

Surfing the revolutionary wave

A comparison between the propagandas of the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany, 1918 and 1919

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Department of Geographical and Historical Studies

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Otto Korhonen

Supervisor: Jukka Korpela

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Tekijä: Otto Korhonen

Opiskelijanumero: 283524

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Tiivistelmä: Tutkimus tarkastelee ensimmäisen maailmansodan loppuvaiheessa alkanutta ”vallankumouksen aaltoa” vertailemalla kahden vallankumouksien keskiössä olleen puolueen, Suomen sosialidemokraattisen puolueen sekä Saksan kommunistisen puolueen Baijerin osaston propagandaa. Tarkastelujaksot vallankumouksille ovat Suomen sisällissota ja Baijerin neuvostotasavallan aika, sekä näitä edeltäneet lyhyet ajanjaksot vuosina 1918 ja 1919.

Tutkimuksen aineistona on käytetty puoluelehtiä *Työmies* (2.1.-12.4.1918) sekä *Münchner Rote Fahne* (18.3.-30.4.1919). Tutkimuksessa on sovellettu aineiston laadullista tarkastelua eri yhtymäkohtien kautta *Histoire croisée* -lähestymistavan avulla. Yhtymäkohtina toimivat marxilainen ideologia, vallankumouksen eri vaiheet ja propagandan eri muodot.

Puolueet lähestyivät vallankumouksia erilaisista ideologisista lähtökohdista. Sosialidemokraattien propagandassa korostui konservatiivinen luonne. Puolue pyrki säilyttämään demokratian, parlamentin aseman ja Suomen itsenäisyyden. Propagandalla pyrittiin tavoittamaan myös työväestön ulkopuolisia väestönsosia. Ideologisesti puolue oli lähimpänä Karl Kautskyn ajattelua. Kommunistien propaganda pyrki syrjäyttämään koko poliittisen järjestelmän. Kommunistit tavoittelivat proletariaatin diktatuuria, jossa puolue olisi ollut keskeisenä vallankäyttäjänä. Puolueen propaganda oli suunnattu ainoastaan köyhälle työväestölle. Vladimir Lenin oli puolueen ideologian osalta tärkein teoreetikko.

Tutkimuksen löydökset mukailevat aiempaa tutkimusta. Ylikansallinen vertailu on kuitenkin paljastanut eri painotuksia. Vieraantunutta työtä tarkasteltiin eri näkökulmasta: Sosialidemokraatit keskittyivät tuotantovälineiden omistussuhteiden sijaan työn sisältöön. Kommunistinen puolue toisaalta painotti omistussuhteiden merkitystä. Puolueiden luokka-ajattelussa oli myös eroja: sosialidemokraatit havaitsivat edistyksellistä aineista työväessä ja torppareissa, mahdollisesti myös talonpojissa ja virkamiehissä. Kommunistit näkivät ainoastaan työväen edistysmielisenä luokkana. Johtopäätöksenä voidaan todeta, että vuosien 1917–20 vallankumouksen globaali aalto oli erittäin heterogeeninen ilmiö, jossa poliittiset liikkeet osallistuivat vallankumoukselliseen toimintaan omista alueellisista lähtökohdistaan.

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Author: Otto Korhonen

Student number: 283524

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Abstract: This research examines "the revolutionary wave", which began towards the end of the First World War, by comparing the propagandas of two political parties central to the revolutions, the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany in Bavaria. The periods under examination are the Finnish Civil War and the Bavarian Soviet Republic, in addition to the short periods before each revolution in 1918 and 1919.

The source material includes party newspapers *Työmies* (2.1.-12.4.1918) and *Münchner Rote Fahne* (18.3.-30.4.1919). The material is examined by applying a qualitative method focusing on points of convergence through *Histoire croisée* approach. These points of convergence include Marxist ideology, different phases of revolution and different forms of propaganda.

The parties approached revolution from different ideological premises. Conservative nature was emphasized in the propaganda of the Social Democrats. The party intended to secure democracy, the role of the Parliament and Finland's independence. Propaganda was directed at the working class and other segments of society. Ideologically the party aligned itself mainly with Karl Kautsky. The propaganda of the Communists strove for a collapse of the whole political system. The party intended to establish a dictatorship of the proletariat, which it would *de facto* govern. Propaganda was only directed at the proletariat. Vladimir Lenin was the most important theoretician to the ideology of the Communist Party.

Findings of this research are in line with previous research. Transnational comparison has however revealed new points of emphasis. Alienation of labor was examined from different points of view: the Social Democrats concentrated on the content of work. The Communist Party on the other hand laid emphasis on importance of the ownership of the means of production. There were also differences between their conception of class: the Social Democrats identified progressive elements in the workers and crofters, and even in farmers and civil servants. The Communists considered working class the only forward-looking class. To conclude, the global wave of revolution in 1917-20 was a very heterogenous phenomenon, in which political parties participated in revolutionary action from their own local premises.

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1. Introduction

According to historian Eric Hobsbawm, a global wave of revolution began during the First World War in 1917 and lasted until 1920¹. He wrote that by 1914 old societies, economies and political systems had lost their '*heavenly mandates*'. In most European countries an alternative to the old system was presented by socialist parties.² The age of empire was coming to an end.

The most notable case of this revolutionary wave is without a doubt the October Revolution in Russia, where the Bolshevik Party seized power from the Provisional Government of Russia in 1917. Revolutions led by socialist movements and political parties did not end there. According to Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, who identified the new age as a revolt of the masses, there were many who believed in the victory of communism in the West³. Between 1918 and 1919 numerous uprisings took place in many European countries.

While these revolutions managed to bring an end to many monarchies in Europe, socialists did not often manage to hold on to power for a long period of time. The revolutions in Finland in 1918 and in Bavaria in 1919 are good examples of those, where the revolutionaries failed to consolidate power in the long term.

After the fall of the Tsarist regime in Russia, the Social Democratic Party of Finland (SDP) attempted to strengthen the Parliament of the Grand Duchy of Finland. Despite holding a simple majority in the Parliament, the SDP was unable to carry out major reforms. The parliamentary election of 1917 resulted in a major loss for the SDP, which lost its majority in the Parliament. This left the Party and its supporters frustrated. The frustration was channeled into a general strike in November 1917, and later into clashes between two armed forces, the Red Guards of the workers and the White Guards of the bourgeoisie.⁴

The revolution of 1918 was carried out late January by the radical wing of the SDP, which organized itself into a parallel government known as the Finnish People's Delegation, commonly 'the Reds'. The Reds initially received arms and moral support from the Bolsheviks in Russia, but according to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed in early March, the Reds could no longer count on Russian

¹ Hobsbawm 1999, 21, Hobsbawm 2011, 261.

² Hobsbawm 1999, 78.

³ Ortega y Gasset 1932, 184.

⁴ Siltala 2014, 88-89.

assistance⁵. The bourgeois Whites and the Imperial Army of Germany defeated the Red Guards in the field and the Finnish People's Delegation collapsed in early May 1918.

The revolutionary wave hit Germany almost one year later. The German Revolution in November 1918 led to the proclamation of a democratic parliamentary republic. A new revolutionary party, the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) was founded to drive the revolution further and make it truly social⁶. The collapse of the German monarchy meant an end to the Wittelsbach dynasty in Bavaria and the beginning of a government based on a mixture of a parliament and councils. A representative of the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (USPD), Kurt Eisner, became the leader of the new People's State of Bavaria on 8 November 1918⁷. However, the parliamentary elections of Bavaria in January 1919 were a massive loss to the USPD, whereas the more moderate Social Democratic party of Germany (SPD) became the leading socialist force in Bavaria.⁸ After the events of February 21, where Eisner was assassinated and the Bavarian SPD leader Erhard Auer shot and wounded, the SPD formed a new government in Bavaria.⁹ The new Government ultimately failed to bring stability to the region.

This era of instability and confusion was exploited by numerous different political groups. It culminated into an uprising, a proclamation of the Bavarian Soviet Republic on 7 April 1919 by a weird coalition of Independent Social Democrats, anarchists and even one leading Social Democrat¹⁰. The Communist Party, the most extreme of the socialist political parties in Germany, took over the 'so-called Soviet Republic' (*'Scheinräterepublik'*) on 13 April, as its leadership proved ineffective in defending the revolution¹¹. The Communist regime met its demise in early May 1919, as Munich fell to the White Guards loyal to the SPD regime in Bavaria¹².

Thus, both the SDP and the KPD took revolutionary action against their respective governments. Other than the similarity of these deeds, Bavaria and Finland had surprisingly lot in common at the time. Both had been parts of once mighty empires, the Russian Empire and the German Empire respectively. Finland had declared for independence shortly after the October Revolution in Russia. The new state found itself in a state of confusion: what type of a governing body should be established? Similarly in Germany, the Bavarian leadership saw an opportunity and distanced itself

⁵ Marjomaa 2004, 15.

⁶ Müller 2010, 164.

⁷ Mitchell 1965, 99.

⁸ Mitchell 1965, 212, 219-220.

⁹ Mitchell 1965, 271-272, 290, 303, 305.

¹⁰ Broué 2005, 280.

¹¹ Mitchell 1965, 311, 313, 319.

¹² Mitchell 1965, 330.

from the Prussian leadership and the new Social Democratic regime in Berlin, which was formed in the aftermath of the November Revolution.

Finland and Bavaria were also relatively weakly industrialized at the time and both had a strong rural element to them. In Finland, agriculture directly supported two thirds of the whole population¹³. At the start of the First World War, Bavaria had hardly any heavy industry and its domestic contribution to the war effort was mainly agricultural¹⁴. Indeed, these two revolutions were successful primarily in areas that were industrialized. The Finnish People's Delegation initially controlled over 70 % of the industrial production in Finland¹⁵. In Bavaria, the Communists had trouble enforcing their rule outside of a few larger cities such as Munich and Augsburg and held no authority in the countryside¹⁶. These factors make a comparison worthwhile and intriguing.

Certain questions arise: Are these commonalities enough to justify the claim, that there was indeed a 'global wave of revolution'? Were these revolutions mere spontaneous, local reactions to the prevailing surroundings following a devastating World War and the collapse of the Imperial system, and therefore their own ways to fill power vacuums after the collapse of the monarchical governments in Russia and Germany? Or were they perhaps similar in terms of justification, goals and in the ways the revolutionary factions motivated the people to join their cause? The latter interpretation would indicate that at least these two revolutions are part of a particular phenomenon visible in Europe towards the end and after the First World War.

Hobsbawm claimed that societal content of these revolutions remained in the dark¹⁷. Therefore, these questions deserve to be answered to broaden our understanding of this phenomenon. To find answers to these previously presented questions, to examine possible commonalities and differences between two political parties engaged in revolution, the field of ideology becomes the center of attention.

¹³ Haapala 2014, 22.

¹⁴ Mitchell 1965, 21-22.

¹⁵ Rinta-Tassi 1990, 237.

¹⁶ Mitchell 1965, 314.

¹⁷ Hobsbawm 1999, 93.

2. Research questions

This research aims to identify ideological differences between political parties central to previously mentioned two revolutions: The Social Democratic Party of Finland in 1918 and the Communist Party of Germany in Bavaria in 1919. Other political movements are excluded from the research in order to limit the scope of the research.

Taking this into consideration, the main research question is formed as follows:

What were the ideological differences in the propagandas employed by the Social Democratic Party of Finland in the Finnish Civil War in 1918 and the Communist Party of Germany in the Bavarian Soviet Republic in 1919?

A claim to power, especially an act of revolution, needs to be well justified, since a mere seizure of power will not win public support needed to govern in the long run. This is a necessary step and a focus of the ideological propaganda spread by revolutionary political parties. The first sub-question is formulated to investigate this issue:

How did the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany justify their claim to power in their propagandas prior to the revolutions that took place in 1918 and 1919?

Initial justification is necessary, but to have any chance of succeeding in the long run, a broader appeal to the masses must take place. Were there perhaps differences in the approaches the Social Democrats of Finland and the Communists of Germany undertook to persuade people to work towards stabilizing their regimes and their policies? What kind of an ideological message was sent to motivate people into taking arms and to keep fighting despite the poor situation in the field? The second sub-question is:

To which ideas did the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany appeal in their propagandas to motivate and persuade people to join their cause during the revolutions in 1918 and 1919?

It should be noted that this sub-question changed slightly through the research process. At the start of the research the focus was purely on motivational factors. The primary sources also included persuasion and that should therefore be reflected in the question to acquire a broader picture of the phenomenon.

Despite facing strong adversaries, the revolutionary political parties also had plans for the future of their states once their regimes had stabilized their positions as the only legitimate governments in their respective areas. It is important to understand, what kind of new systems, laws and regulations

were planned by the parties, as well as how they were presented to the public. These topics are handled in the third and final sub-question:

Based on the propaganda of the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany, which ideas and ideologies were to shape the new order of society?

To clarify, some changes to the societies were already made during the short rule of the revolutionary regimes. The purpose of this question is not to concentrate on them, but to inquire into how these societies would have looked in the future and how the political parties argued for these changes. Goals of these revolutions may be discovered more accurately this way.

3. Primary sources

To find ideological messages, one must look for how they are spread. The target audience of these two political parties in Finland and Bavaria did not spend much time reading philosophical texts. The research question can be best answered by examining the final message that reached the people.

What was discussed among the party elite and other important figures is not important in this case. Therefore, any documents concerning the lawmaking, secret decisions etc. are not relevant to the research question. Instead, the study of propaganda and agitation is a central theme of this research. The products of propaganda that ended up in the hands of the people form the source of this research. The Finnish Social Democratic Party and the German Communist Party spread their propaganda mainly via newspapers. Radio was not a mass media yet, so the revolutionaries could not make use of it. The content in these newspapers had the purpose of changing public opinion to suit their needs as well as to inform the public. They offer a way to study the three main themes of the research question: justification of their rule, propaganda used to motivate and persuade the public into supporting the revolutions, as well as explanations given to policies concerning the new states.

The Social Democratic Party of Finland published their own newspaper, *Työmies*. It was the largest newspaper in the country in 1917 and the only working-class newspaper to publish daily. In 1918, this amounted to 97 issues. 80 000 newspapers made their way daily into hands of party members and other readers.¹⁸ A variety of smaller, local SDP-affiliated papers such as *Hämeen Voima* and *Kansan Lehti* were also published. However, their role was much smaller due to narrow and limited circulation. It is thus sensible to focus on the larger and more important tools of propaganda.

The local, Bavarian department of the German Communist Party had its own newspaper, *Münchner Rote Fahne*. The newspaper was taken over in March 1919 by a party insider Eugen Leviné. Under his leadership large changes were made regarding the KPD's policies and structure altogether.¹⁹ The newspaper was already publishing daily before the declaration of the Soviet Republic. *Münchner Rote Fahne* was published until the end of April, when the revolutionary government in Munich collapsed. 28 publications were released from the start of Leviné's leadership until the end of the Soviet Republic. Since Leviné ultimately became the leading revolutionary figure in the Soviet Republic, this newspaper can be regarded as the official mouthpiece of the revolution.

¹⁸ Matikainen 2018, 50-51.

¹⁹ Mitchell 1965, 308.

4. Research tradition

The research question and the source material link this research to the tradition of history of communications. Since the form of communication in this study is printed, a closer look is first taken into historical research of the printed press.

Early studies into the press include work of the literary historian Robert Prutz, whose study *Geschichte des deutschen Journalismus* from 1845 laid new foundations for the field. The academic historical study of the printed press was truly started in Germany by Otto Groth, who named the field of study *Zeitungswissenschaft*.²⁰ According to Groth, the politically active reader is not satisfied with mere reporting but wants the press to also act as a medium of influencing others²¹. With all this in mind, the study of political newspapers also becomes a matter of the history of propaganda.

Agitation and propaganda of the Finnish socialists is a well-researched topic. Historian Jari Ehrnrooth's doctoral thesis concentrates on revolutionary doctrines and their effects in the Finnish worker's movement 1905-1914. Ehrnrooth identifies orthodox Marxism of Karl Kautsky as the victorious idea in the Social Democratic party of Finland. Industrial workers were regarded as the ideal supporters of this doctrine. Political realities made crofters and farm laborers part of the same group. Orthodox Marxism was coupled with a strong current of archaic class hatred. A central finding of Ehrnrooth is specifically this reconciliation between revolutionary radicalism and Kautskyism in the Finnish worker's movement.²² My research builds on this foundation and aims to clarify, to which degree the Social Democrats held on to these ideas during a revolution, especially given the international context.

In connection to the Finnish Civil War, research on the press of the Social Democratic Party in Finland in 1918 was published recently in 2018 by historian Juha Matikainen. Matikainen compares papers affiliated with the SDP with each other and the party leadership, examines their relationship with the revolution and investigates the reasons as well as the objectives of the revolution²³. According to Matikainen the newspapers justified the revolution as self-defense against the bourgeoisie. Reforms were to be made based on the programme of the SDP, and democracy was to be upheld. The stance of the papers towards social revolution was lukewarm.²⁴ My research aims to clarify the SDP's role as a revolutionary actor and whether its goals and justifications exemplified the 'revolutionary wave'.

²⁰ Leonhard et.al. 1999, 144-145.

²¹ Stöber 2014, 165.

²² Ehrnrooth 1992, 566, 573, 575.

²³ Matikainen 2018, 3.

²⁴ Matikainen 2018, 298-299.

Finland and the nature of the revolution in 1918 is not a common topic of international comparisons. Finnish sociologist Risto Alapuro has however written an article on the issue. Alapuro argues, that in order to compare the civil war with other political crises, one must examine the events in Finland as a serious attempt at a revolution²⁵. His comparison focuses on the Baltic states as well as Hungary. Alapuro approaches the question from state level instead of from the point of view of political parties. He does not dwell on ideology but rather on reasons why a revolution took place at all. My research therefore aims to fill gaps in the research tradition of the SDP, examined transnationally and as a revolutionary actor.

The revolutions in Germany from 1918 onwards are also a relevant topic to my research. Numerous studies have been conducted. Among them, *The German Revolution, 1917-1923* written by historian Pierre Broué, examines the division among the German Socialist movement. Broué claims that the KPD cannot be understood separately from the crisis of Social Democracy from 1914 onwards²⁶. The crisis was revealed, as the SPD unanimously supported the declaration of war and showed itself as not merely the movement of the working class but also as an apparatus capable of collaboration with the class enemy²⁷. I compare the most extreme socialist party in Germany with its Finnish equivalent to clarify their roles as revolutionary actors.

The first year of the Communist Party of Germany, a timeline which involved the Bavarian Soviet Republic, is a topic previously researched by historian Werner Müller. Müller identifies different currents among the notable Communists: manifestation of the revolutionary masses with economic and politic goals was coupled with a tensely organized, centralized party characterized by discipline. The party came close to Leninist principles and similar political praxis, with willingness to ignore a majority when it stood in the way of the leadership.²⁸ Müller's findings present the KPD as a movement of contradiction, although in a different way compared to Ehrnrooth's characterization of the SDP. My research is in a good position to identify similarities and distinctions between the parties and add to the research tradition of the revolutions of this period.

The scope of research of socialist revolutions and political parties during and straight after the First World War is mostly limited to single states or nations. Research comparing revolutions, political movements or their propaganda transnationally are not very common. An exception in this regard can be found in the work of historians Hermann Weber, Jakov Drabkin, Bernhard Bayerlein and Aleksandr Galkin, who wrote on the idea of a world revolution based on Russian and German

²⁵ Alapuro 1990, 11.

²⁶ Broué 2005, 851.

²⁷ Broué 2005, 72.

²⁸ Müller 2010, 185.

communist movements and especially the Comintern in their work *Deutschland, Russland, Komintern*. These historians concentrate on the co-operation between German and Russian Communists. A major difference between their research and mine is that I concentrate on the propaganda efforts of each party and how they acted as movements on their own, not together through co-operation via an organization like the Comintern.

Despite political developments in the last decades, history writing from nationalist point of view has remained strong. Most of Europe is politically unified in a single union, and has been so for decades, yet European history writing has not truly surpassed research, which examines a phenomenon from the point of view of a singular nation state. By specifically expanding the scope of research from just one nation, my research seeks to overcome limits of nationalist history writing. My research produces new information and contributes to this research tradition in this manner.

5. The concept of propaganda

As previously stated, this research revolves around the concept of propaganda. The term has been defined in numerous distinctive ways, so it should be defined carefully.

This research adopts the concept of propaganda from French philosopher Jacques Ellul, an important figure in the academic study of propaganda. Ellul rejected the popular view of propaganda, in which few authoritarian rulers seek to manipulate a passive audience through lies and deceit. He argued that propaganda can simultaneously be honest, strict and exact, while also having an irrational effect.²⁹ Ellul's categorization of propaganda provides methodical tools to find meaningful differences between different representations of propaganda.

