coming troubles, for the state of trade, or for politics. Ask them to call up again tomorrow, he says.

Two tablets of veronal is Ballin’s customary dose against insomnia. Today he has increased the amount fivefold. Once the telephone calls have been disposed of, he begins to feel the effects. But he wants more than his usual sleep. He sits up and again takes a double dose.

His head sinks back wearily into the pillows.

And Ballin’s grandiose vision of the key cities of the five seas, of the far-flung shipping lines controlled by his great firm, in which the whole earth lies caught as in a net, has contracted to a last swift look at the tumbler, which he has already put back carefully in its place.

Then the light reflected in the glass goes out too.

Ballin falls asleep. His breathing grows lighter, at times it fails altogether, then swells gurgling back.

With laboured beats his heart contends awhile against the poison.

Later he is found unconscious in his bed.

The doctor who is called, has Ballin removed immediately to a private hospital, where they pump out his stomach – but the help has come too late. Albert Ballin, Director-General of the Hamburg-Amerika Line, is dead.

It is dawn again in Hamburg, first over the river. The water flows grey under the bridges of the Elbe, past the moorings, the wharves and the piers where the ocean-going steamers are berthed. And in the city too, it is growing gradually lighter, in the streets about the harbour, in the old lodging-houses of Altona and in the packed, dragooned tenements of the working classes – house-fronts black with soot and fog, rows of staring windows, doorways opening into courtyards, rows of ash-bins which the inhabitants have filled with garbage and put outside overnight to recover them again in the morning. Half-dressed, slatternly women appear at doorways and vanish again into the houses. The men with their coffee-cans and parcels of bread do not go to their work today; they are intercepted at street corners and assemble in the bars.

It is day again in Hamburg. Raumschuh has wakened also.

He was present last night when the flag was hoisted over the Employment Bureau and he was at the HAPAG office; then he went to the offices of the social democratic newspaper, the *Echo*, which, accepting the inevitable, had surrendered its editorship to the Spartacists. Afterwards he and his troop had gone to the station to find out the time of the next train to Berlin.

Still half asleep, he becomes sensible of the unaccustomed warmth from the woman beside him. Then he remembers: Yes, of course – Brummschädel had been given the key of the house. They had to go a long way out, to a terminus. And when at last they did get there the women were already in bed, having no more paraffin left. Raumschuh watches the window get lighter. It is tall and narrow and gives on a courtyard. The plaster has come away from the gable opposite. The articles of furniture in the room are still dim and formless. Gently he strokes the hair of his bedfellow. Hannah is her name; she boarded the train at Neumünster, or was it Hordesholm? She has soft hands; he will not soon forget them.

The train for Berlin leaves at 7.40.

“It is a pity,” says Raumschuh. “But we must go – we have made an appointment with the

others.” “Well, if you must...”

And afterwards they get up.

Bonczyk has slept in the bedroom with the other girl, and the two only emerge when Hannah has prepared coffee and set out the cups on the table. It is late already and Bonczyk has to drink his coffee standing.

Even when they reach the street Bonczyk is still half asleep. He trots along beside Raumschuh in silence. They no longer carry rifles; they exchanged them last evening for a couple of Brownings which can be stowed away in the trouser-pocket. The streets of Hamburg now have their usual appearance again- children with satchels on their way to school, trams running. But there are soldiers with red arm-bands at the Dammtor Bridge, and at the other busy centres. And the railway station looks like an armed camp.

Of the nine men who set out from Kiel, Raumschuh and Bonczyk can now find only two; and later a third asleep on a bench in the waiting-room.

The train scheduled for Berlin does not go.

“There, what did I tell you? We could easily have stayed on. What does it matter to a day or so, anyway?” complains Bonczyk.

“There will probably be no train to Berlin all day,” explains a railway official.

“You see! Let’s go back again!”

But Raumschuh pays no attention. He has the fever again. There is a rumour that aeroplanes are coming from Marburg to drop bombs on Hamburg. Raumschuh goes to the station picket, and the others follow him, in the hope of getting a machine-gun and helping to ward off the air-raid.

But the aeroplanes do not come.

A false alarm.

There appears to be nothing more doing in Hamburg.

Along with a host of others the five men sit in the waiting-room, lounge about in the hall or stand on the platforms, seeking for an opportunity of leaving Hamburg. It is a matter of indifference where they go, so long as it is inland, to some place where the revolution has not triumphed yet. After an hour’s wait they find a train for Celle, going by way of Harburg, and perhaps even as far as Hanover.

They reach Celle without misadventure.

But there a large body of troops is drawn up on the platform. As the train enters the station the soldiers board the train and search the compartments. The parties of sailors scattered throughout the length of the train are immediately surrounded.

“Show passes.”

“Where have you come from?”

“Kiel.”

“We’re going to Berlin.”

“Get out – you must come along with us.” “Shake a leg – To the OC station.”

“That’s no good to us – we’re not getting out.”

“We are not taking orders from you. We take our orders from the Soldiers’ Council at Kiel and from nobody else.”

The infantryman looks surprised:

“Soldiers’ Council, eh? Don’t you let our S.M. hear you mention that – he’d go stark staring mad.”

The platform is bristling with rifles. An officer runs down the train.

“Step along, there! Step along!” growls an NCO.

“Hurry up!”

There is nothing for it but to get out of the train and submit to be led away under escort of the soldiers. Thirty of them are locked in a wooden shed.

The soldiers on guard outside are armed with rifles.

The next train brings still more prisoners, mostly sailors, forty this time, making seventy all told. The timbered walls are only nailed together – they have examined them already. And the soldiers

outside seem to be not unreasonable.

"It's the Sergeant-Major's doing," they explain.

"He's as strict as hell. Used to be a warder in the prison here at Celle."

"An officer has taken over now."

"What time is the next train?"

"It should be here any minute, from Bremen."

The train from Bremen brings more sailors – this time the mutineers from the *Thüringen* and *Helgoland*. After having been sentenced to prison in Wilhelmshaven they were later being transferred elsewhere, but they had fraternized with their military escort in the train, and on arrival in Bremen had proclaimed the revolution. That was yesterday, 6th November. Today they have come on to Celle to set free their mates who have been in prison here since. This they explain in a few sentences, and the soldiers on guard out in the passage listen.

The wooden enclosure is now too small to contain them.

The first plank is loosed, and the rest is easy – the wooden walls simply fall asunder. The soldiers permit themselves to be disarmed. The Sergeant Major, who comes storming up at the sound of the tumult, is placed under arrest; and the officer in charge of the railway station also, a first-lieutenant, who just sits at his table in amazement.

The station is now in the hands of the sailors.

A little fellow, a boatswain, quick and nimble as a cat, is issuing orders and organizing the revolutionary guard over the station. A machine-gun is mounted.

The telephone rings in the guard-room. "GOC Hanover speaking," growls a voice.

"Soldiers' Council, Celle, speaking," replies the boatswain.

There is a sharp click in the receiver. GOC Hanover has replaced the receiver. The sailors lose no time. They have rifles once more, and a machine-gun, and abundance of ammunition. They form up in column of squads and march off through Celle in close formation, singing as they go out toward the prison beyond the tower. Bonczyk's only regret is that they have lined up according to size, so that he cannot march at the head of the column with Raumschuh.

"It's just as well we did leave Hamburg, after all," says he to the fellow beside him. "There is something to do here anyway."

A day's march farther on, thirty miles from Celle, at peace within its thousand-year-old ramparts, lies the princely city of Brunswick. Five days ago a mass meeting had been called. Placards in the Hagenpark, along the Lowen wall, at the street corners, announced in shrill lettering: "Speaker: Karl Liebknecht!"

But Liebknecht did not come. A well-known Brunswick agitator, August Merges, formerly a tailor's journeyman, spoke instead. After the meeting there had been a procession through the town. From the Lowen wall it had filed slowly past the Ducal Palace, made a detour by Fallerslebenstrasse to the Dragoon Barracks; thence the crowd of workers, soldiers and women had entered the heart of the city and the Hagen Market. The residents flung open the windows and stared in astonishment. The tailor, Merges, made another speech and then dismissed the crowd, saying: "We shall need you again perhaps, in a few days' time."

The workers of Brunswick have been waiting ever since for the signal. The *Volksfreund* and the *Braunschweigische Anzeiger* continued to publish communiques from the theatre of war, and to describe positions in rear of the line imagined to be of importance for one tactical reason or another. They published their views on armistice terms, and a proclamation by the Emperor on the new political orientation; an appeal by the Government to the German people urging them to preserve order and exercise self-control, incidentally expressing its profound gratitude to the men of the army and the fleet; who by their courageous adherence to discipline have been the means of saving the Fatherland.

Everybody knows that all this is of no importance.

What is important are the things the papers do *not* write about.

Rumours of disorders in Kiel are already current in the city.

"The sailors on the ships have mutinied!" – "They say the revolt has spread to Cuxhaven and Hamburg."

"Wilson demands the extradition of the Imperial Family."

Brunswick, that so genial and placid city, is suddenly alive with a strange unrest. If anyone is heard walking more quickly than usual in the street below, windows are opened; citizens cluster in doorways and whisper secrets one to another.

"I had it from Radke, the saddler. He had to go to Bremen to get some leather...."

"Bremen, too, eh?"

"He saw a big demonstration, and they were carrying a red flag!"

"Oh, the ports, yes, that's one thing – but Brunswick...."

"Don't you be so sure-things are none too rosy at the Air Force Barracks."

"That's nothing – that's merely because of Prince Sigismund, he's too young for the job, he's not fit to be in charge."

"A lot of sailors arrived yesterday."

"Today, too – by the morning train."

"I saw a couple myself at the Petritor wall."

And yonder some women gossiping:

"Have you heard? The Duchess is packing her trunks!"

"You don't say so! Really?"

"I don't know what we are coming to? I got nothing again today for my ration card, No. 35."

"Coal is being issued at the station today – are you going?"

"Ach, what's the use? You only stand there in the queue and get nothing at the finish."

It is a dreary November day. Gusts of wind licking along the streets bring a chilly dampness – walls are wet and window-panes rattle. Fallen leaves dart spinning through the Park railings and there is a smell of sweet rotteness.

It is autumn, but with a difference. There is something brewing.

And Brunswick is waiting – the citizens are waiting;

The members of the ancient aristocracy, the court, the young ducal couple see their doom approaching.

Brunswick, though on its outskirts it harbours a rapidly growing industry and a large proletarian population, still preserves its fundamentally feudal, agrarian outlook, which neither the demonstrations and protests on the part of the workers, nor the warnings of more advanced middle-class circles have been able to change in the slightest. But Brunswick has not entirely escaped the wave of democratization which is sweeping the whole country. Workers and progressives have pointed to the gravity of the political situation, and are demanding free and universal suffrage for Brunswick, too. But the Provincial Assembly has as yet not yielded an inch.

The Duke however, has announced at the last moment in a proclamation that, "having regard to the state of opinion existing in the various sections of the community, he is satisfied that none of the proposals hitherto submitted to the Provincial Assembly for the revision of electorate are adequate, and that nothing short of the same franchise as holds for the Reichstag can now be considered."

The Duke, who took his rightful place in the government of the Reich only as lately as 1913 after the settlement of a feud with the Hohenzollerns, has been moved to take this action as a result of the recent happenings on the coast, which are already beginning to cast their shadow over his country. He has read with growing concern the various reports upon the evil temper in the barracks and in the working-class districts of his capital city. War-weariness and hostility toward those in authority has been increasing among the soldiers, and the workers are beginning to arm. Only a few days ago, August Merges, the organizer of the Independents, had caused arms to be distributed throughout the factories. Nothing is now wanting but the signal for attack, which is hourly expected from Berlin.

Brunswick is waiting – soldiers, workers, citizens, the members of the upper classes, the Government and the Court awaiting the signal.

And the signal was to be given by five sailors singing a little song that was familiar to everyone!

The five sailors are now sitting in a tavern on Langedammstrasse.

Four are from Bremen, the other is Hermann Rode, the cook's mate from the prison at Wilhelmshaven.

The innkeeper has just set a fresh round of beer on the table.

"Tastes like piss," observes Rode. "What's the 'Rote Schloss' waiting for?"

"Can't screw themselves up to it, I suppose."

The "Rote Schloss" is a house a little farther down the street, where the "Volksfreund" is printed, and in which Merges and the Independents are holding continuous session.

"Merges, he's a big windbag! Why doesn't he get going with all his Independents?"

"Ach, it's enough to make a man sick!"

"What about a game of skat?"

"No, let's go over again and see what they're at."

One of the sailors puts on his cap and goes out. The rest, thoroughly bored, stay where they are.

"A good thing we've got old Agnes here!"

"Come on, Aggie, let's have one of the old songs!"

The woman with the guitar takes her instrument and begins to strum. Rode empties down his beer, wipes his beard and twirls again the points of his moustache. He had put on all his best clothes before leaving Wilhelmshaven, and beneath his greatcoat he is now wearing his pre-war parade jacket with polished buttons. Beside Rode is a sailor with an enormous scar on his face. The half of one ear is missing and the skin on one side of his face from the nose to the mouth has a dark bluish gleam.

On his cap-band is SMS *Derfflinger*.

"Where did you get that?" asks Rode.

"Jutland – I was loader on number three, port side."

Agnes has finished tuning her guitar, and is now singing a song which she has sung in every tavern in the town during these last years of the war, and which she has popularized with the whole city of Brunswick.

The sailors join in the chorus:

"Though things go wrong, keep smiling, boys!"

The sailor has come back from the "Rote Schloss".

"The same old story – still sitting there jawing their heads off, waiting for orders from Berlin."

"I've an idea," says Rode.

"Well? Out with it."

"We can't just take root here. It's no good waiting any longer for Merges and his Independents. Let's start out through Brunswick on our own, quite quietly, and all nice and peaceful-like."

"Right, let's!"

"What about Agnes?"

"Oh, Agnes is coming with us."

So the five set off arm in arm, along the ancient streets with their overhanging houses, a whole row

marching down the middle of the roadway. And in front of them, Agnes with the guitar.

"This is a good joke," says Rode.

"Better than falling quite asleep, anyway."

"The good Brunswickers will be annoyed for once in their lives."

It is shortly before seven o'clock and the shops are still open, their windows misty with a yellow glow. Women with market-baskets stand still in the doorways and shop-girls come running to see the spectacle.

The girl with the guitar plays her song again and again, and the sailors march behind her bawling:

"Though things go wrong, keep smiling, boys..."

But they are no longer alone. Already a few soldiers and some workmen have joined the company. Before ten minutes have passed a whole mob is marching on the centre of the town. Even

so no one dreams that this procession will grow to a demonstration, that the troops will go over, and the police capitulate to them, or that within the hour they will have set free the prisoners and finally deprive the Duke and Duchess of their crowns.

But the time is ripe – Brunswick is waiting.

It needs only this little push.

The narrow streets are filled with people lining the curb to right and left of the procession. Many join the throng and others are swept along in its wake. The five sailors at the head are no longer walking arm in arm. They have seen the growing crowd and now are marching boldly, their hearts aflame again as a few days ago in Kiel, or but yesterday in Hamburg and Bremen. The girl with the guitar no longer goes before them but is running with the procession, her instrument hanging unheeded at her side. The surrounding streets, inhabited by workers, feed the marching column, which grows and grows until the “joke” has become a demonstration the like of which Brunswick has never seen before. And the light of the few lamps burning in the Kohlmarkt makes visible the rifles in the hands of the marching men.

From every side reports of immense crowds, some of them armed, streaming toward the city, pour in upon the police and military headquarters.

The Duke and Duchess are seated at the supper table. The senior officer in command of the garrison, Major-General Baron Digeon de Monteton, carries the news in person to the Duke. After a brief consultation with his ministers the Duke considers it inadvisable to oppose the movement by force. He expresses a desire that bloodshed shall be avoided as far as possible, and gives orders accordingly.

The police and the military withdraw into their barracks.

In the meantime throngs of people are swarming into the Kohlmarkt. The narrow, elongated square is insufficient to contain the crowd which covers all the place and overflows into the side streets. In the midst before the fountain stand the sailors.

The man from the *Derfflinger*, the one with the scar, has clambered up on the edge of the fountain. As far as the eye can see across the dimly-lighted square are upturned faces, and beyond in the outer darkness also there is life and movement. The sailor raises his arm, he sweeps out a circling gesture, and is unaware that he has done so – he is conscious only of the intense stillness below him. He feels that here is a people waiting, waiting for something to do – that this crowd must somehow be given an objective, a goal.

He hears his own voice, as the voice of a stranger, say:

“Comrades, workers...”

A long pause – like a great deep breath. No one becomes impatient, no one breaks the stillness. None wants to hear a speech, only some simple word, some common end. Something must be done. This sudden uprising must be given a purpose.

The sailor tries again:

“Comrades, workers – we are going to march now to the prison – to set all military prisoners free – they must taste first the new liberty now dawning!” “Down with militarism!” shouts Rode.

“Down!” comes back in one united roar. “To the prison!”

“To the Remmelberg!”

And the man from the *Derfflinger* and Rode and the rest of the sailors are swept along through the city on the living stream, through the winding streets of new houses fronted with ancient timbered façades. Shouts and cries, and snatches of singing are suddenly audible, to be as suddenly lost again round the next turning.

Then at last they are in front of the prison.

The sailors have already seen the gates of the prison-camp open at Wilhelmshaven, and the doors of the gaol at Bremen. They now set their fingers to their teeth and whistle; and the crowd about them begins to roar. Here too the doors open – a chink at first, then a face with a colourless beard peers out. Hands seize the door and force it backwards. The sailors push their way into the building and the crowd surges in after them.

Only a few warders and officials are there. The Governor of the prison is seated in his office.

Governor and warders are thrust out into the corridors and made to open the cells. Most surprised of all are the prisoners who are borne out in triumph to the street.

The cheers of the crowd sweep toward them.

Then one of them stands up on an abutment to the wall – a soldier who has endured a long term of imprisonment. He attempts to speak, stretches out his arms, his voice chokes. He can do nothing but clench his fist; he begins to weep, and sobs and sobs. And he is a great tall fellow, like a tree! And the people about him look away and are silent.

The freed men are then set in the midst and the crowd moves on to the railway station.

The military guard at the station goes over to the people. A sergeant-major who attempts to interfere is arrested. Merges and the Committee of the Independent Party are here now, and Merges is making a speech from one of the station platforms. Nothing of him is visible but his arms outspread like the sails of a windmill, they sink only to rise again immediately – a little crumpled man labouring like a bellows. In a loud clear voice he shouts his accusations into the night – he abuses the landowners who have made use of the war to exploit the people, the captains of industry who have battered upon the bodies of the slain, the Provincial Assembly which on the strength of the reactionary temper of Brunswick has supported them, but whose days are now numbered...

The crowd moves on again.

The guards at the Central Post Office also join the throng. From the Post-Office to the Ducal Palace is only a matter of five minutes. The ranks of lofty windows are in darkness; only in a few rooms at the side is any light visible. The people besiege the railings, faces peer through the iron bars.

The guard is drawn up on the gravel space in front of the Palace, twenty men in parade dress. In two ranks they stand like tin soldiers, a drummer on the right flank, and three paces farther to the right, the officer.

“No hostilities,” is the Duke’s order.

And the gesture has been carried so far, that even the entrance gates to right and left of the tall hedge in front of the Palace have remained open to-night as usual. The crowd licks in through the gates, then pours in a flood over the square.

The sailors are arguing with the officer.

The guard has sided with the people.

A sharp clear voice of command: “Attention! Slope arms! Present arms!”

Rifles go to the shoulder. Two emphatic movements and the soldiers are standing stiffly at the “present”- they make the time-honoured salute, not this time to his Highness the Duke, or the Duchess, or to any of the many exalted visitors to the Court, but to the people in rebellion.

The sailors and various members of the crowd have taken up a position in the rear of the troops. Rode, the one-time reservist, observes that the ceremony still lacks something – the drummer is not rolling his drum.

Rode walks up behind him:

“Drummer, why are you not drumming?”

Still the drummer does not beat – but a gentle kick from behind sets his hands going. The ceremony is complete – the rolling drum, arms at the present, the shouts of the people in open rebellion sweeping up to the Palace walls and echoing around the bronze charioteer over the portal.

The crowd makes no attempt on the Palace. Only the stables are thrown open and carriages and horses brought out and pressed into service.

A collection is made among the crowd on behalf of the liberated prisoners who, a shivering group in their thin prison clothes, still cluster together, amazed and bewildered amid this sudden activity. The sum collected is not large, and it is clear that the prisoners cannot do much with so little. Then comes a suggestion from the crowd which resolves the problem of how best to get satisfaction for these victims of military justice.

“To the Park Hotel!” shouts a voice.

“To the Park Hotel!” the cry is taken up.

The prisoners are bundled into the commandeered carriages and driven off to the best hotel in the

town.

An escort goes in with them, and the crowd waits outside until it is assured that its protégés are properly lodged and given to eat and drink like other guests.

The people now has the Railway Station and the Post Office, and is in control of the telephone and telegraphic services. At about 11 p.m. the police are withdrawn from the streets, and the police station given up to the people.

It is a long time before the city is quiet; processions continue to wander about the town. One section returns to the prison to let out the occupants of the women's wards, who were overlooked on the previous occasion. Meetings are still in progress in the Hagenmarkt and the Kohlmarkt. A provisional soldiers' council under the presidency of August Merges has met in the Wilhelmsgarten, where they are engaged on working out the morrow's plan of campaign – a general strike, a demonstration of workers and soldiers, the deposition of the Duke, the proclamation of the republic.

Next day everything goes according to programme. The workers, some of whom had already gone to the factories, leave again and join in the general strike. The demonstration marches from the Railway Station to the Central Post Office, past the Ducal Palace, and ends up at last in the old Hagenmarkt. The garrison of the Hussar's Barracks and the Air Force detachments have gone over to the people, and fresh flocks of sailors have arrived from Bremen and Hanover.

There have been speeches. Cries of "Down with old order!"

"Cheers for the new freedom!"

A somewhat expanded soldiers' council has again met in the Wilhelmsgarten to formulate the abdication of Duke Ernst August of Brunswick and Lüneburg. Some raise objections to this course of action. But they are howled down by the rest. The sailors are noisily demanding the document so that they may serve it upon the Duke immediately.

The man from the *Derfflinger* corners the President of the Council: "Give us the paper, August. We'll take it along right now – there's nothing to argue the toss about."

"I'm with you, Alex."

"Us, deposing the Duke! – enough to make a cat laugh, isn't it?"

Merges, the leader of the Independents, looks at the sailors. The voices raised against the deposition have made him hesitate. Have things moved too quickly perhaps? Is it premature? Not a word from Berlin yet of the signal for revolt – and, with the exception of the coastal towns, not a sound has been heard from any other part of the country. Merges dips the pen again in the inkpot and strikes out the signature which he has just set to the document.

Nor does he lead the deputation, but contents himself by insisting that a workers' representative shall be in attendance.

A railway man announces his readiness to accompany the deputation.

Three sailors and one workman set off.

A lorry load of sailors is just passing the gate as they come out – men of the *Thüringen*, the *Helgoland*, the *Grosser Kurfürst*, the *Derfflinger*, coming from Celle.

"Where does the Soldiers' Council hang out?" asks the driver.

"Right here, in the Wilhelmsgarten," replies the man with the scar.

"Hello, Alex, you here!"

A man from the *Derfflinger* has recognized the sailor with the scar. They used to be in the same mess room together.

"Where are you making for, Alex?"

"Going to depose the Duke."

"To depose the Duke? We must be in on this, boys. Right about face, driver!"

But the sailors are frozen through from long standing in the open lorry.

"Oh, bunk – let them do it themselves."

"We want to get a bit warm first."

"Yes, and get a jug of hot coffee somewhere, if there is such a thing."

A quarter of an hour later the delegates of the Soldiers' and Workers' Council enter the palace. The Duke is already expecting them and they are shown directly into the antechamber.

An officer in civilian clothes asks what they want and goes to inform his Highness the Duke of their arrival.

They sit down at a long oval table.

“Like waiting at the dentist’s, only a bit more roomy.”

Rode pours himself something from a flask.

“Water!” he announces in disgust. Then on a side table he discovers a box of cigars. He gets up, fetches the box, and after choosing one for himself, politely offers them round.