According to Ellul, the common notion, that propaganda is a tool of manipulation, and that its purpose is to make people believe something, is outright false. Instead of merely changing opinions, propaganda seeks to provoke action.³⁰ The concept of propaganda is divided into four pairs by Ellul. This research focuses on two of them: Aspects of political and sociological propaganda as well as the propaganda of agitation and the propaganda of integration.

Ellul describes political propaganda as follows:

*"It involves techniques of influence employed by a government, a party, an administration, a pressure group, with a view to changing the behavior of the public. The choice of methods used is deliberate and calculated; the desired goals are clearly distinguished and quite precise, though generally limited."*³¹

Elements of sociological propaganda are also examined. According to Ellul, sociological propaganda seeks to integrate as many people as possible to the society and then to unify the behavior of its members, among other things. This form of propaganda is not practiced deliberately but it is found all around us in a society.³² Therefore sociological propaganda, as Ellul visions it, is not useful to this research. The relevancy exists in relation to Karl Marx's view of a communist revolution, which abolishes the division of labor and class, thus uniting all people³³. To assume that deliberate propaganda efforts seek to integrate most amount of people into a movement can be a fruitful mindset when comparing two political parties and their propaganda efforts. It is therefore under examination but not exactly as Ellul originally defined the term.

²⁹ Foulkes 2003, 10-11.

³⁰ Ellul 1973, 25.

³¹ Ellul 1973, 62.

³² Ellul 1973, 62, 64.

³³ Kołakowski 1981a, 161.

The propaganda of agitation is separated from the propaganda of integration. According to Ellul, *“integration propaganda aims at stabilizing the social body, at unifying and reinforcing it”*. Integration propaganda becomes viable and necessary once a revolutionary party has taken power.³⁴ In this research it is not as important as the propaganda of agitation, because both revolutionary governments had existing rival governments they were competing against, and no stabilization of power was thoroughly achieved during their short periods of governance. Meanwhile, the propaganda of agitation is very important for this research:

*“It (propaganda of agitation) is most often subversive propaganda and has the stamp of opposition. It is led by a party seeking to destroy the government or the established order. It seeks rebellion or war. [...] Governments also employ this propaganda when, after having been installed in power, they want to pursue a revolutionary course of action.”*³⁵

This research takes these four aspects to propaganda in account while answering the research question.

³⁴ Ellul 1973, 75-76.

³⁵ Ellul 1973, 71.

6. Methodology

Transnational history writing can be approached from many perspectives. Through critique of the comparative and transfer approaches, historians Bénédicte Zimmermann and Michael Werner have developed an approach to the research of history called *histoire croisée*. According to Zimmermann and Werner, "[...] *histoire croisée* associates social, cultural, and political formations, generally at the national level, that are assumed to bear relationships to one another".³⁶ Propaganda material of two political parties, linked by revolutions against the bourgeois ruling factions, certainly fits the description.

Histoire croisée -approach comes with certain methodological conceptions. Rather than taking a stance on the debate between micro and macro levels, *histoire croisée* highlights their complex relationship³⁷. In this instance interwoven tendencies between the ideology of the two revolutionary political parties are under examination, so that the result is not a bare comparison between two states or nations. Similarly, research categories are not to be treated in a strict manner, but rather as connected elements that vary over time and in different locations. They are not strictly pre-determined but instead adjusted throughout the research. This inductive approach is methodologically different from the comparative method, in which specific categories of analysis might foretell the results in part.³⁸

Histoire croisée -approach is better suited to this research than the traditional comparative and transfer approaches. Zimmermann and Werner argue that the comparative approach assumes a certain synchronistic viewpoint and sees the objects of research frozen in time³⁹. The sub-questions in my research make a temporal distinction between time before the revolutions and time during the revolutions. There is a temporal element, as the propaganda of the SDP and KPD are observed over periods of time, through many events. Therefore, the comparative approach would not be ideal in this research.

On the other hand, the transfer approach assumes a beginning and an end of the process under examination⁴⁰. These strict points of departure and arrival would be problematic in the case of this research: Whereas the SDP, the lone revolutionary movement, had a clear timeline from the point of revolt to the end of their regime, the same cannot be stated of the KPD. The Bavarian Communists were just one of many revolutionary actors at the time. The timing of their insurrection is rather vague,

³⁶ Werner & Zimmermann 2006, 31.

³⁷ Werner & Zimmermann 2006, 43-44.

³⁸ Werner & Zimmermann 2006, 44, 46.

³⁹ Werner & Zimmermann 2006, 35.

⁴⁰ Werner & Zimmermann 2006, 36.

after all their participation in the earlier Soviet Republic is complicated. As such, the two revolutions did not undergo similar linear process and cannot be examined without crossing multiple perspectives. The *Histoire croisée* -approach focuses on the relation between synchrony and diachrony⁴¹. This feature makes it well suited for this research.

Due to the dominant socialist currents in these political parties and the fact that socialist theory was developed by those identifying as Marxists, the findings are compared with traditional trends of Marxism. The theory is provided mostly by acclaimed historians George Lichtheim and Leszek Kołakowski.

According to Lichtheim, the old guards of Marxian orthodoxy, most notably Karl Kautsky, were met with four new elements of socialism: the Austro-Marxists, the German-Polish group, the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks⁴². Kołakowski's work also examines other influential Marxists such as Eduard Bernstein and Jean Jaurès. These thinkers and the ideas they developed help make meaningful distinctions between the propaganda of the Finnish Social Democratic Party and the German Communist Party. These ideological currents are examined in connection to four categories of propaganda, which were explained in chapter five.

⁴¹ Werner & Zimmermann 2002, 618.

⁴² Lichtheim 1982, 302.

7. Justifying the revolutions

This section is dedicated to answering the first sub-question: *How did the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany justify their claim to power in their propaganda prior to the revolutions that took place in 1918 and 1919?*

The propaganda of agitation is the most relevant concept to this question. The concepts of political and sociological propaganda were also present. The two political parties are first examined separately. These sections are then followed by a comparison between the political parties.

7.1 Claim to power - The Social Democratic Party of Finland

Following Russia's example

1917 was a significant year in the history of both Finland and Russia. The autocratic government of Tsar Nicholas II was replaced in the 'bourgeois' February Revolution by the first Provisional Government, which lacked constitutional authority and was not based on any existing law. The Provisional Government introduced liberal reforms affecting civil rights and political representation, however it failed to tackle the two major issues among the Russian nation, those being the World War and ownership of the land.⁴³

The Social Democrats had meanwhile risen to power in Finland following the February Revolution⁴⁴. The Senate for Finland was led by Oskari Tokoi, a socialist. Ultimately the Tokoi Senate, which included both Social Democrats and bourgeois politicians, failed to achieve social and political reforms.⁴⁵ New parliamentary elections were held in October 1917 and the socialists were unable to win a majority in the Parliament⁴⁶.

The Russian socialists had much more success than their Finnish counterparts. The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies clashed with the Provisional Government, as the Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin called for "*all power to the Soviets!*" This call became the reality after the October Revolution, where the Bolsheviks overthrew the Provisional Government led by Social Democrat Alexander Kerensky.⁴⁷ Lenin, employing a policy of national sovereignty for his own gain, granted Finland its independence on the last day of 1917. Despite achieving this common goal, the bourgeoisie and the Social Democrats in Finland could not reconcile their differences and prevent a collapse of the society.⁴⁸

⁴³ Wood 2003, 36.

⁴⁴ Alapuro 1990, 21.

⁴⁵ Haapala 2014, 42-43.

⁴⁶ Haapala 2014, 48.

⁴⁷ Wood 2003, 36-37, 45-46.

⁴⁸ Haapala 2014, 48-49.

The two revolutions in Russia inspired the Finnish Social Democrats in a great manner. This was manifested in series of articles that appeared daily in the *Työmies* newspaper throughout early January. The newspaper rated these revolutions very highly, even over the importance of ending of serfdom as well as the 1905 Russian Revolution⁴⁹.

The SDP identified the February Revolution essentially as a ‘bourgeois revolution’, which rose to remove any obstacles left in the way of a capitalist industrial management. It was likened to the French Revolution in 1789.⁵⁰ Keeping this in mind, the overall review of the February Revolution by the Finnish Social Democrats was surprisingly positive.

The first few articles concerning the revolutions of 1917 in Russia appear extremely hostile towards the Emperor but exercised little criticism on the bourgeois Provisional Government that succeeded his rule. In fact, the newspaper praised the achievements of this bourgeois government, particularly for leading an emancipation of the working-class movement.⁵¹ This intriguing analysis is not without its predecessor. The way Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote about the bourgeoisie as a revolutionary force in the Communist Manifest is strikingly glorifying. They praised the bourgeoisie for destroying the old, ‘feudal’ institutions and basically the whole worldview, while conquering ‘barbaric nations’ and converting their societies into the image of the bourgeoisie⁵². Vladimir Lenin also considered it important to learn from the bourgeoisie⁵³. The Social Democrats in Finland probably adopted these sentiments, given their description of the bourgeoisie in the February Revolution. As the bourgeois class in question turned from revolutionary into reactionary, the attitude towards it changed as well.

As the subject of the articles progressed to the time between February and October Revolutions, critique eventually expanded from the Tsarist system to concern the Provisional Governments. The key term used here was the ‘*class antagonism*’⁵⁴, which put emphasis on the rift between the wealthier group, consisting of capitalists, landowners and officers, and the poorer group that was made of workers, peasants and soldiers⁵⁵.

The subject of war and imperialism, continued by the Provisional Governments, came under heavy criticism. Unlike the councils in Petrograd, the first Provisional Government disregarded peace as a goal and declared the war to continue until a decisive victory. The ensued demonstrations were

⁴⁹ *Työmies* 2.1, 2. Wallankumousvuoden 1917 päätyttyä.

⁵⁰ *Työmies* 4.1, 6. Venäjältä – Wenäjä vuonna 1917. III.

⁵¹ *Työmies* 4.1, 6. Venäjältä – Wenäjä vuonna 1917. III.

⁵² Engels & Marx 1848, 464-466.

⁵³ Kołakowski 1981b, 486.

⁵⁴ ‘*Luokkawastakohdat*’

⁵⁵ *Työmies* 7.1, 5. Venäjältä – Wenäjä vuonna 1917. IV.

praised by the Finnish Social Democrats, as expected. It was through these demonstrations, they claimed, that imperialism was kept in check and a conclusion was met; only democracy can end the war.⁵⁶

“*The reactionary nature of the bourgeoisie*”, as described in *Työmies*, also came under criticism. The second Provisional Government was criticized for doing nothing other than working to ensure that a counterrevolution happens. The Social Democrats attacked the government in question for its actions to continue the war, retarding progress on the goals of the February Revolution and oppressing the Bolsheviks. General Kornilov’s hostile attitude towards soldier’s councils, lack of discipline and support for the war were denounced by the Finnish Social Democrats, who clearly embraced anti-militaristic tendency.⁵⁷ *Työmies* identified the World War as the single biggest cause for the state of chaos that reigned in Russia⁵⁸. Therefore, it praised the Council of People’s Commissars for its quick actions to seek peace with the Central Powers⁵⁹.

A vision of a revolutionary Russia did not suddenly appear in Finland in 1917 as the revolution was happening. Historian Jari Ehrnrooth identifies a view among the supporters of the SDP, that a revolution was to come from Russia. Not only that, but he also found this view originating already in the aftermath of the Great Strike in Finland in November 1905!⁶⁰ These articles in *Työmies* represent the last variation of this phenomenon before the revolution in Finland.

Additionally, readers were informed of the various causes that led to the February Revolution.

First, lack of food, particularly in Petrograd, as well as the mismanagement concerning its distribution received plenty of attention⁶¹. The industry, that chose to manufacture armaments over consumer goods, was mentioned as a part of the causes that lead to the revolutions⁶². *Työmies* reported that the situation regarding food supply improved after the February Revolution⁶³. However, the tone changed later: Economic dissolution, lack of food and hunger that followed were the causes for rebellions and anarchy that took place around Russia during the time between the two revolutions⁶⁴.

Another feature was censorship, particularly in subjects concerning the war. The Social Democrats implied, that censorship made reform through words impossible⁶⁵. However, the February Revolution

⁵⁶ *Työmies* 7.1, 5. Venäjältä – Wenäjä vuonna 1917. IV., *Työmies* 8.1, 7. Venäjältä – Wenäjä vuonna 1917. V.

⁵⁷ *Työmies* 8.1, 7. Venäjältä – Wenäjä vuonna 1917. V.

⁵⁸ *Työmies* 10.1, 7. Venäjältä – Wenäjä vuonna 1917. VI.

⁵⁹ *Työmies* 10.1, 7. Venäjältä – Wenäjä vuonna 1917. VI.

⁶⁰ Ehrnrooth 1992, 91.

⁶¹ *Työmies* 3.1, 6. Venäjältä – Wenäjä vuonna 1917. II.

⁶² *Työmies* 2.1, 2. Wallankumousvuoden 1917 päätyttyä

⁶³ *Työmies* 4.1, 6. Venäjältä – Wenäjä vuonna 1917. III.

⁶⁴ *Työmies* 10.1, 7. Venäjältä – Wenäjä vuonna 1917. VI.

⁶⁵ *Työmies* 2.1, 2. Wallankumousvuoden 1917 päätyttyä

appeared to have solved this problem in every field other than the war effort. Numerous working-class newspapers could now publish their message without obstruction.⁶⁶ The press was freed from the shackles of Tsarist oppression, it was argued in *Työmies*⁶⁷. Censorship was mentioned later in the context of the October Revolution, as the Bolshevik press was put under censorship prior to it⁶⁸. This time censorship was not seen as a cause for revolution, but rather as a reaction of the bourgeoisie, as they were trying to defend their rule against a hostile group attempting to seize power.

Finally, an interesting critique regarding ‘degeneracy’ running rampant in the court of Emperor Nicholas II deserves some attention. This included not only nepotism, but also some kind of sexual, ‘even unnatural’, deviancies, supposedly practiced by the mystic Grigori Rasputin, the Empress and other women in the court.⁶⁹ The topic of morality may seem out of place here. According to the philosopher Jacques Ellul propaganda must be total, it must combine different elements together⁷⁰. Whereas this may have shifted some of the focus away from more concerning matters, such as hunger, using all means to strike at your opponent is considered necessary. This quickly became evident, as the Social Democrats of Finland built the stage for a possible uprising.

Justifying the revolution: Themes of the propaganda articles of the Finnish Social Democratic Party

The Social Democratic Party of Finland strongly emphasized certain themes prior to the revolution in 1918. Between 2.1.1918 and 26.1.1918 the Social Democrats published propaganda concerning societal problems (13 articles), anti-militarism (12 articles), lack of democracy and support for independence (10 articles) as well as lack of legitimacy of the bourgeois rule (9 articles). These topics were thus represented almost equally.

⁶⁶ *Työmies* 4.1, 6. Venäjältä – Wenäjä vuonna 1917.

⁶⁷ *Työmies* 4.1, 6. Venäjältä – Wenäjä vuonna 1917.

⁶⁸ *Työmies* 10.1, 7. Venäjältä – Wenäjä vuonna 1917. VI.

⁶⁹ *Työmies* 2.1, 2. Wallankumousvuoden 1917 päätyttyä

⁷⁰ Ellul 1973, 12.

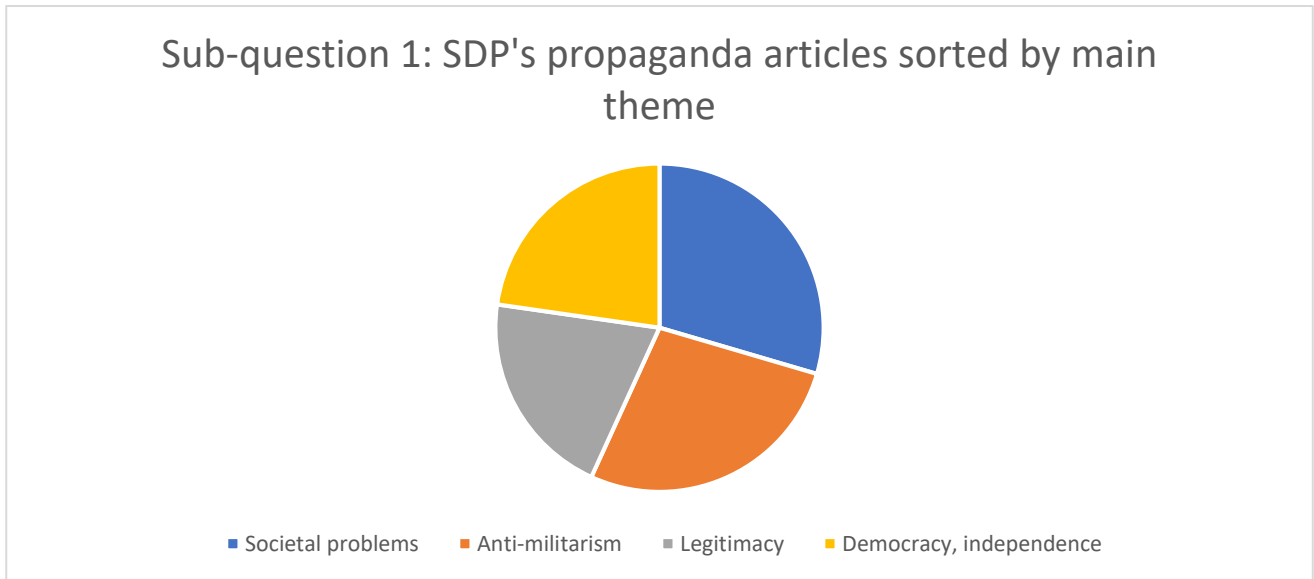


Chart 1: Propaganda articles published in *Työmies* 2.1.-26.1.1918, sorted by main topics.

Societal problems

The Finnish society was in crisis at the time. Whereas Finnish companies had gained massive profits supplying the Russian imperial army, the Finnish currency was meanwhile drawn into Russian inflation, leading to an even greater rise in living costs. Finland found itself basically blockaded from the Western world, while Russia discontinued imports of grain during the summer of 1917.⁷¹ The Social Democrats acknowledged in late 1917, that the problem was due to those discontinued shipments. They quickly shifted the blame on the bourgeoisie in January.⁷²

The poor situation concerning food supply became weaponized in the propaganda of agitation of the Social Democratic Party. The Socialists were depicted as the champions on the issue, whilst the bourgeoisie was accused of using dubious measures to prevent any progress⁷³. Problems arose in terms of equal pay for grain produced, and the Social Democrats were not afraid to blame the bourgeoisie for favoring certain groups of farmers⁷⁴. Price gouging and greed of the wealthier class were blamed for poor access to vital groceries⁷⁵. These messages are not surprising, given that black markets were flourishing at the time⁷⁶.

The Social Democrats also attempted to arouse feelings of envy and injustice among their followers. *Työmies* published an article that built on the confrontation between hungry workers and well-fed

⁷¹ Siltala 2014, 51-52.

⁷² Matikainen 2018, 241.

⁷³ *Työmies* 3.1, 2. Wallankumousvuoden 1917 päätyttyä.

⁷⁴ *Työmies* 18.1, 3. Porwariston poliisianarkiaa vastaan.

⁷⁵ *Työmies* 24.1, 4. Missä on n.s. parhaimmiston järki?

⁷⁶ Siltala 2014, 52.

bourgeoisie. The Social Democrats claimed that wealthy people were enjoying great feasts in ‘fancy restaurants’ in Helsinki, whereas many workers spent Christmas hungry⁷⁷. Hunger was categorized as an existential threat to workers and their families, all the while the upper class was portrayed as engaging in gluttony⁷⁸. Historian Jari Ehrnrooth identified a tendency in the publications of the Finnish socialists to demand a natural, equal distribution to justify their class hatred⁷⁹. This trend he found in the texts published between 1905 and 1914 was clearly continued by the SDP.

Additionally, the moral degeneration, which they previously identified to have taken place in Tsarist Russia, was also brought to attention. The capitalist economic system was labelled the cause for alcoholism, prostitution and other kinds of moral depravation among the working class⁸⁰.

The means of gaining power were not the only thing dubbed suspicious by the Social Democratic Party of Finland. The party underlined a dualism of anarchy and order in their propaganda. They presented themselves in favor of order, whilst the bourgeoisie was blamed for willingly inciting anarchy and causing division among the working class⁸¹. The newspaper admitted that the bourgeois parties seemingly advocated for orderliness, but in a way that was not democratic and would cause anxiety rather than a sense of security among the people⁸². A closer look reveals that the social democrats identified the bourgeois call for order in such an overly dramatic way, that it would lead to conflict and anarchy. An example of this is the arming of the White Guards, which in turn, according to the Social Democrats, led to arming the Red Guards. This radicalization then led to confrontations and thus anarchy ensued⁸³. Social democrats simplified this message into a slogan: “*Anarchy breeds anarchy*”⁸⁴.