“A ducal cigar – you don’t get that every day! I say, but what do we call them – the Duke and Duchess – how do we style them exactly?”

“Now let’s have none of your monkey business! Duke and Duchess! They’re plain Mr. and Mrs. Brunswick – so that’s that!” snorts the man from the *Derfflinger*.

But there is no time to argue about it. They have hardly had a couple of draws at their cigars when the door opens and the Duke enters: “I see you have helped yourselves – that relieves me of my duties as host. May I have the pleasure of knowing what you want?”

The delegates of the Soldiers’ and Workers’ Council have risen to their feet.

The man with the scar hands the document to the Duke:

“On behalf of the people we have to submit this statement to you, and to ask that you sign it immediately.” The Duke takes the piece of paper in his hand, a halfsheet of notepaper, with six lines of typescript:

Brunswick, 8 November 1918.

I, “Ernst August, Duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg”, hereby declare that I renounce the throne for myself and my heirs, and put the government in the hands of the Soldiers’ and Workers’ Council.

Thereunder, one signature – “Zander, *President of the Soldiers’ Council*”; and a second, “Merges, *President of the Workers’ Council*” – but the second signature has been struck out.

“I must ask you to be so kind as to wait half an hour. Help yourselves in the meantime.”

With a wave of his hand toward the box of cigars the Duke takes his leave and with his attendants retires to the adjoining room.

Ernst August, Duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg, an enthusiastic horse-breeder, dog-fancier and racing motorist, has never allowed himself to become excited over politics. After the briefest possible participation in the chief political event of his reign, the World War, he had retired again to enjoy the company of his young wife, his horses, dogs and motor-cars at Brunswick. Nor does this question of abdication now exercise him greatly; His interview with the several ministers and officials summoned for the occasion – Barons von Knigge, von Grone – the Duchess herself is there – does not take long. Barely twenty minutes have elapsed before the Duke is back again in the antechamber, presenting to the sailor from the battle-cruiser *Derfflinger* the declaration signed by himself and duly countersigned by the ministers.

Ten minutes later Merges, the President of the Workers’ Council, has the document again and is drawing up a proclamation to the population whereby Brunswick is declared an independent province of the German Republic.

Raumschuh and Bonczyk set off again the same evening. Alex Dankert, the man from the “*Derfflinger*”, and a hundred or more other sailors are seated in a train scheduled for Berlin by way of Magdeburg and Rathenow.

Berlin with its public offices and ministries, Berlin, the capital city of the Empire, must be captured – not till then will the mutineers cease to be mutineers and roving bands of outlaws. Not until the red flag is flying over the Brandenburg Gate and on the flagstaff of the Imperial Palace will

the revolution have finally triumphed.

The train has already passed Magdeburg and Stendal. The night wind is blowing the rising mist and steam from the engine into the compartment through the broken window. Cold and damp, it wipes over the face and lingers in the clothes. Like doing watch on shipboard – two or three men keeping themselves awake by smoking, the rest lying about in huddled heaps. The necessity of being prepared to jump up at any moment makes sleep uneasy, and the unnatural position of the body makes it heavy with dreams. But absent are the slapping blows of the crested waves against the wall of the ship, the ringing of the wind in the masts and the shrouds, and the rhythmic stamping of the engine.

It is as if some ancient thing had been suddenly lost. So swiftly have the grey ships become things of the past. But here in this carriage full of men the mind remembers again the crowded mess-decks, has the sense again of the communal life within the routine of the ship, the “on” and “off” of the watch. But once the train shall have stopped and the passengers have gone their several ways, all that will be gone, forever.

Karl Raumschuh fills his pipe.

The sudden flame of the match flickers over the sleeping figures. Bonczyk is on the floor, his head on his knees. Opposite sits Dankert, the man from the *Derfflinger* – staring straight before him.

“It’s as if something had gone phut!” he says.

“Oh no, it’s nothing – it merely feels like that here, because there’s no light.”

“What are you going to do when we get to Berlin?”

Raumschuh shrugs his shoulders.

Again they are staring out of the window. Lights show up every now and then in the outer blackness.

The train pulls into a station and stops.

Bonczyk stretches himself and tries a new position for his legs. Sailors from the other carriages pass along outside the train shouting:

“It’s not going any farther!”

Everybody climbs out. Still half-asleep they stand before the low station building and read the name on the brick wall: “Rathenow-Berlin 96 kilometres.”

They run along the carriages toward the engine. Already some people are returning down the line. One has a lantern in his hand.

“The train is stopping here.”

“The rails have been pulled up.”

“Government orders.”

The sailors discuss what they shall do. It would take too long to repair the line, so they decide to go to Berlin on foot, by way of Brandenburg and Potsdam.

In straggling groups they pass through Rathenow in darkness. Many are lugging their kit along with them. On the country roads the interval between the marching groups increases. After an hour’s march Raumschuh, Dankert, Bonczyk and some dozen others see a motor-lorry waiting outside an inn. They go in and fetch out the driver. Alongside the driver, on top of the load, forward on the running-board, wherever there is room someone is perched.

Progress is slow. The driver is obliged to go cautiously, for in the glare of the headlights the gathering mist is like a wall of cotton-wool. The lorry jolts over the neglected high-road. They cling on with numb fingers. Those lying among the boxes go in danger of broken ribs.

After two hours the wheels begin to run smoothly again over the asphalt of a broad highway. The houses to right and left are hardly visible, only occasional details show up out of the gloom – the entrance to a subway, a bill hoarding, a street corner, and at last the steel arches of the bridge over the Havel at Potsdam.

In the woods between Potsdam and Wannsee the fog diminishes and the road becomes visible. Only half an hour more. Nearer and nearer come the blocks of houses on the outskirts of the city, and thereafter it is a straight run into the centre of Berlin.

A squadron of mounted police patrolling the streets espies the half-frozen sailors clinging to the lorry. The car is overtaken, and the men, stupefied with weariness and the long journey through the fog, suddenly find themselves surrounded by horses' heads. And without even thinking of resistance, they allow themselves to be arrested.

They are not taken to the police station, but, on the authority of the War Office order concerning sailors and other military persons at large in Berlin, to Moabit gaol.

Wedged between the horses of their escort, stiff-legged and in wet clothes, they trudge along past the Tiergarten. Gleaming chalky-white through the leafless shrubbery they see the statues of the Hohenzollerns erected by Wilhelm II.

Then they come to a wide open square.

The asphalt surface is glistening with moisture. Above the heads of the horses and the helmets of the police, rise the columns, grey and monumental, of the Brandenburg Tor.

Such was the dawn of the 9th November.

BERLIN MARCHES

On the 8th November the War Cabinet was due to meet at 10 a.m., but the various ministers have turned up before the appointed hour to talk over the situation.

Kiel – return to a state of relative order under the direction of Noske. Hamburg – a change for the worse. Wilhelmshaven reports that the forces of law and order are insufficient. The General Officer Commanding in Hanover has been taken prisoner. The red flag is waving over the docks at Bremen. The republic has been proclaimed at Munich, and the abdication of the King of Bavaria is being called for. At Stuttgart a soldiers' and workers' council has usurped the authority. At Brunswick a demonstration led by five sailors has liberated the prisoners and occupied the Central Station. The police have surrendered and the Palace guard gone over to the populace.

Ernst August has abdicated.

Train-loads of insurgents are approaching Berlin.

Outside the windows of the conference-room the day is grey and rainy. The interior of the chamber with its panelled walls is wrapped in gloom; only the polished surface of the long table reflects a subdued pearly light.

A number of ministers without portfolio are gathered around Herr Drews, the Prussian Minister for the Interior. In the centre of another group is the Secretary of State, Herr Scheidemann. "The abdication ultimatum has made a great hit with the mob," Scheidemann is declaring. "We shall beat the Independents to it yet!"

The abdication ultimatum which he has handed to the Chancellor in the name of his party, is threatening to overthrow the Government. The middle-class members of the Cabinet are most indignant and overwhelm him with reproaches.

"Social democracy will have to answer for this to posterity!"

"The Reich is to be saved only if the majority parties hold together."

Scheidemann mops his lobster-red pate with his handkerchief:

"We have done our utmost to divert the attention of the masses; if they are now agitating the question of the Emperor's abdication, that is primarily the fault of the bourgeois newspapers, such as the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, for giving publicity to the matter. It was with the utmost reluctance that we went to the Chancellor. But if the abdication does not come off soon, it won't be long before it is a question of Republic versus Monarchy!"

The ministers without portfolio are discussing the same topic:

"You say the Social Democrats don't want a republic?"

"It is very extraordinary, but they don't seem to wish it in the least!"

"That is exactly what Deputy Landsberg said in the inter-party committee: 'We have no intention of proclaiming a republic; though we are republicans, we are also democrats, and have no wish to see the views of a minority imposed upon the majority.'"

"But they will be driven to it by the extremists among the masses."

"The collapse on the Western Front and the negotiations with Wilson should to have been kept secret."

"Yes – the Generals lost their nerve...."

"If the Social Democrats ignore the masses now, the masses will turn to the Independents – that is what they are afraid of."

"But surely the man in the street is not to dictate policy?"

The group around Scheidemann has become larger.

Scheidemann is declaring in most positive tones: "The Emperor must go, or there will be revolution!"

"But a matter like that can't be settled at such short notice."

"How does Herr Scheidemann propose it shall be done, I should like to know? To induce him to abdicate before tomorrow morning – and over the telephone – the thing is simply impossible!"

Under-Secretary Haussmann takes it almost as a personal affront. In a slightly Swabian accent he says: "I am pained by the whole behaviour of the Social Democrats. It will certainly lose us our majority. At the very moment when Prussia is prepared to accept reform, they must go and upset everything!"

Scheidemann defends his party:

"It was a question of time – things have moved too quickly. If we had not acted now, the movement would have passed beyond our control."

"But one cannot deal like that among educated people! The behaviour of the Social Democratic Party makes it practically impossible for any self-respecting person to collaborate with them." Scheidemann begins to regret, as he has often had to do during the last few days, that Ebert is not in his shoes. He looks at his ministerial colleagues, at the seventy-year-old von Payer who was Vice-Chancellor under Hertling, at the aged Gröber with his long white beard brushing his waistcoat, at the square head of Dr. Solf, looking like an elderly Catholic priest in a wig. What is the use...?

To put an end to the discussion he says:

"No one can tell who may be sitting in these chairs tomorrow. We are satisfied that there will be revolution if the Emperor does not abdicate at once. If he does abdicate, then we believe we can guarantee that events shall still be given a favourable turn. Until today we have remained loyal to our promises. We have even risked our reputation in so doing."

Fresh reports continue to break in upon the meeting:

The authorities at Cologne are treating with the Soldiers' Council.

The Bavarian War Ministry at Munich has been seized.

Some officers enter from the antechamber, click their heels, salute the ministers and ask for an interview:

"We have put ourselves at the disposal of the GOC."

"Companies are being formed with ten to fifteen officers, and the battalion unostentatiously distributed among the houses. The city has been divided into various battle zones."

Now someone arrives from Police Headquarters:

"The Glashof looks like a military camp; there are troops in all the cellars of the Palace, to say nothing of armoured cars in the court-yard."

"And the troops are to be trusted?"

"Absolutely, Your Excellency. The Naumburg Jäger Battalion for example!"

"And the Jüterborg Artillery – loyal to the marrow!"

"The GOC has explained to the leaders that the situation calls for stern measures. Armoured cars have already been sent against the insurgents. The Air Force has been given orders to send out aeroplanes to deal with the sailors coming to Berlin by train. The railroad tracks have been torn up as well."

"The artillery have been called out too."

The ministers concerned thank the young officers for their reassuring report, then resume their places at the long conference table with the rest of the Cabinet.

"The main thing is that we should hold Berlin until reinforcements can arrive from the Front. GHQ has promised the War Minister experienced troops. The 2nd Guards Division is already on the way, and one other besides. An army staff also is coming to take charge of the operations against the mutineers."

The entire Cabinet is now present. Only Erzberger, who left for the Western Front two days ago as leader of the Armistice Commission, is wanting.

The Minister for War opens the session.

He expatiates on the military situation: "I have the situation in Berlin well in hand.. I know there are soldiers with red arm-bands parading the streets in Moabit, and certain elements calling themselves the 'Red Guard' have collected at the Putlitzstrasse Railway Station; sailors too are continually arriving in. Berlin, but they are being arrested and locked up at once."

"I shall send the sailors back to their ships," interrupts Admiral von Mann.

The Minister for War continues to talk of the safety of the capital, but he confines himself to

generalities. He has no intention of disclosing much to a cabinet which in the Chancellor's private circle is disparagingly known as the "Soviet". Nor have the ministers who speak after him anything particular to say. The decisions of moment have clearly all been made elsewhere – at the War Ministry, at the Headquarters of the General Officer Commanding in the Marches, in the Chancellor's own office or, perhaps, in the committee of the Social Democratic Party.

The bourgeois members of the Cabinet feel themselves to be threatened by the arbitrary high-handed action of the Social Democrats.

Dr. Solf proceeds to remind them of the common danger:

"I have received information from abroad of the designs of the Bolsheviks. Germany is now their hope for a world revolution. They intend to strike here in December. The High Admiral, his Excellency von Tirpitz, is one of those on the proscribed list, not to mention his Excellency Herr Scheidemann!"

Scheidemann cannot resist a smile. He thinks of the letters which he has received from time to time threatening him with assassination if he votes for another war loan; or with being destroyed like a cur if he does not so vote, thereby stabbing his country in the back. He is to be shot, murdered, hanged – and all for the most contradictory reasons. "A traitor to the Fatherland", "a traitor to the working class", "an imperialist Social Democrat", "a miserable scoundrel", he has been denounced as all these in the letters. Even the *Kreuzzeitung*, the journal of the Christian Conservatives, called for his head. Scheidemann has grown accustomed to prophecies such as this of Dr. Solf's; his optimism has not suffered. He reads statements of this kind now over his morning coffee and has even gone so far as to make a collection of them.

He knows perfectly well how the police came by their information. Was it not he who suggested dropping the Russian Embassy's dispatch-box on the Silesian Railway Station, whereupon the desired documents were promptly brought to light at Police Headquarters?

As a matter of fact the broadsheets were the work of German Independents and printed in German printing offices. But the authorities did not notice that and the Russian Ambassador was accordingly given his papers. Scheidemann is not so easily to be frightened; he knows all about it.

"But pardon me, my information is absolutely trustworthy. If you like I shall put you in touch with my informant," says Dr. Solf.

"No, I thank your Excellency, I should not learn anything new. I have reliable sources of my own which keep me in touch with what is happening there. But of one thing I can assure you, gentlemen-my party will see to it that Germany is spared Bolshevism."

The discussion drags on endlessly. After two hours it is closed at last.

The Prince's personal advisers foregather in his office to prepare plans for the immediate future.

The Emperor is sure to abdicate; as things are he has no alternative. After the abdication a Constituent Assembly must be called immediately. The existing cabinet is not a practicable instrument; the "Soviet" must be sent about its business. Social Democrats will have to be included in the new government of course, but not Scheidemann, who after all has climbed to the top only by means of his ability as an orator. Let us rather have people like Noske, who have given evidence of some solid virtues. Dr. Simons suggests Ebert as the most suitable Chancellor. Prince Max should not retire altogether – the best thing would be if the Emperor could be prevailed on to nominate the Prince as his successor.

The Social Democrats are also in conference at the same time.

The Party caucus, supplemented by members of the parliamentary committee and delegates from the unions, has assembled in the committee-room at the Reichstag. Scheidemann has reported on the attitude of the Government toward the Social Democratic ultimatum and has informed the meeting of the Chancellor's decision to retire. He is surprised at the calmness with which the news is received – in view of the growing excitement in the country, an almost criminal calmness.

Ebert sits heavily in his chair – to await events, to allow himself to be borne along by them – these are his proved tactics.

Wels, Bauer and the rest have no ideas of their own to oppose Ebert. The patriarchs of the Party – Pfannkuch is seventy-seven, Molkenbuhr almost equally decrepit, and Gehrish can no longer

understand anything – may be written off. The only men who might have been a match for Ebert, are a few deputies who have now gone over to the Independents. But the delegates from the factories are insistent:

“We can’t restrain our colleagues much longer.”

“We shall merely be called obstructionists.”

“And traitors to the working class.”

“If we don’t get busy soon we shall be ignored.”

“Lehmann really must go.”

“Well, who was it sent in the abdication ultimatum?”

“Yes, that has had some effect.”

“True. It is absolutely essential that public opinion be given a turn in favour of the Party. Even so the disappointment among the workers is considerable. But for the moment we can still hold them. We have until tomorrow. Even if they do go out, there is still time.”

“We are prepared for both possibilities.”

Ebert did not want that disclosed – the official from the *Vorwärts* receives a disapproving glance from Ebert as a reward for his unauthorized statement. All the same in the office of the *Vorwärts* there are now lying broadsheets appropriate to either eventuality; two distinct handbills bearing these mutually contradictory exhortations:

“Strike...”

“Stick to your jobs ...”

Ebert is so confident of the effect of the abdication ultimatum and the resultant swing of the workers in favour of the Social Democrats that he is prepared even to retreat a little. He has brought along with him a resolution which reads:

“In view of the Chancellor’s assurance that he yesterday communicated to the Emperor the Party’s ultimatum, the Party, in order not to imperil the armistice negotiations, does not wish the resignation of the Chancellor, neither is it prepared to accept the consequences of the resignation of its own members from the Government until after the armistice shall have been concluded.”

Two days ago Scheidemann had wanted to leave the Government but the Party refused him permission. He now jumps up excitedly from his chair. Wels and Bauer look at him expectantly. Ebert sits motionless and merely rolls his eyes.

Scheidemann sits down again.

No one speaks to the motion, which is accordingly adopted.

The strongest workers’ party in Germany – though it has not yet eliminated from its programme the substitution of socialism for capitalism and though for four years it has taken upon itself the responsibility for the defence of the Fatherland – is unwilling to accept responsibility for the revolution, and so it continues to wait.

The initiative is left to the Independents.

At 8 a.m. they also assembled at their office on the Schiffbauerdamm – Ledebour, Luise Zeitz, Dittmann, Däumig and Laukant, Revolutionaries who at the same time are members of the committee of the Independent Party, were also present.

The Revolutionaries wanted to attack as early as the 4th November, and Ledebour, who with other members of the Party Committee has taken part in the recent meetings of the Revolutionaries, advocated immediate action. But the rest of the Party leaders considered it premature and suggested the 7th instead, but at a later meeting declared the preparations to be still incomplete and persuaded the workers to a further postponement, this time from the 7th to the 11th November.

On the morning of the 8th they had met again as usual. But there was no session. As they entered they observed suspicious persons waiting about in front of the house. Laukant had recognized one of them as a plainclothes man. It was decided therefore to hold the meeting in the Reichstag, where the members imagined they would be safer.

Laukant was first to leave the house. On descending to the street he stared straight ahead without looking around. The cop was still there, leaning against the wall of the embankment.

A quarter of an hour later Laukant reached the Reichstag.

He went to room No. 18, the party room of the Independents. He told those present that the party offices were being watched. They were still speculating as to the reason for it, when Luise Zeitz entered in a state of excitement. Her hand still on the door-knob, she burst out with the latest news:

“Däumig is arrested!”

“We’re for it now, he is only the first.”

“In front of the party offices – I came down with him – we were on our way here,” explained Luise Zeitz.

“They must have got wind of the Revolutionaries’ plans. This comes of the arrest of that engineer- lieutenant – he has blabbed.”

“Do you think he will betray the whole scheme?”

“He was only partly in the know.”

“I warned Barth at the time.”

“They mean to arrest the leaders, that’s obvious.”

“Something must be done, and at once.”

“If only Haase were back!”

“We can’t wait for Haase. We can’t wait any longer at all. The call to action must be given immediately. The 11th is far too late!”

“We must get hold of the Revolutionaries.” “Barth has the addresses, I’ll go and find him.”

While the missing members of the Party Committee were being summoned by telephone to talk over the arrest, Laukant set off to find the President of the Revolutionaries. He was not in the Hackepeter Restaurant on the Chausserstrasse where he usually dined. Laukant continued his search – in workers’ taverns, at Schultz’s in Elizabethstrasse, at the “Musical Fox” on Jostystrasse, at the homes of his various associates.

So Laukant ran around for hours, but without finding Barth.

“This bloody business must stop!” “Who stuck this placard here?”

“Everybody knows the Party bosses have got the wind up.”

At Schwartzkopff’s Munition Factory on Zinnowitzstrasse a party of men leave the torpedo which they are transporting from the shop to the storehouse, and gather around a placard, still wet from the press, which has been posted up on the wall:

THE QUESTION OF THE EMPEROR TO BE DECIDED – SHORT DELAY
Workers! Social Democrats!

Part of our demands of yesterday have been accepted by the Government and the Majority Parties. Like franchise for Prussia and the rest of the States of the Confederation, based on proportional representation, is to be introduced without delay by decree.

The abdication question is still not settled. Our demand for immediate abdication was based upon the assumption that the armistice would be concluded by noon today. This expectation has not been realized, because as a result of unforeseen difficulties the German Delegation has been unable to reach enemy headquarters until this morning. The conclusion of the armistice might be imperilled by our withdrawal from the Government. The Party Committee has decided therefore to postpone action until after the armistice, in order that the bloodshed may first be put a stop to and peace be secured. The workers’ representatives are meeting again on Saturday.

Workers! Social Democrats! The postponement is now a matter of only a few hours. Let your strength and your determination prove equal to this delay.

The Committee of the SPD and the Party Representatives in the Reichstag.

“‘Your strength and your determination!’ – think we will fall for that stuff, do they?”

“‘Short delay!’ – it’s four years they’ve been doing it now.”

“They were a sight quicker off the mark when it was a matter of voting war loans.”

“All this fuss about abdication – did ever you hear such bunk! If the Emperor and the rest of the gang, including the Government and the bosses, aren’t kicked out neck and crop, things will never be different.”

They are all infuriated by the contents of the document.

One man elbows his way to the front:

“I guess we’re not going to let them throw any more dust in our eyes, comrades. Nobody at Schwartzkopff’s is going to be gulled by this sort of thing, if I can help it.” He rips down the placard and throws it away. No one protests – Schwartzkopff’s factory is one of the strongholds of the Independents and Revolutionaries.

And at the General Electric in Voltastrasse, at Siemens, in the power stations, the foundries and machine tool shops, in all the factories of Berlin, workers are discussing the latest social democratic poster. The feeling against the social democratic leaders is not everywhere so unanimous as at Schwartzkopff’s. In many of the factories the representatives of the old Party still contrive to keep their hold over the workmen. But even the social democratic workers are not disposed to compromise on the abdication question. William II, who has been branded with the responsibility for the war, must go immediately.

The workers are still waiting for the call to a general strike.

But the signal is not given. The wheels go on turning, the factories go on producing. And the National Defence called for by Prince Max’s cabinet is threatening to become a reality.

Who is to give the signal?

The Social Democrats will not give it, neither will the Independents – it remains for the small, illegal group of Revolutionaries and their leader Emil Barth, backed by the Spartacists, to sound the tocsin to the Berlin workers.

Emil Barth has been passing through difficult days.

On Sunday Lieutenant Walz had been arrested. On Tuesday, as an immediate result of this, a woman member of the group, informed in many details of the movement, was subjected by the police to severe interrogation.

On Wednesday the Revolutionaries were disturbed in their securest stronghold. Barth, who had been last to leave the interrupted meeting, ran straight into the arms of three lorry-loads of police in the act of disembarking in front of the house. He stood glued to the spot, but luckily recovered his composure in time.

“What’s the joke?” he asked with seeming simplicity.

“You’d better clear out or I’ll put you under arrest!” shouted a police lieutenant as he rushed excitedly into the house.

The same evening Barth went home to get a change of clothes for a companion. He had not visited the house since the arrest of Lieutenant Walz. As he got out of the tram he saw his three-year-old son running towards him, and immediately afterwards his wife coming out from the door of an undertaker’s shop.

Barth understood the significance at once.

When he left home three days ago his eldest son was lying ill with influenza.

Barth accompanied his wife to the hall of the lodging-house.