This message of anti-anarchy served an important purpose connected to the category of political propaganda. The Social Democrats clearly wanted to organize a united force of workers under their leadership, a force so strong that it could rival the White Guards of the bourgeoisie. This feature is best seen in a writing that denounced all anarchists, as well as those Red Guards that were against a central organization. Calls for harsh common discipline reinforced this message. Motives of those, who stood against a strong centralized organization were questioned. Their stance on the issue was deemed beneficial to the bourgeoisie and therefore anti-working class.⁸⁵ Similar unequivocal

⁷⁷ Työmies 9.1, 4. Raittiasiat. Herroille olutta jouluksi.

⁷⁸ Työmies 28.1, 2. Työväen wallankumous

⁷⁹ Ehrnrooth 1992, 484.

⁸⁰ Työmies 16.1, 3. Porwariston poliisianarkiaa vastaan.

⁸¹ Työmies 10.1, 6. Puolueen riennot. – Nykyhetken ohjelmasta. I.

⁸² Työmies 11.1, 2. „Luja järjestyswalta.”

⁸³ Työmies 11.1, 2. „Luja järjestyswalta.”

⁸⁴ Työmies 24.1, 5. Missä on n.s. parhaimmiston järki?: ”Anarkia synnyttää anarkiaa”

⁸⁵ Työmies 10.1, 6. Puolueen riennot. – Nykyhetken ohjelmasta. I.

demands to work under centralized leadership were also made in 1917 by the press of the SDP⁸⁶. These serious problems, especially shortage of food, were coupled with another existential threat: warfare.

Anti-militarism

War and militaristic tendencies were constantly criticized in *Työmies*. The fact that especially men suffer in war, and that the deaths severely harm nations and their coming generations were emphasized⁸⁷. A battle of ‘gold versus blood’, capitalism versus socialism, was deemed a battle between war and peace. Unsurprisingly the propaganda evaluated the blood of the nation a force more powerful than gold. The Social Democrats took inspiration not only from Russia, but also from France, more specifically from the revolution of 1789 and the Commune of Paris in 1871. While the newspaper admitted that gold eventually won in these cases due to more primitive circumstances, it was the blood of the proletariat that defeated the power of gold in Russia in 1917. Accordingly, it was only a matter of time before the proletariat of other countries would do the same.⁸⁸ These revolutions, the defeat of capitalism and militarism, were portrayed as inevitable. Historical necessity of such revolution, which is realized through impersonal historical forces, closely follows the thinking of Karl Marx⁸⁹.

The most prominent issue connected to militarism was compulsory military service. The propaganda of agitation was extreme on this topic. *Työmies* reported on an anti-war meeting that took place in the countryside. Economic cost was not the issue in the re-establishment of compulsory military service, which the Social Democrats considered another existential threat to the working class. Establishing an army, “*a murder-organization*” as the participants labelled it, was portrayed as a reactionary, anti-democratic project by the capitalist class. The language was particularly inflammatory, as indicated by terms such as “*enterprise to murder*”, “*slaughter-organization*” and “*bloodthirsty exploitation system of the capitalist class*”.⁹⁰ On a different article the motives of the bourgeoisie were examined, reaching the conclusion that they wished to curb those dissatisfied by the hunger, oppression etc⁹¹. Poor workers were the ones harmed by wars, meanwhile rich capitalists made huge profits and therefore had strong incentives to start and prolong wars⁹².

⁸⁶ Matikainen 2018, 134.

⁸⁷ *Työmies* 4.1, 5. Sota kansojen elinvoiman turmelijana. Parannuskeinoja.

⁸⁸ *Työmies* 11.1, 6. Kulta ja veri.

⁸⁹ Kołakowski 1981a, 148.

⁹⁰ *Työmies* 8.1, 3. Maaseudulta – Sotaa ja sotalaitosta vastaan. ”*murhaushanke*”, ”*teurastuslaitos*”, ”*werenhimoisen kapitalistiluokan riistojärjestelmä*”

⁹¹ *Työmies* 10.1, 3. Joko se rauhoitustyö nyt alkaa? Senaatin erään ehdotuksen johdosta.

⁹² *Työmies* 7.1, 2. Tapettava suunnitelma.

The propaganda clearly steered the issue away from whether it was beneficial or even necessary for the new independent state to have armed forces. Any conscripted force would exist to serve the bourgeois capitalist class, and not the nation. The Social Democrats employed a reference to Russia, stating that the former oppressive Tsarist Government could not deliver peace with its war measures. Instead, further bitterness and escalation of class war was the result.⁹³ This message was designed specifically for the Social Democratic youth. *Työmies* agitated for massive demonstrations and other means of protest, if the bourgeoisie were to legislate a law for compulsory military service.⁹⁴

The topic of anti-militarism was not limited to resistance of conscription. The White Guards were named “*butchers*”, and their purpose was stated simply in one sentence: “*The Butcher Guard appears to be trained for slaughter of the workers.*”⁹⁵ The Social Democrats mentioned this goal constantly in articles relating to the topic of the White Guards. All confrontations between the Red Guards and the White Guards were solely blamed on the latter, as expected. The nation was portrayed to be under a threat, as the White Guards were about to spill the blood of their own citizens. The newspaper built a narrative of a hungry population asking for bread, but whose calls were instead suppressed violently by the White Guards.⁹⁶ The Social Democrats argued on 26 January, that an attack on the Red Guards by the Whites appeared to be only a matter of time⁹⁷.

Calls like that did not appear out of nowhere. Historian Juha Matikainen identifies similar message of portraying the White Guards as a threat to the workers originating in *Työmies* during the latter half of 1917. The threat of violence was already highlighted long before the revolution.⁹⁸ The Social Democrats were also eager to connect the White Guards with a political institution, namely the bourgeois senate.

Despite the unwillingness of the senate to acknowledge the White Guards as their own armed forces, *Työmies* stated that it was clearly the case⁹⁹. Establishment of order and conscription was merely used to legitimize illegal “*Guards of the Butchers*”¹⁰⁰. On 26 January, right before the coup d'état and the outbreak of the Civil War, it was reported that the senate had planned and begun a bloody war against the people of Finland and the democratic system. The nation and its suffering were

⁹³ *Työmies* 10.1, 3. Joko se rauhoitustyö nyt alkaa? Senaatin erään ehdotuksen johdosta.

⁹⁴ *Työmies* 18.1, 7. Nuorisoliike. – Suomen työläisnuorisolle, työväenluokan äideille ja isille, waltiollisesti ja ammatillisesti järjestäytyneelle työväelle. *Työmies* 8.1, 6. Taisteluun asewollisuutta ja sotalaitosta vastaan!

⁹⁵ *Työmies* 23.1, 2. Weljen veri wuotaa!: ”*Lahtarikaartilaiset näyttävät olewan walmiiksi harjoitettuja työwäestön teurastukseen.*”

⁹⁶ *Työmies* 23.1, 2. Weljen veri wuotaa!

⁹⁷ *Työmies* 26.1, 3. Lahtarikaartit ja senaatti.

⁹⁸ Matikainen 2018, 140-141.

⁹⁹ *Työmies* 26.1, 3. Lahtarikaartit ja senaatti.

¹⁰⁰ *Työmies* 15.1, 2. Köyhälistön woimat kokoon!

highlighted, as was evident in phrases such as “*the spilling of brother’s blood*”¹⁰¹. The propaganda here was nationalist in essence. The nation was underlined constantly, and the White Guards as well as the senate, ‘enemies of the people’, were blamed first and foremost for organizing a war against their own nation.

This defensive nature of the revolution is well present in previous research on the topic. Matikainen argued that the Social Democrats portrayed the bourgeois Government as the aggressor, given that it was arming itself against the working class. The bourgeoisie were blamed for any future unrest and violence since the socialists only assumed a defensive position.¹⁰²

Undermining the legitimacy of the bourgeois ruling faction

The Finnish Social Democratic Party also attacked its opponents on the issue of good governance. It engaged in a campaign to undermine the legitimacy of the Parliament, in which the SDP had lost its majority following the previous elections in 1917. Another target of the SDP was the governing Senate of Finland, which comprised of members of the bourgeois parties. *Työmies* accused the Finnish bourgeois parties of assisting the Russian Provisional Government of Alexander Kerensky in its efforts to intervene in Finnish politics. The newspaper mentioned Kerensky’s order to break up the Parliament and order new elections back in 1917. More accusations followed, and the bourgeois parties were blamed for using illicit means and winning the latest parliamentary election merely by spending great amounts of money on their campaigns. In order to hurt the legitimacy of the elections, *Työmies* went as far as to accuse the opposing side of election fraud.¹⁰³

Työmies identified this alleged infiltration as merely a steppingstone. The real goal of the bourgeoisie, according to the publication, was the concentration of powers and removal of important laws, previously introduced and accepted by the Parliament. Among these, the SDP identified the law for eight-hour working day and the Municipal Act. They were ultimately not repealed due to a massive strike.¹⁰⁴ It was however implied in *Työmies*, that the bourgeois faction is not using the powers of the parliament in a legitimate manner.

The Social Democrats also accused the senate of attempting to gain dictatorial powers from the Parliament, “*the highest operator of state power*” as they put it.¹⁰⁵ They made their case in a very clear manner: “*The bourgeois majority of the parliament has given its senate the unlimited powers of*

¹⁰¹ Työmies 26.1, 2. Kansan viholliset: ”*weljesweren wuodatuksella*”

¹⁰² Matikainen 2018, 233.

¹⁰³ Työmies 3.1, 2. Wallankumousvuoden 1917 päätyttyä.

¹⁰⁴ Työmies 3.1, 2. Wallankumousvuoden 1917 päätyttyä.

¹⁰⁵ Työmies 10.1, 3. Joko se rauhoitustyö nyt alkaa? Senaatin erään ehdotuksen johdosta.

a violent dictatorship".¹⁰⁶ The Social Democrats spoke of a "takeover" and a "declaration of war" in connection with the bourgeoisie and the Senate¹⁰⁷. It is noteworthy, that the Social Democrats defended the Parliament as an institution, and only attacked it due to the bourgeois majority at that time. In fact, they considered the parliamentary institution itself almost sacred. By declaring the means, through which the bourgeois Parliament and Senate ruled illegitimate, the SDP clearly worked to weaken the authority of the ruling faction while also posing as a guardian of the parliamentary system. This finding is in accordance with previous research, which has emphasized that the revolution was not directed at the Parliament, but rather at the bourgeois Senate¹⁰⁸.

Political propaganda was also present in this topic. The SDP laid its goal out plain and clear: by conquering the parliament, the working class gets to use it to defeat capitalism¹⁰⁹. Interestingly this does not exactly follow Marx's view on revolution. Having seen the failed revolutions of 1848 and the Paris Commune, Marx firmly believed that the working class could not just occupy state institutions and use them for their own purposes¹¹⁰. Despite that, they deemed the fight for institutions such as the parliament very important, and a large part of the propaganda concentrated firmly on this issue.

Why was the party so keen on defending parliamentarianism? Historian Jari Ehrnrooth identified the Parliament as an achievement of the Great Strike in 1905 and thus something the SDP were not willing to let go off. It was also in line with the Kautskyite doctrine of Marxist orthodoxy, as the Parliament was a historical necessity and a progressive step towards socialism.¹¹¹ To abandon the Parliament would have meant a profound abandonment of Kautskyism. In any case, this is another clear case of the conservative approach of the SDP. The propaganda on this issue was also a great example of propaganda of agitation.

Guardians of democracy and the independence of Finland

The Social Democrats presented themselves as guardians of democracy and self-government. According to the party, a strong democracy was a necessary precondition for order and a strong state¹¹². Agitation was practiced on the basis that democratic achievements of previous revolutions

¹⁰⁶ Työmies 15.1, 2. Köyhälistön voimat kokoon! "Senaatti aikoo hyökätä lahtariwoimalla työväenluokkaa vastaan: 'Eduskunnan porwarillinen enemmistö on antanut senaatilleen awoimet väkiwaltaisen dikatuurin waltuudet."

¹⁰⁷ Työmies 16.1, 4. Taantumuksellisen porwariston wallankaappauspuuhat: "wallankaappauspuuhat", Työmies 19.1 s.3 Senaatin wallananastuspyrkimykset eduskunnan käsiteltävänä: "wallananastuspyrkimykset", Työmies 27.1 s.1. Häwitetäänkö työväenliike: "Nuoren Suomen tasawallan „hallituksen" sodan julistus työväen luokalle."

¹⁰⁸ Matikainen 2018, 240.

¹⁰⁹ Työmies 20.1, 1. Suomen wapaudelle juhlittaessa.

¹¹⁰ Lichtheim 1982, 119.

¹¹¹ Ehrnrooth 1992, 92.

¹¹² Työmies 25.1, 4. Wiimepäiwän tapausten johdosta.

were in danger and that the capitalists had prepared plans of war against the nation and democracy¹¹³. The call for self-governance is best illustrated in a direct quote: “*Nations must cease being flocks of sheep, whose destinies are ordered around by ruling forces*”¹¹⁴.

Bourgeois parties were criticized in *Työmies* for only supporting national interests when it was beneficial to their class interest. The Social Democrats accused them of being against national self-rule during Kerensky’s rule in Russia, in hopes of receiving support against the demands of the Finnish working class.¹¹⁵ According to the Social Democrats, Finland owed its independence to the revolutions in Russia, because those events had made Finland’s independence possible¹¹⁶.

Researcher of politics Erika Harris summarized nationalism as follows: “*The principle of sovereignty resides essentially in the Nation. No body, no individual can exercise any authority which does not explicitly emanate from it*”¹¹⁷. This is exactly the principle, which the Finnish Social Democrats employed in their propaganda. In their own words: “[...] *a government, which does not know the nation, does not have the right to rule over the nation*”¹¹⁸.

Nationalism had been a topic of debate in the early years of the 20th century among the international Social Democratic circles. Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin developed a theory of national self-determination, which gave all minority nations the right to an independent state. The SDP adopted the theory and made the party seek for more cooperation with the Bolsheviks¹¹⁹. They employed the theory to secure Finland’s independence and to fight the bourgeoisie inside the Finnish political system, as seen so far.

The Social Democrats strictly linked socialism, self-government of the nation and democracy together. They built a case around this connection, claiming that international democracy cannot exist without universal recognition of self-rule to all peoples. They drew their inspiration not only from Lenin but also from socialist theoretician Karl Kautsky.¹²⁰ The SDP went even further in their nationalism.

¹¹³ *Työmies* 26.1, 6 Suomen järjestyneelle työväelle ja Työväen järjestyskaarteille., *Työmies* 27.1, 1 „Niistä me helposti selviydymme.”

¹¹⁴ *Työmies* 20.1, 1. Suomen vapaudelle juhlistaessa: “*Kansain on lakattava olemasta lammaslaumoja, joiden kohtaloista wallanpitäjät mielensä mukaan määräävät.*”

¹¹⁵ *Työmies* 27.1, 1. „Niistä me helposti selviydymme.”

¹¹⁶ *Työmies* 3.1, 2. Wallankumousvuoden 1917 päätyttyä.

¹¹⁷ Harris 2009, 21.

¹¹⁸ *Työmies* 27.1, 1 Hallitus ja kansa.: “[...] *hallitus, joka ei kansaa tunne, ei ole oikeutettu kansaa hallitsemaan.*”

¹¹⁹ Matikainen 2018, 93.

¹²⁰ *Työmies* 20.1, 1. Suomen vapaudelle juhlistaessa.

A socialist society is, according to the SDP, achieved only once the workers conquer their own fatherlands.¹²¹ The wording of this message is against the thinking of Karl Marx, who argued that the workers had no fatherland. The revisionist socialist thinker Eduard Bernstein thought, that the present-day workers were part of the public life and enjoyed their rights as citizens. Given all that, they could now truly affect the destinies of their countries. As such, they could call their states fatherlands, and they had good reasons to defend them.¹²² Previous research has uncovered certain diluted form of revisionist thinking in Finland before the First World War, and as such, this is not surprising¹²³.

Nationalism and socialism through international co-operation thus appeared to be the ideological doctrine advocated by the Social Democratic Party. This is very much in line with the thinking of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels as seen in the Communist Manifesto, where they state that communists everywhere work for unity of the democratic parties of all countries¹²⁴.

Additionally, the Social Democrats blamed the capitalist ruling class for using its powers against the recently gained independence of the nation. Close ties to Sweden and Germany were mentioned, and above all the idea of selling the island of Ahvenanmaa (Åland) to Sweden was deemed dangerous. Grain shipments from the United States to Finland were halted by the United Kingdom, and *Työmies* blamed the incident on reckless foreign policy practiced by the Finnish bourgeoisie.¹²⁵ The Social Democrats once again portrayed the interests of the capitalists as opposed to those of the Finnish nation. New leadership, that could truly represent the nation, was hopelessly needed.

It is however important to note that nationalism did not truly surpass socialism in importance. A good example of this is found in a column published on 20 January, which stated: “*a Finnish worker is a thousand times closer to a Russian worker than he is to a Finnish burgher*”.¹²⁶ Egalitarianism was present in their argumentation: a separation based on ‘master and slave nations’ was not part of the ideology of the Finnish Social Democrats. In fact, ‘imperialist socialists’ advocating such view were denounced in *Työmies*.¹²⁷

7.2 Claim to power - The German Communist Party in Bavaria

Inspiration from Russia and Hungary

¹²¹ *Työmies* 20.1, 1. Suomen wapaudelle juhliittaessa.

¹²² Kołakowski 1981b, 110.

¹²³ Ehrnrooth 1992, 185.

¹²⁴ Engels & Marx 1977, 493.

¹²⁵ *Työmies* 26.1, 2. Kansan wiholliset.: ‘...weljesweren wuodatuksella’

¹²⁶ *Työmies* 20.1, 5 Niitä näitä. – Juhlapäiwän teksti: ”*Suomalainen työmies on niihin kutsunut wieraaksi wenäläisen työmiehen...hän onkin tasa-arwoinen toweri ja tuhat kertaa lähempänä meitä kuin kotimainen porwari*”

¹²⁷ *Työmies* 20.1, 1. Suomen wapaudelle juhliittaessa.

By early November 1918, war-weary Germany was ready for political change. Kaiser Wilhelm II had abdicated. The Crown Prince had rejected his claim to the throne. Efforts were made to save the monarchy by conservatives in the Social Democratic Party such as future president Friedrich Ebert. However, the people were showing their support for establishing a republic with socialist characteristics.¹²⁸

In an attempt to reduce the influence of the extremist left, SPD leader Philipp Scheidemann decided to proclaim the German Republic and invite socialists outside the party to participate in the government. As a result, revolutionary agitation lost some of its edge. These efforts were successful in the short-term.¹²⁹ Ultimately, they were not enough to prevent multiple revolutions taking place in the coming months.

The recently founded German Communist Party found itself in a challenging position in March 1919. A large section of the leadership had been arrested following the unsuccessful Spartacist uprising in January. Even worse, paramilitary units executed the two co-founders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. More losses ensued, as the party organized a communist revolt in Bremen. The leadership of the Bremen Soviet Republic demanded a removal of the Ebert-Scheidemann government in Berlin, only to find itself collapse after a short while.¹³⁰

The Communists had recently suffered setbacks in Bavaria as well. A new government was formed under the Social Democrat Johannes Hoffmann, who saw the Communists as an enemy. He inherited a state with miserable economy and a capital in financial ruin. Hoffmann himself hampered efforts to socialize the economy. Moreover, the Hungarian Soviet Republic was proclaimed and it started funding the Austrian Communist Party. Suddenly the threat of Bolshevism was coming from the southeast.¹³¹ Overall, the Communists suddenly gained a solid outlook for their future in Bavaria.

Considering the previous failed revolutions in Germany, it is not a surprise, that the Communists in Bavaria drew inspiration from two political movements outside their country. Those were the Bolshevik Party in Russia and the Communist Party in Hungary. The former's constitution was under examination in the pages of *Münchner Rote Fahne* to answer a simple question: What do the Communists want? The answer included a council system, arming of the workers through establishing a red army and battling both capitalism and imperialism.¹³² Unsurprisingly the historian Werner

¹²⁸ Pelz 2018, 63-4.

¹²⁹ Pelz 2018, 64.5,

¹³⁰ Müller 2010, 167.

¹³¹ Mitchell 1965, 290-292, 294, 298-299.

¹³² Münchner Rote Fahne 20.3, 3. Was wollen die Kommunisten?

Müller identifies Soviet Russia and specifically its council structure as a role model to the Communists in Germany.

The recent revolution in Hungary, in which a Soviet Republic was declared, brought much excitement to the Communists in Bavaria. It was seen as a sign that the time of “*the German trinity of capitalism, imperialism and militarism*” was ending. The Communists in Bavaria highlighted possibilities of action against the capitalist and imperialist order on a global scale.¹³³ These two revolutions were examined carefully in the pages of the *Münchener Rote Fahne*.