“He died on Monday night – he is to be put in the coffin at six – you have come just in time....”

Barth looked at his grief-stricken wife and at the child clinging to her skirts. Over her shoulder he caught sight of a boy with rickety legs running across the courtyard. “Though father and mother, brother and sister, are on their deathbed ...” he had said recently in one of his sentimental speeches to the Revolutionaries.

He broke away from his wife:

“No, it can’t be done – I can’t stay. Make haste and fetch my other suit, the brown one – I must clear off again at once.”

“The funeral is on Friday,” his wife persisted – then she vanished with the child into the darkness of the stairway. Before long Barth had vanished again with his suit of clothes.

And today is Friday, the 8th November.

Barth awakened late in a kitchen in East Berlin where he has been hiding during the last few nights. He drank his coffee hastily and then set off with a comrade.

He has an appointment with Däumig and Liebknecht at noon. Now he is sitting in the little beer hall – but neither Däumig nor Liebknecht turn up at the appointed time. Barth waits impatiently for half an hour, then goes to the telephone and calls up the office of the Independent Party.

“Barth here – is Däumig there yet?”

“Däumig has been arrested.”

“Däumig arrested! ...”

“Yes, a couple of hours ago, and Müller and Liebknecht too, so it seems.”

Müller and Liebknecht – Barth can get along without either of them. But Däumig, the military leader of the Revolutionaries – Only the previous evening he had received the military authorities’ new plan of campaign, and Däumig is needed to change the Revolutionaries’ plan immediately.

“Are you there, Comrade Barth?”

“Yes, what is it?”

“Laukant is out looking for you-something very important!”

Barth comes out of the telephone box; his face is paler than usual, and the short-sighted eyes seem even more prominent behind his spectacles.

“Bill, please,” he says aloud.

“Out of here, quick,” he whispers to his companion. Once outside he explains the situation:

“... it’s all the doing of that damned lieutenant! Looks as if he has given the whole game away. Everything is at stake. We can’t waste a minute now. We must get hold of the Revolutionaries this evening, especially the leaders of the Storm Detachments and the couriers.”

They settle which comrades shall be called, and discuss where would be the safest place for the meeting. Barth decides for the “Musical Fox”. Then they separate.

Barth goes back to his hiding place to revise the plan of action himself.

The other rounds up all the available Revolutionaries. Sharp at eight o’clock Barth enters the tavern.

The comrades are already foregathered in a back room. It has not been possible to advise them all, but about forty have come, among them the leaders in all the more important factories of Berlin: machine-tool makers, smiths, fitters – hard-headed and horny-handed – they sit there in silence side by side, the pick of the workers of Berlin. It is doubtless not an accident that, apart from Laukant the turner, no Independent leader has turned up.

It is ten months now since the Revolutionaries first led the Berlin workers in a great political strike – a strike not merely for more bread and higher pay, but for the ending of the war and in protest against the iniquitous peace imposed at Brest-Litovsk. They lost that fight and were scattered to the four winds. But from every sector of the Front to which they had been sent, they found their way back again, and despite the military dictatorship and against the wishes of the trade-union leaders and even of their own party, have kept alive the spirit of revolt. And now they are preparing to lead the Berlin workers in the final struggle.

They all believe it will be the final struggle.

As for Barth, he believes it fanatically. He has staked everything on this one card, prepared everything for this one blow and now is afraid lest tomorrow it will be too late, lest tomorrow all the cards may have slipped from his hand. Too many new people have been initiated into the scheme during the last fortnight; and one is enough to deliver them all to the hangman.

Barth starts speaking as soon as he enters:

“Comrades, the meeting is open. Däumig, Müller and Liebknecht have been arrested. I now ask that full authority to act be given to me. Does anyone wish to speak to this proposal?”

None of the Revolutionaries moves.

“In that case we shall put it to the vote. Those in favour please hold up the hand. “Thank you— Those against?” The motion is carried unanimously.

“I shall begin my dictatorship. We kick off first thing in the morning.

“Further, no one is to go home tonight.

“Again, no one is to go about alone until after six tomorrow morning, but always in twos, so that every man shall be continually under observation. That is not suspicion, it is caution. The meeting is now adjourned until I have written the Call to Action to be distributed in the morning.”

Barth sits down at a side table.

He has brought the text with him already prepared, but even at this time he cannot resist the temptation to show off. He writes, deletes, recasts his text.

The Revolutionaries wait in silence.

Outside in the restaurant a concertina is playing. One of the two musicians accompanies it singing:

*“Let’s follow the swallows,
And build a nest!
Be faithful and true,
And I will love you...”*

The music goes on interminably, always the same soppy melody and the same words. Barth has returned to the table with his text which he now reads to the meeting:

“Workers, Soldiers, Comrades!

“The fateful hour has come! Let us finish the work!

“At this moment, when Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils have seized the power in all the ports, indiscriminate arrests are taking place here in Berlin. Däumig and Liebknecht have been arrested.

“That is the beginning of the military dictatorship – the signal for a useless slaughter.

“We demand not the abdication of one person, we demand a Republic.

“The Socialist Republic, with all that it implies.

“Join the fight for Peace, for Liberty, for Bread!

“Workers, leave the factories.

“Soldiers, leave the barracks.

“Workers and Soldiers, unite.

“Long live the Socialist Republic!

The Committee of the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Council.”

He signs his name to what he has written and hands it to Eckert.

“One signature is not enough, we must have more. We need well-known names. In the absence of the comrades concerned, I shall add: Brühl, Franke, Ledebour, Liebknecht, Neuendorf, Pieck, Wegmann. They would agree in any case – especially if all goes well.”

“And what if it goes ill?”

“Then nothing matters. Now for the next thing. The handbills, must be printed at once. Here, Gustav, the manuscript; get as many printed as possible. Thirty thousand at least, so that we shall have a hundred for each factory.”

Laukant takes the manuscript.

“Thirty thousand? That’s rather a tall order. When must they be ready?”

“They must be at their destinations by half-past four.”

Barth then chooses seven men and sends them to warn Brühl, Franke, Ledebour and the others whose signatures have been set to the manifesto, to keep away from their houses for the night. Then he turns again to the meeting:

“Comrades, we are faced with an unexpected disaster. Do not be alarmed. The flamethrower-lieutenant, of whom I spoke before, has been under arrest since Sunday. He appears to have betrayed the scheme we worked out along with him; yesterday there came into my possession a brand-new plan prepared by the military. So we shall have to change our dispositions accordingly.”

Barth spreads out a map of the city on the table. The positions held by the Government he has

marked green; those factories where the Revolutionaries have a strong following, in red; the remaining factories which the Revolutionaries must win over, he has indicated with red dots.

During the afternoon he had altered the route so that the points occupied by the Government should be avoided. He now gives the leaders of the several storm detachments assigned to each of the eleven columns their appropriate instructions, warning them not to take notes but to carry it all in their heads. He then gives the couriers their orders. All messages are to be handed to the relays posted at the "Old Fritz" memorial in the Friedrichshain, who in turn will carry them to the headquarters at a place to be specified later.

These discussions last for three hours.

In the meantime Laukant, having delivered the manifesto to the printer, has returned. He lingers a while in the restaurant, orders a glass of beer, and takes stock of the visitors. A few belated guests are having a last drink with the bar-tender. The man on the dais has taken his concertina again and at short intervals plays again and again the refrain from the "Czardasfürstin". By the time Laukant goes back into the conference room, Barth is at the end of his instructions:

"...Where the column does run up against a police patrol, you must act quickly. If they are against you, then they will have to die in a good cause, or leave the field to you. Where you come to a barracks you must start fraternizing. A deputation will enter the barracks and treat with the soldiers.. But it must be the whole hog, or nothing. Under no circumstances should you compromise. If the soldiers do come over to us, then the officers must be displaced and for their own safety put under arrest.

"It is impossible to say beforehand whether the fight will be short or long, but whatever happens let the strictest revolutionary discipline be observed. Any single individual may, and should, make himself responsible for his own part, his own sector. But he will not be in a position to know how the fight as a whole is going. For that reason unquestioning obedience must be given to all orders coming from me.

"The following are the possibilities:

"Lightning victory along the whole line.

."Lightning defeat.

"A struggle of several days with ultimate success.

"A struggle of several days with ultimate defeat.

"A long, bitter, uncertain and bloody fight. It is idle to prophesy which it will be. Let us say simply: Victory at any price! Victory or death!"

At half-past twelve the meeting adjourns.

The Revolutionaries dribble out of the tavern. By two and two they stroll off down Prenzlaustrasse to the Alexander Platz, where the long building of the Police Headquarters looms large in the darkness. At the Alexander Platz they go their various ways, some to the North, others to the industrial districts in the East and South-East.

Laukant and Habersaath are passing the Alexander Barracks. They look up at the gloomy façade which is almost wholly without windows. The sentries at the gate are carrying bombs and wearing steel helmets. They come to the Palace Bridge. To the right above the inky waters of the Spree is the Cathedral, and to the left the Imperial Palace stands out against the night sky.

"Two symbols – Church and State!"

"And the Exchange behind there, that makes the third!"

"Tomorrow night."

Laukant, a turner, is a member of the Committee of the Independent Party and associate member of the Revolutionaries. The metal worker Habersaath is head of a group of Spartacists and leader of one of the Revolutionary storm detachments. Laukant comes of an East Prussian peasant family; Habersaath belongs to North Berlin and is consumptive. The former hates the existing social order with the even pertinacity of his kind, the latter with the fanaticism of the doomed.

But the same hatred is in both hearts.

Each lost in his own thoughts, they pass down the “Linden” and cross Friedrichstrasse, which, in spite of the lateness of the hour, is still populous with tipplers returning home, profiteers, prostitutes and night-club touts. Then they turn into the lonely Wilhelmstrasse.

Here and there a light is still burning at an upper window. There are lights too, in a few rooms at the Chancellery. The two men in passing look up at the building where sits the brain of the Empire, the head of the bureaucracy which dominates the Reich, and which they mean to overthrow. They begin to walk more swiftly, they have still an hour before they can collect the handbills from the printing-office.

The Chancellery is in darkness.

Only in the office of the Chief of the Chancellery, in the secretaries' room and in the adjoining private apartments of the Chancellor is there still light. The Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, has at last called up the Imperial Villa Fraineuse.

After weeks of hesitation, sending first one person, then another, he is at last speaking with the Emperor directly, without the interposition of the whole bureaucratic machinery.

“... What I have instructed others to tell Your Majesty, I must now repeat in my capacity as a relative. Your abdication has become essential if civil war in Germany is to be averted; it is necessary to the final act of your mission as Emperor of peace. The blame for any bloodshed would be laid at your door...”

To the Emperor's protest he replies:

“No, the attitude of the troops is insubordinate. At Cologne the power is in the hands of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council. The red flag is flying over the Palace at Brunswick. The republic has been proclaimed in Munich. A workers' and soldiers' council is sitting at Schwerin. Nowhere has the military opposed them.”

Alongside the Emperor is seated his aide-de-camp, von Grünau; beside the Chancellor, his diplomatic secretary, von Prittwitz, whom the Chancellor has summoned to record what he says to the Emperor. Von Prittwitz follows anxiously the rise and fall of the voice and the growing concern of the Prince.

“I have opposed the idea, but the situation is now beyond control. The step must be taken with the utmost rapidity. If the sacrifice is made only after blood has been shed, it will have no useful effect ... If the Emperor does take this step, then, with the help of the Social Democrats, it will still be possible to control the situation. Otherwise the republic is certain. If one could count on the troops, things might be different...”

The Emperor blames the Social Democrats. But the Prince defends them:

“No, the idea did not originate with the Social Democrats. They had to adopt it to retain the leadership. This is the last possible moment. If the abdication is not made today I can carry on no longer. Nor are the German Princes ready to side with the Emperor.”

The Prince is constantly interrupted. The Emperor grows more indignant and emphatic. The Social Democrats, the Government, even the Princes – everyone is forsaking him!

The Prince, in evident distress, replies:

“I am told it has been suggested that I have been intriguing against you – that is a lie. If I had not shielded you, the question would have become acute a week ago. I am giving my advice now as a German prince and as a relative. It is essential that the sacrifice be made voluntarily, if your good name is to be preserved before history.”

But the Emperor will have none of it.

To his aide-de-camp he says:

“How dare the Prince suggest such a thing!”

To the Prince he replies in a brusque tone:

“I will not surrender. At the head of my army I shall restore order in this country. The necessary commands have already been given.”

Von Prittwitz sees the Prince's face fall, and hears him say very slowly:

“I must ask your Majesty to relieve me of my office at once; and to appoint a new Chancellor.”

“No,” the Emperor shouts back, “I will have none of that! You issued the appeal for an armistice – you must face the consequences!”

After the conversation the Prince sits down wearily. The Emperor is very, very unjust to me, says he; he sends for Dr. Solf and Wahnschaffe, the Chief of the Chancellery. Once more they formulate under five heads the Government’s reasons for requiring the abdication and wire the text to Spa. After the dispatch has been sent off, Wahnschaffe calls up the Emperor’s villa and asks Baron von Grünau to acquaint His Majesty at once with its contents.

Von Grünau refuses:

“It is useless to disturb the Emperor, he has just gone to rest. A matter of such importance is not to be settled over the telephone nor by any intermediary. Perhaps the Chancellor could send the Vice-Chancellor and the Minister for Justice – some accredited authority will be needed at Spa if it comes to a formal abdication.”

That is the last conversation which the Chief of the Chancellery has this night. Only a few officers remain in the aide-de-camps’ room to take messages and telephone calls. From every part of the Empire reports arrive telling of the spread of the revolutionary movement. Documents gradually pile up on the table, any one of which eight days ago would have been considered grave enough to warrant waking the Chancellor.

But the last few days have set their own pace.

During the early hours of the morning conversations are renewed with Spa. GHQ has not yet been able to make up its mind to propose abdication to the Emperor, nor has the Imperial Villa again broached to the question.

It is not yet seven o’clock.

The telephone bell rings again:

“Scheidemann here – has the Emperor abdicated?”

“Not yet, Your Excellency, but we are expecting word of his resignation any minute now.”

“I shall wait one hour more; if he has not gone by then, I go.”

The adjutant puts down the receiver:

“So – Scheidemann or his Majesty – that is the question!”

The day’s business has begun. The telephone rings unceasingly, the various government departments and offices throughout the city vie with each other in imparting and demanding urgent information. The members of the Cabinet, due to meet at ten, turn up hours beforehand. In the aide-de-camps’ room, the rooms of the Chancellery, in Dr. Solf’s office, there is a perpetual coming and going.

During the early hours of the morning the Chancellor has an interview with Ebert – it is not the first interview of a strictly private nature which he has had with the leader of the Social Democratic Party; and to obtain which he has had to give Ebert assurance of absolute secrecy. As on previous occasions he admits him to the park through a gate at the end of the garden.

Ebert tells the Prince that he has done everything to restrain his party – he has managed to put on the brakes by using the argument that it would be a far greater obstacle to peace if the Party left the Government, than if the Emperor failed to abdicate. And day after day he has held back the Party press until it is now quite impossible any longer.

As they walk to and fro in the garden at the back of the house they discuss probable future developments – the possibility of Ebert becoming Chancellor, the question of the regency and the likelihood of its becoming necessary to call a Constituent Assembly.

The Prince’s impression of Ebert is one of absolute loyalty. But he sees too that Ebert has reached his limit, and can make no further concessions.

On returning to his room the Prince summons the aide-de-camp and inquires for news from Spa.

“Still no decision, Your Highness.”

“Any fresh developments in Berlin?”

“The closing of the railways has been put through successfully, and the whole of the inner city between the Spree and the Canal has been encircled by the police and military.”

The Prince next receives the Minister for War.

“We are, as it were, in a beleaguered fortress. Apart from the three Jäger battalions there are no reliable troops in Berlin.”

“Then the promised troops from the Front have not come?”

“The 2nd Guards Division has been put off at Herbesthal. They are to open the Rhine bridges and recapture Cologne. The thing has been done now – there was nothing left for me to do but to assent. However, I have protested to GHQ that it is sheer madness to leave Berlin without military protection.”

“And the Jäger Battalions, are they trustworthy?”

“All three may be relied on absolutely.”

“Where are they stationed?”

“One at the Palace, one in the Alexander Barracks, and a third at the bridges.”

The aide-de-camp on duty appears in the doorway:

“An important message, Your Highness.”

“What is it, please?”

“The courier with the armistice conditions has come to grief.”

“What, not Erzberger?”

“No, a courier. It is not known exactly how. At GHQ it is thought that he must have lost his way among the shell-holes.”

This misfortune is only the first. Shortly afterwards Wahnschaffe comes in with a paper which he sets on the table before the Chancellor. It is a rather undersized, and badly printed handbill.

“A manifesto by the Independents – a messenger from the Social Democrats has just brought it. It was distributed this morning through the factories.”

The Chancellor takes the sheet in his hand.

It is the text drawn up by Barth.

“So – the Independents?”

He thinks of Ebert and his warnings. It was only yesterday that Ebert had said: “If the Emperor does not abdicate, the socialist revolution is certain. Not that I want it, mark you – I hate it like sin!”

The Social Democrats are the Prince’s last hope.

“Well, so much for the Independents – but if the Social Democrats give the counter order, what then?”

“Scheidemann has rung up several times already this morning. Only ten minutes ago he declared that if the decision still had not come, he really didn’t know how they were going to keep the people from revolution.”

“Transmit the text of this broadsheet to Spa, and tell them, too, what His Excellency Herr Scheidemann has said.”

The Prince walks despondently up and down the room. He had hoped to save the monarchy with the Emperor at its head; if not that then the principle of monarchy at least. Now there is nothing for it but to call a Constituent Assembly. Another hour and even that may be impossible also. He summons Dr. Solf from the Cabinet meeting to go over with him the proclamation which has been prepared for the abdication.

“If the masses once get busy and the Emperor is turned out by the mob, then comes Bolshevism”, groans the Prince.

No one can deny it. Unless the Emperor abdicates in time and the help of the Social Democrats is thereby secured, the situation is hopeless.

Dr. Solf enters and the other gentlemen retire.

The telephone rings again in the aide-de-camps’ room.

“Scheidemann here – has the abdication come yet?”

“No, still no decision... midday perhaps.”

“I do not need so long to decide. Have the goodness to inform the Chancellor that I have resigned. You shall have it in writing within a quarter of an hour.”

“But, Your Excellency, one should not be over hasty.”

“Maybe, neither should one hesitate until it is too late.”

The aide-de-camp bursts into the Chancellor's room.

"Your Highness, his Excellency Herr Scheidemann..."

"Scheidemann again! what is it now?"

"The Secretary of State, Herr Scheidemann, has resigned, his resignation in writing is on the way!"

The Prince had not expected this. He was still in hopes that Ebert's influence would avail to prevent the Social Democrats from leaving the Government. Scheidemann's resignation means the resignation of his party and therewith the Cabinet falls.

"Inform the Cabinet at once. Call up GHQ, the Quartermaster-General, the Emperor's villa, too – Schulenburg, Grünau, Plessen, any one you can get hold of. The abdication must come. It is a matter of minutes!"

The meeting of the Cabinet is broken off.

The ministers scatter through the various rooms of the Chancellery. The Chancellor's personal advisers get into touch with Spa. Each one of them is holding a different line.

"Wahnschaffe here."

"Haefen here."

"Self here."

"GHQ – von Hintze speaking."

"Villa Fraineuse – Schulenburg speaking."

"Yes, resigned, Scheidemann and Bauer, both the social democratic Ministers. No, we have tried everything; everything has failed. Yes, and the majority of the other members of the Cabinet have declared for the abdication – everything hangs on the Emperor's decision. If the Chancellor resigns then the whole Cabinet goes – No, it couldn't be done. It would be impossible to form another for lack of a majority in the Reichstag."

"It can't be put off, Your Excellency."

"No, not another minute."

Admiral von Hintze at GHQ tries to calm the Chief of the Chancellery: "The Supreme Command has decided to inform his Majesty at once that in the event of civil war the armed forces would not stand behind the Emperor, and further, that on account of the difficulty of feeding it, the army would not be in a position to conduct a civil war."

"In that case there is nothing for it but abdication."

Wahnschaffe waits feverishly for the answer.

After a further delay Hintze replies:

"The Generals are just going to the Emperor."

Wahnschaffe puts down the receiver, he loses no more time.

"Connect me with the Reichstag, Room 15, Herr Ebert, urgently please—"

"Wahnschaffe."

"Ebert."

"About the demonstration. Can't you do something – please! We have had news from GHQ The abdication is certain..."

"Too late, Your Excellency, the ball is rolling. One factory is out already..."

"But surely the people can still be brought to reason!"

"We shall see what can be done," replies Ebert.

The strike of 2,000 workers at Schwartzkopff's works in Zinnowitzstrasse has been reported to Deputy Ebert. But the 3,000 men of the sister factory in Scheringstrasse have come out too.

Laukant is at the head of the first column.

The Revolutionaries, Eckert, Urich, Thost, and Habersaath with his group of Spartacists, are leading the second column.

In Barth's plan the staffs of both the Schwarzkopf factories are counted as one column, to join forces outside the AEG, the General Electric in Ackerstrasse, and then to demonstrate in front of the Maikäfer Barracks. At eleven points throughout the city the Revolutionaries assemble the staffs of

the various factories, organize them into columns and begin the march on the seat of government in the centre of Berlin.

The first part of the programme goes according to plan.

The 2,000 Schwarzkopf workers file past the Stettin Railway Station. In Schlegelstrasse they are joined by 600 more. In Gartenstrasse they bring out the workers at "Keiling and Thomas".

Then they march to the AEG in Ackerstrasse.

The porter sees the crowd approaching. He unhooks the heavy iron gates and bangs them to; but is unable to shoot the bolt – the doors swing back under pressure of the oncoming mob. The storm troops enter the building, dash across the courtyards, up the stairs, and shout through the workrooms: "Down tools! Knock off! Into the street! Join the procession!"

For days the workers have been awaiting this signal.

They switch off the power and stop work. Where this is not done quickly enough the Revolutionaries stop the machinery themselves. Corridors and stairways are crammed with people, gradually they begin to stream out through the factory gates. Ever larger swells the flood.

Another 3,000 are out.

But the workers from Schwartzkopff's in Scheringstrasse, who, according to the plan were to bring out the staff of the great factory in Voltastrasse and then to join the rest at Ackerstrasse, have not arrived.

The leaders confer hastily.

"We can't wait."

"We shall have to go and see what's wrong."

"Right! to Voltastrasse!"

The new slogan passes round:

"To the AEG, Voltastrasse!"

The procession now numbers 5,000 men. At the head and on either flank go the armed storm-troops-two hundred revolvers and a few dozen hand-grenades. A marching song is started, but it dies, still-born. With sombre, almost troubled faces, the files straggle along one behind another. Occasional shouts serve only to emphasize the silence which broods over the column.

"The limpet!" shouts someone, shaking his fist.

William II, sticking to the throne, he means.

"Down!" shout a score of voices.

"Down with ration-cards!"

"Down with Scheidemann!"

"Down, down..."

The AEG in Voltastrasse, a long brick building covered with grime and dust, with false windows, is besieged by an immense seething mob. Ever since early morning the workers from Scheringstrasse have been struggling to win over the six thousand hands of this factory. Urich and Thost with their following, Habersaath and his Spartacists, have combed the various departments again and again.

Part of the staff has come out, but the majority are still within. In a few of the rooms the machines have stopped, but in the rest work still goes on. Most obstinate in their refusal to down tools and join the procession are the smiths.

"They don't want to – they say it's no good to them."

"Threatened to crack us with a hammer!"

"There's one fellow in particular..."

"A stocky, grey-headed chap."

"The representative of the Social Democrats."

Habersaath approaches Laukant who has just arrived: "We can't afford to wait any longer – what are our guns for, anyway? Come, Gustav, see if you can do anything."

While a section of the Revolutionaries from Ackerstrasse are combing the rooms once again, exhorting the hesitant, Laukant goes with the rest to the smithy.

The smiths have stopped work and are standing about in the glow of the smouldering fires

arguing the toss for and against joining the demonstration-burly, powerful figures, most of them have been recalled from the Front and have therefore more to lose than others unfit for the trenches.