Historian Hermann Weber identifies Soviet Russia as an idol of the radical left in Germany¹³⁴. Bavarian Communists certainly embraced this status of the Bolsheviks, as Lenin’s writings were published in the *Münchener Rote Fahne*. The Communists in Bavaria echoed his stance on militarism. An article series on the topic defended revolution and even warfare in certain cases. The militarization of the whole society, even the youth, was not a cause for concern: these teachings of the imperialist capitalists could soon be used to advance the cause of the proletariat.¹³⁵

The recent revolution in Hungary was by no means ignored either. The KPD expressed enthusiasm as news of the revolution occupied the pages of *Münchener Rote Fahne*. The Hungarian Communist State was said to have been modelled by the experience of the Soviet dictatorship in Russia. The Bavarian Communists praised the new state in Hungary for rapidly bringing freedom to the proletariat while also securing human rights. The Bavarian Communists carefully described the revolutionary process: various topics included setting up revolutionary tribunals, establishing the Red Army of the proletariat and even revising the concept of marriage.¹³⁶ The Hungarian Red Army received additional attention. Its structure, discipline and the election of its leadership were among the features under observation by the KPD.¹³⁷ The Communists boldly declared that Germany was to follow in the footsteps of Hungary¹³⁸.

Justifying the revolution: Themes of the propaganda articles of the German Communist Party in Bavaria

The German Communist Party used its newspaper *Münchener Rote Fahne* to spread its message. The party concentrated mostly on undermining the legitimacy of the ruling bourgeois faction (25 articles)

¹³³ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 26.3, 1. Die Münchner Kommunisten an die ungarische Räte-Republik.

¹³⁴ Weber 2014, 13.

¹³⁵ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 28.3, 1-2. Das Militärprogramm der proletarischen Revolution I, *Münchener Rote Fahne* 29.3, 1-2. Das Militärprogramm der proletarischen Revolution II.

¹³⁶ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 27.3, 1 Aus den beiden Sowjetrepubliken. I. Ungarische Räterepublik.

¹³⁷ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 27.3, 2. Zwei Armeen. I. Die ungarische rote Armee.

¹³⁸ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 26.3, 1. An die Räte-Regierung der ungarischen Arbeiter-, Bauern-, u. Soldatenrepublik.

as well as opposing militarism (13 articles). Other notable subjects were societal problems (9 articles) and imperialism (7 articles).

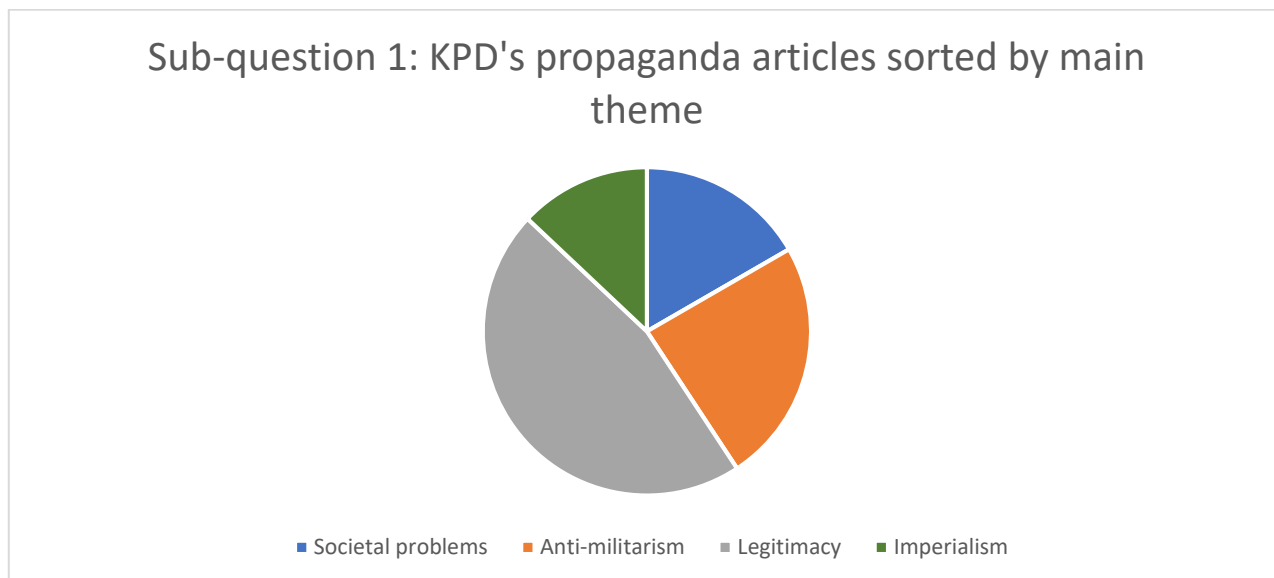


Chart 2: Propaganda articles published in *Münchener Rote Fahne* 18.3.-6.4.1919, sorted by main topics.

Delegitimate rule of the bourgeoisie and rival socialists

The Communists denounced the policies of their opponents across the political sphere in their propaganda of agitation. This issue received most attention by a wide margin. Among numerous topics, the most important one was the council system. The KPD attacked its adversaries, particularly the Social Democratic Party of Germany, for attempting to limit the political influence and power of the councils. An important case concerned council elections, in which only those meeting certain income would be allowed to participate. The Communists feared that councils elected in this way would become mere puppets of the Social Democratic Ebert-Scheidemann-Noske government in Berlin, and not represent the workers anymore.¹³⁹

The Communists reported that the bourgeois ruled Parliament (Landtag) of Bavaria had met to put an end to the council of workers, soldiers and peasants.¹⁴⁰ Such events were emphasized to enforce a view that the ruling factions were not on the side of the workers. Blame was particularly laid on the Social Democratic Party and its representatives like President Friedrich Ebert and Minister of Defense

¹³⁹ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 18.3, 1. Kommunisten und Rätekongreß. Der Berfälschung des Rätesystems.

¹⁴⁰ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 18.3, 2. Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands. Eine Erklärung der Ortsgruppe München.

Gustav Noske. The Communist blamed them for outright strangling the councils. Therefore, to establish a Soviet Republic, the whole SPD was untrustworthy to work with.¹⁴¹

The KPD also attacked the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany (USPD), as their position on the councils was unfavorable. The USPD was blamed for considering the councils mere organizations for mediation of opinions instead of organizations that were to exert power. Their views on the role of the councils were denounced as “*petit-bourgeois nonsense*”¹⁴². Overall, the Communists claimed that the USPD was deceiving the proletariat.¹⁴³ The KPD clearly looked to establish themselves as not only the most radical, but also the most authentic socialist party in Germany.

The Communists also blamed the SPD for working in favor of not only the bourgeoisie, but also the reactionary factions such as the old military leadership. The three notable Social Democrats, President Ebert, Prime Minister Philipp Scheidemann and Defense minister Noske were called “*mere blind tools in the hands of the capitalist clique and the reactionaries*”¹⁴⁴. Examples on this were numerous. The KPD reported how Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg and General Erich Ludendorff, prominent military leaders from the First World War, were back in the public eye. Even the Bavarian Crown Prince had been given additional time by the Social Democrats before he had to formally denounce his claim to the throne.¹⁴⁵ The KPD portrayed Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske as too weak to stand in the way of the reactionary military quarter¹⁴⁶.

The Communists went so far as to imply, that the three prominent Social Democrats were preparing for the reinstallation of the German monarchy! Indeed, this theory was promoted, and the Communists posed a question: Why did the former Emperor Wilhelm II choose to flee specifically to the neighboring Netherlands during the November Revolution? The possibility of his return with help of the Social Democrats remained relevant, it was argued in *Münchner Rote Fahne*.

The propaganda also put a lot of emphasis on Noske’s good relationship with military leadership.¹⁴⁷ The “*men of yesterday*”, like Ludendorff, were also now, thanks to Noske, once more in prominent positions¹⁴⁸. There were subtle and not so subtle implications that the SPD was either too weak to

¹⁴¹ Münchner Rote Fahne 6.4, 2. Auch eine Räterepublik!

¹⁴² ‘*kleinbürgerlicher Humbug*’

¹⁴³ Münchner Rote Fahne 25.3, 1. Eine unabhängige „Politische Kundgebung” oder Wie macht man einen Eierkuchen, ohne Eier zu zerschlagen?

¹⁴⁴ Münchner Rote Fahne 19.3, 1. Der starke Mann: “*Und doch sind sie bloß blinde Werkzeuge in den Händen der kapitalistischen Clique und Reaktion*”

¹⁴⁵ Münchner Rote Fahne 19.3, 1. Der starke Mann.

¹⁴⁶ Münchner Rote Fahne 20.3, 2. Die Waffe als Legitimation.

¹⁴⁷ Münchner Rote Fahne 21.3, 2. Warum der Kaiser nach Holland ging.

¹⁴⁸ Münchner Rote Fahne 2.4, 2. Die starken Männer. Großadmiral von Tirpitz.

prevent the return of monarchy or it was working together with reactionary forces to make it happen. In any case, the Scheidemann government was depicted as a threat to the proletariat, and the KPD presented themselves as a true alternative to the current system.

Despite opposition to the SPD on the grounds that their rule would eventually nullify the November Revolution and thus bring back the old rule, KPD did not actually think highly of said revolution. Instead, they criticized the revolution for not changing anything for the masses of people. It was characterized as a mere change of ruling personalities, meanwhile the old bureaucracy remained. What did it mean for the workers to have the Social Democrat Ebert at the top of Germany's politics, asked the Communists? According to them, no change happened in the relationship between a ruling class and an oppressed class.¹⁴⁹ The rights obtained were deemed microscopical¹⁵⁰. The Communists presented the November Revolution in Germany as one to have failed to bring forth meaningful change, contrary to the Bolshevik October Revolution in Russia. A failure to truly change the society was on the bourgeoisie and primarily on the Social Democratic Party of Germany and its trio Ebert-Scheidemann-Noske, argued the Communists.

Perhaps the most notable difference between different socialist parties in Germany at the time was the question of how socialism was to be achieved. The Bolshevik revolution served as an example in how political power was seized, and the Bavarian Communists put a lot of emphasis on the fact that the workers did not happily just wait for a chance to vote their representatives into the Parliament.¹⁵¹

Additionally, the Communists made a distinction between true socialism and state capitalism. This distinction was purely based on the character of the state: only a state ruled by the proletariat could achieve socialism, as this was also a question of politics and not merely of economics. Therefore, when the German state, controlled by the bourgeoisie, started running a mining company, it was not practicing capitalism instead of socialism. The KPD specifically denounced the Social Democratic rulers, who governed for the benefit of the bourgeoisie and established industry based on state capitalism through the process of 'socializing' some means of production under the ownership of the state.¹⁵²

The party exercised harsh critique not only on other socialist movements, but on many socialist thinkers as well. An important socialist theoretician condemned for his views was Karl Kautsky. The Communists approved Kautsky's acceptance of the councils as organizations for fighting, but they

¹⁴⁹ Münchner Rote Fahne 26.3, 2. Sozialisierung. Von Anton Pannekoek.

¹⁵⁰ Münchner Rote Fahne 21.3, 2. Abgewürgt! Von Max Levien.

¹⁵¹ Münchner Rote Fahne 26.3, 2. Sozialisierung. Von Anton Pannekoek.

¹⁵² Münchner Rote Fahne 26.3, 2. Sozialisierung. Von Anton Pannekoek.

found his support for them as revolutionary institutions of governance inadequate¹⁵³. Even worse, Kautsky fought against the councils through his writings on the issue¹⁵⁴. Kautsky's view of Germany not yet being ready for socialism was considered disappointing by the Communists¹⁵⁵. It is in this way that Kautsky challenged the Leninist principles of the October Revolution in Russia¹⁵⁶. Lenin did not consider the October Revolution inevitable, as something that had specific requirements and outcomes once those requirements are fulfilled. Instead, he saw the conditions at the time as an opportunity that needed to be seized, as it might never come back.¹⁵⁷ The KPD clearly shared Lenin's view as they were not content to just waiting for the material and economic conditions to improve to a point sufficient for socialism, whatever that might be.

The Communists ridiculed another socialist theorist, Eduard Bernstein, for his supposed devotion to monarchy and the fatherland. More seriously, they criticized and denounced his lukewarm stance on the council system.¹⁵⁸ This was by no means surprising, since the revisionist thinker believed in gradual social reforms, using democratic pressure to achieve socialist ends¹⁵⁹. After all, he even yearned for parliamentary constitutionalism with a reformed monarchy¹⁶⁰!

The aspect of political propaganda was present in *Münchener Rote Fahne*. Much against the view of Bernstein, but in line with Kautsky, the KPD wanted to establish socialism through revolution. An article published on March 18 states it clear and simple: "*We seek to establish dictatorship of the proletariat, and not over the proletariat.*"¹⁶¹ The Communists denounced the bourgeois concept of democracy and saw the dictatorship of the proletariat as a true form of democracy¹⁶². This form of governance was not optional for shifting the society from capitalism to socialism. Meaningful change could only come through such dictatorship, which was principled in nature. The KPD denounced the Social Democratic Government at the time for lacking these qualities.¹⁶³

Overall, the KPD's conception of socialism appeared very different from both Kautsky and Bernstein. The two USPD politicians and theoreticians never seriously considered disconnecting socialism from

¹⁵³ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 25.3, 1. Eine unabhängige „Politische Kundgebung“ oder Wie macht man einen Eierkuchen, ohne Eier zu zerschlagen?

¹⁵⁴ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 6.4, 2. Auch eine Räterepublik!

¹⁵⁵ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 26.3, 2. Sozialisierung. Von Anton Pannekoek.

¹⁵⁶ Kołakowski 1981b, 50.

¹⁵⁷ Lichtheim 1982, 332.

¹⁵⁸ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 29.3, 1. „Es ist bestimmt in Gottes Rat...“ Eduard Bernsteins Abschied von der USP.

¹⁵⁹ Kołakowski 1981b, 101.

¹⁶⁰ Lichtheim 1982, 264.

¹⁶¹ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 18.3, 2. Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands. Eine Erklärung der Ortsgruppe München: "*Wir erstreben die Diktatur des Proletariats und nicht die Diktatur über das Proletariat*".

¹⁶² *Münchener Rote Fahne* 25.3, 1. Eine unabhängige „Politische Kundgebung“ oder Wie macht man einen Eierkuchen, ohne Eier zu zerschlagen?

¹⁶³ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 21.3, 4. Aus Bayern. Nürnberg.

democracy¹⁶⁴. Opposite to that, Lenin was a strong supporter of a dictatorship of the proletariat, which he defined as an “*exercise of force by the proletariat against the exploiters it had overthrown*”¹⁶⁵. The KPD followed the Bolshevik leader’s thought closely on the issue of democracy versus dictatorship.

The Communists presented a clear view on how such a dictatorship could be achieved. They quoted a famous slogan of Lenin by declaring “*All power to the soviets!*”¹⁶⁶ It was for this reason, that the Bavarian Communists harshly criticized anyone who appeared to limit the powers of the councils. They saw the success of the Bolsheviks in Russia and aimed to replicate that in Germany. The stance on the councils was extreme and their message was very clear. The Communists refused to take part in municipal elections, for no organization of governance other than the councils could be allowed to exist. No compromise was to be made with the bourgeoisie.¹⁶⁷

The process of delegitimization also included the press. *Münchener Rote Fahne* published attacks on bourgeois newspapers on an almost daily basis. German and foreign newspapers were chastised for spreading lies on issues deemed important to the KPD. Bourgeois newspapers allegedly spread lies about the working class¹⁶⁸. Case that was more specific involved the Berlin March Battles of 1919, which according to the KPD were unjustly blamed on the Communists.¹⁶⁹

The supposed lie industry did not only concern affairs of Germany. According to the Communists, the recently established Hungarian Soviet Republic was also a victim of lies spread by bourgeois papers¹⁷⁰. Soviet Russia was similarly attacked. A story concerning a decision to end marriage, the ‘private ownership of women’ by the Peasant’s, Soldier’s and Worker’s Council of Kronstadt was promoted by the bourgeois press. The KPD regarded this reporting an example of a blooming lie-industry.¹⁷¹ Bourgeois papers also accused the Bolsheviks of ruling through hunger, by stealing food shipments and destroying what they could not carry¹⁷². Whilst correcting false reporting as they saw it, the Communists also clearly wanted to discredit the bourgeois press and its ‘*lie-industry*’ altogether. By doing so, the KPD built a narrative, that not only its political institutions, but also the whole bourgeois society was corrupt and needed to be replaced.

¹⁶⁴ Lichtheim 1982, 264.

¹⁶⁵ Kołakowski 1981b, 498.

¹⁶⁶ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 21.3, 3. Reichsregierung und Räte: “*Alle Macht den Räten!*”

¹⁶⁷ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 3.4, 4. Kommunisten und Gemeindewahlen.

¹⁶⁸ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 18.3, 3. Internationale Lügenindustrie. Einheimische Lügenproduktion.

¹⁶⁹ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 22.3, 1. Das Berliner Blutbad und die „*Münchener Post*.”

¹⁷⁰ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 27.3, 2. Bürgerliche Wut.

¹⁷¹ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 19.3, 3. Internationale Lügenindustrie. Schauerberichte über den Bolschewismus. Bolschewiki „*Ehe*”.

¹⁷² *Münchener Rote Fahne* 20.3, 3. Ausländische Lügenproduktion. Odier über die russischen Zustände.

Harsh living conditions under SPD rule

To undermine the ruling system through propaganda of agitation, the KPD reported widely on hardships of life and shortages of goods that affected the workers especially. Hunger was a central theme, and the Communists tied it to the Bavarian Parliament on multiple occasion. Such starvation, among other grievances, was bound to the parliamentary system. The KPD presented their rule, the dictatorship of the proletariat as a cure to this problem.¹⁷³

People's livelihoods were also in jeopardy. The KPD stressed a problem of unemployment. The problem was described as something inherent to a capitalist economy, which could not be solved in said system. Poor unemployment benefits added to the problem of hunger.¹⁷⁴ Poor wages, especially in the countryside were another problem. A great example of this can be found in *Münchner Rote Fahne* on April 5, where it was outright declared that "*the agrarian capitalist paid starvation wages!*"¹⁷⁵ The staggering wages were coupled with increasing prices. More specifically, this problem concerned the price of coal¹⁷⁶.

Lack of housing was another problem, which the Communists used to justify their cause. A lack of housing in Bavaria was blamed on the anarchy that ruled in a capitalist society. Once again, the KPD leaned on the two Soviet Republics, Russia and Hungary, for a model. The Communists demanded that families with more rooms than the size of their family required were to give up their excess facilities to those in need. Similar measures had been taken in Moscow and Budapest beforehand.¹⁷⁷

The KPD called for regulation of apartments and a revolution in the field of housing. The bourgeoisie were to be forced to give up the space they did not need to the families of workers.¹⁷⁸ Such measures would not have been possible within the capitalist system. This serves as one of the numerous examples of how the KPD used a radical, but according to their propaganda an utmost necessary course of action to further justify a revolution and an establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat.

The threat posed by militarism

With conditions so poor, a reader must wonder how such a system was not toppled. The Communists had an answer: According to Lenin, the armament of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat was one of the most important matters of the capitalist society at the time. Militarism finding its way into the

¹⁷³ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 19.3, 2. Die Festung in der Prannerstraße, *Münchner Rote Fahne* 21.3, 1. Abgewürgt! Von Max Levien.

¹⁷⁴ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 5.4, 4. Gegen die Erwerbslosen.

¹⁷⁵ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 5.4, 3. Die Arbeitslosigkeit in Bayern.: "...Die Agrar-Kapitalisten bezahlen Hungerlöhne!"

¹⁷⁶ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 3.4, 2. Aus der kapitalistischen Volkswirtschaft. Preissteigerungen und kein Ende.

¹⁷⁷ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 5.4, 1. Die Wohnungsnot in Bayern.

¹⁷⁸ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 21.3, 3. Bekämpfung des Mietwuchers im kapitalischen Staat.

public life was emphasized. The KPD claimed that the bourgeoisie militarized the whole society, even the youth!¹⁷⁹

Despite Germany's loss in the First World War and the new government lacking authority, the German military organization did not dissolve even after an armistice in November 1918. Actually, the German military was the only unimpaired force between the Rhine and Ural Mountains at the time!¹⁸⁰ Therefore, the Communists had a good reason to choose the military as one of the main targets of their agitation.

The KPD pushed this narrative and linked it to violent suppressions of Communism by the White Guards in many areas of Germany. The bourgeoisie and the White Guards were accused of working hand in hand¹⁸¹. In reference to this, the bourgeois council of Berlin reportedly wished to establish an armed force geared by the army itself¹⁸². This linked conveniently with the previously mentioned reports of close ties between the SPD and the old guard in the German armed forces. The Ebert-Scheidemann-Noske trio was blamed for the situation, in which the officers were armed whilst the workers found themselves unarmed¹⁸³.