They are doubtful of the success of the rising. "Broken heads, that's all we'd get!"

"And you can get that right here, if you want it," says Lange, the grey-haired Social Democrat, with an angry glance toward the door.

"SPD, USP, and now Spartacus! – Pity the workers can't stick together, is what I say."

"Yes, why couldn't you stay in the Party?"

The crowd outside begin to jeer.

"What, with Minister Scheidemann!"

"And with Ebert, who even now hasn't had enough!" "If we left it to them, the war would never end!" "You come in here and I'll brain you with this hammer!" repeats Lange.

But no – no need of a hammer for the likes of this chap – he'll just take him by the scruff of the neck and chuck him out into the yard!

Habersaath faces him.

"A silly old hen – that's what you are!"

"Hear, hear," exclaims one of the assistants.

"An old hen, I said, but you're worse than that – you're a traitor to your fellow workers."

A traitor to his fellow workers! Wilhelm Lange, member of the Party for over twenty-two years, factory representative, secretary to the local branch, treasurer of the Association for the Promotion of Free Thought and Cremation; vice-president of the "Full Purse" Slate Club; member of the sub-committee of the Allotment Society, "Concord III" – Lange, a traitor to his fellow workers!

And that from this little upstart! Lange braces himself. Then he sails in. With a quick movement he seizes Habersaath by the collar and spins him round. But four or five others interfere and separate them.

"He started it!" growls one of the Revolutionaries.

"Now, mates, don't let's have any scrapping."

"That's not what we came for. – Pack up and come with us, lads."

"We can't let the war go on forever. Remember the chaps at the Front – think of those who have just been called up – it will be your turn next..."

Laukant, big and clumsy, expressing himself only with difficulty, has hit on the right line.

The smiths weaken visibly.

"Nothing happens of itself."

"He's right, you know, we might easily get nabbed again."

"Let's put a stop to it, once and for all."

"Come on, Bill," says one to Lange who has been thrust into the background.

"You let me at him – I'll knock his bloody head off!"

"Come on, man, the AEG in Ackerstrasse has joined them."

"You do as you like, I'm going home."

Lange goes to the dressing-room. The others begin to soap their hands and arms and get ready to leave.

The fall of the smithy is the signal for the whole factory.

From every department the workmen and factory girls are pouring into the street. Not all join the demonstration – a good many go home – but of the 20,000 who have struck at least half remain. Ten thousand men parade past the rows of tenements in North Berlin. They are not yet the victorious army of the Revolution – a long, grey river drags along Ackerstrasse. In the busy Invalidenstrasse it keeps strictly to one side of the road, careful not to disturb the normal movement of traffic. Men on leave from the Front join the procession. Red flags appear. Women and children march in front with placards appealing to the soldiers:

"Do not shoot, brothers!"

"We want peace."

And in South Berlin the workers from the Daimler and Stock factories are marching through the Tempelhof. In the East the aerodromes at Adlershof and Johannisthal, connected by railroad, have

become immense camps for the revolutionary army. Fresh contingents from the surrounding industrial districts are forever arriving there to be organized and set in motion by the Revolutionaries.

In the North West the workers in the great Siemens Combine have downed tools and are now standing, a seething black mass, in the factory yard. From the roof of a shed the one-armed Revolutionary, Glöbig, is delivering a speech, proclaiming the last day of the Empire and of capitalism.

A party of demonstrators led by Primelsack, who failed to appear at change of shift today, has invaded the power station; but the firemen refuse to extinguish the fires – even the Independents are against it. They are in sympathy with the strike, of course – but a power station is not the same thing as a factory. Electricity, they explain, is a matter of life and death. Primelsack is running from one furnace to the next. He blackguards his colleagues as funks, blockheads, obstructionists, cowards, traitors – but it is no use, he only succeeds in winning a few to his side.

The majority persist in their refusal.

While Primelsack is getting more and more angry, explaining that it is precisely the key industries that count, and that it is here, if anywhere, that the thing is to be strangled, the humming of the generators in the engine-room suddenly stops.

Opening the door to the engine-room the firemen hardly know the place again – it looks like a vast wash-house. Through door and windows pour dense clouds of steam and out of the midst of this white fog appears Sült, the engineer, shouting: “We can’t wait on the leaders any longer, mates.” Wilhelm Sült has switched off the turbogenerators, opened the valve of the main steam pipe and loosed all the pent-up energy to waste itself in the upper air.

And thereby he has given a signal to the whole of East Berlin. The entire complex supplied from Rummelsburg is now without current. The machines in all the factories are suddenly still. The trams stand motionless in their tracks, obstacles to traffic and symbols of revolt.

Primelsack shakes Stilt by the hand. “Wilhelm ...” is all he can say.

“I’m only sorry we don’t supply the whole of Berlin. Now for the power station at Schiffbauerdamm, and then to Moabit,” answers Sült.

The column in the North has reached Chausseestrasse.

The crowd is marching on the Maikäfer Barracks. Pressed against the houses opposite they take up their position along the whole extent of the building. They look up at the windows of the men’s quarters on the other side of the street.

The gates are shut, the barracks’ windows secured with chains. It is not clear whether the chains have been put there against the demonstrators or to prevent the soldiers from leaving the barracks.

Then the muzzles of rifles are observed at cellar windows and at the loop-holes in the gate. And on the platform above machine-guns have been mounted.

The soldiers at the windows are wearing steel helmets.

The demonstrators wave.

Some call to the soldiers:

“Comrades! ...”

“Don’t shoot!”

“We want peace!”

“We want to put an end to the war!”

Whenever a soldier raises his hand to wave back, hundreds of arms are lifted in the crowd and cheer follows on cheer.

A small group bearing placards detaches itself from the crowd, crosses the street and advances toward the outer gate. On the platform above crouches the machine-gun crew. Gunner No. 1 holds the grips more firmly, Gunner No. 2 bends over the loading-belt, carries it to the breech. Gunners 1, 2 and 3 are ready to fire, exactly as the drill book prescribes. They look out upon the people opposite, who have sensed this hardly perceptible movement and are shrinking away. But they can only huddle closer together. The houses are behind them and the doorways filled to overflowing.

The machine-gun can fire four hundred rounds a minute.

And against the walls opposite every shot must be a ricochet.

The order to open fire has not come yet, but the soldiers already hear the terrible command in their ears. The man with the cartridge-belt thinks again of the Front, of the advancing enemy whom he has mown down with his machine-gun; he tries to remember some comparable situation – but never has he seen a target of such helplessness. He looks at the wall of soft bodies for whom there is no escape. The muzzle of the gun is aimed into the midst of the crowd – women who yesterday were still making bullets, men who yesterday were still turning shells, soldiers in field grey who like himself have been at the Front – men, women, who live, eat, suffer even as he...

No. 2 is beginning to think.

He has sworn fealty to the colours, he is wearing the Emperor's uniform – that Emperor who once said:

"Your barracks are a fortress guarding the Palace, which it is your duty to defend. Day or night you may be called upon as a bodyguard to shed your blood, to lay down your life, if need be, in defence of your King. And if it ever happened again, as in 1848, that the people of Berlin grew rebellious against their Sovereign, I am confident that you would drive every rebel back to his kennel."

When a man begins to think, he ceases to be a soldier...

Gunner No. 2 reaches toward the gun, makes a few manipulations, mechanical, practised. He disengages the cartridge-belt from the breech of the gun, holds it a moment undecided in his hand – then, yielding to a sudden impulse, flings it down into the street below at the feet of the women.

The belt bursts and the cartridges roll over the cobble-stones.

The rest of the crew does not realize what has happened.

The soldier himself is surprised at his action. The demonstrators remain rigid, waiting.

Then a woman shrieks – yelps like an animal. It runs through the crowd – a yell of relief passes down the whole long line. Then they begin to move, across the street toward the barracks.

The clear space in front of the barracks is there no more.

Ladders are brought from the neighbouring houses.

No one knows how they have come there so quickly – it was not planned, no one had thought of it before. The ladders are placed against the windows of the soldiers' quarters. Ten thousand men are moving, ten thousand pairs of hands suddenly have something to do.

Windows are broken.

Chains are loosed.

Weapons are passed out and received by those below. Soldiers climb from the windows and jump down into the street.

"Comrades!"

"Brothers..."

Suddenly a sound of firing. The crowd is being fired on from the northern gate! Light blue puffs of smoke drift upwards in front of the shut door. The muzzle of a rifle is thrust through the loop-hole.

The group with the placards scatters.

Others spring forward. Stones are hurled at the door. A Revolutionary forces his pistol through the loop-hole alongside the rifle-barrel, presses the trigger, six times one after another, until all the chambers are empty.

The rifle drops back. In less than a minute the door is opened from within by the soldiers.

The soldiers stammer explanations:

"A naval officer."

"We refused to shoot."

"So he fired himself..."

"Where is he?"

"He was wounded."

"He made off across the square."

Some of the demonstrators have also been wounded.

They are carried into a room in the barracks and while some go to find a doctor, others examine the injuries and try to render first aid.

There is one lying motionless.

"He's done for – there's no helping him."

"Through the heart – he didn't feel much, anyway."

The Revolutionaries recognize him-it is the metal worker, Erich Habersaath.

The crowd is now streaming into the barracks and fraternizing with the soldiers. The machine-gun crews bring out their guns. One lorry draws up at the door, then a second. Machine-guns, ammunition, revolvers are commandeered by the Revolutionaries.

The soldiers elect a council. The nominees are adopted without further discussion, and together with the Revolutionaries from the Schwartzkopff factories form the Workers' and Soldiers' Council for the district.

The air is thick with new proposals:

"To Moabit!"

"To the gaol!"

"Let out the prisoners!"

A bugle sounds: For officers!

The summons, given on Laukant's suggestion, is obeyed automatically. The officers assemble in the usual place, the conference room at the club-house.

When Laukant enters they are already surrounded by a swarm of workers who are arguing with them about handing over their weapons.

"...we have borne them honourably!"

"I have fought for his Majesty with this sword."

"Only the Emperor can release us from our oath."

"Ach, that's all poppycock. We don't want any more military. Go home and see if you can't find a better job."

Laukant pushes his way to the front: "Where is the naval officer?"

At first no one answers, then the captain replies:

"The lieutenant is not in the barracks."

"Where is he? He must be found."

A soldier answers the question:

"He climbed over the wall at the back."

"Hand over your arms and stay in this room until I get further instructions from the Reichstag," says Laukant in a tone of finality. The officers have no alternative but to give up their arms to the workers and retire into a neighbouring room. And the Workers' and Soldiers' Council posts sentries outside the door.

The procession forms again on the barracks square.

The Workers' and Soldiers' Council, consisting of five workers and five soldiers, now takes charge. The gate of the barracks is flung wide open, and amid the music of the regimental band the demonstration headed by lorries armed with machine-guns, leaves the square for the Lehrter Railway Station and Moabit Gaol.

Laukant goes to the Reichstag to get instructions from the Committee of the Independent Party.

At the same hour the Social Democrat, Otto Wels, had turned up at the Alexander Barracks. Earlier in the morning a deputation had been sent to the *Vorwärts* Office by the Naumburg Jäger Battalion to get some leader of the Social Democratic Party to explain to the Battalion the political situation. Wels came back with the deputation and is now perched on top of an ambulance van in the barracks square.

He has told them of the Government's efforts to secure peace, of President Wilson's demands, of the necessity of Wilhelm II's abdication.

The Emperor must abdicate; only so can the road to peace be opened. The Emperor's hesitation is costing every day the lives of thousands of brave soldiers...

Wels thinks of Ebert, who only yesterday was still endeavouring to stem the tide; who last night

prevailed upon Scheidemann to urge the Social Democrats in the factories still to wait; who even today was still urging the utmost possible restraint. It flashes through his mind that he is perhaps pursuing a dangerous course – he is entirely alone, and perched up here in this exposed position he must offer an easy target.

Wels' eye runs along the ranks of soldiers drawn up in unimpeachable military array; he sees the officers standing on one side, waiting, it would not surprise him in the least, suddenly to hear the sharp word of command: "Enough! Sergeant-major, arrest that man...."

But he cannot stop now. ..

The situation calls for a clear, unambiguous statement.

Wels was once an upholsterer's journeyman, and what is more, a recruit once in a Prussian barracks. He knows the smell in the passages and rooms, knows the barracks square during the drill hour, knows the countless curses and humiliations which men have suffered here.

Here generation after generation has been trodden into the mire. Each year's new levy, entering at the barracks gate, has been drilled here until the last remnant of self-respect was threshed out of them and they could safely be passed out, obedient soldiers, into the Reserve. It was on these barracks squares that the docile submissive population was fashioned into cannon-fodder for the World War.

Otto Wels, the upholsterer, suffered under the system; Wels, the agitator, fought against the system; Wels, the deputy, supported the system. In 1914 the Social Democrats had swung into line with the general war policy like a well-trained Prussian regiment. There had been many things over which Wels had shaken his head, the necessity of which his more academically trained colleagues experienced some difficulty in making clear to him. Practical politics implies responsibility, and if one is to be trusted with responsibility for the general national interest, there is many a long-cherished ideal that must be surrendered.

Wels had realized that.

But this one hour at least belongs to him.

He speaks again as he used to speak; he still believes that it is not for a handful of politicians, but for the people in revolt to make the final decision. He tells of the mutiny of the sailors, of the workers in Hamburg, Hanover, Munich, who have already joined the revolution... And none of the soldiers doubts but that this "Revolution" and Social Democracy are one and the same thing. In swift sentences Wels presses to a conclusion:

"...under no circumstances then can the present system continue. The revolution is not to be betrayed. It is our duty at all costs to prevent civil war. It does not matter to me to which party you belong if you are resolved to see that in the future the people shall decide its own destiny, then put yourselves at the disposal of the Social Democratic Party!

"Show your consent by giving three cheers for Peace!"

The soldiers, accustomed to respond only to the word of command, still stand rigidly at attention. But others, strangers to the barracks, who have been standing at the gate during the speech, now advance across the square and in scattered groups swarm among the ranks. "Peace!" shouts Wels again;

"Peace!" comes back the cry.

"Three cheers for Government by the People!"

"Hurrah!" join in the Jäger.

Wels has won. The soldiers break ranks, surge around the waggon and lift Wels down. The officers, who have listened to it all in silence, retire. A committee of the soldiers announces that the Battalion places itself at the disposal of the Social Democratic Party.

But Wels is no mere popular orator, he is an organizer too. And before long he is marching from the Alexander Barracks at the head of a squad of sixty Jäger to the office of the *Vorwärts* in Lindenstrasse, which he places under the protection of a guard of sixty men and a sergeant-major.

"This senseless waiting!" groans the Chancellor.

With him are Dr Simons, Wahnschaffe and von Prittwitz.

“Yet it must come, sooner or later. If we could have announced the abdication yesterday, we might have saved the monarchy.”

“I have been speaking with Herr von Hintze.”

“And Count Schulenburg called up a little while ago.”

“General Groener was at the phone too.”

“They all say the same thing. The decision is impending, the Emperor is going, definitely. Only we must be patient a little longer.”

“We’ve been hearing that for the last three days!”

The Chancellor sits bowed over his desk. His face is haggard from his recent illness and the excitements of the last few days.

“Privy Councillor von Schlieben,” announces the messenger.

Von Schlieben of the Ministry for the Interior has come with a report of great crowds of workers advancing from the North on the centre of the city. “Everything now depends on whether the police and the troops will stand their ground.”

“An extremely serious situation. According to the police report, the insurgents have attacked the Maikäfer Barracks. There has been bloodshed already.”

“Has that news been sent on to Spa?”

“I am just waiting to get through, Your Highness.”

Walinschaffe gets up and goes out with von Prittwitz and von Schlieben to the anteroom. Dr. Simons remains with the Chancellor.

“Your suggestion of yesterday was right, Doctor Ebert is the only possible Chancellor, as things are. But he must be appointed by the Emperor before he abdicates – then there may still be some slight hope of saving the monarchy.”

“We must contrive somehow to divert the revolution into the legal channels of an election campaign.”

“But we need the abdication for that.”

“It should be here any minute now. The news from Spa is more definite.”

The Chancellor takes up the Proclamation which he has already revised with Dr. Solf. The text of the document announcing the abdication of the Emperor and the renunciation of the throne by the Crown Prince, appointing Deputy Ebert to the Chancellorship and calling for the election of a Constituent Assembly, has in the meantime been submitted to the Minister for Justice for legal approval. The Prince goes through the document once again with Dr. Simons, sentence by sentence, and makes a few verbal alterations.

The telephone next door is working unceasingly.

Telegraphic reports coming in from various parts of the Reich are docketed and sent on to the appropriate authority.

Telephonic communications on the other hand, whether from Police Headquarters, the War Ministry or the GOC, which serve to give some idea of how things are going in Berlin, are immediately circulated through the whole building and then taken round the various ministries in Wilhelmstrasse.

The workers are marching – not merely in the North but in every district. They are moving in accordance with a definite plan, from the outskirts to the centre of the city. But there stands the girdle of loyal troops. The bridges across the Spree, the passages over the Landwehr Canal, are held by strong detachments of police and military, and behind them, secure as on an island, lies the Inner City with the governmental quarter.

The gentlemen at the Chancellery are still hopeful. The Jäger battalion, the cavalry patrols, the armoured cars will take the shock and hold the crowd until the abdication arrives – until the Prince is in a position to present the people with Deputy Ebert as his successor in the Chancellorship. Then on the strength of these concessions the Social Democrats will be able to send the people home.

The Minister for War is still confident. The case of the Maikäfer is not typical. The Maikäfer never were considered trustworthy.

But a field-grey car dashes down Leipzigerstrasse and pulls up abruptly outside the War Ministry. A tall lieutenant jumps out. Without ceremony he dashes up the steps, and on urgent business is admitted at once to the War Minister. He has come direct from the Alexander Barracks and the Palace where he had gone to get the help of the armoured cars.

He clicks his heels:

“Jäger Battalion No. 4, Alexander Barracks, has gone over to the rebels. The armoured cars at the Palace have refused to go against them.”

Two stunning blows. The Minister for War stands bolt upright behind his desk; his face is blank with astonishment, even the deep furrow between his brows has disappeared. He stares at the bringer of the news – First-Lieutenant von Etzdorf, no doubt about it!

The Minister goes to the telephone:

“The Chancellery! His Highness, the Chancellor, personally!” he demands.

The Naumburg Jäger Battalion, the armoured cars at the Palace. The dreadful news runs through Wilhelmstrasse like a prairie fire. The meeting of the War Council at the Chancellery is interrupted a second time. The ministers and civil servants come hurrying across from their various offices. Eye-witnesses come in from the street. All have some specially important communication to make, or think themselves able to give some particularly valuable advice.

The Chancellor’s anteroom is choc-a-bloc with people. Everybody talking at once – this one was at the Franzer Barracks; that one at the Palace; others have heard definitely from third persons. Lieutenant Colin Ross, an officer of the Press Section of the Foreign Office, has actually seen the procession in Claussestrasse. He was passing the Maikäfer Barracks when the soldiers and workers were fraternizing.

He is also admitted. He describes to the gentlemen the scenes he has witnessed.

“The thing is irresistible. Their example will carry the whole garrison.”

“The Franzer are not to be trusted either. The O.C. has just told me he cannot answer for the regiment,” announces an aide-de-camp.

With the aide-de-camp has come another officer from the GOC who reports:

“The park has already been overrun by the crowd, but the police have cleared the square again in front of the Palace. Machine-guns are again covering the bridges and approaches.”

Colin Ross, who, after what he had seen at the Maikäfer Barracks, had hurried to the Reichstag and appealed to various of the party leaders, turns again to the Chancellor:

“Deputy David asked me to tell your Highness that the Social Democrats are doing their utmost to keep the crowd quiet. He said, moreover, that it would be a grave mistake to use force; it would only aggravate the situation.”

All the Chancellor knows is that it is now not a question of hours, but of minutes.

Outside in the corridor Wahnschaffe, the Chief of the Chancellery, barges into Dr. Simons.

“At last, Your Excellency! Spa has just rung through – the Emperor has agreed to abdicate! It only remains to be formulated.”

The next moment he is telling the good news to the Chancellor:

“The thing is actually settled at last. They are just drawing it up. The Emperor has decided to abdicate. We shall have the formal statement in half an hour!”

Half an hour...

The Chancellor breathes again. “We shall beat the Reds to it yet.” The others also clutch at this last, desperate hope.

Half an hour – twenty minutes now – then the knots will begin to unravel.

Business is resumed again in the Chancellery. Only in the Chancellor’s own room is the customary aim not immediately restored. Some gentlemen are standing talking in the doorway. In the middle of the room others are disputing with Dr. Solf and Count Bernstorff about the Regency. Ross, the pressman, is still there.

The Chancellor is seated alone at his table; he might as well be talking to himself: “That idea of David’s – he is right. I think so, too – any attempt to use force at the hands of disaffected troops could only lead to victory for the Reds. Ask the Minister for War to come to me at once to settle

what orders are to be given the troops as to the use of weapons.”

After a pause he adds: “Will someone see to that, please!”

Their Excellencies continue their talk. No one seems in a hurry to undertake the task. Finally Lieutenant Ross leaves the room. He goes to the telephone and calls up the War Minister:

“The Chancellor wants an order to be issued forbidding the troops to use firearms. There must be no shooting!”

The Secretaries of State, Dr. Solf and Count Bernstorff, are left with the Chancellor. They are proposing to him that he should himself undertake the Regency. The Prince reminds them of the suspicion with which he is regarded by the Emperor and his advisers, and refuses.

“It would provide the necessary transition,” urges Count Bernstorff.

“Anyway, it couldn’t be done without the consent of the other Princes of the Reich.”

“Let us ask the ambassadors.”

The Prince is getting restive again. The half hour has elapsed and still nothing has been heard from the Villa Fraineuse. The news from Berlin continues to grow more serious. Formerly it was the Maikäfer, the 4th Jäger, the 2nd Company of the Alexander, the armoured cars at the Palace, the Franzer—now it is the troops in the barracks at Kupfergraben.

The Chancellor wanders aimlessly up and down.

Fifty minutes.

The Social Democrats are negotiating with the soldiers in the Dragoon Barracks. The Jüterborg Artillery have mutinied. The Northern Reserve has gone over. Sixty minutes...

“We must get in touch with the Emperor at once!”

Wahnschaffe goes to the telephone – von Prittwitz and Dr. Solf take turns. No response. The Chancellor who is holding the Abdication Proclamation in his hand, flings it down again on the table in despair. The military cordon around the Governmental quarter has been broken. At any moment the mob may burst into the Wilhelmstrasse. For one moment he imagines he already hears the shouting mob approaching, he sees the place already surrounded, the street filled with faces.

His advisers are getting desperate, too.

“If something is not done soon all is lost – if Ebert is presented to me by the mob as the people’s tribune then comes the Republic!”

“And if it is Liebknecht, then comes Bolshevism!” The Prince opens the door to the anteroom:

“For God’s sake, haven’t you got the Emperor yet?”

“One telephone at the Villa Fraineuse is engaged, the other is disconnected,” replies the under-secretary.

The Emperor – it is eleven days since he left Berlin; not, as the Chancellor was told, at the instigation of the Supreme Command – the Generals at Spa were as surprised at his sudden arrival as the Chancellor in Berlin at his sudden departure. Many still remembered the angry words with which the Emperor had left the Army three months before: “I will not remain with a defeated army!”

During the days immediately following his arrival the Emperor had travelled in his special train from one army to another, holding parades behind the lines and awarding decorations. A few days ago he settled down at the Villa Fraineuse, a retired country house in the neighbourhood of Spa.

Attended by Lieutenant-Colonel Niemann he now goes out to the conservatory, where Generals von Plessen and Marschall, Admiral von Hintze, Baron von Grünau and Count Schulenburg, the Chief of the Crown Prince’s Army who has been summoned for the occasion, have already assembled.

The two senior officers of the army, General Field-Marshal von Hindenburg and the Chief Quartermaster-General, General Groener, have also been called. In prescribed full-dress uniform, complete with sword, they stand before the Emperor.

The seventy-one-year-old Field-Marshal finds it hard to speak:

“I cannot bring myself to say what I must say. I would ask therefore to be allowed to resign...”

The Emperor impatiently cuts the old Marshal short.

He turns to the Quartermaster-General whom he had left only twenty-four hours ago with the order: "The army must face about and march against the homeland," and now says:

"The Quartermaster-General will give an account of the military situation."

General Groener produces a few sheets of notepaper.

He has jotted down only a few brief notes. The picture of the army, the great retreating line of the rearguard action, is ever-present with him, like some dreadful waking dream. It is his task to withdraw two million men in the face of the enemy – one gigantic wheeling movement, the left dug well into the earth, the right swinging for ever backwards. Whether it will still be possible to bring it to a stand west of the Rhine, is impossible to say.

And in all that vast area to be evacuated still lie eighty thousand wounded, immense stores of war material, great dumps of provisions, for which there exists no means of transport. With every kilometre that the army retires, the network of railways becomes sparser. Then there is the danger-point north of Verdun, where the Americans are attacking and threatening to break through. No depth of reserves to counter the thrust now exists. Against the fresh troops of the enemy, advancing under cover of an unprecedented superiority in guns and material, Germany can oppose only a thin line of utterly exhausted soldiers.

Such is Ludendorff's legacy which Groener has inherited.

"All troops still fit for service are engaged with the enemy. The withdrawal of one or more divisions for the suppression of the rebellion at home, would mean the collapse of the Front," resumes the General.

He takes up a fresh sheet: Communications and the Homeland.

The lines of communication are in complete disorder. One has to be thankful if even the most necessary supply trains come through. The forward traffic has been stopped at many points, at Cologne and Munich, for example. The great supply depots behind the line are all in the hands of the Revolutionaries. Cologne and other important railway junctions are controlled by soldiers' councils. The front-line division which, on account of its supposed special trustworthiness, had been chosen to cover the rear of GHQ, has refused to obey its officers and, contrary to express orders, has started to march home...

The General confines himself to a statement of facts. He goes on in an even, imperturbable voice, recounting all the symptoms which those of the Emperor's immediate circle have not dared even to mention. Only yesterday Major-General von Plessen had described as mere irregularities the flagrantly insubordinate conduct of the Headquarters' troops under his command. And even now Count Schulenburg, the Chief of the Crown Prince's Army, tries to argue away the facts. An approving glance from the Emperor encourages him to intervene.

He breaks in upon the Quartermaster-General, suggesting that he overestimates the difficulties. "Admittedly, the army as a whole could not be used in any fight against the homeland. All the same, there are numerous groups on which one could rely absolutely. These might be withdrawn, and after a few days' rest, sent against the fractious cities on the Rhine. It would take eight or ten days, no doubt. But if we made it quite clear to the army in what a scandalous way the navy has let the army down, and how a pack of shirkers and profiteers at home is threatening to cut off supplies from the hard-pressed troops, we should have no difficulty in getting their support."

"The march of events would be too quick for us," retorts Groener.

The Emperor who, during the Quartermaster-General's statement, had walked to the fireplace and stayed there leaning against the overmantel, pricks up his ears at Count Schulenburg's statement. But the Count is alone in his opinion. It is agreed that troops for the suppression of the rebellion at home simply do not exist.

"What is it but a sailors' mutiny? It could be put down with a handful of troops," persists Count Schulenburg.

General Field-Marshal von Hindenburg is asked his opinion:

"As things stand at present, the military operation called for by the Emperor has no chance of success."

The Count has another suggestion:

“The Emperor might stay with the Prussian troops and re-enter the country peacefully. That would be none of the Reichstag’s business. At most the Prussian Landtag might have a say in the matter.”

The Emperor regains his composure. He seizes upon this new plan and elaborates it further with the Count.

The Rhineland cities must be taken first, then with these as a base one could march on Berlin. The other courtiers second the idea; they also think that it offers a feasible course to the Emperor. The old Field-Marshal and the Chief Quartermaster-General stand aloof in silence.

The Quartermaster-General has refrained from recommending abdication to the Emperor. He imagined that the monarch would himself decide for the heroic gesture and had urged those in the Emperor’s confidence to suggest to him such a solution. But the Emperor closed his ear to all hints.

Not only Groener, but others also have wished to afford the Emperor the most dignified possible exit. Michaelis, the former Chancellor, and a number of Pomeranian noblemen, were prepared to go with the Emperor to the trenches, there to await death in his company. When, after a lunch-party, Michaelis tried to turn the conversation in that direction, the Emperor had left him standing. He would hear nothing of making a violent end – “My Christian principles forbid such a course.” Nor would he consider abdication.

“The heir of Friedrich the Great does not abdicate,” he protested to his aide-de-camp.

That Friedrich the Great, after the battle at Kunersdorf, had ridden into the thick of the fight in search of death, and that, as a last resort, he had always carried a dose of poison, was apparently unknown to his successor.

General Groener observes with displeasure how even now these gentlemen, still true to courtly practice, are endeavouring to blind themselves and the Emperor to the true state of affairs. He breaks in upon the conversation: “A fortnight ago one might perhaps have tackled the problem that way. But as things are now the Count’s view is entirely mistaken. In my opinion a peaceful return of his Majesty is impossible. The latest news from Berlin has to be taken into account.” The Emperor swings round angrily.

He has had no luck with his Chief Quartermaster-Generals. Ludendorff he could not abide because of his sergeant-major’s face; Groener displeases him by his Wurttemberg accent.

The General continues unruffled; his eyes seek the Emperor’s, and in the decisive tone of one stating a fact he says: “The army will march home as a body under its leaders and generals; but not under the leadership of your Majesty.”

The Emperor looks around for support. The courtiers in generals’ uniforms plastered over with decorations, gasp. Field-Marshal von Hindenburg stands impassive as a mountain.

Still nothing happens.

The Emperor says nothing.

He goes to the door opening onto the garden. On the doorstep he turns and shouts at the General: “Your Excellency, I want that statement from you in writing. I want to see it in black and white – a statement by all the army commanders – that the army is no longer behind me. Only then will I consent to go, not before. Let the officers in the front line be asked their opinion.”

The Quartermaster-General has already summoned to Headquarters fifty front-line battalion commanders, whom Colonel Heye has just been interrogating as to the loyalty of their troops. The first arrived during the course of the morning. Exactly as they came, without being able even to wash or get something to eat, they were called in, four at a time, to the room of the Chief of Staff to answer the prescribed questions. The final verdict is not yet known. A few of the commanders have not yet arrived.

The Emperor is walking in the park with von Grünau. The Field-Marshal and the Quartermaster-General are also outside. Around the two army leaders are gathered the aides-de-camp and the Emperor’s advisers. Admiral von Scheer, who had been knighted after the desperate action at Jutland and given a post representing the navy at GHQ, now joins them from the Villa. They are discussing the state of the army, the spread of the revolution, the news from Berlin.

“This pressure from the Chancellery is monstrous!”

“Decisions of such gravity require deliberation.”

“There has been fighting in the streets in Berlin – there must have been shocking bloodshed at the Maikäfer Barracks – help should be sent to the capital at once.”

“It is out of the question that the Emperor and his army should give in to a handful of Revolutionaries! Preposterous! – that an army which has been the astonishment of the whole world for four years should be unable to put down a gang of rascally sailors!”

The Quartermaster-General is acquainted with these “rascally gangs”. He has had opportunity to judge of the power of their ideas. Prior to his appointment to GHQ, he was in command at Kiev, where he saw a greater army, greater even than the German, and a throne older than the Hohenzollern throne, collapse. He had been in the farthest outpost confronting the new red capital. He knew that it was only under cover of German bayonets that the Russian White Guard had been able to advance its banner against Bolshevism and to erect gallows for the revolutionaries. But the bayonets of the German army of occupation had become blunted in the process, the German troops had been infected with the Bolshevist spirit and were no longer fit for service. And this new power which has appeared so suddenly, is not confined to Moscow; it is in Berlin, too, in the very heart of the German Reich.

It is three days since Groener interviewed Ebert and the leaders of the Social Democratic Party and of the Unions at the Chancellery. It became clear to him then that more than the Hohenzollern dynasty was at stake. Ebert and the Social Democrats, who throughout the war have proved themselves men with a lively sense of national responsibility, have done all they could to preserve the monarchy. They are not opponents of monarchy as such. The majority of Social Democrats, so they had told him, would be quite content with a constitutional monarchy on the parliamentary model, granted a moderate socialistic tinge. Ebert had stressed that particularly: “I would strongly urge you, Herr General, to take this last chance of saving the monarchy and to see to it that some one of the Imperial Princes is entrusted with the Regency as speedily as possible.” Deputy Südekum had implored him: “Consider Ebert’s proposal, Herr General, or we shall be faced with a terrible catastrophe.” Ebert had been calm as usual, but Südekum was quite beside himself. When he spoke of the monarchy tears came into his eyes. And Scheidemann, who had been called to answer the telephone, seemed quite distressed when he came back, nervously breaking in upon the discussion: “It is too late to talk of abdication now, the revolution has begun. The Kiel sailors have already captured the power both in Hamburg and Hanover.”

The Social Democratic leaders had lost control of the masses, that also became clear to Groener at the interview. These unbridled masses were now heading straight for Bolshevism. And if Bolshevism carries the day, then not only will the throne of Wilhelm II and the Hohenzollern Dynasty fall, but every time-honoured right of property and possession, whether in land or goods or means of production, will be lost – everything which, in the General’s opinion, goes to make up the basis of civilization and culture. Bolshevism is the enemy. And in the fight against this new antagonist Social Democracy may well prove the surest ally.

Groener catches sight of the Emperor remonstrating with von Grünau at a turning in the path. Returning from his meditation he hears those about him still repeating the same meaningless phrases, phrases devoid of all sense of the realities of the situation, phrases already invalidated by the swift march of events.

Their Excellencies are discussing the 2nd Guards Division which was to have covered the rear of GHQ.

“Even the Guards refuse to obey orders!”

“I am surprised at that in Prussian soldiers who have sworn fealty to the Emperor. The oath to the colours is one of those imponderable things binding even the humblest soldier in the army.”

“There is nothing surprising about it,” says Groener. “In times of revolution the oath to the colours no longer fulfils the functions for which it was designed. And in the end it proves the mere fiction that it is.”

The oath to the colours a mere fiction!

A soldier would be court-martialled for such a statement, an officer cashiered – and here is the

first soldier, the first officer of the army uttering this monstrous thing! The notabilities in general's trappings and gold-embroidered admiral's uniforms look perplexedly at the Quartermaster-General. They turn hopefully to Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, but he is gazing with vacant eyes at the place where his Majesty has just been standing.

A field-grey car is coming down the lonely country road. It turns in at the garden and approaches the house at top speed. The Crown Prince in the uniform of the Death's Head Hussars jumps out of the car.

He sees the Chief of his Army and Hindenburg and Groener and all the bewildered Generals standing about. In a cheery voice he shouts across:

"What, haven't those sailors been stood against the wall yet!"

The Quartermaster-General makes no reply.

The Field-Marshal makes none either.

Count Schulenburg goes to greet the Crown Prince and accompanies him a space into the garden. He tells him what has happened, and in a few rapid sentences outlines his own and Major-General von Plessen's ideas on the question of abdication, with a view to persuading the Crown-Prince to urge them upon the Emperor.

If abdication as Emperor is unavoidable, his Majesty should at least remain King of Prussia.

The Emperor and the Crown Prince are alone in the garden.

The woods adjoining the park are wrapped in a wet mist. There is a continual dripping from the branches of the trees.

The Emperor is talking. With quick gestures he emphasizes occasional sentences and ideas. The Crown Prince makes only brief comments.

He asks the Emperor what is his position as regards abdication.

"I wouldn't consider it for one moment!" replies the Emperor.

"It all comes of putting the government on a broad basis. You do that, then they turn you out," observes the Crown Prince.

After a while Count Schulenburg, von Plessen and von Hintze approach and join in the discussion.

Colonel Heye, the Chief of Staff, who has been interrogating the fifty battalion commanders, has made his report to the Quartermaster-General. Only thirty-nine have turned up; messages have come from the missing eleven to say that they have been delayed through engine trouble.

Colonel Heye posed two questions-first: "What is the feeling of the army toward the Emperor? Would it fall into line in the event of a fight to reconquer the country?"

One commander said Yes.

Fifteen refused to commit themselves.

Twenty-three said No.

The second question went beyond Emperor and Empire. It read: "What is the attitude of the army to Bolshevism? Would it march against that enemy at home?"

Eight commanders were not prepared to say.

Twelve commanders were doubtful, phrasing their answer thus: "Yes, eventually perhaps, given explanation. If they thought that their own families were in danger, then they might march."

Nineteen commanders said No.

Heye continues: "One of the commanders moved 'That all the officers present should pledge them-

selves to absolute secrecy as to the nature of the enquiry, in order that it should be impossible ever to accuse the Emperor of instigation to civil war'. The motion had been carried."

General Groener and Colonel Heye now join the group gathered about the Emperor and the Crown

Prince. Colonel Heye reads out the result of the investigation. He concludes his statement with these words:

"The army is still loyal to your Majesty, but it is weary and indifferent, and wants only rest and peace. They will not march against the homeland, nor yet against Bolshevism. They all want one

thing only, an armistice, and the sooner the better, for every hour tells.”

Count Schulenburg repeats his words about the “oath to the colours, which the troops would not break”, and “the Supreme War Lord, whom they would not desert”.

“Let there be no misunderstanding as to the reasons for which we are now asking the obedience of the troops. For the restoration of law and order from place to place – for the march home again, the army is loyal, is obedient.”

“The oath to the colours! The Supreme War Lord! – these things are mere fictions now,” repeats Groener.

But the Count is not to be stayed.

“If that is the Quartermaster-General’s opinion, then he does not know the spirit and temper of the army. We in the trenches, under fire, have learned what is the spirit and the temper of the army. What two books, do you suppose, one finds everywhere there? The Bible and the Song Book! The trenches are the home of the loftiest sense of duty and the deepest religious feeling. An army that has done what our army has done during the last four and a half years – war-worn and exhausted though it may be – an army filled with that spirit does not break its oath, I say, does not forsake its King. Indeed, it is the other way about – the army itself would collapse and disperse, if its Supreme War Lord were to forsake it.”

The Emperor nods dubiously.

“We do want an armistice, of course. I must be clear on this point. Unless I am clear, I will not abdicate. Will the army march home in good order without me? General Schulenburg thinks not. General Groener says: Yes.”

Colonel Heye clicks his heels:

“Even under its Generals the army will only march home. It is still under control of its leaders. If your Majesty is pleased to march home with it, well and good. But the army will not fight any more, that is all – neither at the Front nor at home.”

“Your Majesty does not need an army to go walking; your Majesty needs an army which will fight for your Majesty,” interposes Admiral von Hintze.

The Quartermaster-General nods agreement. The Field-Marshal looks troubled.

The Admiral tries to make the point still clearer: “Would the Prussian troops fight?” he asks.

Count Schulenburg considers a moment. Thirty eight commanders of the most trustworthy Prussian regiments have declared against his opinion, only one in favour.

“No,” he is compelled to admit.

An aide-de-camp comes from the Villa and announces a telephone message from Berlin:

“Under-Secretary Wahnschaffe on behalf of the Chancellor begs that a desperate situation shall be saved by the Emperor’s immediate abdication.”

The Emperor looks at the aide-de-camp, then at his mute advisers.

After a moments reflection he pulls himself together and gives Admiral von Hintze the order:

“Tell Berlin that I abdicate as Emperor, but not as King of Prussia.” The Admiral has already turned to go when the Emperor calls him back:

“No, it must be drawn up first – when it has been drafted and approved, then let it be communicated to the Chancellor.”

He dictates a few notes for the proposed draft, then leaves the Generals and, accompanied by the Crown Prince, goes into the house where the table is spread for luncheon.

Admiral von Hintze, von Grünau, Major-General von Plessen and the Generals Marschall and Schulenburg retire to the business apartments of the Villa. They sit down and collaborate in the wording of a proclamation whereby Wilhelm II abdicates as Emperor of Germany, at the same time declaring his determination to continue to be King of Prussia.

The telephone rings again. The Admiral takes up the receiver.

“Von Wahnschaffe!” he informs the gentlemen at the table. He tries to placate the excited under-secretary in Berlin: “The abdication is coming – it really will not be long now...”

Count Schulenburg gets up, takes the receiver and shouts wrathfully into the instrument: “A step so grave as the abdication of the Emperor is not one to be made in a few minutes! His Majesty has

taken the decision, and it is being drafted this very moment – the Government must be patient until the statement is in its hands.”

“But the thing is most urgent – every minute is precious...”

At Berlin von Prittwitz is standing beside the Under-Secretary, listening-in to the conversation. Without wasting a moment he dashes off to find the Chancellor to tell him what von Hintze has said.

With the Chancellor are seated Dr. Simons and the ambassadors of Baden, Bavaria and Wurttemberg, whom the Chancellor has summoned at the instigation of Count Bernstorff to talk over the question of the succession. The ambassadors declare themselves in agreement with Count Bernstorff’s proposal that Prince Max should himself undertake the Regency. “Why not a *coup d’etat*?”

“The situation calls for quick decisions,” so the gentlemen argue.

The Prince puts the thought from him:

“Certainly, if the Emperor had appointed me his successor, then I should accept. As it is I must decline.”

The Ambassadors rise and go. The Prince is left alone with Dr. Simons.

“The important thing now is to announce the abdication before it is too late!”

Dr. Simons has used every argument, and the Prince has been obliged to admit them all.

“Either we depose the Emperor, or it is Bolshevism.” At that moment von Prittwitz enters the room still stuttering with excitement: “Hintze has just been on the phone. He says the Emperor is willing to abdicate. Only he wants to draft the proclamation himself.”

“There is no time for that. Tell them that we have prepared it ourselves. It must be published immediately,” replies Prince Max.

Von Prittwitz returns to the telephone. But Wahnschaffe has already rung off.

The Prince has taken the plunge. He hands the document to the Secretary of State, Dr. Simons, for publication. Within ten minutes it is in the hands of the printer, and before half an hour has passed newsboys are calling special editions through the streets of Berlin:

“The Emperor abdicates!”

“The Crown Prince renounces the throne!”

“Friedrich Ebert, Chancellor!”

“A Constituent Assembly to be called!”

Dr. Simons has returned to his office at the Ministry for the Interior. The Prince is discussing with Dr. Solf and Count Bernstorff what further measures should be taken.

A servant enters.

“Deputies Ebert, Scheidemann, Bauer and two union leaders wish to speak with his Highness, the Chancellor.”

“I shall see the gentlemen at once in the library.”

The Vice-Chancellor, von Payer, is sent for. Then the Prince, followed by the Vice-Chancellor, Count Bernstorff and Dr. Solf go across to the library.

“Shew the gentlemen in, please”

Ebert, Scheidemann and Bauer enter. The two Social Democratic workers, Brolat and Helier, have

been left outside in the anteroom. Ebert, who unknown to his colleagues has this morning already talked over with the Prince the question of the succession to the Chancellorship, begins: “Our party has sent us to inform your Highness that, in our opinion, it is imperative, if law and order is to be preserved and unnecessary bloodshed avoided, that the supreme executive power be vested in the persons possessing the full confidence of the people. We consider it necessary, therefore, that the

two posts of Imperial Chancellor and of GOC in the Marches should be in the hands of representatives of our party.

“In this matter we have not only our own party, but the party of the Independent Social Democrats also, solidly behind us. The troops, too, are with us. The Independents have not yet been

able to make up their minds whether they wish to join the new government. But if they should so decide, then we must insist that they be admitted. We have no objection to the inclusion of representatives of the bourgeois parties; only a definite majority must be ours. The details can be settled later.”

The library is open on all sides.

Officials hurrying past, officers from the aide-de-camps' room, from the anterooms, even a few stray visitors, have gathered around the Prince. The Minister for War has turned up also. Dr. Simons who has come back again from the Ministry for the Interior, Under-Secretary Haussmann specially summoned for the occasion, and Count Rödern, all take part in the interview.

The two social democratic workers have likewise entered by the swing door, and taken up a position in rear of their own party leaders.

The Prince reminds Scheidemann that he has not yet been released from his oath as Secretary of State.

“I consider myself no longer a member of the Government”, replies Scheidemann.

The Prince turns to Ebert:

“I should like to put this question to you: Have the leaders of the Social Democratic Party both the will and the power to prevent the movement from acts of violence? Can they guarantee to maintain order provided there is no shooting?”

Scheidemann anticipates Ebert, who as usual is carefully considering his reply. “Every garrison and regiment in Greater Berlin is on our side. We have just this minute come from the Reichstag where delegates from every regiment, not excluding the Lübbener Jäger who were considered especially trustworthy, have promised to back us.”

“What evidence have you in support of your claim? Are you quite sure that you can control the movement – that it will not slip out of your hands?” asks Haussmann.

“I know for a fact that we can control it. Of course, we cannot produce documentary evidence of the feeling among the troops. But I suggest that the Herr Secretary make a tour of the barracks in a car along with one of our party and then let him judge for himself from the cheers of the troops on whose side they are.”

Haussmann declines the offer.

The Chancellor turns again to Ebert:

“I have already proposed to the Emperor that a bill be submitted to the Reichstag with a view to the calling of a Constituent Assembly, this assembly to decide how Germany is to be governed in the future.”

“We are in agreement with the principle of such a Constituent Assembly,” replies Ebert.

“I shall give you my decision in half an hour.” Prince Max bows and leaves the library.

The groups dissolve and a swarm of journalists come in through the open doors. Secretary Haussmann starts an argument with Ebert as to the desirability of calling a Constituent Assembly, expressing doubts whether an election in a time of such revolutionary disturbance would result in any just picture of the real feeling of the country.

“That is certainly a point to be considered,” admits Ebert.

The Prince goes back to his room with Count Bernstorff and Dr. Solf; on entering he catches sight of the War Minister. The Chancellor has forgotten that only two hours ago, in his anxiety to prevent bloodshed, he had issued an order forbidding the use of weapons. He is suddenly no longer the Christian who scoured the Scriptures for texts on which to base his foreign policy; no longer the democrat who made a pact with Ebert and proposed the calling of a Constituent Assembly – he is once more just a Prince, the heir to an ancient dynasty, who suddenly sees with startling clarity that this hour must decide the fate of the Empire, the fate of every dynasty in Germany. A shocking thought strikes him – perhaps the guns could still do it!

“Is the army to be trusted?” he asks hastily of the War Minister.

“To judge from the latest reports, I am afraid it is not.”

The Prince collapses again just as suddenly.

“Then there is no hope.”

The rest of the ministers are called to consider the terms on which the Chancellorship shall be handed over to Deputy Ebert. They have been expecting this summons and come at once, but there is no general, united discussion. They stand about the room in little groups talking of all manner of things, of the Constituent Assembly, of the doings in the streets, of the attitude of the War Ministry and of the General Officer Commanding in the Marches, of the difficulties of travel and the possibilities of getting home... Messengers enter in search of sundry people wanted urgently elsewhere. Even Scheidemann appears in the midst of it all. Ebert, who is by the open door, is already being greeted as "Herr Reichskanzler." Persons passing back and forth congratulate him and shake his hand.

The Prince, in company with Dr. Simons, Dr. Solf and Count Bernstorff, is trying to get on with the business in hand. But he is continually interrupted. Like an immense roundabout the groups circle around the Prince, ever new faces appearing, wanting to know this thing or that.

Now it is Lieutenant-Colonel van den Bergh with a message from the GOC:

"In view of a report from the Guard Corps that the majority of the troops would not shoot and are already setting up workers' and soldiers' councils, General von Linsingen asks whether under these circumstances firearms are to be used. Instructions required immediately – immense crowds – 30,000 – have entered the city since two o'clock – answer by return."

The War Minister strikes an attitude:

"I order that weapons shall be used in defence of the life and property of citizens, and in protection of public offices. Please inform his Excellency von Plessen at General Headquarters immediately!"

The Social Democrats are there unbidden, nevertheless one shouts from the door:

"We can keep law and order in the city. We are sending deputations to treat with the workers. We don't want any protection!"

The War Minister shouts back:

"If you don't want protection, that is your affair! And if you send Members of the Reichstag to deal

with the oncoming mob, that is also your affair! But there is a crowd. And so long as there is a crowd they must be made to observe the law. I am concerned merely for the safeguarding of life and property and the direct defence of government offices."