Münchner Rote Fahne reported on a secret order given to the White Guard *Garde-Kavallerie-Schützen-Division*, which was closely tied to Minister Noske. This order commanded troops to immediately shoot anyone found in possession of a firearm¹⁸⁴. The Communists argued that this situation was born as the bourgeoisie were arming themselves, while the workers were being simultaneously disarmed. The political propaganda called for opposite action¹⁸⁵. To further prove the necessity of such action, the KPD simultaneously highlighted events of violence directed towards the workers in Germany.

The newspaper reported on numerous acts of violent acts against the workers. The White Guards, "Noske troops", as they were labelled by the KPD, were accused of attacking troops loyal to the council system. The propaganda painted this attack as nothing less than a reactionary coup d'état.¹⁸⁶ White troops in Neukölln, Berlin reportedly had orders to shoot anyone who carried a membership card of the Communist Party. Even women and children were among those shot dead.¹⁸⁷ After reporting an execution of a father and a son in Berlin, the Communists concluded that everyone would

¹⁷⁹ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 29.3, 1-2. Das Militärprogramm der proletarischen Revolution. Von N. Lenin.

¹⁸⁰ Geyer 2010, 203.

¹⁸¹ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 31.3, 2. Wie ein Blutbad für ganz Deutschland vorbereitet wird.

¹⁸² *Münchner Rote Fahne* 20.3, 2. Entwaffnung der Arbeiter, Bewaffnung der Bourgeoisie.

¹⁸³ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 31.3, 2. „Chronik und Glossen.“ Was sich die Monarchisten bereits Herausnehmen.

¹⁸⁴ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 19.3, 1. Der weiße Terror.; Ein geheimer Schießelaß der Garde-Kavallerie-Division.

¹⁸⁵ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 20.3, 2. Entwaffnung der Arbeiter, Bewaffnung der Bourgeoisie.

¹⁸⁶ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 20.3, 1. Einführung des Sozialismus in Deutschland. Königsberg.

¹⁸⁷ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 20.3, 2. Neukölln.

be killed, even if the weapon they were holding was a broom stick. The Communists held Minister Noske responsible for these events, and they dubbed this widespread violence ironically “*Noske justice*”.¹⁸⁸ The “*Civil War Minister*” Noske, as the Communists called him, was unsurprisingly also blamed for violently quelling the revolution that took place in Bremen earlier in 1919¹⁸⁹. Even worse, the KPD outright claimed that these bloodbaths were planned and provoked by the government¹⁹⁰! Amid all these disturbing reports, the communists urged their supporters to wait, save their strength and not be provoked¹⁹¹. Their propaganda of agitation did not therefore support an immediate revolution at the time.

The fight against imperialism

Anti-imperialist tendencies were present in the pages of *Münchener Rote Fahne*. Most criticism was laid upon German and Entente imperialism. Despite suffering from the economic imperialism of the Entente, the KPD did not rate it any worse than the German imperialism of the past¹⁹². The Communists did not concentrate on one specific country. Instead, they denounced numerous states for practicing imperialism. Even Serbian imperialism became a topic of interest through the threat it imposed to workers in Hungary and Croatia¹⁹³.

German imperialism was still relevant despite its loss in the First World War. The Communists pointed out, how interesting it would be to ask Minister Noske, why German troops were still in Courland, Estonia and Lithuania¹⁹⁴. The KPD reported that the German government was not happily releasing Russian prisoners of war, and when they begrudgingly did, those former prisoners were forced to fight against the Bolsheviks in the armies of the anti-Bolshevik General Anton Denikin or the Don Cossacks¹⁹⁵. The goals of the SPD-led Germany and the Entente were met in this affair, and the KPD did not hesitate to call it out.

This special relationship received a lot of attention. The Communists spread claims that the Entente did not completely disarm Germany, because under the leadership of Minister Noske Germany could use its arms for imperialist purposes that would also benefit the Entente¹⁹⁶. A direct quote further explains the case the KPD was making:

¹⁸⁸ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 18.3, 2. Das Blutbad in Berlin.

¹⁸⁹ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 3.4, 1. Bremen.

¹⁹⁰ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 31.3, 1. Wie ein Blutbad für ganz Deutschland vorbereitet wird.

¹⁹¹ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 18.3, 2. Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands. Eine Erklärung der Ortsgruppe München.

¹⁹² *Münchener Rote Fahne* 26.3, 1. Die Münchner Kommunisten an die ungarische Räte-Republik. An die Räte-Regierung.

¹⁹³ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 1.4, 1. Die serbischen Imperialisten gegen die ungarischen Arbeiterführer.

¹⁹⁴ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 29.3, 2. Untersuchungskomödie.

¹⁹⁵ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 19.3, 1. Weiße Garden aus russischen Kriegsgefangenen?

¹⁹⁶ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 2.4, 4. Noske braucht Kanonen.

“The current system of the Entente consists of sending the soldiers of others, instead of their own, against the Bolsheviks. Germany, which has submitted to their will, has constructed a new army subordinate to Hindenburg against the Bolsheviks¹⁹⁷”

To further embarrass the SPD in the eyes of workers, the *Münchener Rote Fahne* reported on a story published by the *Manchester Guardian*. Winston Churchill, the Secretary of State for War in the United Kingdom had praised the German government for its fight against Bolshevism, in other words against the proletariat, as it was argued by the German Communists. Now it was obvious for the working class to see, that Prime Minister Scheidemann spilt the blood of the German proletariat in the name of English capitalism and imperialism!¹⁹⁸

The Communists thus thoroughly denounced imperialism, and debunked its legacy. It was through the dictatorship of the proletariat in Europe, wrote the Communists, that even the victims of colonialist slavery would regain their freedom¹⁹⁹. The KPD presented itself as the only political movement capable of ending these imperialist practices.

Not against war in principle

The strong tendency of anti-militarism and anti-imperialism indicates that the KPD was not in favor of violence in any case. This was not true by any means. Following Lenin’s thought the party promoted the idea that an oppressed class must seek to arm itself, otherwise it would remain mishandled and enslaved²⁰⁰. It was stated in a very clear manner: *“The socialists cannot be against every war, for then they would stop being socialists²⁰¹”*. Lenin’s stance on war was amoral: Warfare was simply a mean to meet an end, and it was not essentially different from peaceful means. He did not make a distinction between offensive and defensive wars. Everything revolved ultimately around class interest and the question was therefore whether a war would be beneficial to class interest or not²⁰². Once again, the tight connection to the Bolsheviks is evident.

It is interesting to note, that the KPD did not outright list situations where a war would be justified. Remaining flexible and surprising the readers, even keeping them strained may have been a preplanned feature of their propaganda. It is in the nature of propaganda, that a conditioned audience

¹⁹⁷ Münchener Rote Fahne 26.3, 1. Deutsche Söldner für Entente-Imperialisten: *“Das jetzige System der Entente bestehe darin, nicht die eigenen Soldaten gegen die Bolschewisten zu schicken, sondern andere ins Feuer zu treiben. Deutschland, das sich ihrem Willen füge, habe unter Hindenburg eine neue Armee als linken Flügel gegen die Bolschewiki gebildet...”*

¹⁹⁸ Münchener Rote Fahne 29.3, 1. Ein Lob der englischen Imperialisten für Herrn Scheidemann

¹⁹⁹ Münchener Rote Fahne 4.4, 2. Manifest der kommunistischen Internationale. An das Proletariat der ganzen Welt. II.

²⁰⁰ Münchener Rote Fahne 29.3, 1. Das Militärprogramm der proletarischen Revolution. Von N. Lenin. II.

²⁰¹ Münchener Rote Fahne 28.3, 1. Das Militärprogramm der proletarischen Revolution. Von N. Lenin.: *“Die Sozialisten können nicht gegen jeden Krieg sein, ohne aufzuhören, Sozialisten zu sein.”*

²⁰² Kolakowski 1981b, 496.

can be adequately organized in many different directions²⁰³. In any case, the stance on war can be summarized in a short slogan: “*There can be no civil war without war.*”²⁰⁴ According to the Communists, it was hopeless to reform the capitalist system and if it was necessary to wage war, the Bavarian Communists were not afraid to grab their weapons. In fact, they were advocating for the creation and development of soldier’s councils as a preparatory step towards the dictatorship of the proletariat²⁰⁵.

7.3 Comparison of the justifications prior to the two revolutions

It is noteworthy, that the two political parties under examination had a lot in common in their propaganda. Both drew inspiration from the Bolsheviks, and exalted Vladimir Lenin as well as the October Revolution. Societal problems were highlighted to turn workers against their ruling governments, and political decisions made by the bourgeois factions in both countries fell under heavy criticism. The goals of the bourgeois political parties in Finland as well as the Social Democratic Party in Germany were suspicious and even reactionary to both parties. The propaganda of agitation practiced by the two parties was similar on these topics.

Both political parties had anti-militaristic tendencies and portrayed the White Guards in each country as hostile to the workers and a threat to the whole survival of the working class. Chaos and anarchy were opposed by both the SDP and the KPD. They clearly employed political propaganda to persuade their audiences to join their ranks formally and to organize themselves under the leadership of these parties. None of these shared traits come as a surprise or attracts interest. However, many clear differences were also present and deserve a careful inspection.

Distinctions can be identified on the issue of legitimate governing bodies. As previously mentioned, the Finnish Social Democrats advocated for a strong parliament, whereas the Communists in Bavaria were not satisfied with anything less than a supremacy of the councils. Given the animosity of the KPD toward both the German National Parliament *Nationalversammlung*, as well as the Bavarian Parliament *Landtag*, this becomes a major difference worthy of closer examination.

The bureaucracy and governing institutions were obviously different in Finland and Bavaria. The lack of worker’s councils probably made it easier to safeguard the existing parliamentary democracy. The Finns had not learned to take the parliamentary system for granted. The very first parliamentary elections, with universal suffrage, were held only recently in 1907²⁰⁶. In Germany, systems based on

²⁰³ Ellul 1973, 32.

²⁰⁴ Münchner Rote Fahne 25.3, 1. Eine unabhängige „Politische Kundgebung,, oder Wie macht man einen Eierkuchen, ohne Eier zu zerschlagen: ”*Mann kann.[...] keinen Bürgerkrieg ohne Krieg machen.*”

²⁰⁵ Münchner Rote Fahne 1.4, 2. Die nächsten Aufgaben der bewaffneten Arbeiterschaft.

²⁰⁶ Rasila 1980, 20.

councils and the Parliament clashed following the November Revolution. The Councils were the revolutionary institutions, which had no future along the bourgeois political structure planned by the SPD.²⁰⁷ The KPD, the most extreme of the socialist parties in Germany, unsurprisingly chose to support the more revolutionary institutions.

Nevertheless, both the SDP and the KPD faced a bourgeois parliament and the former defended the institution for what it resembled, while the latter wished to demolish it. Whilst both factions eventually ended up taking arms against the prevailing system, this difference was not meaningless. Ellul's propaganda of agitation is a useful point of view on this matter.

The propaganda of agitation of both political parties under examination was directed at the bourgeoisie. The KPD, however, agitated also against the complete political system, whereas the SDP carefully avoided condemning the Parliament.

Indeed, the SDP justified its claim to govern on its conservative, safeguard attitude towards the parliamentary system and democracy against attempts by the bourgeois Senate to establish a violent dictatorship. The KPD on the contrary wanted to establish a dictatorship, or a '*true democracy*' in place of the '*bourgeois democracy*', as they presented the matter. The Bavarian Communists viewed '*bourgeois democracy*' like the Austro-Marxist theoretician Max Adler: democracy represented the way, in which the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie was organized. Problems, such as economic inequality and social antagonisms cannot be fixed in a democracy, Adler argued. Social democracy represented the '*true democracy*', in other words socialism without class division.²⁰⁸

This would have also meant a total collapse of the bourgeois system. Bourgeois ideas and conceptions, for instance of ownership, would have been replaced as seen in the propaganda. The Communists aspired to use their power to redistribute residence according to the needs of the workers. Their justification for power was not that they would defend Weimar institutions; it was instead that they would replace them with those more in line with socialism. According to Lenin, the proletariat will not be able to gain freedom unless it destroys the state apparatus. That was the main task of a revolution, he argued.²⁰⁹ The KPD clearly agreed with Lenin on this issue. The strong conservative character in the propaganda of the Finnish Social Democratic Party is further highlighted by opposite approach: The SDP wanted to preserve the parliamentary system, the KPD wanted to abolish the parliamentary system.

²⁰⁷ Pelz 2018, 67.

²⁰⁸ Kołakowski 1981b, 278-279.

²⁰⁹ Kołakowski 1981b, 499.

Differences were also visible in their stances on war. The SDP and the KPD both had a view that wars tend to benefit the bourgeoisie and harm the working class. The Communists, drawing their thought from Lenin, concluded that some wars were necessary and even beneficial as well as necessary for the working class. The Finnish Social Democrats did not glorify war in a similar manner. According to historian of ideas Leszek Kołakowski, Kautsky despised violence and war, and hoped that a transition into socialism could be achieved with peaceful means²¹⁰. This principle is present in *Työmies* as well.

The contrasting interpretation of socialism between the SDP and the KPD is perhaps best embodied in their stances on the Marxist theorist Karl Kautsky and the revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin. The Finnish Social Democrats drew their inspiration from Kautsky's interpretation of Karl Marx. This was by no means extraordinary, as Kautsky hinted in his own memoir that he never considered himself anything other than a Social Democrat. Scholar of Marxism George Lichtheim considers Kautsky the most conservative of Marxist thinkers at the time.²¹¹ Kautsky's conservative outlook also explains the hostility the Bavarian Communists showed towards him. What makes Kautsky intriguing in this context is that he criticized the October Revolution in Russia²¹².

This changes nothing in regards with the Communists in Germany, but it exposes an ideological contradiction among the Finnish Social Democrats. They were not only inspired by Lenin and the October Revolution, but also appeared to idolize the Bolshevik party and its achievements in Russia. Meanwhile their ideology of socialist revolution without denouncing democracy was in accordance with Kautsky's thought. With this in mind it makes a lot more sense, how the Social Democratic Party of Finland managed to present itself as both a defender of parliamentary democracy as well as a revolutionary force.

The Communist Party of Germany avoided such contradiction by outright condemning the November Revolution for lacking meaningful achievements. There was nothing valuable to conserve, as the party advocated for ruling councils, a system that was not properly in place at the time. For the KPD, denouncing Kautsky's thought was not only a matter of ideological conformity, as Kautsky was a prominent member of the rival socialist party USPD. If he was right, then people should side with USPD over KPD.

The point of view of sociological propaganda, which seeks to integrate and unify as many people under a movement or a society as possible, reveals an interesting difference between the SDP and the

²¹⁰ Kołakowski 1981b, 54.

²¹¹ Lichtheim 1982, 266.

²¹² Kołakowski 1981b, 31.

KPD. There was a clear nationalist tendency in the propaganda of the Social Democratic Party of Finland, as explained before. This discovery is even more obvious upon a comparison of the target audiences these two parties wanted to influence.

The audience of the Finnish Social Democrats was most often referred to as the *nation (kanssa)*, or the *workers/working class (työväki/työväenluokka)*. The term *proletariat* existed in the Finnish language, as it was used occasionally²¹³. Nevertheless, they directed the message often at the whole nation. The German Communists in Bavaria usually referred to their audience as the *proletariat* or the *workers/working class (die Arbeiter/die Arbeiterklasse)*. *The nation, the people (das Volk)* was not mentioned on many occasions.

The Finnish Social Democrats thus clearly attempted to appeal to a wider portion of the population than the German Communists did. They justified their claim to power by presenting themselves as the true representatives of the unified Finnish nation, a people, who would not be under the influence of the international bourgeoisie. This view is further strengthened by the fact that the KPD advocated on numerous occasions for establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat, which would exclude other classes from political power. There was no room for any factions outside the proletariat in their movement, for their justification relied on being the legitimate, radical representative of the working class and only the working class.

It is by no means surprising to identify different stances on nationalism among socialist parties: Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels did not formulate any theory addressing the question of nationalism²¹⁴. Out of the many different approaches to this question, the KPD chose a careful option. The SDP's stance reflects the strong nationalist current in Finland. Previous research has even noted that the SDP's positive stance on the Bolshevik-ruled Russia was based more on hopes of gaining national independence than having socialism spread to Finland²¹⁵. Therefore, it is easy to make the claim that in some cases nationalism was even more important to the Social Democrats than socialism.

The Finnish Social Democrats also showed strong feelings of class-consciousness, and socialism was the dominant ideology in their propaganda. Nevertheless, strong nationalist leanings were completely lacking in the propaganda of the Communist Party of Germany in Bavaria. Finland had only recently become a nation state, and this development must have influenced the Social Democrats to the point where spreading nationalist message was necessary. An explanation to the lack of nationalism in KPD

²¹³ Example: Työmies 11.1, 6. Kulta ja veri.: ”Mutta kerran ihmiskunnan historiassa on proletariaatin veri nousnut voittoisana kultaa vastaan.”, translation: ”But once in the history of mankind has the blood of the proletariat risen victorious against gold.”

²¹⁴ Kolakowski 1981b, 88.

²¹⁵ Matikainen 2018, 147.

revolves around the First World War. Whereas Germany had experienced a nationalist fever at the beginning of the war in 1914, many volunteers changed their minds as the brutal war continued²¹⁶. Finland's losses in the war were microscopical in comparison. Bavarians also lacked important distinctive features, such as their own language, to develop a strong independent national identity.

The first sub-question was defined as follows: *how did the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany justify their claim to power in their propagandas prior to the revolutions that took place in 1918 and 1919?* A short summary of previous section would be that both political parties portrayed themselves as organizations that could tackle societal problems created by bourgeois capitalism and protect the working class from violence. The KPD declared itself the party to end imperialism against working classes of the world, whilst the SDP justified its ambitions to rule by being a protector of the independence of the Finnish nation, the Parliament and democracy. The KPD argued that only a dictatorship of the proletariat could end capitalism and protect the proletariat from reactionary forces, and as the only party to advocate for such a system, it had a legitimate claim to power.

²¹⁶ Weber 2014, 12.

8. Motivation and persuasion during the revolutionary period

Starting from the beginning of the revolutions, both the Finnish Social Democratic Party as well as the German Communist Party in Bavaria took on the task to persuade and motivate people to act according to their wishes. This section is dedicated to the second research question:

To which ideas did the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany appeal in their propaganda to motivate and persuade people to join their cause during the revolutions in 1918 and 1919?

The concepts of political and sociological propaganda are most relevant to this question, although the propaganda of agitation is also present.

8.1 Motivation and persuasion by the Finnish Social Democratic Party

A short summary of the conflict in 1918

The Finnish Civil War began on 27-28 January 1918, as the Helsinki Red Guard then occupied the capital city. A new government, the Delegation of People's Commissars of Finland (Suomen kansanvaltuuskunta) was set up by the Reds. Local guards were requested to seize power around the country. The Reds were successful in the South but could not prevent the Whites from occupying most of Finland.²¹⁷

During February, both sides consolidated their power and eliminated resistance within the areas they occupied. The war turned into trench warfare in March. During this time, a proper White Army was organized in the North through conscription. The difference of skill in leadership was massive: Professional soldiers with officer's training were almost exclusively in the ranks of the White Army. The Whites were also successful in crippling any resistance in the areas they occupied. Interrogations and executions were effective and became systematic as time went on.²¹⁸

These matters aided the Whites, as they managed to capture the important industrial city of Tampere after a long and fierce battle on 6 April. Another important battle took place on the same day on the Karelian Isthmus at the Russian border. The Whites managed to defeat their opponents and secure a good position to attack Vyborg, the center of the Reds in Eastern Finland. Meanwhile Germany had intervened in the conflict by sending a division to aid the White Army. They managed to capture Helsinki on 13 April. A major retreat of the remaining Reds toward Soviet Russia had begun, and the revolution was ultimately crushed in the following weeks.²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Tikka 2014, 95-6.

²¹⁸ Tikka 2014, 100-2.

²¹⁹ Tikka 2014, 103-6.

Motivating and persuading people to join the revolution: Themes of the propaganda articles of the Finnish Social Democratic Party

Four distinct themes arose in the propaganda. The two largest topics were clearly the persuasion for the benefit of the nation (34 articles) and persuasion by denouncing the old state of affairs in the country (30 cases). Two smaller themes involved motivating people to fight for their own survival (12 articles) as well as by appealing to their sense of morality (6 articles).