"Will the Colonel kindly inform the General Officer Commanding in the Marches?"

Lieutenant-Colonel van den Bergh is soon back again.

"His Excellency von Linsingen wishes to state that it is unlikely the soldiers would fire in defence of the government offices."

The actual matter to be discussed seems to have been forgotten – neither nominations, discussion, nor votes are forthcoming. But Prince Max is determined to have the thing settled. He sends for Ebert, who is waiting outside.

Ebert, Bauer, Scheidemann and the two Social Democratic workers are standing in front of the Chancellor. The turmoil of faces is still for a moment, also the babel of voices. Only the doors open and shut continually – officials, messengers, journalists, they all come in.

The Prince says in a solemn voice:

"If anyone can save the Fatherland now, it is your party. Yours is the largest organization and it has the widest influence. Herr Ebert, are you willing to undertake the Chancellorship?"

Ebert bows his head in thought. He knows full well what are the demands of the workers outside there – how far they exceed the present constitution of the Reich with a chancellor at the head of it. He turns to Scheidemann and Bauer:

"Don't you think I should consult the Party leaders first?"

"Ach, nonsense! Say 'Yes' and have done with it."

"Are you willing to undertake the office of Chancellor?" the Prince asks once more.

"It is a difficult office, but I will undertake it."

Dr. Solf goes up to Ebert:

"Are you prepared to govern within the meaning of the Constitution?"

“Yes,” replies Ebert. Dr. Solf asks again:

“Within a monarchical constitution?”

Ebert lifts his head and glances at the Prince:

“Yesterday I should have answered the question unconditionally in the affirmative. Today I must first consult with my friends.”

“Now about the Regency,” says the Prince.

“It is too late,” says Ebert.

“Too late,” agrees Scheidemann.

“Too late,” repeat Bauer and the two Trade Unionists.

The next question to be settled is what ministers shall be appointed.

The ex-Chancellor, Prince Max von Baden, plays a leading part in the negotiations, endeavouring to introduce into the new Cabinet as many members of the old as possible.

“It would be as well to preserve whatever legality and continuity there is left to preserve,” says he. He tries to induce Scheidemann and Bauer to withdraw their resignations, and to get Haussmann and Dr. Solf also to remain.

Ebert, too, is unwilling to sever all organic connection with the past. It is his intention to include both Scheidemann and Landsberg in the new government, and he requests the various secretaries of state to continue in office for the time being.

Scheidemann thinks of the Minister for War – such a prominent symbol of the old regime – and of the General Officer Commanding in the Marches, the representative of military power in Berlin, who only yesterday had plastered the walls with placards threatening with imprisonment any who should be guilty of setting up workers’ and soldiers’ councils.

“The Minister for War and the GOC must go! Both those posts must be held by us,” Scheidemann declares impetuously.

The Minister for War reminds him of the army which is still fighting the enemy.

“There are generals enough at the Front to take care of that!”

“But supplies have to be kept up. And there are the armistice negotiations still in progress.”

“We can see to all that!”

The furrow between the War Minister’s eyebrows becomes deeper:

“I shall remain at my post ! Without prejudice to my personal convictions, I am prepared to carry on, or do you mean to suggest that I am to be swept away?”

Not one of the five Social Democrats who came here an hour ago as “representatives of the revolution”, humbly begging an audience of the Chancellor, had dreamed for one moment of sweeping away the War Minister, or anyone else for that matter.

Scheidemann moderates his tone:

“Anyway, if only as a guarantee abroad, it is desirable that a Social Democrat should be associated with the War Minister.”

The Minister for War has no objection to that.

Scheidemann suggests Deputy Göhre.

A messenger approaches Ebert:

“Deputy Dittmann, Herr Cohn and Herr Vogtherr wish to speak to the Chancellor.”

The Independents getting busy at last!

“Tell the gentlemen I shall see them at once.”

Prince Max places the library at the disposal of Ebert.

There is not the least change in procedure. Chancellor Ebert invites his Excellency the Vice-Chancellor, von Payer, to attend the interview. And the Vice-Chancellor in his turn invites his Excellency the Secretary of State, Dr. Solf, to go with him.

Accompanied by both these gentlemen, Ebert goes to the library:

“Ask the gentlemen to come in, please.”

The servant opens the door to the Independents. Ebert’s servant has the same bland expression as any Chancellery porter of the days of Bethmann or Bülow. Recognizing that the Social Democrats alone would be unable to bring the masses into line, Ebert has been working since early morning to

effect an agreement with the Independents. Immediately after his early-morning interview with Prince Max, he had gone to the Independent leaders in their party room at the Reichstag and proposed a coalition of the two parties. In his anxiety to rake in every available force, he had even gone so far, in reply to a question concerning Liebknecht, as to say: "Why, yes, bring us Liebknecht, too, if you can!"

The interview with the three Independents does not last long.

Ebert allows them no time to explain their programme. He simply asks whether they wish to join the Government and tells them that he intends to fill the posts of ministers with portfolio from the bourgeois groups.

The Independents reply that they have no objection in principle, but that they cannot give a final answer immediately. Dr. Solf admires the rapidity with which Ebert grows to his new dignity, and von Payer the short shrift he gives the three Independents.

Ebert dismisses the Independents, allowing them a brief interval in which to make up their minds.

He then sits down with Dr. Solf and Haussmann, who drafted all the Prince's utterances also, and sets about the composition of his first proclamations as Chancellor.

"To all Authorities and Civil Servants!

"We have taken over the Government in order to save the German people from civil war and starvation, and to ensure that its just demand for self-determination shall be realized. We shall be able to fulfil this task only if all the authorities and civil servants throughout the length and breadth of the land co-operate with us. I know that it will be difficult for many of you to work with the newcomers, but I would appeal to your love of our country. Any breakdown in the administration at this critical time must deliver Germany over to anarchy and the most appalling misery. I would ask you, therefore, to help the Fatherland by continuing to work courageously and unstintingly, every man at his post until the hour of relief comes."

"To the citizens of Germany.

"...I have undertaken to form a new government in conjunction with the other parties

"Fellow Citizens. I appeal to you, one and all, for your support... "Fellow Citizens.

"I appeal to you, one and all, to leave the streets.. .

"Berlin, 9 November, 1918.

"The Chancellor."

Ebert signs both appeals, and then goes to the Reichstag.

“GROENER SPEAKING...”

The columns marching from the outskirts of the town have reached the Inner City. The redoubtable lines of defence – the outer at the City Railway, the inner at the Spree and the Landwehr Canal – have melted away. What few troops have not gone over to the people, have declared themselves neutral. The processions move in a great flood along the streets – women, workmen, soldiers in fieldgrey, deserters, schoolboys. The idle trams have been turned into rostrums. From the roofs of the cars men are making speeches, and on many are armed groups of soldiers and workers standing shoulder to shoulder. The passing crowd looks up at them and they look down on the crowd.

The whole great mass of which Liebknecht had spoken, is moving. The iron is hot for the forging, it now remains only to be worked to new forms.

The movement must be given direction-the marching columns must see their goal.

Liebknecht has hardly slept. Last night he and the Spartacists, together with Ledebour, also drew up an appeal to the “Workers and Soldiers” and distributed it through the factories. Ever since early morning he has been under way. His followers scrounged a motor-van for him and decked it with garlands of red carnations; at the Anhalt Station, Unter den Linden, in Leipzigerstrasse, at every street corner the red car turns up – workers bristling with weapons, a few sailors – and in the midst of them, Liebknecht.

The car stops and Liebknecht speaks:

“Comrades. . . .

“The Red Flag is floating over Berlin. The proletariat is marching – the proletariat, both in overalls and field grey – for peace at once, for the abolition of martial law, for the opening of the prisons, for the disarming of the police. The Berlin workers have not led the way in the German revolution, but it is left for them to make it a Communist revolution. The abdication of a couple of Hohenzollerns is a mere nothing. The putting of a few constitutional Socialists at the head is also nothing.

“The civil and military power, the factories, the banks, the transport combines, must all be taken over by the workers.

“We must set up workers’ and soldiers’ councils. We must fight with every ounce of our strength and our will to realize the programme of the workers’ and soldiers’ councils.

“Hurrah for the German Socialist Republic!”

The lorry moves on again. The crowds pour along the streets and come to a stand outside the strongholds of the old order, uncertain what they should do. Little groups detach themselves from the waiting throng and make their way into the buildings to throw down the mighty.

The Admiralty Office, occupied by the Secretary of State for the Navy, filled with admirals, captains, commanders, over a hundred armed naval officers, capitulates to an NCO and six men.

Moabit Gaol is taken by a detachment of Revolutionaries while the demonstrators wait outside. After a short parley the Governor hands over to the Revolutionaries a list of the political prisoners. The warders open the cells and the prisoners are set at liberty, among them the sailors arrested at dawn that morning.

At Tegel a party of sailors releases two hundred military prisoners.

A fitter disarms single-handed an entire police station; when the constables have left the building he loads himself with rifles and revolvers and goes into the street in search of anyone who wants to arm.

Professor Hermann Duncker of Boxhagenerstrasse, a member of the Spartacist group, is outside Wertheim’s store awaiting his wife who has gone to inquire by telephone the whereabouts of a colleague, Jogisches, who was in prison. A procession passes, complete with military band and red flags. A soldier in fieldgrey, an old friend of Duncker’s, a member of the party and sometime editor

of various workers' journals, leaves the procession and comes toward Duncker whom he has not seen since the outbreak of war.

The two men embrace.

The crowd shouts "Hurrah!"

The crowd bawls "Down!"

Duncker has quite forgotten his wife Kate. He marches off with the procession, singing with the rest:

"We are the working men..."

Soon afterwards he is standing in a motor-lorry with his soldier friend, surrounded by a group of armed soldiers. The lorry sets off down Leipzigerstrasse, past Donhoffplatz. A little farther on the lorry stops in front of the main entrance to the *Berliner Lokalanzeiger*, which is besieged by a crowd of people.

"Down with the jingos!" the mob is shouting. "Down with the lying newspapers!"

"All newspapers belong to the people!" expounds Duncker, the professor.

"Let's go in then, and take them over," suggests his soldier friend.

"Sure," agrees another, as he fixes his bayonet.

They jump out of the lorry and push their way through the crowd – Duncker, his friend, three other

soldiers and a sailor. The liveried porter turns the revolving door and they enter the building. One of the departmental chiefs comes down the stairs: "This way, gentlemen, please – the directors are expecting you."

The six men enter the conference room.

The directors and editors of the paper are seated at a round table. They turn hopefully to the unarmed man with the bald head and academic air for an explanation. But Duncker, accustomed as he is to delivering long harangues upon the capitalist exploitation of the people and the servile part played by the bourgeois Press in the process, does not waste any words on these people. In a single sentence he presents the revolution's requirements to the capitalist press:

"Gentlemen, the leaf has turned – yours must do the same."

The epigram suffices to make the situation clear.

The editorial board of the *Lokalanzeiger* listens anxiously to the shouts of the crowd, audible through the window; they turn their heads, look from one to another and then at the long-legged doctor who has nothing more helpful to tell them than this atrocious... But is it a joke? This man with the extravagantly drooping moustaches, thin and shambling, yet to all appearance so respectable; the soldiers with fixed bayonets; the crowd in the street below growing ever more noisy – these are facts not to be argued away. And the police can give no help; they have ascertained that already.

At last one breaks the silence. Then the rest find their tongues, all most polite and accommodating:

"I expect you are right, sir."

"Things cannot go on as before."

"Of course, we shall fall into line."

"Good, then we shall take over at once. Where is the composing room?"

An editor jumps up and obsequiously leads his unwanted guests to the composing room and the printing office. A short speech – the workers declare themselves in agreement with the change of editorship. The soldiers retire and post themselves at the entrance below. Duncker and his friend set to work in the composing room. They take off their coats, bend over the already finished matrix of the evening edition of the *Lokalanzeiger* and indicate the parts which must be removed and replaced by reports of the revolution.

Duncker prepares the text for a pamphlet explaining the general situation, and a second for a small handbill announcing a mass meeting at the Busch Circus. He then telephones to Meyer and other Spartacist leaders for helpers on the newspaper and speakers for the evening meeting at Busch Circus.

The directors of the Scherl Publishing House who have stood out to the last for continuance of the war and stifled every expression of the popular will, are glad to get off with whole skins, and now leave the building in haste.

The columns of the proletariat marching from the industrial suburbs in the East End have swelled to an army of 30,000 men by the time they reach the Police Headquarters in the heart of Berlin. They surround the immense building, and in a broad stream pour through the portal into the courtyard. The constables unbuckle their sabres; they cannot get shot of them quickly enough – sabres, revolvers, cartridge-pouches, batons go to join the ever growing pile. And the soldiers of the Jäger Company who had been brought in yesterday to reinforce the police, are collecting their gear, packing their traps and preparing to go home.

While the demonstrators are busy appropriating whatever weapons they want, or groping their way along the labyrinth of passages and stairways to the wing containing the cells, a number of the higher police officials have gathered in the anteroom of the Chief of Police, where they are negotiating with Eichhorn, the Independent.

The Independent demands the surrender of Police Headquarters with all its establishment, the force to be controlled henceforth by a board to be nominated by the Revolutionaries.

Privy Councillor Abbegg, representing the police, explains that a deputation of the Right-Wing Socialists has just been there, and expressed their willingness to rest content with a simple disarming of the force.

But Eichhorn sticks to his point.

After a little argument the Privy Councillor agrees to all the demands and straightway dictates the necessary instructions to a secretary. He then takes the document to the next room to get the signature of the Chief of Police.

A few minutes later he hands Eichhorn the document duly signed by von Oppen, the Chief of Police: "Herr von Oppen has broken down completely and asks to be excused a personal interview. He wishes me to state, however, that he has handed in his resignation, and will be leaving the service immediately."

From Moabit a large body of armed men is already on the march – the sailors released from the gaol, soldiers in fieldgrey and workers – all under the leadership of Richard Müller, former President of the Revolutionaries. Alongside him goes a man with a terribly thin, wasted face, whom Müller had never seen until an hour ago, when the two men together had set about organizing the procession. Now, together, they are leading it.

Richard Müller, the metal worker, had been reclaimed from the Front a few days ago to stand as parliamentary candidate for the Independent Party. The other had been employed addressing envelopes in a firm for the manufacture of taximeters. Having been wounded when a volunteer in the army he was, on convalescence, given a commission; later he had attempted to desert to the French; but finally gave himself up and was sentenced to imprisonment.

Richard Müller and Heinrich Dorrenbach are now leading their band into the city with the intention of occupying the Reichstag. At the Moltke Bridge they encounter a forgotten detachment of the Guards. The soldiers take no thought to defend the bridge, but fling their rifles into the Spree, while a few join the band of revolutionaries.

Thus unmolested they reach the Reichstag at last.

They enter amid cheers from the crowd, and in the lobby they halt.

Müller makes a short speech, telling them that whatever happens they must keep together and hold the Reichstag against all comers. He himself will go at once to the Independents and inform their committee of the existence of the troop. Dorrenbach is of the opinion that the first thing to be done is to find something to eat.

The soldiers pile arms, then stand looking blankly at the marble statue of Wilhelm I. A few sit down on the carpet. The sailors who came to Berlin this morning by lorry are still feeling the effects of the long night journey through the fog; they stretch out full length and try to sleep.

Not a soul is perturbed by this sudden bivouac.

A never-ending stream of traffic plies to and fro – deputies, journalists, soldiers, common people – through the lobby, the restaurant, the great assembly hall, up the stairs, along the corridors to the upper floor where are the party committee rooms.

In this room is a food committee, in that one a welfare committee. Here commissions are in session, the reason of whose existence is unknown; they shortly dissolve again or migrate to yet other rooms. Room 18 contains the committee of the Independents; Room 15 the Social Democrats; and in a room alongside is a meeting of soldiers' delegates whom Deputy Wels, following up his success with the Naumburg Jäger, going from barracks to barracks, has hastily gathered together.

The air is thick with tobacco smoke. In the confusion of faces and shouting voices it is difficult to understand exactly what is going on. One soldier is talking about bad bread, a second of a certain Lieutenant Schneider, a third of a fraudulent sergeant cook, a fourth about the abolition of the compulsory salute; others want to know whether pay will still be forthcoming, whether rations could not be doubled, whether they may not be sent back home again soon.

In the midst of it all stands a man promising everything – pay, bread, double rations of artificial honey, twice as much butter and three times as much sausage, instant demobilization with bonus...

"The sergeant cook, he won't get a bonus?"

"No, of course not – that case will have to be looked into. Everyone who has profiteered at the expense of the troops must be dealt with, that goes without saying.

Yes, Lieutenant Schneider too, he will be brought to book. The time is past when one could ride rough-shod over the troops with impunity. But the main thing, comrades, the main thing is unity. Both the socialist parties must stand together and form a coalition government, that is the main thing."

Coalition – without that there can be no peace.

Coalition – without that there can be no bread.

The politician in the soldier's tunic continues to drum the idea of political unity into the hard, peasant heads of the soldiers until they have it by heart and imagine it to be the solution of every problem.

"But, of course – coalition!"

"What else would you have?"

"It's coalition or bloody murder, one or the other! The two parties must get together and form a government."

"And if the Independents aren't quick about it, we'll go and stir them up a bit!"

And not only here, but in four or five other rooms simultaneously, the Social Democratic Party has rigged similar meetings of the soldiers. Deputies Antrick and Cohn pass rapidly from one meeting to the next, and no sooner have they one delegation well-schooled than they send it across to the Independents.

Another batch has just gone to the committee room of the Independents. The Deputies have their hands full, for the soldiers, though they merely repeat what they have just been told, gesticulate frantically in the process.

Ever since the early hour this morning when to their astonishment Ebert and Scheidemann turned up in their committee room, the Independents have been debating for and against joining with the Social Democrats.

Ledebour is against coalition. Dittmann on the other hand favours it, on condition that all posts are divided equally between the two parties. But for the hundredth time already today the majority rules that they cannot take any final decision; a plenum is lacking and besides Haase, the president, is not back yet from Kiel.

"Well, if you aren't quick about it, we soldiers will set up a government ourselves!"

"We shall simply put in the Social Democrats and have done with it! Anyway, we are not going to wait any longer."

While the deputies are still arguing with the soldiers, a man enters quite out of breath with running – Emil Barth, the leader of the Revolutionaries! Until a few minutes ago he had been seated before his map of Berlin in a back room at the "Musical Fox" waiting in vain for some news of his

storm troops, unable to issue a single order – Emil Barth, from whose control the movement has slipped clean away!

He has only just heard of the plans for coalition.

In a state of excitement he rushes up to the Independents standing about:

“We have the Police Headquarters – the Town Hall is ours – everywhere we are victorious! And you mean to tell me we are now going to sit down at the same table with those traitors to socialism, with Ebert and Scheidemann? The thing is impossible – impossible, I tell you!”

“At Hamburg the masses have already forced us to unite,” interposes Dittmann. “If only Haase were here!”

“Coalition!” shouts a soldiers’ representative. “Coalition!” comes back the chorus.

Dorrenbach has managed to get hold of some bread for his men out in the lobby, and has also scrounged a few cartons of artificial honey. Bonczyk, who has collected his own ration and another for Raumschuh, is now perched on the arm of the deep leather settle in which Raumschuh has lain down to sleep. Raumschuh is utterly exhausted – it is not the effect merely of the night journey; in Moabit they had locked him up for riotous behaviour in an icy cell by himself without a bed, so that despite his exertions of the previous days he had been obliged to stand propped up against the wall until he was released. Sleep has now claimed him.

Bonczyk holds a piece of bread and honey under his nose; he tells him of the President’s throne in the Chamber, all upholstered in red plush, of the cabinet meeting which he has witnessed, of the Emperor’s W.C. with a carpet on the floor, mirrors on the wall, and chairs! But Raumschuh will have none of it – neither artificial honey nor red plush nor Emperor’s W.C. He blinks up at the dome beneath which he is lying, casts an uncomprehending glance upon all the activity about him, the pyramids of rifles, the soldiers in field grey lying about on the carpet amid empty jam tins, cardboard boxes and cigarette ends; he rolls over on the other side and is asleep again.

Bonczyk puts the piece of bread and the little cube of artificial honey into Raumschuh’s pocket, then sets off with a mate who is also thirsty, in search of the Reichstag Restaurant.

They stand at the buffet and look round the room. In a corner Bonczyk spies Ebert who had been made Chancellor but a few hours ago; alongside him is seated Scheidemann. Bonczyk recognizes them from pictures in the newspapers.

Ebert and Scheidemann each have a plate before them, but just as they are about to start eating an excited swarm of deputies, journalists and soldiers bursts into the room. They are all talking at once and all to Scheidemann:

“Comrade Scheidemann...”

“A speech!”

“At once!”

Scheidemann wants to spoon down his soup first.

“No, quick! There are ten thousand people out there. Liebknecht has entered the Palace! He is proclaiming the Soviet Republic!”

“A speech, quick!”

“No, now!”

Scheidemann is dragged from his chair, pushed out of the restaurant, across the lobby, through the reading room, out at an open door on to the balcony. A Bavarian captain reaches down and helps him on to the parapet. Scheidemann sees the crowd below – from the steps they stretch away in a broad sea as far as the Bismarck Memorial and beyond to the edge of the Tiergarten. The surge and roar of the immense, moving throng carries him away – he was always more demagogue than cautious, calculating politician – he begins to speak, unsurely at first, feeling his way, but finally sweeps to a conclusion far beyond the limits prescribed by the political programme of the Social Democratic Party:

“Workers and soldiers!”

“Terrible have been these four years of war! Awful the sacrifice which the people has had to make both in money and in life! The disastrous war is over. The mass murder is ended.

“The enemies of the people, the enemies responsible for Germany’s collapse, have been swept

away. The stay-at-home heroes who yesterday were still dreaming of conquest; who have been in the forefront of the battle against constitutional reform, especially of the shameful Prussian electoral system – that enemy, let us hope, we have defeated. The Emperor has abdicated. He and his friends have gone forever. The people has triumphed along the whole line!

“The Prince of Baden has surrendered the Chancellorship to Deputy Ebert. Our friend is now engaged in the formation of a Workers’ Government to include every socialist party. The new government must not be disturbed in its work for peace, in its effort to secure bread and work for every man.

“Workers and soldiers! Show yourselves worthy of this great occasion; for it is an immense thing that has happened, and a great, almost insuperable, task that lies before us.

“Government by the people for the people! Let nothing be done to bring dishonour upon the workers’ movement! Let us show ourselves united, true and conscious of our great task!

“The old, the rotten, the Monarchy, has collapsed.

“Long live the new!

“Long live the German Republic!”

With arms outstretched Scheidemann finishes his speech. A few seconds he stands rigid in ecstatic posture; he hears the first gust of the rising storm of applause. Not till then does he climb down from the parapet.

The Bavarian captain then tries his hand:

“Comrades...” he shouts into the tumult. “In Bavaria also the Republic has been proclaimed. Munich is...” He can get no further.

The crowd before the Reichstag is transported with joy. The news that the Republic has been proclaimed flies above the heads of the crowd like a football. Ever fresh islands of men in the midst of the sea take their hats from their heads and burst into rousing cheers. Scheidemann, who voted for the war loans; Scheidemann, who supported the war; Scheidemann has proclaimed the Republic!

“Hurrah for Scheidemann! Hurrah for the Republic!”

Occasional hoots serve merely to emphasize the general jubilation.

Scheidemann is borne back in triumph to the restaurant.

Only a few deputies are still there. Ebert has just finished his soup. He wipes his beard and looks up at the seething, jabbering throng approaching.

“Scheidemann has proclaimed the Republic!” shouts someone.

Ebert turns pale. He thrusts his plate aside, looks at Scheidemann, strikes his clenched fist on the table: “Is that true?”

“But, of course, it was the obvious thing to do!” – “...the obvious thing to do!”

Ebert had caused himself to be appointed Chancellor two hours ago by Prince Max; but in so doing he had been most careful that the office should be handed over in a strictly constitutional manner, with the formal assent of all members of the Imperial Cabinet. Moreover, he had promised to do his utmost to stay the popular rising and to keep it within the limits of the law.