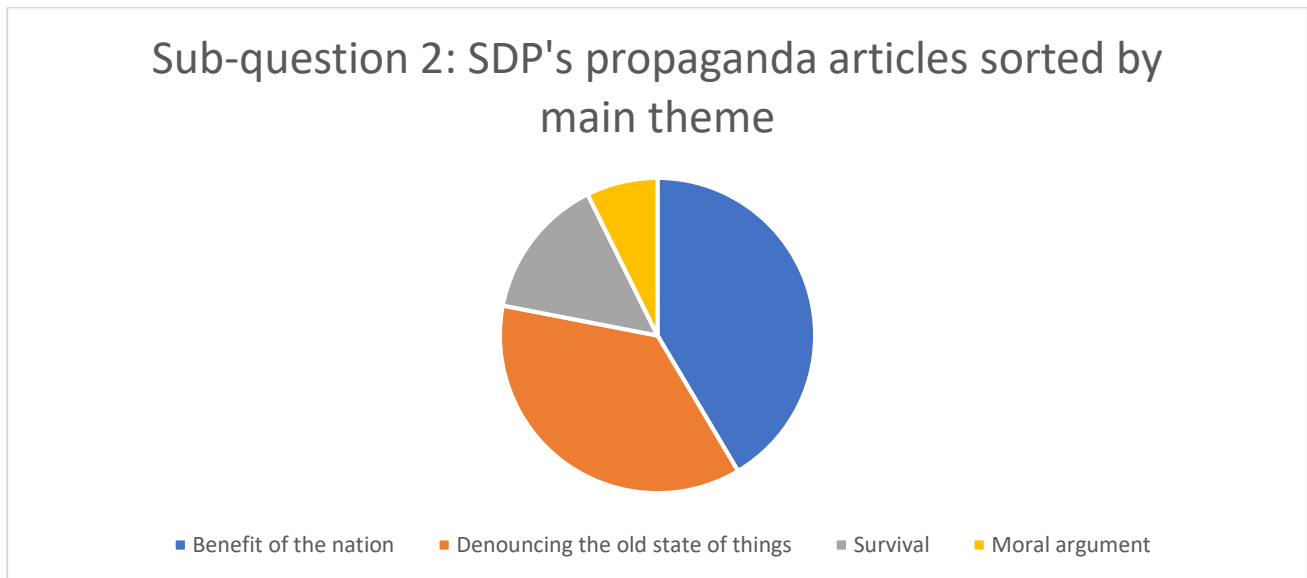


Chart 3: Propaganda articles concerning motivation and persuasion published in *Työmies* 27.1.-12.4.1918, sorted by main topics.

For the greater good of the Finnish nation

The nationalist undertone previously identified continued once the revolution began. Three aspects to nationalism were prominent in *Työmies*. First, the revolution was portrayed to benefit the Finnish nation. Second, the SDP argued that democracy, a political system based on the whole population was the legitimate form of government. Third, the propaganda clearly aimed to unify various segments of the Finnish society in the name of the Finnish nation.

As soon as the revolution began, calls for action, in the form of political propaganda, were made precisely for the benefit of the Finnish nation. The amount such articles in *Työmies* was large. The message was simple: “*The coming happiness and prosperity of the nation is in question!*”²²⁰ The Social Democrats repeated this message in various forms throughout the months. Aiming to reach material and spiritual well-being for the nation is a good example of this theme²²¹. Similarly, living

²²⁰ *Työmies* 28.1, 2. Helsingin työväelle!: ”Kyseessä on kansan tuleva onni ja menestys”

²²¹ *Työmies* 12.3, 2. Luowa työ

standards of the nation, standard of education and prosperity were mentioned as aims of the revolutionary movement²²². Emphasis on the various benefits for the Finnish nation was common during early parts of the conflict.

Despite the conflict beginning as a coup d'état performed by the most radical of Social Democrats, loyalty to democracy was underscored in their propaganda. Democracy, along with socialism, was essential and necessary to them²²³. The Social Democrats also argued that as things stood, a revolution was required to achieve democracy. Furthermore, it was implied that only the Social Democrats stood for democracy and progress, while the bourgeoisie allegedly supported monarchy and reaction.²²⁴ Calls were made to have most of the people come out in the name of democracy against the autocracy of the capitalist class and replace class rule by rule of the people²²⁵.

Germany's intervention in the conflict gave the calls for democracy a more nationalist undertone. This began in March, as The Social Democrats accused the bourgeois Senate of turning Finland into a colony of the German Empire. Agreement on German intervention was illegitimate to the Social Democrats, as they considered it to be at odds with democracy, because it lacked the support of the nation.²²⁶ The propaganda of the SDP branded co-operation between the Finnish bourgeoisie and Germany treasonous and designated a potential German control of Finland 'slavery'. Examples of the Irish, the Indians and other subjugated nations were told to encourage readers to fight for the sovereignty of the nation.²²⁷

According to the Social Democrats, a threat to Finland's independence and territorial integrity did not only come from Germany. The SDP weaponized a threat of Sweden's possible involvement in the conflict. If they were to do that and help the White Guards to victory, land concessions from Finland to Sweden could be on the table. Even the possibility of a total annexation of Finland was not excluded in the propaganda.²²⁸ "*The Swedish-German capitalists ought not to rule this country*", declared the SDP. The Social Democrats wanted the management of the country left completely to the working nation of Finland. They urged the workers were to fight until Finland was a democratic country.²²⁹ It is in this way, that the Social Democrats portrayed themselves as the true defenders of Finland's independency and democracy. Promotion of self-government is not in conflict with Marxist

²²² Työmies 17.2, 4. Wallankumouksen wyöryssä

²²³ Työmies 30.1, 3. Totuus.

²²⁴ Työmies 13.2, 2. Porwaristo ja demokratia.

²²⁵ Työmies 5.3, 4. Keskiluokat ja wallankumous, Työmies 31.3, 1,3. Kansanwaltako wai luokkawalta?

²²⁶ Työmies 12.3, 3. Nyt on maa myöty.

²²⁷ Työmies 20.3, 3-4. Tuho on owella.

²²⁸ Työmies 26.2, 3. Suomen itsenäisyyden uusin waara.

²²⁹ Työmies 7.4, 1. Työwäen Pääneuvoston julistus: "Tätä maata eivät saa hallita ruotsalais-saksalaiset kapitalistit"., Työmies 7.4, 4. Taistelu wai rauha?

thinking, as Karl Marx himself suggested the promotion of Irish self-government to his English associates²³⁰.

Despite this massive campaign to ‘restore democracy’, as the Social Democrats saw it, their support for a democratic system was conditional. In April, the People’s Delegation declared Finland a military dictatorship. According to the SDP, this rejection of democracy was as unavoidable due to increasing instability and lack of discipline in the country. It is important to note, that this was not a sudden rejection of democratic principles, but rather a change necessitated by the current state of the revolution.²³¹ There were no propaganda efforts advocating for the need of a dictatorship beforehand.

It is worthy of note, that the Social Democrats were not advocating for an order in which the workers simply became the ruling class. Their propaganda aimed to unite different sections in the country by occasionally signifying the importance of nationality over class. The Finnish soldier no longer bleeds for foreign lords but instead makes his own history, argued the Social Democrats²³². Finns, whether working class or bourgeois, were called to work for the survival of the Finnish nation²³³. This is obviously inconsistent with the previous declaration that a Finnish worker is closer to a Russian worker than he is to a Finnish burgher.

On the other hand, the Social Democrats also claimed that the bourgeoisie was aiming for the complete annihilation of the working class. Such message certainly did not encourage for a reconciliation between the classes. Class distinction was clearly stated and even accepted to some degree²³⁴. Opposite viewpoint was also presented, and the Finnish working class was claimed to fight to the end of class distinction²³⁵. Attempts to integrate both the concept of class as well as nationality produced a confusing propaganda effort overall.

Research tradition sheds some light on this balancing act between the nation and the working class. The Social Democrats did not see the nation as a sum of its individuals, but rather as a sum of different classes with their own societal and economic privileges. Legislative and executive powers were not an expression of the collective will, but rather a way for one class to hold on to its ruling position.²³⁶

In any case, socialists usually do not make a major distinction between attempts to emancipate the working class and free a nation from foreign oppression. Karl Marx weighted in on this topic in

²³⁰ Lichtheim 1982, 84.

²³¹ Työmies 12.4, 2. Taistelua wallankumouksen voittoon wiemiseksi terästetään.

²³² Työmies 23.2, 4. Suomalainen veri.

²³³ Työmies 17.2, 5. Kansalaiset, työhön!

²³⁴ Työmies 28.3, 2. Erään lausunnon johdosta.

²³⁵ Työmies 2.4, 4. Maalaistyöwäelle.

²³⁶ Matikainen 2018, 240.

relation to the revolutions in 1848-49 and declared: *"The Hungarian shall not be free, nor shall the Pole, nor shall the Italian, as long as the worker remains a slave!"*²³⁷ The issues seemed interconnected to him, but the solution required the emancipation of workers in any case. Despite clumsy outcomes, the propaganda of the SDP is somewhat in alignment with Marx's principle.

The SDP often directed a message of national unity to specific classes or professionals. In addition to the traditional base of support, namely poor workers, many other classes were subjected to this campaign of persuasion. This finding is very relevant, given that previous research has put emphasis on the industrial workers as the backbone of the working-class movement in Finland²³⁸.

The crofters were an important target audience to the revolutionaries. They were called to defend achievements of the revolution, especially a new law that granted them full independence from the previous landowners. The Social Democrats also requested crofters to organize themselves and send men to the Red Guard, in addition to sending food to cities or wherever it was needed.²³⁹ Even land-owning farmers were persuaded to join the revolutionaries by likening their role to that of the working class. The Social Democrats also pointed to common memories and experiences. Farmers were addressed as victims of capitalist oppression just like workers.²⁴⁰ The Social Democrats asserted that only a working-class victory could save the farmers from economic exploitation practiced by the bourgeoisie²⁴¹.

Another important target audience were the civil servants. The propaganda portrayed civil servants as essentially workers, who ought to take a decisive step and abandon the capitalists for the good of the Finnish nation²⁴². The Social Democrats portrayed state bureaucracy as an enemy of young civil servants, an enemy totally disconnected from the normal lives people lived. Instead, the civil servants were persuaded to end a strike they had organized and join the revolution.²⁴³ Teachers were among lower strata of the civil servants, and efforts were made to convince them to join the revolutionary movement. They were likened to the working class by emphasizing their stature in society and the poverty and scarcity that came with it. A direct quote explains the message well: *"It is most absurd, backward conduct to fight against one's own class and benefit"*. Instead, they were pressed to work for the success of the revolution.²⁴⁴

²³⁷ Lichtheim 1982, 85.

²³⁸ Ehrnrooth 1992, 185.

²³⁹ Työmies 6.3, 3. Taisteluun torppariwapautuksen puolesta!

²⁴⁰ Työmies 8.2, 5. Miettikää vielä kerran!

²⁴¹ Työmies 23.3, 4-5. Kenen kukkarolla?

²⁴² Työmies 5.4, 3. Lennätinwirkamiehille.

²⁴³ Työmies 14.2, 3. Sananen Suomen nuoremmalle wirkamiespolwelle.

²⁴⁴ Työmies 25.3, 4 Herätkää. *"Sehän on mitä nurinkurisinta, takaperoisinta menettelyä: taistella omaa luokkaansa, omia etujansa vastaan."*

Efforts to appeal to such a broad segment of society signal a major break with the orthodox Marxism of Karl Kautsky. Kautsky opposed the idea, that co-operation between the proletariat, the peasantry, and the petty bourgeoisie could lead to socialism. He was particularly mistrustful of the peasantry, a class he deemed conservative in nature. On the other hand, he approved temporary alliances to secure political or social reforms, as long as the working class preserved its independence and separate role from bourgeois movements.²⁴⁵ The SDP did not seek a petty reform here, as its message was about the complete working-class revolution. Therefore, the stance of the Social Democrats is contrary to Kautsky's on this issue. Previous research clarifies this split well. Historian Juha Matikainen argues that Kautskyism had become a problem to the SDP already by the parliamentary elections in 1916. The party then shifted clearly towards reformism, which allowed co-operation with the bourgeoisie.²⁴⁶

The People's Delegation was motivated by a belief that they could win in free elections. This could only have happened if they kept the socialist movement united and received some support outside their traditional base, the working class²⁴⁷. There might also be an alternative explanation. That explanation is more in line with Kautsky's orthodox Marxism.

So far, it is clearly visible, that the Social Democrats had a rather fluid conception of class. There were also hints, that they were even dismissing aspects such as wealth and ownership of the means of production as important factors to one's class identity. A great example of this feature is in a text, where the Social Democrats attempted to persuade educated women. Those women associated with both bourgeois and working-class circles, and they were persuaded to take part in worker's leisure activities. The Social Democrats wanted their presence to be accepted. "[...] *After all, they too are daughters of the same native country and children of the same creator*", argued the Social Democrats. Truly cultured and highly educated women had acquired something they defined as an '*education of the heart*', they argued.²⁴⁸ How does this relate to their understanding of class?

George Lichtheim, scholar of Marxism, recognized the importance of a '*national class*' in the thought of Karl Marx²⁴⁹. He described this class as follows:

²⁴⁵ Kołakowski 1981b, 33, 48-49.

²⁴⁶ Matikainen 2018, 293.

²⁴⁷ Matikainen 2018, 254.

²⁴⁸ Työmies 12.3, 3. Maamme siwistyneet naiset ja nykyinen aika.

²⁴⁹ Lichtheim 1982, 86.

“The ‘national class’ was that stratum which embodied the forward-looking tendencies, i.e., those which at a given moment made it possible for society to raise itself to a higher technological, economic and social level.”²⁵⁰

This concept of the ‘national class’ did not entirely follow the distinct lines between the working-class and the bourgeoisie. In a way, it was the embodiment of progress, a feature promoted by the Social Democrats as seen so far. Possession of this ‘education of the heart’ may have been an attribute of the forward-looking ‘national class’ and could also partially explain, why the Social Democrats directed their message to various segments of society rather than just the workers.

On a different note, the nationalist message did not shy away from making distinctions along ethnic lines. The SDP portrayed the Swedish-speaking civil servants as foreigners to the Finnish-speaking civil servants, who were supposedly closer to the Finnish nation than their Swedish-speaking colleagues were²⁵¹. This expresses the strong nationalist current found in *Työmies* throughout the revolution.

To further illustrate the importance of this point, it should be noted, that nationalist message was not limited to ethnic Finns! Romani men were also persuaded to join the Red Guards to fight for the good of their tribe²⁵². Nationalism was a major ideological component in the propaganda of the Social Democrats during the Finnish Civil War, but it had some limits. The Social Democrats rejected fanatic nationalism as being non-beneficial to the happiness of the nation. They stated on one occasion that the interests of Finland were tied to the Russian revolution, and nationality played only a small role. Nationalism that benefits capitalism was divisive to the nation, they argued.²⁵³ Their approach to socialism did not include ‘limits’, as seen in their stance to nationalism, and therefore it can be considered stronger of the two major ideological components of the Social Democratic Party.

Opposition to oppression, slavery, Christianity, reaction and capitalism

The political propaganda in *Työmies* also included a negative viewpoint. Readers were motivated to fight not only for their own benefit, but also against harmful features of society. Oppression, slavery, reaction and capitalism were the most prominent problems of society which the Social Democrats aspired to abolish. This was a major theme in *Työmies* and featured the second most articles out of all topics.

²⁵⁰ Lichtheim 1982, 88.

²⁵¹ *Työmies* 8.2, 2. Suomalainen Wirkamies ja Waltiolliset Olot.

²⁵² *Työmies* 13.3, 2. Herää heimoni – tumma.

²⁵³ *Työmies* 11.3, 3. Opiskelewalla Nuorisolle.

The end of societal and economic oppression was to constitute the main principles of people's rights²⁵⁴. According to the Social Democrats, the proletariat was unable to build a new society until domestic and foreign tyrants who oppress the working class in Finland are defeated²⁵⁵. The term 'oppression' was mainly utilized as an umbrella term and it was left vague deliberately. For instance, the soldiers of the Red Guards were fighting for those without freedom and human rights, wrote the Social Democrats²⁵⁶. Lack of those freedom and human rights seemed to form at least a part of their conception of oppression. The main culprits guilty of oppressing the poor were the bourgeoisie and the clergy²⁵⁷.

The term 'slavery' was defined in a clearer manner. It was tied to capitalism and class distinction²⁵⁸. It was repeatedly stated in an article that the Red Guards were fighting for the dignity of work. The Social Democrats argued that capitalism had enslaved their poor comrades, and it was the duty of young students to free them.²⁵⁹ Domestic servants in the countryside were characterized to have lived under slavery before the revolution. Their status was described as even worse than that of animals. According to an article in *Työmies*, they received poor nutrition, had 16-hour workdays, and suffered from great limits to their personal freedom. The law and authorities were set against them.²⁶⁰

There were efforts to persuade readers into joining the Red Guards to liberate the working class²⁶¹. The message was certainly not limited to just soldiers. All workers, both men and women, were named '*red warriors*', no matter whether they were fighting on the frontline or not. The message to all of them was very clear: "*Break your chains!*"²⁶² Calls to emancipate poor children and retired workers from slavery were published to urge people to join the fight²⁶³. Dramatic representations were common. For instance, a strong dualism of freedom and honorable death were set against slavery and shameful living²⁶⁴. There was also an individualist message of persuasion regarding the end of slavery: to fight for the freedom of slaves was to grant a person inner peace and happiness²⁶⁵. The Social Democrats celebrated heroism, and those who died for freedom had died a hero's death²⁶⁶. This feature links with the previously mentioned message based on morality.

²⁵⁴ *Työmies* 16.2, 2. Kansan oikeus.

²⁵⁵ *Työmies* 25.2, 1-2. Salakawala vihollinen.

²⁵⁶ *Työmies* 14.2, 5. Rohkeasti eteenpäin.

²⁵⁷ *Työmies* 31.3, 4. Oman itsensä edessä.

²⁵⁸ *Työmies* 28.3, 5. Katko kahlees!

²⁵⁹ *Työmies* 11.3, 3. Opiskelevalle nuorisolle.

²⁶⁰ *Työmies* 11.3, 3. Orjalaki kumottu.

²⁶¹ *Työmies* 3.3, 2. Työmiehet, astukaa miehissä Punaisen Kaartin riiveihin!

²⁶² *Työmies* 28.3, 5. Katko kahlees!

²⁶³ *Työmies* 3.2, 4. Wanhusten ja lasten, leskien ja orpojen kyynleet kuiwataan.

²⁶⁴ *Työmies* 11.3, 4. Wapauden puolesta.

²⁶⁵ *Työmies* 28.2, 3-4. Jos.

²⁶⁶ *Työmies* 11.3, 4. Auringon noustessa.

The Social Democrats identified a reactionary element within the bourgeoisie and urged people to fight against them. A victory of the bourgeoisie would be a victory for reaction, they claimed²⁶⁷. Privileges were denounced, whilst equal rights and duties were embraced. According to the Social Democrats, the fight was for equal human rights, freedom and equality, which the Church supposedly opposed.²⁶⁸

This leads to the complex relationship with Christianity. On one hand, the Social Democrats portrayed the bourgeoisie as the prophets of Moloch and therefore not as real Christians²⁶⁹. On the other hand, Christianity did not escape criticism either. The clergy was heavily criticized for their actions during the Civil War. The SDP blamed them for supporting the slaughter of men in order to establish a 'Godly order'²⁷⁰. In a nationalist critique of Christianity, the religion was described as a mask worn by a Swedish imperialist, the oppressor that arrived in Finland during the Middle Ages²⁷¹. The bourgeoisie were deemed unpatriotic for their acts to restore the rule of a foreign upper class²⁷².

Mere overthrow of the ruling faction, a reform of bureaucracy and change in laws non-satisfactory to the SDP. The whole system of capitalism had to be defeated for true change to take place in society.²⁷³ Capitalism was for them the cause for the First World War and all the violence and misery that came with it. The lower classes of society were called to overthrow the oppressive capitalist power.²⁷⁴ In this context, women were also persuaded to join the fight against the tyranny of capitalism. Rather than serving on the frontline, they ought to take up some of the work left undone by men serving in the Red Guards.²⁷⁵ The message to women emphasized a lack of progress on equality and rights under the old system and persuaded them to join the fight for freedom and emancipation²⁷⁶.

The moral argument

Persuasion to act in one's own interest can be powerful. It was however far from the only narrative pushed by the Social Democrats. Their propaganda also included a message appealing to the sense of morality. The SDP's appeals to duty can be summarized in a direct quote from an article originally published in the Swedish magazine *Stormklockan*:

²⁶⁷ Työmies 6.2, 4. Wallankumous ja sen wastustajat.

²⁶⁸ Työmies 3.4, 2. Raakuuteen kiihoitusta.

²⁶⁹ Työmies 20.3, 4. Wapaus ja porwaristo

²⁷⁰ Työmies 3.4, 2. Raakuuteen kiihoitusta.

²⁷¹ Työmies 20.3, 4. Wapaus ja porwaristo.