Thick-set and bull-necked, he comes out from behind the table. The blood surges to his temples. His face has turned purple, Scheidemann starts back before this incarnation of concentrated fury. The other witnesses of the scene are equally astonished at Ebert’s sudden outburst, for no man knows the cause; none knows of the secret interviews which have passed between Ebert and the Prince; none knows of the pact made by the leader of the Social Democratic Party with the last Imperial Chancellor.

With difficulty Ebert finds words, disjointed sentences which he flings like blows in the face of his colleague: “Whatever made you do such a thing? – You had no business to do it! – To proclaim the Republic is not in your competence! – What is to become of Germany – a republic or what you will – that is not for you, but for a Constituent Assembly to decide!”

Ebert will hear no explanation; he silences all who would know the reason for his agitation: “I have told you my opinion. I want to hear no more, and there’s an end of it!”

His colleagues are left dumbfounded. He stumps heavily out of the restaurant, pushes his way through the crowd of workers, past the bivouac, to the party committee room. He takes down his hat and his overcoat and then leaves for the Chancellery.

But outside the columns are still marching.

From the Reichstag the crowd extends to the Brandenburg Gate and from the Brandenburg Gate, like a broad, dark carpet, it stretches as far as the Imperial Palace. Ever more and more armed men are appearing. Motor-lorries mounted with machine-guns jolt along on their iron springs over the cobbles. Here handbills are being broadcast from a dray – making the third that the *Vorwärts* has issued today. There the white-haired Ledebour is delivering a speech from a taxi. At the corner of Wilhelmstrasse a wounded officer is addressing the crowd, exhorting all and sundry to keep a watchful eye on the people with the guns. There are clusters of men on the balcony of the Café Bauer. One in a boiled shirt is proclaiming that “law and order are quite as necessary as bread”. A soldier with a shaggy beard, newly arrived from the Eastern Front and still hung about with his pack and packages, is standing wedged among a throng of people who are demanding that he should tell them what is going to happen next. Youngsters are worming their way through the crowd, tossing little handbills into the air, which descend like snowflakes on the heads of the people, and are greedily seized upon, the notice drawn up by Duncker and so hastily printed at the office of the *Lokalanzeiger*:

Mass Meeting
Subject: Our task
Tonight, at eight o'clock, in
Busch Circus
Workers, Women, Soldiers!
Everyone come!

The Spartacist League.

In the Lustgarten amid a sea of faces and outstretched arms, is a lorry filled with sailors and workmen.

“Liebknecht!”

“Karl Liebknecht is speaking!”

“Silence!”

Liebknecht is on the roof of the lorry. He is pointing to the main gate of the Palace: “Workers and soldiers, let the new socialist freedom go in at that gate! Let us hoist the Red Flag of the Free German Republic on that staff where the Imperial Standard now waves!”

The lorry sets off through the crowd and sweeps up the drive. The people stream along in its wake; they overrun the courtyards, mount the steps, scatter through the smooth parqueted rooms.

While Liebknecht is arguing with the Chief Steward of the Palace and being taken to a room with windows giving on the square, the crowds who have entered behind him are exploring the apartments, all wrapped in gloom. One party has penetrated to the kitchens, which have remained unused since 1914. Someone discovers a switch and turns on the light.

The crowd stands on the threshold, glued to the spot. With incredulous eyes they stare at the piles of provisions. On tables, on the cold cooking-range, on the floor – everywhere are sacks, chests piled high, and rows of great earthenware jars. And these bulging sacks, these heavy chests, these bulky jars are not mere ornaments. The bewilderment of these wasted creatures, despoiled by their rulers to the very verge of physical collapse, does not last long. With all the greed of starving men they fall upon the imperial hoard: 800 sacks of snow-white Ukrainian flour, countless bags of coffee, boxes of tea, preserves, thousands of eggs, pots of lard, bottles of sauce, rows of sugar loaf,

quantities of pulse foods, chocolate, cigars, cigarettes.

Chests are broken open, sacks are ripped up, coffee-beans are strewn all over the floor, flour rises in clouds. And the smell of the good things of which they have so long been deprived intoxicates the senses of these famished creatures – munition workers, soldiers, wounded men – more even than the food which they so greedily stuff into their mouths.

And above stairs, on the balcony whence Wilhelm II had delivered his address “To my People”, gleams the pale forehead of Karl Liebknecht, his outstretched left hand beating time to his sentences: “...never again will a Hohenzollern stand in this place. It is seventy years since Friedrich Wilhelm IV had to stand here and doff his cap to the funeral procession of those who fell in the cause of freedom before the barricades in Berlin – a procession of fifty blood-stained corpses. Another procession is passing here today – the procession of the ghosts of the millions who have laid down their lives in the sacred cause of the proletariat. Broken and bleeding, these victims of tyranny go staggering by, and behind them trudge the ghosts of millions of women and children who have perished in want and misery in the cause of the proletariat. And after them come the millions upon millions of victims of the World War. Today a countless multitude of proletarians has come to this place to celebrate the new freedom. Comrades, I proclaim the Free Socialist German Republic – a Republic which shall include all races, where there shall be no more slaves, in which every honest workman shall receive the just reward of his labour. The reign of capitalism, which has turned all Europe into a graveyard, is over. Now we can recall our Russian comrades, who when they left said: ‘If within a month, you have not done what we did, we will not own you!’ And it has taken us less than a fortnight! We must summon all our strength to build up a new government of workers and peasants; to create a new political system of the proletariat, an order of peace and happiness and freedom, not merely for our brothers in Germany but for the whole world. We reach out our hands to them and call upon them to complete the world revolution. Whoever is resolved not to cease from fight until the Free Socialist Republic and the world revolution shall be realized, let him raise his hand and solemnly swear!”

From the Palace to the banks of the Spree, from the Museum to the Cathedral stretches the vast crowd.

Above the field of faces rises a forest of arms. A single, hoarse cry bursts over the old, grey Palace:

“We swear!”

“Three cheers for the Republic!”

Suddenly the Cathedral stands out in gay illumination, all the bells begin to ring; but the crowd is not to be diverted. A crimson carpet is passed out over the parapet of the Royal Balcony and hangs down in one broad sweep.

Then comes a shout:

“Long live the first President of the Socialist Republic – long live Karl Liebknecht!”

Liebknecht shakes his head and shouts back:

“We have not got there yet! But president or no president, we must all stand together to achieve the Republic. Hurrah for Freedom! For happiness and peace!”

“Peace!” returns the echo.

Once again the people cheer – the Red Flag has been hoisted on the flagstaff of the Imperial Standard.

Out in the courtyard Liebknecht hurriedly musters a guard to hold the Palace, which is now the property of the people. He puts a soldier in charge, promises the twenty-four men of the old guard who still remain, a safe conduct, then climbs again into the lorry in which he came and goes off with his followers to the Reichstag.

He enters Room 18 where the Independents are in council, his head still full to bursting with the experiences of this unique day. Liebknecht, the agitator whom even a room full of sympathetic listeners can fire to a condition of complete self-oblivion, has today seen hundreds of thousands of workers on the march. He surveys the circle of disputing men – Dittmann, Müller, Barth, Wurm, Cohn. He has not gained even a clear impression of the faces, hardly heard what is being debated,

but he has understood the leading theme. Without asking any questions, without waiting for opposition, he goes at once to the secretary and dictates:

“All executive, legislative and judicial power to be vested in the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils...”

Barth and the Left-Wing are delighted. Dittmann and the Right have no ready alternative with which to counter this uncompromising, unambiguous statement of policy. Their only resort is to fall back upon Haase, who must be here before very long, and without whom no final decision can be made.

Dittmann wants to set off for Hamburg at once to fetch Haase. But for that he will need a car and a safe conduct – or, better still, two – one signed by Scheidemann, the other, for safety’s sake, by Liebknecht.

While they are still arguing about Haase and getting a military car, and the safe conducts, and the necessary signatures, the door opens and Scheidemann looks in.

With him are Brolat and Helier, the two trade-union officials.

“Well, boys, have you made up your minds yet?” asks Scheidemann.

“We must first be clear as to the basis of the new republic.”

“Perhaps you have prepared a draft, then?”

The secretary produces the text which Liebknecht has dictated.

Scheidemann takes it and reads; he boggles at the crucial lines. In order to gain time and collect his thoughts, he reads it all over again.

“Quite, but where in God’s name did you get this stuff?”

“It’s that or nothing!”

“That is our last word.”

“We are not coming in on any other basis.”

“There is Haase, of course; he should be here any minute now.”

Scheidemann begins to remonstrate, assuming a paternal tone as befitting his grey hair. After much argument to and fro, he eventually succeeds in changing the crucial sentence into the following formula:

“In this Republic the executive and judicial power shall be exclusively in the hands of the elected representatives of the working classes and soldiers.”

The new wording has, indeed, not been able to change the essence of Liebknecht’s draft; nevertheless, it is no longer “roaring Bolshevism”, and, what is more important the phrase “elected representatives” leaves the door open to the social democratic leaders, and, given long enough discussion, perhaps even to leaders of the bourgeois parties also, without whom the Social Democrats cannot imagine any government.

Still only half-satisfied with his achievement, Scheidemann leaves the Independents and carries the text to his own party colleagues. There a copy is at once made and sent to Ebert as party President at the Chancellery.

Ebert is not at the moment in a position to receive the messenger.

Chancellor Ebert is in the library with the Vice-Chancellor von Payer, Secretary of State Haussmann, and a few others of the late Cabinet. They are conferring as to what measures shall be taken to defeat the revolution.. As the course most likely of success, he now puts forward the scheme to which he had pledged himself with Prince Max, and with which he recently confounded Scheidemann in the Reichstag Restaurant: the speediest possible calling of a Constituent Assembly.

The ex-ministers declare themselves in agreement with of this idea in principle, but they cannot yet give final assurance of participation in Ebert’s new Cabinet. That, so they explain, is dependent upon the sanction of their several parties.

The gentlemen rise and go.

Ebert then receives his party colleague.

He reads the draft terms for the formation of a coalition government as drawn up by the Independents and mitigated by Scheidemann. He goes through the document carefully, point by point, then lays it down again upon the table..

“Impossible, we can’t come in on that basis.”

“Should we send a refusal to the Independents then?”

“No, that won’t do either.”

Ebert searches for a way out, and the thought comes to him again which has come to him more than once already today, but which he does not dare to express; for not only would the extremists among the workers and the Independents consider him a traitor, but his own colleagues also. His party colleague forgotten, he is still lost in thought, when a messenger enters and announces: “His Highness Prince Max of Baden.”

Ebert dismisses his colleague.

Prince Max, dressed ready for the journey, enters the library and finds Ebert alone. He has come to take his leave and shakes Ebert by the hand.

“I beg you most earnestly to stay,” says Ebert.

“With what object?” asks the Prince.

“I should be very glad if you could remain as Regent.” It is the advice which the late Cabinet had given the Prince, the same suggestion which they have passed on to Ebert. But the Prince has made up his mind. He intends to meet his wife at Aschersleben, join forces with the Duke and Duchess of Brunswick *en route* and then to go on to his chateau at Salem am Bodensee. A special train has been put at his disposal for the journey, and Scheidemann has given him a safe conduct.

To Ebert’s proposal the Prince replies:

“I know you contemplate forming a coalition with the Independents, and with the Independents I could not work.”

The Independents will be used by the Government. Without the Independents the Social Democrats could never get the masses behind them; without the collaboration of the Independent leaders the Majority Socialists could never scotch the “pestiferous thing”. Ebert knows that and the Prince knows it too. They shake hands once again, a Prince of Baden and a subject of Baden, who even in the exalted position to which events have carried him, still remains loyal to his sovereign.

The Prince turns on the threshold:

“Herr Ebert, I commend the German Reich to your care.”

Ebert stands at the door with bowed head and answers:

“I have given two sons for the Reich.”

The river of faces never ceases – workmen in overalls, soldiers in uniform, apprentices, shop girls, women.

In grey drops it trickles out from the apartment houses, from courtyard and mews the tributaries run side by side into the streets. The stream swells to a river, emptying into the great flood which pours into the city, to Police Headquarters, past the Palace, filling the great, wide street Unter den Linden, the promenade, the roadways and the footpaths; it draws slowly through the five gateways of the Brandenburg Gate, encircles the Reichstag building where a light is burning at every window; bears off toward the North, past the Tiergarten, the barracks, Moabit Gaol; then divides and by various channels comes back ag to Police Headquarters, a living stream continually fed from ever fresh tributaries, a never-ending circle.

And there is neither police nor military to stay them.

The buildings in which power formerly resided, whose courtyards were this morning still noisy with the trampling and neighing of the horses waiting in readiness for the attack, now lie open to all. The air is laden with dust of the marching columns, vibrant with marching songs and the echo of scattered bursts of rifle fire.

There has been shooting from the loop-holes of one of the Palace gates, from the Palace stables, from the roof of the University and of the Library – hysterical, aimless shooting over the heads of the crowd, shots which have claimed but few victims. The demonstrators penetrate into the buildings, search the rooms, the cellars, the roofs, but find no trace of the culprits.

A party of Revolutionaries has posted itself at the Brandenburg Gate. Beneath the bodies of the bronze horses they have mounted a machine-gun. All at once, as if they had suddenly gone mad,

they open fire on some flickering lights in the Tiergarten; then cease again just as abruptly. "Counter-revolutionaries marching in from Spandau!" someone had shouted to the soldiers – but it was merely the tail-lamps of traffic going peacefully homewards.

The gates of all the public buildings are open.

At Police Headquarters are workers arming themselves.

In the barracks the homeless seek refuge.

In the quadrangle of the Criminal Court an immense pyre of dossiers is burning.

The people are crowding through the lofty, brightly-lit rooms of the Reichstag. Emil Barth has shifted his Revolutionary Committee from the upper room where it had been sitting, to the Chamber of the House itself. The workers and soldiers rounded up by Richard Müller and Dorrenbach's sailors have piled in after them. From the throne of the President of the Reichstag which is decked in red cloth, Barth declares the first session of the Greater-Berlin Workers' and Soldiers' Council to be open.

Before the closed doors of the Busch Circus a great crowd has assembled and is demanding admission. Duncker, who had issued the general invitation to a mass meeting at the Circus, is arguing with the proprietors. A gentleman is dashing about the vestibule in a state of panic, protesting that he dare not admit anyone as the Soldiers' Council has forbidden the meeting. Not until he has made innumerable telephone calls and received Duncker's specific assurance confirmed by telephone from the Reichstag – that his Soldiers' Council is "not the right one", but one of many false ones who do not count, will he consent to allow the doors to be opened, and then only under threats from the crowd waiting outside. Duncker, who had telephoned Liebknecht and Meyer and other members of the Spartacist Group and taken no end of trouble to get helpers for the work of editing the *Lokalanzeiger*, finds himself here almost unaided – no chairman, no speaker other than himself, everything to be improvised! Only his wife Kate is there to support him, and she is now standing beside him on the giddy platform whence, under other circumstances, circus horses and elephants make their chute into the water below. The building is ill-lit and on one side only. On one of the benches above him Duncker catches sight of a few familiar faces – the seamstress from the centre block and some other inhabitants of 46 Boxhagenerstrasse where a handful of his bills had been distributed – another patch of white faces in the centre row, a second at the other end of the circus, and a third high up under the roof are picked out by the meagre light which filters in – the rest of the building is wrapped in profound gloom. Tier upon tier, like a fog-bound crater rising steeply into the infinite, the heads of the audience encompass the forlorn figure of Duncker upon the platform below. And the two frowsy oleander bushes which someone has found and placed on the ramp in a vain hope of dissipating the air of general desolation, cast enormous, fantastic shadows into the dome of the building. Duncker talks of the war, of the failure of the German policy of force, and of the simultaneous failure of the policy of gradualism of the Majority Social Democrats. From lack of any specific Spartacist programme, and careful not to prejudice any that the party may subsequently decide upon, Duncker is obliged to limit himself to generalities. He is urging that the partial revolution already accomplished be now made into a complete revolution. And to drive his point home he cites the great example of Russia. His audience, unfamiliar with the ways of political meetings and assembled haphazard, makes no interruptions, expresses no opinions, but merely listens attentively to all he has to say.

And outside the stream still flows on – men still pouring in from the suburbs and working-class districts toward the heart of the city. In the Friedrichstrasse, Unter den Linden, on the square in front of the Brandenburg Gate, the blue, flickering electric arc-lamps are burning again.

The war is over.

The Empire has been overthrown, Germany is a republic.

The Berlin populace is marching. Whoever can carry a gun or understands how to throw a bomb, has taken his place in the columns, or, mounted on lorries already bristling with weapons, is drifting slowly with the stream. Here a party of workers is escorting home through the crowd the entire staff of a police station, who dare not venture alone on the streets. A hand is placed good-humouredly on the police inspector's shoulder and a worker says jestingly: "Now it is our turn!" There a French

prisoner-of-war with slung rifle is marching along, step for step, with a squad of soldiers in field-grey.

“Hurrah for the International!”

“Vive la révolution mondiale!”.

“Workers and Soldiers....” says someone, by way of beginning a speech.

“Hurrah! Hurrah!” retorts the crowd drifting heedlessly by.

Sheltering in a corner of the cold, damp street is an old woman with a military greatcoat over her arm. In utter bewilderment she keeps repeating to herself the self-same words: “Somebody has given me a coat! Somebody has given me a coat...”

From a crowded motor-lorry a flock of handbills flutters down upon the heads of the people. Ebert’s two proclamations: “To the citizens of Germany”; “To all Authorities and Civil Servants” – issued at noon, are out of date by evening. This new proclamation: “There must be no shooting” is signed: “The Social Democratic Workers’ and Soldiers’ Council”. And on the bonnet of the lorry is a life-size representation of a workman and a soldier shaking hands. And in a side street is another lorry, also spouting handbills, and with the same picture of fraternization on the bonnet. The Social Democrats have requisitioned every car in the military park and any private car upon which they could lay hands.

A man with a handbag is making his way from the Lehrter Railway Station to the Reichstag – Hugo Haase, the leader of the Independents. He first heard of the Berlin revolution at Rathenow, where his train had been stopped. There, at an inn, the story was told how the Social Democrat, Wels, had been parading the streets at the head of the Jäger battalion. Haase arrived in Berlin only a few minutes ago by a train filled with sailors and soldiers returning home from the Front. The crowds streaming along through the darkness remind him of Kiel, its streets filled with sailors, and of the march of the workers at Hamburg.

The brilliant spokesman and herald of the coming revolution, who reached Kiel too late and arrived in Hamburg only after the die had been cast, has come back to Berlin on the night of November 9th, when the Majority Social Democrats have already half a day’s start and, with consummate skill, are now in process of winning over to their side the one great hope of the Independents, namely, the proletarian in uniform.

Haase scrutinizes the placards as they are being borne along, in the hope of discovering some evidence of the triumph of his party. He stoops to pick up a sheet of paper and deciphers it by the light of a street lamp – a special edition of the *Vorwärts* calling for a general strike and announcing that “the movement will be under the combined direction of the Social Democrats and Independents”.

Haase does not know that this special edition was issued only after the strike had broken out against the express wish of the Social Democratic Party; when the strike had in fact succeeded. Neither does he know that the “combined direction of the movement” does not correspond the facts, but merely represents the desire of the Social Democrats to smuggle themselves into the movement after the event.

Haase pushes his way through the crowd outside the Reichstag. Bag in hand, he climbs wearily up the stairs to the first floor and at last enters Room 18, where his party colleagues have been sitting awaiting him for three days.

Ebert has now vacated the library and installed himself in the Chancellor’s room – the same place which, until this morning, Prince Max had occupied, and before him the whole line of imperial chancellors, Bethmann, Billow, Caprivi – the same place which thirty years ago Bismarck had occupied. Ebert does not get up again; he has a heavy day behind him and now, keeping his seat, he allows the endless succession of visitors to file past – Under-Secretary Haussmann, a conservative deputy with three representatives of the press, Dr. Landsberg, Otto Wels, Hermann Müller just back from Kiel, Comrade Göhre who is to understudy the War Minister. The excited Haussmann he pacifies: “The bourgeois ministers will be used as technical collaborators. Of course, I agree, they could not contemplate joining the Cabinet unless they have full right of vote. The Independents will most certainly be put right on that score.” The very diffident conservative deputy

and the three pressmen have come merely to inform him that the *Lokalanzeiger* has been taken over by the Spartacists, and the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine-Zeitung* and the *Berliner Allgemeine Zeitung* by the Independents, and to ask his opinion as to the legality of the business. Ebert recommends patience: "The last word in these matters has not yet been said, but this much I can tell you: the final decision rests neither with the Spartacists nor with the Independents." With Dr. Landsberg he discusses what reply shall be made to the terms submitted by the Independents for the formation of a coalition government, and then leaves it to him to deal with the Party Committee. Comrade Wels reports all his varied activities – the soldiers' councils he has formed; the guards he has stationed at the Spree Bridges; the propaganda lorries he has sent out through the city with the "Unity" slogan; the plans he has elaborated for influencing the general meeting of workers and soldiers' councils on the morrow – Ebert says simply: "Carry on – do whatever you think fit!" Hermann Müller describes his impressions of Kiel and tells how Noske, by assuming the Governorship, had contrived to set up a court of appeal superior to the Workers' and Soldiers' Council. Ebert interrupts with the observation: "The important thing now is Berlin. Above all, we must make the Independents and the Spartacists toe the line. Wels has undertaken to work on the soldiers to that end. Tomorrow's meeting of the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils may well be decisive for all Germany..." Then at last he allows himself a pause, and takes out a packet of sandwiches. Hardly has he stuffed the last bite into his mouth before he admits the next visitor – the social democratic representative at the War Ministry, Comrade Göhre. Ebert contemplates the lieutenant's uniform which Göhre – who was in the army for a short time – has dug out from his wardrobe and put on today in honour of his new dignity. The absurdly ill-fitting uniform, the equally absurd signatures appended to an appeal to the troops – "Göhre, Lt. of the Landwehr, Südekum, Lt. of the Landwehr, Colin Ross, Lt. of the Reserve" – awaken in him once more that thought which he dare not utter, dare not discuss with even his most intimate friends – at any rate not yet – but which, for all that, seems to him to provide the only means of keeping the Social Democrats in power... After Göhre has gone and while his next visitor, Comrade Hirsch, is busily outlining the programme of a "People's Committee for the Maintenance of the Communal Services in Greater Berlin", he is still brooding over this thought. Comrade Hirsch is talking of Gas, Water, Electricity Works and Savings Banks. Ebert nods solemnly, at the same time reasoning with himself: Treachery? Perhaps – but what alternative is there? – There can be no government without military power.

The Social Democrats' reply to the terms of the Independents for the formation of a coalition has been delivered at Room 18.

Liebknecht flings the document down on the table:

"They would *prefer* to see Germany a socialist republic! They admit it, but only as a recommendation! Only as a pious hope! It is a matter for a Constituent Assembly to decide! They are against workers' and soldiers' councils, and emphasize the necessity of including bourgeois members in the provisional government! But, comrades, this is a cabinet of the counter-revolution! This is no place for us! Our job is to carry the revolution still farther..."

Ledebour agrees with Liebknecht:

"I wouldn't sit at the same table with any one of those people – certainly not with Ebert and Scheidemann – much less in the same government."

Hugo Haase, whom the armistice terms which he has just read, have reduced to despair, is also in principle against taking any share in the government: "On the other hand, we are too weak to undertake the business alone. Mere numerical inferiority would soon bring us down..."

Dittmann, Wurm, and Cohn are for participation:

"We can't afford to abstain – a cabinet of some sort is necessary, if only for concluding the armistice. Let us join, say, for three days only. Liebknecht, too, must think of his reputation. I dare say even he, through his refusal, would not relish the prospect of being saddled with the blame of delaying the armistice and thereby causing even one soldier to lose his life unnecessarily" And so the debate goes on – Dittmann, Wurm and Cohn on the one side, Ledebour and Liebknecht on the other and Haase between, endeavouring to mediate and find a compromise.

The revolutionary forces are focused in three points:

In Room No. 18, on the first floor of the Reichstag, the parliamentary representatives of the radical wing are disputing as to the relative power of the two socialist parties, unable to decide between the alternatives of taking over the government themselves, of co-operating with the Social Democrats, or of refusing to take any part whatever.