²⁷² Työmies 3.2, 3. Isänmaan puolesta.

²⁷³ Työmies 26.3, 4. Sotatrusti.

²⁷⁴ Työmies 10.2, 4. Suomen köyhälistöläistowereille!

²⁷⁵ Työmies 13.3, 4. Naiset ja vallankumous.

²⁷⁶ Työmies 25.3, 4. Äidit ja tyttäret.

*“It is our duty to carry this heritage unharmed [...] out of holy wrath against injustice and oppression, rejoicingly offering even the greatest of sacrifices for the creation of a new system of society. This society’s perfection and happiness has only been a beautiful, distant dream until now.”*²⁷⁷

The SDP commented local events with similar message concerning morality. Remaining passive and ignoring one’s duty would lead to harmful consequences for the workers²⁷⁸. Civilians were encouraged to go and learn how to take care of the sick and wounded. The Social Democrats called both workers and burghers, men and women to fulfil their duties in the name of humanity.²⁷⁹

A request to uphold one’s duty targeted teachers specifically, as some of them had gone on a strike following the coup in January. In addition to referring to various forms of injustice teachers had faced under former leadership, they were urged to fulfil their duties at that important moment, lest history condemn them²⁸⁰.

The declaration of revolution issued on 27 January described working-class power as a power of justice²⁸¹. Righteousness was also a motivational factor used to persuade readers to join the cause. A typical message appealing to morality can be seen here:

*“To fight for justice means that you are going to win as well and you may once more proudly call your homeland your fatherland. Glory to the heroes of justice, as they are victorious even in death! Shame on traitors, may they be eternally cursed!”*²⁸²

These messages might seem out of place, especially considering that Karl Kautsky, the chief ideologue of social democracy, considered human behavior in society not determined by ideals. He emphasized the material necessities of life as a guiding force. However, it is important to note that Kautsky saw moral ideals not as aims, but rather as weapons in the social struggle.²⁸³ Lenin had also declared that communists do not believe in eternal morality²⁸⁴.

²⁷⁷ Työmies 16.2, 5-6. Idealismi luokkataistelussa: *”Meidän welvollisuutemme on kantaa tämä perintö wahingoittumattomana [...] pyhästä vihasta wääryyttä ja sortoa vastaan, iloisina antaen waikkeimmatkin uhrit uuden yhteiskuntajärjestelmän luomistyössä, järjestelmän, jonka täydellisyys ja onnekkuus on tähän saakka ollut wain kaunis, kaukainen haawe.”*

²⁷⁸ Työmies 22.2, 2. Sota wallankumouksen synnyttäjänä.

²⁷⁹ Työmies 3.3, 3. Lahtarien petomaisuus.

²⁸⁰ Työmies 20.2, 3. Kansakoulujen opettajille.

²⁸¹ Työmies 28.1, 1. Wallankumousjulistus Suomen kansalle.

²⁸² Työmies 21.3, 5. „Sä petit toiweet weljies...”: *”Taistelemalla oikeuden puolesta olet sinäkin kerran woittawa, ja synnyinmaatasi voit vielä kerran ylpeillen kutsua myös isänmaaksesi. Kunnia oikeuden sankareille, sillä he owat woittajia kuollessaankin! Häpeä pettureille ja ikuinen kirous!”*

²⁸³ Kolakowski 1981b, 38.

²⁸⁴ Kolakowski 1981b, 516.

Another thinker to take into consideration on this topic is the French philosopher Jean Jaurès. Kołakowski writes, that *“In Jaurès view socialism is part of the universal trend towards harmony which gives a meaning to all the struggles and sufferings of which history is full.”*²⁸⁵ Calls to fulfil one’s duty to humanity, as seen in *Työmies*, are certainly compatible with the view of Jaurès. However, this attitude did not likely come from Jaurès, as his texts were not well known in the Finnish worker’s movement²⁸⁶.

Additionally, Kołakowski identifies this way of thinking in opposition to Marxism: *“Marx could never have said that the revolution would take place ‘in the name of justice and goodness’, for these were not part of history and had no share in determining its meaning.”*²⁸⁷ Marx criticized these kinds of utopian humanitarian doctrines as ineffective types of socialism. Social equality was not correct because it was just, but because it was the inevitable next step in history. He believed that a rational man accepts forces of history and sets petty sentimentalism aside.²⁸⁸

Overall, it is most likely, that these pleas to morality were based on pragmatism. The Social Democrats probably estimated that a quasi-religious message appealing to moral values could persuade people to join the socialist cause.

Survival

By the latter half of March, the fight seemed to be no longer for better living standards and more happiness, but rather for mere survival of the Finnish nation²⁸⁹. The narrative of ‘one last battle’ was built from early on in *Työmies*. The Social Democrats persuaded workers to join the cause and rise as a unified force. Such force was something that could not face death, but only life.²⁹⁰ A unified force of the international proletariat was to operate fiercely like an ant nest against invaders²⁹¹. On this topic, the focus was primarily on the working class instead of the nation.

Despite mounting a successful revolution in the most industrialized parts of Finland, a message of anxiety was echoed early in February: taking a step back would lead to the annihilation of the workers²⁹². Persecution of Huguenots in France and anti-socialist measures in Germany were soft compared to those, which the bourgeoisie would inflict on the working class of Finland, the Social

²⁸⁵ Kołakowski 1981b, 124-5.

²⁸⁶ Matikainen 2018, 32.

²⁸⁷ Kołakowski 1981b, 125.

²⁸⁸ Berlin 2013, 277-278.

²⁸⁹ *Työmies* 23.3,1. Elämismahdollisuudet ensi- ja lähiseuraawina vuosina.

²⁹⁰ *Työmies* 9.4, 2-3. Ei kuolema vaan elämä.

²⁹¹ *Työmeis* 5.4, 6. Sotasilla muurahaisten kanssa.

²⁹² *Työmies* 5.2, 4. „Tää on viimeinen taisto!”

Democrats argued²⁹³. In fact, they claimed on 5 April that if the forces of the White leader, General Mannerheim were victorious, they would execute and possibly torture working class men²⁹⁴. *Työmies* was discontinued one week later on 12 April. The last issue included a call for everyone to keep working for the revolution, which depended on discipline, organization and capability to fight²⁹⁵.

Some clear contradictions arose in the propaganda. A call to arms was necessary for self-preservation, but there were also clear hints, that the Social Democrats were ready for a peaceful solution if such was available²⁹⁶. There were numerous articles where the view of the future was surprisingly positive. Indeed, as defeat looked inevitable in April, the Red Guards were urged to prepare for the end of conflict and to surrender their arms²⁹⁷. Future prospects must have looked grim, but the working class was nonetheless said to have a guaranteed future and an eventual victory²⁹⁸.

The Social Democrats deemed the question surrounding the working class too large to be decided by just one conflict. They deemed even the bloodiest of defeats impossible in destroying the working-class movement.²⁹⁹ Echoes of Karl Kautsky were present in this message of inevitable victory of socialism and the working class. This was in line with Karl Marx, who thought that the destruction of capitalism was not going to happen only through spontaneous actions by the working class³⁰⁰. On the other hand, the passive defeatist message was also something contrary to the ideas of Kautsky. *“Passive submission to the seemingly inevitable does not mean that societal progression is allowed to run its course, but that it is halted instead”*, he wrote³⁰¹.

8.2 Motivation and persuasion by the German Communist Party in Bavaria

A brief overview of the Soviet Republic

The Soviet Republic of Bavaria was declared on 7 April 1919³⁰². It is noteworthy, that the Soviet Republic lived through two different phases. The first phase, the ‘so-called soviet republic’ (*Scheinrätorepublik*) had a more anarchist approach to it with politicians and thinkers such as Erich Mühsam, Gustav Landauer and Ernst Toller.³⁰³ The nickname to the new state was given by the Communists, who refused to join the new government. The leadership of the new government

²⁹³ *Työmies* 6.3, 6. Asema selwäksi!

²⁹⁴ *Työmies* 5.4, 5-6. Työläisäidit, kuiwatkaa kyyneleenne.

²⁹⁵ *Työmies* 12.4, 2. Taistelu wallankumouksen voittoon wiemiseksi terästetään.

²⁹⁶ *Työmies* 14.2, 7. Syö tai sinut syödään.

²⁹⁷ *Työmies* 11.4, 2. Punakaarti.

²⁹⁸ *Työmies* 11.4, 2. Omin woimin.

²⁹⁹ *Työmies* 8.4, 1. Suomalainen murhenäytelmä.

³⁰⁰ Kołakowski 1981a, 294.

³⁰¹ Kautsky 1974, 123. *“Toimeton alistuminen näköjään välttämättömään ei merkitse sitä, että yhteiskunnallisen kehityksen annetaan käydä kulkuaan, vaan sitä, että se pysäytetään”*.

³⁰² Mitchell 1965, 310.

³⁰³ Franz 1957, 322.

presented comical plans such as that of a ‘free currency economy’ and became a bit of a laughing stock. Meanwhile the KPD had established a shadow cabinet, a revolutionary council which kept an eye on the situation³⁰⁴.

The Social Democratic Hoffmann Government had relocated from Munich to Bamberg in early April amid the revolutionary chaos. Most of Bavaria remained loyal to Hoffmann, as only the area between Augsburg, Garmisch and Rosenheim embraced the government of the Soviet Republic. The Hoffmann government, under pressure from President Ebert in Berlin, decided to blockade Munich, prepare a military assault, and begin negotiations with representatives of the Soviet Republic. Hoffmann’s choice to seek a victory militarily changed the political situation in Munich remarkably.³⁰⁵

The second phase can be described as a “communist reign of terror”, led by Russian Jews Max Levien, the editor of the *Münchner Rote Fahne* Eugene Leviné and Tobias Axelrod.³⁰⁶ Their rule began on Palm Sunday, 13 April 1919 after a coup attempt by military troops loyal to Hoffmann had failed to put an end to the Soviet Republic. Leviné was made the chairman of a new executive council and became *de facto* dictator of the Soviet Republic. Under Leviné, a large-scale armament effort was carried out.³⁰⁷

Hoffmann’s attempts to deal with the situation without outside help were unsuccessful, and he requested reinforcements from Berlin. The Bavarian Red Army could not defend Munich against a much greater force, and the Soviet Republic was ultimately defeated on 3 May 1919.³⁰⁸

Motivating and persuading people to join the revolution: Themes of the propaganda articles of the German Communist Party

Due to the short duration of the revolution, less propaganda articles were published over this period. The articles were nevertheless heavy in propagandistic content. The most important topic continued from the pre-revolutionary period, it was the delegitimization of the opponents of the KPD (8 articles). Other topics included persuasion by denouncing harmful features of the old society (6 articles), persuading readers to act to the benefit of the proletariat (5 articles) and motivating people to fight for their own survival (4 articles).

³⁰⁴ Mitchell 1965, 311-313.

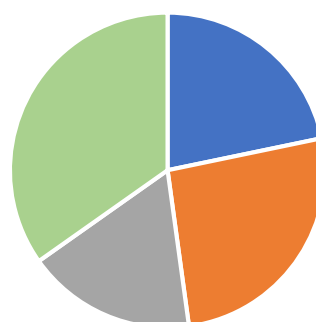
³⁰⁵ Mitchell 1965, 314-317.

³⁰⁶ Franz 1957, 322.

³⁰⁷ Mitchell 1965, 318-321.

³⁰⁸ Mitchell 1965, 321-322, 330.

Sub-question 2: KDP's propaganda articles sorted by main theme



■ Benefit of the proletariat ■ Denouncing the old state of things ■ Survival ■ Legitimacy

Chart 4: Propaganda articles concerning motivation and persuasion published in *Münchener Rote Fahne* 7.4.-30.4.1919, sorted by main topics.

Fighting for the interests of the proletariat

The KPD presented itself as a champion of the council system. The slogan “*all power to the soviets!*” remained relevant even the declaration of the Soviet Republic. Like before the revolution, the KPD argued that a Communist Soviet Republic would free the working class from all concerns and misery³⁰⁹. The Communist Party declared itself a protector of the councils, not only against the bourgeoisie, but also against socialists who were willing to make concessions on this issue. This was best seen in an article which discussed the possibility of securing the council system to the German constitution. The Communists saw this leading to the death of the council system, as it would subjugate the councils to the will of the National Parliament, a bourgeois institution.³¹⁰ Hostility towards the Parliament was by no means limited to the Bavarian Communists: The whole party had denounced the parliamentary system and voting rights as non-issues in their fight for a ‘true democracy’ already in 1918³¹¹.

On one hand the KPD criticized the timing of establishing the Soviet Republic, as they clearly thought that the situation was not ripe for establishing such revolutionary state in Bayern at the time. They acknowledged that by declaring a soviet republic the working class declared war on capitalism. The KPD argued that there could be no compromise between communism and capitalism, no negotiations

³⁰⁹ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 7.4, 1. Arbeiter! Folgt nur den Parolen der kommunistischen Partei!

³¹⁰ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 26.4, 3. Arbeiter! Parteigenossen! Proletarier von ganz Deutschland!

³¹¹ Müller 2010, 162.

between those two ideologies.³¹² For that reason the timing of such action had to be done correctly, during a time when the working class could win against the bourgeoisie.

An international element was strong in the propaganda of the KPD. “*Long live the world revolution, long live socialism*” was a slogan used by the party. Central Europe was to link with Soviet Russia in a cultural struggle for socialism against capitalism, with the help of the French, Italian, English and American proletariat.³¹³ The council system was identified as an international phenomenon. As such, the Bavarian Soviet Republic did not only owe its existence to previous socialist revolts in Germany, but also to the Hungarian Soviet Republic and Soviet Russia. The KPD thought that the masses of proletariats in each country would rise to the occasion by themselves.³¹⁴

Calls for a global revolution remained in the propaganda until the very end. Indeed, even the last newspaper published on 30 April highlighted the importance of the international proletariat, which was unified by its revolution. Hints of critique were also present as far as the international co-operation of the working class had functioned so far. This included the Second International and its weakness to prevent the First World War.³¹⁵ Much like the Bavarian leadership, the former KPD leader Rosa Luxemburg had condemned German Social Democratic leaders for the collapse of the International: They had betrayed the internationalist ideals of socialism.³¹⁶ The party was clearly a supporter of the proletariat of all countries.

Indeed, the national question was one of the few major themes, where the KPD’s views still coincided with Luxemburg. Luxemburg had chastised the Bolsheviks for their stance of national self-determination. This disagreement was however based entirely on pragmatism and strategy, not on feelings towards nationalism. Lenin had hoped that ethnic minorities in the former Russian Empire would have helped the Bolsheviks to hold on to power, while Luxemburg only concentrated on the class element.³¹⁷

This finding of strong international current is in line with the research tradition, which has emphasized, how German Communism was neither a product nor a copy of its Russian counterpart³¹⁸. The Bolsheviks did not have influence on the German Left during the early, critical part of the

³¹² Münchner Rote Fahne 28.4, 1. Verhandeln?

³¹³ Münchner Rote Fahne 12.4, 3. Eine Etappe. “*Es lebe die Weltrevolution, es lebe der Sozialismus.*”

³¹⁴ Münchner Rote Fahne 28.4, 4. Der Sieg des Rätegedankens.

³¹⁵ Münchner Rote Fahne 30.4, 1-2. Weltfeiertag! Weltkampftag

³¹⁶ Kołakowski 1981b, 93.

³¹⁷ Kołakowski 1981b, 92-93.

³¹⁸ Weber 2014, 11.

revolutions in Germany in 1918 and 1919³¹⁹. Despite numerous similarities between The KPD and the Bolsheviks, the autonomy of the KPD during this period should not be disregarded.

One article in *Münchener Rote Fahne* highlighted the importance of one German Soviet Republic created by the will of the unified German working class. The future of the proletariat could not be in small, fragmented states. While the message was mostly not tailored to different segments of society, workers of all fields were demanded to take part in the creation of this new state.³²⁰ Members of different professions were not persuaded individually. One exception to this phenomenon came with a curious case involving workers in accommodation services, who were persuaded to abandon trade unions and follow the Communist Party instead. The Communists argued that these workers could only be freed through a socialization of the means of production, which could only take place in a dictatorship of the proletariat³²¹. The anti-union message is well in line with Rosa Luxemburg's thinking on reforms: no amount of reform can achieve revolutionary objectives or overthrow capitalism. This was particularly true in Britain, where according to Luxemburg the trade unions had abandoned class objectives and accepted bourgeois ideas for immediate gains.³²² All in all, nationalist perspective was largely absent in the propaganda of the KPD, as the international point of view remained strong. Few cases proved otherwise, although the workers of Munich were ultimately persuaded to fulfil their sacred duty not only to the international revolution, but also to the German revolution³²³.

Opposition to the SPD, USDP and the 'so-called soviet republic'

The KPD was only one of many socialist parties in Germany who claimed to work for working-class interests. The party was faced with not only the task of persuading workers to join its cause, but also to delegitimize its rivals SPD and USPD. The propaganda of agitation against the Social Democratic Ebert-Scheidemann-Noske government and the Bavarian SPD-led Hoffman government continued largely as it had before the creation of the Soviet Republic.

Calls were made to attack these political entities. For an example, the Communists urged their followers to take down Hoffmann's government, which they dubbed "*the government of capitalist predators*"³²⁴. Harsh attacks on the two parties were met with new criticism of the 'so-called soviet republic' and its socialist and anarchist leadership.

³¹⁹ Geyer 2010, 191.

³²⁰ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 26.4, 3-4. Arbeiter! Parteigenossen! Proletarier von ganz Deutschland!

³²¹ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 7.4, 4. Versammlung der erwerbslosen Gastwirtsgehilfen.

³²² Kołakowski 1981b, 78-79.

³²³ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 30.4, 2. Weltfeiertag! Weltkampftag

³²⁴ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 14.4, 1. Soldaten!

The core critique of other socialist parties can be summarized in a direct quote:

*“The opinion of Max Levien and the rest of the KPD representatives was right, claiming that the revolution must be carried out by the masses. Only as these masses begin to create new structures, which have the capability and functionality to take over necessary societal operations of the surviving bureaucracy, and are thus able to prevent a collapse, can it be said that the masses have started a revolution.”*³²⁵

The Communists assessed that the Social Democrats were incapable to complete this revolutionary task, as they could not crush the capitalist order of society, but instead clung on to it. The ‘so-called soviet republic’ could not fulfil the task, as it was born out of the anarchist-individualist concept, which although revolutionary, was not fruitful and could not properly evaluate the will of the masses.³²⁶ It is worthy of note, that the Bolsheviki also used the will of the masses as a justification for their rule, even denouncing universal suffrage. They argued that universal suffrage was unable to capture the will of the masses³²⁷.

Some examples were given why the SPD and the USPD were not trustworthy representatives of the working class: the SPD occupied important seats in the Government of Germany, while working-class revolutions were violently suppressed by their party member, the Minister of Defense Gustav Noske and White Guards loyal to Noske in Berlin, Bremen and Rhineland. The Communist gave USPD leader Hugo Haase the nickname *“strangler of councils”*, and they declared the Marxist theoretician of the USPD Karl Kautsky an opponent of the councils during the revolution. Based on these reasons, true supporters of communism were urged to separate themselves from Haase and Kautsky and join the KPD instead.³²⁸ A party which considered the council system central to their politics would co-operate with neither the Social Democrats, nor the Independent Social Democrats.

The opposition to the SPD was already very clear in the propaganda prior to the revolution. This theme continued throughout the revolutionary period. The Social Democrats were accused of mass murder of the proletariat and workers in the name of ‘peace and order’, while simultaneously

³²⁵ Münchner Rote Fahne 12.4, 3. Eine Etappe. *“Der Standpunkt Leviens und der übrigen Vertreter der Kommunistischen Partei war vollkommen richtig, dass die Revolution von den Massen getragen sein muss. Von den Massen getragen ist die Revolution erst dann, wenn diese Massen beginnen, die neuen Formen zu schaffen, die die Aufgabe und Fähigkeit haben, notwendige gesellschaftliche Funktionen des überlebten Bürokratismus zu übernehmen und so einen Zusammenbruch zu verhindern.”*

³²⁶ Münchner Rote Fahne 12.4, 3. Eine Etappe.

³²⁷ Kolakowski 1981b, 86.

³²⁸ Münchner Rote Fahne 12.4, 1. Warum wir nicht mitmachen!

complaining about shrinking morals and justice in its publications. The Communists argued that such hypocrisy was barely ever matched by the bourgeois press.³²⁹

The KPD made sure they were distinct from the USPD. Differences ran much deeper than just in their stances to the councils as governing organisms. The USPD was declared opportunistic and guilty of always following mass opinion, thus it was lacking in principles³³⁰. The Communist stance to the masses was slightly different, as seen in this direct quote:

*“We Communists are of the opinion, that the masses of course make the decisions and oversee politics. However, we proclaim that we can only go forward together with a mass of proletariat, which has achieved the necessary political ripeness through consummation of our propaganda as well as through their own higher-level experience in class struggle.”*³³¹

Through opposition to the USPD, it became evident why the KPD refused to have anything to do with the Soviet Republic when it was first announced. The Bavarian Communists seemed to have a similar stance to the role of the party as Vladimir Lenin: Lenin considered the vanguard party utterly independent of the proletariat, except for one thing, and that was a need for its support³³². The dictatorship of the proletariat, which they so often referred to as a model of their state, can also be better understood in this context.