In the Chamber of the Reichstag itself a committee to arrange for the calling of a general meeting of all workers' and soldiers' councils has been co-opted from among the Revolutionaries and the chance assembly of workers and soldiers.

The Majority Social Democrats, committee and all, have migrated to the Chancellery and are there busily engaged exploring the possibilities in two opposite directions: On the one hand, the formation of a coalition with the Independents, under the slogan "Establish the revolution!"; on the other hand, co-operation with the bourgeois parties for the purpose of calling a constituent assembly, under the slogan: "Democracy".

The Independents are disputing.

The Majority Social Democrats are organizing.

The Revolutionaries are trying to hitch themselves to the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. And on the streets the great nameless masses are still moving, but after their day of excitement are growing weary at last and with the lateness of the hour beginning to disperse. The organized demonstration has disintegrated; only here and there scattered islands remain stationary in this ebbing sea. At the Brandenburg Gate there is still a multitude of armed workers and soldiers ready to defend the revolution. On the Alexander Platz is a great, black throng discussing the setting-up of public eating-houses; the throwing open of the Palace and the villas in West Berlin as a solution of the housing problem; and the possibilities of work for the soldiers when they return from the Front. The Lustgarten is dotted over with countless eager little groups discussing every conceivable social and political problem. Beneath the arching shadows of the oleander bushes in Busch Circus quiver the silhouettes of the two Duncers. "The long succession of wars will end only with the overthrow of capitalism!" cries the husband. "Mothers and daughters, take your place in the vanguard in this last fight for freedom!" cries the wife.

The people are leaving the Circus. Toil-bent proletarians, for the first time attempting to straighten themselves up; men and women in whose eyes flickers a vain hope that the days of privation may even yet have an end. And in the midst of the departing crowd Truda Müller, the seamstress. She has become separated from her neighbours and is now being borne aimlessly along – down the "Linden", along Friedrichstrasse. Outside the railway station she stops. A train has just arrived from the Western Front. Soldiers with bearded faces, packs on their backs and parcels in their hands, are coming down the steps in grey squads. A fortnight ago a letter addressed to her husband had been returned to her with the imperial field post-office stamp: "Unclaimed". Truda Müller now happens to be outside a Berlin railway station and she scrutinizes every soldier's face; for a morbid thought has suddenly seized her, which causes her to stand there until the last soldier has come down and disappeared into the crowd. Even then she does not move from the place.

Fritz Ebert is alone in the Chancellor's room. His friends have all gone. In sweat-soaked collar and unbuttoned waistcoat he sits back in the chair from which he has not moved for hours. The pace has been almost too much for him. In the morning he was still hopeful of saving the monarchy; by ten o'clock he was studying how to fall into the arms of the strikers; by noon all that remained was the plan for summoning a constituent assembly; by nightfall he is on the verge of losing the power to the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. But he has prepared everything for the morrow and has no doubt that a cabinet of Social Democrats and Independents will come into being. And of such a cabinet an instrument can be forged which shall gradually override the Councils. What Noske has done for Kiel must now be done for Berlin, and for the Reich. It really boils down to a question of military power. The army which had stood behind the old government is breaking up. The soldiers will disperse to the four winds, no doubt, but the officers – what will they do? ... The thought, which means treachery, is there again.

Ebert is free of exalted ideas and without the least inclination toward sentimentality. The 9th November – that day for which generations of Socialists have longed, for which so many have suffered – is safely behind him. It has not caused his blood to move a jot faster; it has merely made him dog tired.

And what is treachery? – an idle question without foundation in political realism, which ranters and idealists may care to answer. And what is socialism? – one ideal for the liberation of mankind; and of such there are many. Politics is not concerned with ideals, but with the forces which may be organized under the aegis of certain ideals. What concerns Ebert is not socialism, but the Social Democratic Party. And if the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils get the upper hand, this great instrument will surely come under the wheels and be ground to powder – unless – unless he can contrive at the right moment to get some military force to back his policy. Can he call the officers of the old imperial army to his aid? – that is the question.

Ebert gets up from his chair. He goes to the door, opens it and listens a moment in to the passage, then shuts it again and locks it. He sinks back heavily into the armchair and looks long at the telephone before him. If he lift the receiver, the exchange will answer; but if he first switch over himself, he is in touch by private line with GHQ at Spa and can speak to the Quarter-Master-General without anyone overhearing...

If it were merely a question of the surrender of yet another socialist principle, of which so many have already had to be sacrificed to the exigencies of practical policy and that not on his initiative alone but with the full approval of every understanding colleague. But there you have it! Those other steps had never been undertaken without the sanction of a majority.

And here he is alone.

Friedrich Ebert who has opposed bourgeois democracy to the desire of the working classes for single control, placing the decision as to the future destiny of the people in the hands of an elected Constituent Assembly to be called together by every capitalist device for influencing votes – Friedrich Ebert who, as a party official, has challenged every smallest independent action on the part of a colleague, and dragged up for censure before the Party Committee any functionary who, without previous permission, has bought for the use of his office so much as a curtain worth twelve marks fifty or, without observing all the details of prescribed routine, has acted on his own initiative in the most trifling affairs – Friedrich Ebert, whose blood had boiled only a few hours ago when Scheidemann, without previous party sanction, had proclaimed the Republic – Ebert now stands alone, face to face with the most crucial decision his party has ever had to make.

In small concerns Ebert has ever been painfully observant of every requirement of party discipline; in great matters he has more than once set himself above it, but never without a twinge of conscience. So now he sits in front of the telephone, a complex of tormenting inhibitions and thoughts – on the one hand, a successful military coup, the restoration of the Imperial Reich, court-martial for the rebellious workers; on the other, the power in the hands of workers' and soldiers' councils, the setting up of a German Republic of Councils, the overthrow of the capitalist system. Ebert can decide neither for the one nor the other; he must find a middle path for his party.

His hand reaches for the receiver, then lets it lie.

Wait and see – those are the tactics which have brought him thus far – they will not fail him now. He sinks back again into speculation and brooding.

In the Chamber of the Reichstag Barth is giving the orders for the coming day: "10th November, 10 a.m. All workers in all factories of Berlin to elect one representative per thousand men. Similarly, all soldiers to elect one representative for each formation. These representatives to assemble at 5 o'clock in Busch Circus, where a provisional government will be formed..."

In the Committee Room of the Independents, Liebknecht, brought to heel at last by the combined assaults of Dittmann, Cohn, Haase and the soldiers' delegates, declares his willingness to join a Cabinet of People's Commissars constituted on a basis of parity, but with the provisos that "the legislative and executive power shall ultimately rest with the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils; that the coalition is for three days only; and that the Commissars shall be confirmed in their office by the General Assembly of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils..."

An hour later Liebknecht withdraws his support. The first meeting of the Workers' and Soldiers' Council concludes with three cheers for the German Soviet Republic.

At the Brandenburg Gate the *International* is sung. Outside the railway station in Friedrichstrasse an unknown woman sinks fainting to the ground.

A telephone rings in the Chancellery.

The President of the Social Democratic Party has the receiver in his hand:

"Ebert speaking."

"Groener speaking."

Quartermaster-General Groener has consulted his staff and discussed the matter with Field-Marshal von Hindenburg. The army asks the support of the Social Democratic Party for the restoration of its lost authority. As a price, the Generals offer to the new Government the protection of their bayonets and guns.

Chancellor Ebert listens attentively to First Quarter-Master-General Groener's proposals. Then he asks:

"What is your attitude toward the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils?"

"Commanders have been instructed to deal with them in a friendly spirit."

"And what do you expect of us?"

"The General Field-Marshal expects the Government of the Reich to support the Officers' Corps in the maintenance of discipline and order in the army. He asks also that the provisioning of the army shall be ensured by every possible means and that any disturbance of railway communications shall be prevented."

"Anything else?"

"The Officers' Corps invites the Government of the Reich to fight Bolshevism, and for this purpose places itself at the Government's disposal."

Ebert hesitates before giving his answer. He looks up at the thickly-padded door; he turns toward the window and listens for any sound from the street, where he fancies he already hears the enraged shouts of the workers.

Then in a confident voice he replies:

"Convey to the General Field-Marshal the thanks of the Government."

POSTSCRIPT

The happenings in Germany during the autumn of 1918, though historically so instructive, are unknown to most people, or, at best, the memory of that time has been buried beneath a steady accumulation of false accounts. In this volume I have attempted to give a comprehensive survey of those weeks during which the foundations were laid for Germany's existence after the war.

I have cast this history in the form of a novel, because it is my belief that events which are brought about not by any exchange of diplomatic notes, but by the sudden collision of opposed forces, do not lend themselves to a purely scientific treatment. By that method one can merely assemble a selection of facts belonging to any particular period – only artistic re-fashioning can yield a living picture of the whole. As in my former book, *The Kaiser's Coolies*, so I have tried here to preserve strict historic truth, and in so far as exact material was available I have used it as the basis of my work. All the events described, all the persons introduced, are drawn to the life and their words reproduced verbatim. Occasional statements which the sources preserve only in indirect speech are here given direct form. But in no instance has the sense been altered.

THEODOR PLIVIER

THEODOR Otto Richard PLIVIER – Some biographical details

Theodor Plivier (called Plievier after 1933) was born on 12 February 1892 in Berlin and died on 12 March 1955 in Tessin, Switzerland.

Since his death Plivier/Plievier has been mostly known in his native Germany as a novelist, particularly for his trilogy of novels about the fighting on the Eastern Front in WWII, made up of the works *Moscow*, *Stalingrad* and *Berlin*.

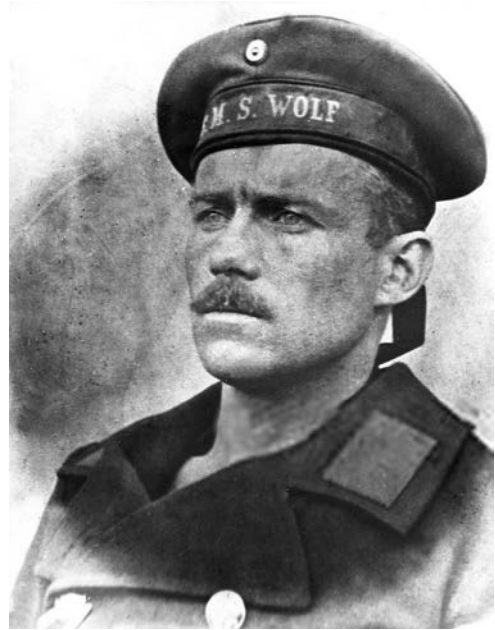
He was the son of an artisan file-maker (*Feilenhauer* in German) and spent his childhood in the Gesundbrunnen district in Berlin. There is still a plaque dedicated to him on the house where he was born at 29 Wiesenstraße. He was interested in literature from an early age. He began an apprenticeship at 17 with a plasterer and left his family home shortly after. For his apprenticeship he travelled across the German Empire, in Austria-Hungary and in the Netherlands. After briefly returning to his parents, he joined up as a sailor in the merchant navy. He first visited South America in 1910, and worked in the potassium nitrate (saltpetre) mines in 1913 in Chile. This period of his life seems to have provided much of the material for the novel *The World's Last Corner* (see below).

He returned to Germany, Hamburg, in 1914, when he was still only 22. He was arrested by the police for a brawl in a sailors' pub, and was thus "recruited" into the imperial navy just as the First World War broke out. He spent his time in service on the auxiliary cruiser SMS *Wolf*, commanded by the famous Commander Karl August Nerger. It was he who led a victorious war of patriotic piracy in the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, seizing enemy ships and their cargo, taking their crews prisoner, and returning in glory to Kiel in February 1918. The activities of SMS *Wolf* are described in fictional form in the final chapter of Plivier's *The Kaiser's Coolies* (see below). The young Plivier didn't set foot on land for 451 days, but while at sea he became converted to revolutionary ideas, like thousands of other German sailors. Nevertheless, he never joined a political party. In November 1918, he was in Wilhelmshaven and participated in the strikes, uprisings and revolts accompanying the fall of the German Empire, including the Kiel Mutiny. He also played a small role in the November Revolution in Berlin.

He left the navy after the armistice (11 November 1918) and, with Karl Raichle and Gregor Gog (both sailor veterans of the Wilhelmshaven revolt), founded the "Green Way Commune", near Bad Urach. It was a sort of commune of revolutionaries, artists, poets, proto-hippies, and whoever turned up. Two early participants were the anarchist Erich Mühsam and Johannes Becher (see below), who was a member of the German Communist Party (KPD). At this time several communes were set up around Germany, with Urach being one of three vegetarian communes set up in the Swabia region⁶.

It was the beginning of the anarchist-oriented "Edition of the 12" publishing house. Plivier was certainly influenced by the ideas of Bakunin, but also Nietzsche. Later he took on some kind of "individualist anarchism", ensuring that he didn't join any party or formal political organisation.

In Berlin in 1920 he married the actress Maria Stoz⁷. He belonged to the circle of friends of Käthe Kollwitz⁸, the radical painter and sculptor, who painted his portrait. On Christmas Day 1920



⁶ See: *The Mountain of Truth: the counterculture begins – Ascona, 1900-1920* by Martin Green, University Press of New England, 1986. Pg. 70.

⁷ They had a daughter and two sons.

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K%C3%A4the_Kollwitz

he showed a delegation from the American IWW to the grave of Karl Liebknecht⁹. In the early '20s he seems to have associated with the anarcho-syndicalist union, the FAUD (Free Workers' Union of Germany), and addressed its public meetings¹⁰.

Plivier underwent a "personal crisis" and began to follow the example of the "back to nature" poet Gusto Gräser¹¹, another regular resident of "Green Way" and a man seen as the leading figure in the subculture of poets and wandering mystics known (disparagingly at the time) as the "Inflation Saints" (*Inflationsheilige*)¹². In the words of the historian Ulrich Linse, "When the revolutionaries were killed, were in prison or had given up, the hour of the wandering prophets came. As the outer revolution had fizzled out, they found its continuation in the consciousness-being-revolution, in a spiritual change"¹³. Plivier began wearing sandals and robes...¹⁴ According to the *Mountain of Truth* book (see footnote), in 1922, in Weimar, Plivier was preaching a neo-Tolstoyan gospel of peace and anarchism, much influenced by Gräser. That year he published *Anarchy*, advocating a "masterless order, built up out of the moral power of free individuals". Supposedly, "he was a religious anarchist, frequently quoting from the Bible"¹⁵. This was not unusual amongst the *Inflationsheilige*.

His son Peter and his daughter Thora died from malnutrition during the terrible times of crisis and hyper-inflation in 1923. A year later he began to find work as a journalist and translator. He then worked for some time in South America as a cattle trader and as secretary to the German consul in Pisagua, Chile. On his return to Germany he wrote *Des Kaisers Kulis* ("The Kaiser's Coolies") in 1929, which was published the following year. It was a story based on his days in the Imperial Navy, denouncing the imperialist war in no uncertain terms. At the front of the book is a dedication to two sailors who were executed for participation in a strike and demonstration by hundreds of sailors from the *Prinzregent Luitpold*¹⁶. Erwin Piscator put on a play of his novel at the Lessingtheater in Berlin, with the first showing on 30 August 1930. *Der Kaiser ging, die Generälen blieben* ("The Kaiser Goes: The Generals Remain") was published in 1932. In both novels Plivier did an enormous amount of research, as well as drawing on his own memories of important historical events. In the original edition of *Der Kaiser ging...* there is a citations section at the end with fifty book titles and a list of newspapers and magazines consulted. This attention to historical fact was to become a hallmark of Plivier's method as a novelist. The postscript to *Der Kaiser ging...* clearly states what he was trying to do:

"I have cast this history in the form of a novel, because it is my belief that events which are

⁹ *Industrial Pioneer* [IWW paper], March 1921.

¹⁰ Some material about the FAUD on libcom has brief references to Plivier, for example:

<https://libcom.org/files/syndicalism-Germany.pdf>

¹¹ <http://praymont.blogspot.co.uk/2011/07/ur-hippies-from-germany-to-california.html>

<https://strangeflowers.wordpress.com/2012/10/12/dress-down-friday-gusto-graser/>

¹² Inflation had been seen by most people as a serious issue from the end of the war. However, the famous period of hyper-inflation in Germany was roughly from January to November 1923. By November 1923, the American dollar was worth 4.2105 trillion (10¹²) German marks. Then a new currency was introduced, backed by hard assets. The classic work about this phenomenon is *When Money Dies* by Adam Fergusson, 1975 (republished 2010).

This Wikipedia page (in German) has some stuff about the colourful "Inflation Saints":

<https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inflationsheilige>

¹³ *Wanderpropheten der Zwanziger Jahre*, Berlin, 1982.

¹⁴ Unfortunately, although there are pictures available of Plivier as a sailor, and as a successful author, it has not been possible to find a picture of him as an unwashed hippy.

¹⁵ *The Mountain of Truth...*, pg. 71.

¹⁶ The dedication reads: "In Memoriam: Alwin Köbis, Stoker SMS 'Prinzregent Leopold', Max Reichpietsch, Leading Seaman SMS 'Friedrich der Grosse'. On August 25th, 1917, sentenced to death by Naval court-martial at Wilhelmshaven. On September 5th shot by a detachment of reservists on the rifle range at Wahn in the Royal department of Köln." More information about Alwin (or "Albin") Köbis can be found here:

<https://libcom.org/history/albin-k%C3%B6bis-1892-1917>

See also: *Mutiny – A history of naval insurrection* by Leonard F. Guttridge, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis MD, 1992. According to this book, Reichpietsch was affiliated to the USPD and Köbis was an anarchist.

brought about not by any exchange of diplomatic notes, but by the sudden collision of opposed forces, do not lend themselves to a purely scientific treatment. By that method one can merely assemble a selection of facts belonging to any particular period – only artistic re-fashioning can yield a living picture of the whole. As in my former book, *The Kaiser's Coolies*, so I have tried here to preserve strict historic truth, and in so far as exact material was available I have used it as the basis of my work. All the events described, all the persons introduced, are drawn to the life and their words reproduced verbatim. Occasional statements which the sources preserve only in indirect speech are here given direct form. But in no instance has the sense been altered.”

His second marriage (which didn't produce any children) was to the Jewish actress Hildegard Piscator in 1931. When Hitler came to power as Chancellor in 1933, his books were banned and publically burnt. He changed his name to Plievier. That year he decided to emigrate, and at the end of a long journey which led him to Prague, Zurich, Paris and Oslo, he ended up in the Soviet Union.

He was initially not subject to much censorship in Moscow and published accounts of his adventures and political commentaries. When Operation Barbarossa was launched he was evacuated to Tashkent along with other foreigners. Here, for example, he met up (again?) with Johannes Robert Becher, the future Culture Minister of the DDR! In September 1943 he became a member of the National Committee for a Free Germany (NKFD), which gathered anti-Nazi German exiles living in the USSR – not *just* Communist Party members, although there were a fair number of them involved. In 1945 he wrote *Stalingrad*, based on testimonies which he collected, with official permission, from German prisoners of war in camps around Moscow. This novel was initially published in occupied Berlin and Mexico, but ended up being translated into 14 languages and being adapted for the theatre and TV¹⁷. It describes in unflinching and pitiless detail the German military defeat and its roots in the megalomania of Hitler and the incompetence of the High Command. It is the only novel by Plievier that was *written specifically as a work of state propaganda*. It is certainly “defeatist”, but only on the German side – it is certainly not “revolutionary defeatist” like Plievier's writings about WWI. The French writer Pierre Vaydat (in the French-language magazine of German culture, *Germanica*¹⁸) even suggests that it was clearly aimed at “the new military class which was the officer corps of the Wehrmacht” in an effort to encourage them to rise up against Hitler and save the honour of the German military. The novel nevertheless only appeared in a censored form in the USSR.

He returned to Weimar at the end of 1945, as an official of the Red Army! For two years he worked as a delegate of the regional assembly, as director of publications and had a leading position in the “Cultural Association [*Kulturbund*] for German Democratic Renewal” which was a Soviet organisation devoted to changing attitudes in Germany and preparing its inclusion into the USSR's economic and political empire. As with so much else in Plievier's life, this episode was partly fictionalised in a novel, in this case his last ever novel, *Berlin*.

Plievier ended up breaking with the Soviet system in 1948, and made an announcement to this effect to a gathering of German writers in Frankfurt in May of that year¹⁹. However, Plievier had taken a long and tortuous political path since his days as a revolutionary sailor in 1918... He clearly ended up supporting the Cold War – seeing the struggle against “Communist” totalitarianism as a continuation of the struggle against fascism (logically enough). What's more, his views had taken on a somewhat religious tinge, talking of a “spiritual rebirth” whose foundations “begin with the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai and end with the theses of the Atlantic Charter”! Although

¹⁷ For example, a TV drama based on the book was broadcast by the BBC in 1963:
<http://www.britishtelevisiondrama.org.uk/?p=1220>

¹⁸ *Germanica*, 28, 2001, “Theodor Plievier, romancier-reporter des deux guerres mondiales”. This magazine article (in French) contains more biographical information about Plivier than anything else available online.
<http://germanica.revues.org/2242>

¹⁹ This is set out in the paper “*Einige Bemerkungen über die Bedeutung der Freiheit*” (“Some remarks about the importance of freedom”).

it can be read as a denunciation of the horrors of war in general, it's clear that *Berlin*, his description of the collapse of Nazi Germany in 1945, is far more of a denunciation of Soviet Russia than anything else. The character Colonel Zecke, obviously a mouthpiece for Plivier's views, even claims that Churchill and Roosevelt only bombed Dresden because they wanted to please Stalin. If you say so, Theo...! One virtue of Plivier's single-minded attack on the Russian side is that he draws attention to the mass rape of German women by Russian soldiers. This was a war crime which it was not at all fashionable to mention at the time he was writing, despite the existence of perhaps as many as two million victims²⁰.

Berlin ends with one of the recurring characters in Plivier's war novels being killed while participating in the East German worker's revolt in 1953²¹. Despite his conservative turn, Plivier obviously still has some of the spirit of Wilhelmshaven and can't restrain himself from giving the rebellious workers some advice about how to organise a proletarian insurrection – seize the means of production! Another character says:

“What use was it raising one's fists against tanks, fighting with the Vopos [*Volkspolizei* – People's Police], trampling down propaganda posters – one has to get into the vital works, to get busy at the waterworks, the power stations, the metropolitan railway! But the workers are without organisation, without leadership or a plan –the revolt has broken out like a steppes fire and is flickering away uncoordinated, in all directions at once.”

He went to live in the British Zone of Occupation. He got married for a third time, in 1950, to Margarete Grote, and went to live next to Lake Constance. He published *Moscow (Moskau)* in 1952 and *Berlin* in 1954. He moved to Tessin in Switzerland in 1953, and died from a heart attack there in 1955, at the age of 63.

His works – particularly the pro-revolutionary ones – are almost unknown in the English-speaking world (or anywhere else) today. The republication of *The Kaiser Goes: The Generals Remain* in electronic form is a modest attempt to remedy this!

Finally, please read Plivier's novels! Even the reactionary ones...

²⁰ Indeed, the monstrously ugly Soviet war memorial in Treptower Park in Berlin is sometimes referred to as “the tomb of the unknown rapist”. See: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-32529679>

²¹ This revolt is also described at length in another important German novel, *Five Days in June* by Stefan Heym. This is also written from a somewhat conservative political viewpoint – that of the central character who's a union official trying to prevent the workers going on strike!

For a non-fictionalised description of the events, see the pamphlet by Cajo Brendel: <https://libcom.org/library/1953-working-class-uprising-east-germany-cajo-brendel>

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- *Aufbruch*, Berlin, Verlag der Zwölf, 1923
- *Weltwende*, Berlin, Verlag der Zwölf, 1923
- *Stienka Rasin*, unpublished text presented by Marc Schweyer, Strasburg, Documents: review of German questions, March-April 1972.
- *Des Kaisers Kulis*, Berlin, Malik Verlag, 1929, republished in Berlin in 1988 by Verlag der Nation
- *Zwölf Mann und ein Kapitän. Novellen*, Leipzig, Verlag Weller, 1930
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