An interesting fact in connection to the masses is that the Communists made it very clear, that their view of societal change was based on scientific socialism³³³. Karl Marx used the term to distinguish his thought from utopian socialism and its models of a perfect society. The practical aspect of scientific socialism was to confirm economic and social tendencies currently in place. The goal of this activity was *“to stimulate or activate the real forces by which society was changed”*.³³⁴

The term was further developed by Friedrich Engels. He used it to explain socialism as a theory resulting from scientific observation by scholars, independent from the proletariat. According to Engels, the theory of socialism must be embedded from outside into the worker’s movement and applied as a weapon in the struggle for emancipation. Vladimir Lenin adopted the concept and used

³²⁹ Münchner Rote Fahne 10.4, 2. Der Gipfel der Heuchelei!

³³⁰ Münchner Rote Fahne 25.4, 1. Die Kommunistische Partei und die Räte-Republik.

³³¹ Münchner Rote Fahne 25.4, 1. Die Kommunistische Partei und die Räte-Republik. *“Wir Kommunisten stehen auf dem Standpunkt, dass allerdings die Massen selber zu entscheiden haben und die Träger der Politik sein müssen. Aber wir erklären, dass wir selbstverständlich nur mit einer Masse des Proletariats zusammengehen können, die durch unsere Propaganda und im höheren Grade noch durch ihre eigenen Erfahrungen im Klassenkampfe die notwendige politische Reife erlangt hat.”*

³³² Kolakowski 1981b, 391.

³³³ Münchner Rote Fahne 28.4, 1. Die Mittel der Gegenrevolution.

³³⁴ Kolakowski 1981b, 109.

it to justify the rule of elite intellectuals. After all, in his view the working class was unable to develop the necessary theoretical understanding by itself. The party, ruled by the intelligentsia, existed to represent the interests of the working class regardless of the opinions of the working class itself.³³⁵ The Communist Party of Germany in Bavaria clearly followed Lenin on this issue, as it presented itself as the leading force of the revolution, that the masses were to follow. Rosa Luxemburg's view was that the working class was categorically revolutionary³³⁶. This view was certainly not present in the propaganda of the Bavarian Communists.

The feud between Luxemburg and Lenin was very relevant in connection to the KPD in Bavaria. To Luxemburg, a socialist party was the self-organizing proletariat, functioning to spontaneously rise against the current order. She rejected the view that the party ought to consist of a proletariat organized under the leadership of professional revolutionaries.³³⁷ The Bavarian Communists clearly sided with Lenin on this debate, as they did on many other occasions. In fact, previous research acknowledges this strong current of Leninist principles in the KPD during its early years³³⁸.

So, in addition to the SPD and USPD, the 'so-called soviet republic' lacked legitimacy in the eyes of the Communists. Its leadership was ridiculed in *Münchener Rote Fahne* for declaring the birth of a dictatorship of the proletariat without first asking the proletariat about it³³⁹. The declaration of the Soviet Republic was mocked to come from a small group of 'nutcases', 'putschists' and 'phrasemongers'³⁴⁰.

A main criticism of the 'so-called soviet republic' was its lack of a core structure, in this case councils filled with representatives of the working class. Despite the state of siege, in which the Soviet Republic found itself, the Communists chastised the leadership for not arming the proletariat for a coming fight and thus ignoring the most important task.³⁴¹ The leadership of the Soviet Republic and the Social Democratic Party were even accused of treason, for misleading workers and manipulating independent socialists and anarchists into declaring a Soviet Republic, consequently giving the White Guards a reason to prepare their offense against the proletariat³⁴².

In addition to pointing out all these faults, people were persuaded to follow the leadership of the KPD. According to the Communists, the threat coming from reactionary armed forces was not only directed

³³⁵ Kołakowski 1981b, 42, 396.

³³⁶ Kołakowski 1981b, 82.

³³⁷ Kołakowski 1981b, 84.

³³⁸ Müller 2010, 185.

³³⁹ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 10.4, 3. Volksversammlung auf der Theresienwiese.

³⁴⁰ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 11.4, 1. Gefahr in Verzug.

³⁴¹ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 10.4, 3. Volksversammlung auf der Theresienwiese

³⁴² *Münchener Rote Fahne* 11.4, 1. Gefahr in Verzug.

at the leadership of the Soviet Republic, but also at the whole proletariat. Warnings given by the Communist Party, ‘the guardian of the revolution’, were ignored for too long, they argued in *Münchner Rote Fahne*. All preparations to combat hostile forces were deemed to have been delayed for too long.³⁴³

Indeed, the failure of the First Soviet Republic to mobilize the working class to arms was a major theme in the propaganda of the KPD. Their message highlighted the weakness of the ‘so-called soviet republic’. The scope of the failure was further emphasized by a threat posed by the White Guards. Despite large efforts to delegitimize the leadership of the Soviet Republic prior to the coup attempt on 13 April, the Communists did not agitate for a fight against the Soviet Republic. A general strike demanding weapons to the workers was the only realistic course of action to the Communists, who saw a greater threat to the proletariat elsewhere. All efforts were to be directed against the White Guards.³⁴⁴ The Communists portrayed themselves as the only legitimate option to lead the proletariat to fight for its own survival.

Against capitalism, oppression, and slavery

The KPD continued to highlight social problems throughout the revolutionary period. The problem of unemployment was described as something clearly produced by a full bankruptcy of the capitalist society³⁴⁵. The bourgeoisie were chastised for allowing the murder of thousands of workers rather than taking an inch of loss in profits they made through exploitation³⁴⁶.

To combat the system, unemployed workers were urged to join a social revolution, one part joining a red army and the other taking up emergency work, something which would no longer be deemed distasteful in a communist system. In any case, the KPD argued that a communist society could only be achieved by destroying the capitalist state.³⁴⁷

One should note, that despite having been founded by the socialist theoretician Rosa Luxemburg, the Communists in Bavaria did not refer to her notable theory on capitalism. Luxemburg argued that capitalism destroys the forms it depends on by being exploitative in nature and simultaneously assimilating non-capitalist economies, eventually running out of non-capitalist areas to exploit³⁴⁸. This implication that capitalism would break down automatically raised suspicion among

³⁴³ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 11.4, 1. Gefahr in Verzug.

³⁴⁴ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 11.4, 1. An die Arbeiterschaft Münchens!

³⁴⁵ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 28.4, 2. Arbeitslosigkeit und soziale Revolution.

³⁴⁶ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 10.4, 1-2. Die Vorbereitungen zum Massenmord.

³⁴⁷ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 28.4, 2. Arbeitslosigkeit und soziale Revolution.

³⁴⁸ Kolakowski 1981b, 70.

Luxemburg's Leninist critics³⁴⁹ The Communists in Bavaria did not repeat her message of deterministic downfall of capitalism. Instead, they called workers to actively battle capitalism to bring the system to its end, thus choosing the Leninist way of action.

Anti-war voices also remained strong in the propaganda. The Entente's aim at the time was to limit Germany's operational ability³⁵⁰. Therefore, a blockade of the Central Powers remained in place and caused illnesses and deaths through malnourishment. A strong dichotomy was built between the interests of the masses and the interests of the oppressors. Despite criticism of imperialism practiced by the Entente, the Communists argued that oppression was coming from a specific class, not a state or a nation:

*“The international revolution knows nowadays only one front: the proletariat of the world against the bourgeoisie of the world. If this front were to disappear, the shackles tying the working masses of the world would disappear as well. And thus, all wars would become impossible, forever.”*³⁵¹

A national solution to the problem was soundly rejected. The Communists told the workers that they had nothing positive to expect from a future peace treaty, as the terms were being dictated by the bourgeoisie. The KPD urged Bavarian proletariat to focus its strength into fighting the enemy, namely capitalism and the bourgeoisie, which the Entente embodied in a way. A victory of the international proletariat, a communist economic order would bring the peace negotiations to an end.³⁵²

Slavery was also an important theme in the propaganda. The Communists argued that white soldiers fighting against the revolution were deemed to end up in slavery under their officers, like during the World War. Agitation of the Communists attempted to make soldiers arrest betrayers of the revolution. Garrisons were also urged to elect their own councils and leaders to replace officers. The Communists argued that this fight is about reaching an important goal, that is, freedom.³⁵³ More specifically, the Communists mentioned freedom of the proletariat from oppression and subordination, as well as for economic and political freedom³⁵⁴. The KPD claimed that a civil war was unavoidable as soon as the proletariat tried to end the centuries long state of slavery³⁵⁵.

³⁴⁹ Kołakowski 1981b, 71.

³⁵⁰ Geyer 2010, 204.

³⁵¹ Münchner Rote Fahne 25.4, 2. Räte-republik und Friedensfrage. *“Die internationale Revolution kennt heutzutage nur eine einzige Front: die Front des Weltproletariats gegen die Weltbourgeoisie. Fällt diese Front, so fallen auch die Fesseln, die die werktätigen Massen der Welt gefangen hielten. Und damit werden auch ein für allemal alle Kriege unmöglich werden.”*

³⁵² Münchner Rote Fahne 25.4, 2. Räte-republik und Friedensfrage.

³⁵³ Münchner Rote Fahne 14.4, 1. Soldaten!

³⁵⁴ Münchner Rote Fahne 14.4, 1. Generalstreik!, Münchner Rote Fahne 29.4, 3 Bürgerkrieg.

³⁵⁵ Münchner Rote Fahne 29.4, 3. Bürgerkrieg.

Survival

The competition of the two powers, ‘the bourgeois dictatorship of capitalism’, against the ‘communist dictatorship of the proletariat’ was an important theme in the propaganda of the KPD. The Communists motivated workers to fight in this war, for it was a war of existence, a matter of life and death³⁵⁶. Such perspective was built for a long time in *Münchner Rote Fahne*.

An article published on 14 April announced, that the ‘Scheidemanns and Noskes of Bavaria’, meaning the Social Democratic Hoffmann government, had proclaimed a civil war. In other words, they had given the signal to begin a mass murder of the proletariat.³⁵⁷ The Communists stressed this danger and presented themselves as the only force capable of saving the proletariat.

The Communists claimed that Berlin, with the violent suppression of communism having happened there, was the prototype for Munich. First, the Social Democrats would lock the proletariat of Munich in a ‘so-called soviet republic’, that was not truly working with their interests in mind. Then the republic was to be crushed from the inside by the Social Democrats. Finally, the Social Democrats would announce that the republic is in a state of chaos, as they themselves meanwhile move to ensure the loyalty of military leadership. However, the Communists could intervene and prevent a supposed coming mass murder of the proletariat.³⁵⁸ The Communists actually had some success in the field, capturing Dachau from White troops on 16 April³⁵⁹. Despite scoring a victory on this occasion, the propaganda machine kept emphasizing that the workers were under threat.

After the *Palmsonntagsputsch*, the Communists declared that the government of the capitalists, the Hoffmann Government, was coming to take workers’ rights away. According to the KPD their actions would not stop there. All class-conscious fighters were also going to be massacred by the SPD. A failure to fight now would lead to a downfall of the revolution, an eternal state of slavery as well as starvation of workers and their children.³⁶⁰

This message was strengthened by reports of atrocities from other parts of Germany, which were also published in *Münchner Rote Fahne*. For instance, it was reported that civilians, including women and children, were slaughtered in Essen. The right-wing Social Democrat Karl Severing was blamed for an order, that was to give the authorities a right to obligate anyone into forced labor. Refusals to comply were to be met with imprisonment.³⁶¹ As such, the fight was for both freedom and survival.

³⁵⁶ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 29.4, 3. Bürgerkrieg.

³⁵⁷ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 14.4, 1. Kampf!

³⁵⁸ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 14.4, 1. Kampf!

³⁵⁹ Mitchell 1965, 320.

³⁶⁰ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 14.4, 1. Arbeiter!

³⁶¹ *Münchner Rote Fahne* 26.4, 2. Schandtaten der Noske-Bestien.

Additionally, a persecution campaign of the working class was announced to have been launched. Sensational headlines, such as *'Preparations of a mass murder'*, were used to prove a point. The Communists blamed the Minister of Defense Gustav Noske for issuing anti-Communist flyers based on lies, which were agitating soldiers to commit mass murder against the Communists. Noske's alleged lie campaign, claiming that the USPD had planned a putsch in the city of Magdeburg, was also mentioned by the KPD. Thereafter 'Noske the tyrant' moved to imprison popular socialist Alwin Brandes. The government was once again accused of planning the murder of the proletariat in relation to these events in Magdeburg.³⁶²

8.3 Comparison of the motivational and persuasive aspects of propaganda

First it should be noted that there was a slight imbalance in the source material between the two parties. That exists due to the Bavarian Soviet Republic meeting its demise much quicker than the socialist rule in Finland. A fruitful comparison is nevertheless made possible by long and content heavy nature of the articles in *Münchener Rote Fahne*.

As the revolutions began in 1918 and 1919, the two parties found themselves in different situations. The radical wing of the SDP formed the leadership of the new government, and the party newspaper was supportive of the uprising. The KPD, despite being a revolutionary party, was not happy with the way the Soviet Republic was founded. As such, one expects great disparities in the messages of the two parties. Some commonalities are also present.

Both parties persuaded and motivated their followers to join the fight against capitalism, oppression and slavery. This theme continued from the pre-revolutionary periods and there were only minor differences between the parties on this theme. The SDP briefly mentioned gender-specific issues and exercised some critique on the Church in addition to these topics.

Additionally, both political parties reacted to the poor military situation towards the end of the revolutionary regimes. People were motivated to join armed forces loyal to the revolutions. Similar threats were identified: Slavery and mass-murder of the working class would await if the revolutions were to fail. A small but nonetheless interesting difference can be identified on this topic.

A calm and positive view of the future, possibly in line with Kautsky's orthodox Marxism, was portrayed in *Työmies*. Kautsky saw revolution as a historical process³⁶³. Capitalism was moving unavoidably toward its destruction through a process, which could not be altered by neither the

³⁶² Münchener Rote Fahne 12.4, 3-4. Noske-Arbeit in Magdeburg.

³⁶³ Ehrnrooth 1992, 138.

capitalists nor the socialists³⁶⁴. To take this view seriously would mean sitting back and allowing history to run its course.

As we have seen so far, the Bavarian Communists strongly rejected such message. According to them, the whole future of the working class rested on the outcome of the revolution. Calls to fight for the revolution began once they had assumed the leadership of the Soviet Republic and these calls were not reversed even when the White Guards were closing in to conquer Munich. The Social Democrats in Finland gave contradictory messages on this topic: on one hand, the survival of the workers was at stake. On the other hand, even a total loss in the Civil War would not prevent a working-class victory in the future. The latter interpretation became stronger towards the end of the war.

Another difference can be seen in the propaganda of agitation, which understandably was not as strong in Finland, where the Social Democrats were now supportive of the Red leadership ruling most of the industrialized areas. The KPD had exercised harsh criticism of the SPD and even the USPD before the declaration of the Soviet Republic and the party continued to do so throughout the revolutionary period. The KPD wanted to establish a Soviet Republic, but on different principles and at a more suitable time. As a result, the party had numerous opponents and put a lot more effort into agitation during the revolutionary period.

Appeals to morality were only made by the Finnish Social Democrats. A glimpse of this phenomenon could already be identified in the texts concerning the revolutions in Russia, as well as in Finland prior to the Civil War. Vague appeals were made to appeal to sense of justice and duty towards humanity. Wording was sometimes even quasi-religious, and terms such as 'holy wrath' were present in the propaganda. Despite branding Christianity as a facade of imperialism, the language they used was sometimes quite similar. The likely reason as to why the KPD did not publish similar quasi-religious content was probably connected to the fact that their message was directed only to industrial proletariat of the cities, not the socially conservative countryside.

This leads us to the most significant difference in the propaganda between these two political parties in connection to this research question: Great differences were shown in their target audiences and how they persuaded and motivated these specific audiences to work with them. So far it is clear that the SDP often referred to the nation, whereas the KPD rarely did the same.

Indeed, the SDP reached out to numerous segments of society: Industrial workers, crofters, land-owning farmers, civil servants and particularly teachers were all among the people the Social Democrats attempted to win over. Class-consciousness was built by likening their living standards

³⁶⁴ Matikainen 2018, 23.

and their position in society. The Social Democrats argued that under capitalism everyone serves the small, extremely wealthy upper class! Therefore, a common economic and material basis could be established, and some effort was shown to overcome class antagonism.

The goal must have been to appeal to an audience as wide as possible, even at the cost of ideological disparity. The Social Democrats certainly distanced themselves from orthodox Marxism of Karl Kautsky. According to historian Leszek Kołakowski, Kautsky did not believe in an alliance with the peasantry, whose interests were contrary to the working class and socialism³⁶⁵.

Any problems combining the interests of different classes was avoided by the consistent, narrow approach of the KPD. The communist propaganda was targeting a much smaller segment of society. This finding is in line with the fact, that the revolution received little support from conservative peasants living outside Munich³⁶⁶. KPD's approach to the peasantry question was to completely ignore the countryside. This matches the orthodox Marxist interpretation, in which the small peasants would inevitably be squeezed out of existence, and so to defend their rights would mean taking a reactionary stance on this issue³⁶⁷. The KPD rejected the views of one of its own founder Karl Liebknecht. He saw all who lived by the work of their hands as part of the working class, including the peasants and petty bourgeoisie. Liebknecht argued that a socialist party ought to be more interested in the socialist thinking segment of society, rather than only wage-earners.³⁶⁸ So, from the point of view of Ellul's sociological propaganda, the two political parties had massive differences when it came to unifying their audiences.

Neither the Finnish Social Democrats nor the German Communists directly referred to the concept of 'national class'. However, this difference in their target audiences could be at least partially explained by them having different conceptions of the composition of said class. Karl Marx considered the bourgeoisie to have once been the forward looking 'national class', but also saw its historic role now coming to an end³⁶⁹. If the SDP saw some sectors of the bourgeoisie, such as minor land-owning farmers, still a part of the progressive 'national class', it would make sense to try to win them over.

Meanwhile, the Communists in Bavaria may have been more in line with Marx in thinking that the 'national class' was more or less synonymous with the proletariat at this point in history. The communists in Bavaria were looking after the interests of the proletariat, and no one else. No efforts

³⁶⁵ Kołakowski 1981b, 49.

³⁶⁶ Pelz 2016, 123.

³⁶⁷ Kołakowski 1981b, 99.

³⁶⁸ Kołakowski 1981b, 134-135.

³⁶⁹ Lichtheim 1982, 88.

were made to win the bourgeoisie over. Even poor farmers in rural Bavaria were ignored. Historian Hermann Weber's research into the KPD membership concluded, that only 5,5 % of the party membership in 1924 were peasants and day laborers³⁷⁰. How could they fail so miserably at recruiting the proletariat on the countryside, something which Lenin could easily manage in 1917?

Lenin's correspondence with socialist thinker Hermann Gorter sheds some light on the issue. Gorter argued that a mass of poor peasants did not exist in Western Europe similarly to Russia and could therefore not be employed for revolutionary purposes. Gorter saw hope in the quality, not the quantity of the Western proletariat.³⁷¹ The propaganda efforts of the Communists indicate that they did not disagree with Gorter. Another explanation, tied specifically to Bavaria was the Bavarian Peasants' League (BBB), a political party with reasonable electoral success. Due to its strong recruitment program, the newly established peasant's councils were largely identical with local BBB associations.³⁷² Since the peasant's councils were already under the influence of a rival political party, The Communists could not hope to win much outside larger cities.

Finally, nationalism was major point of difference between the two parties. Debates concerning the question of national sovereignty were held in the international socialist circles during the early years of the 20th century. Three approaches received attention: The idea of cultural autonomy for all nations within a state by the Austro-Marxist, the extreme denunciation of national sovereignty by Rosa Luxemburg and the principle of national sovereignty by Vladimir Lenin.³⁷³ The ideas of Luxemburg and Lenin were furthest from each other on this issue. It is very clear, that the SDP sided with Lenin's view of national sovereignty, while KPD embraced Luxemburg's internationalism. This finding further emphasizes the great variety of political movements that took part in the 'revolutionary wave' that begun during the First World War.

The vastly different approaches to the national question were once again evident, as we moved from the pre-revolutionary periods into the conflicts. The Finnish Socialists, much like the Bavarian Communists, opposed the rule of the capitalist class. Both political parties denounced imperialism, but in a different manner. The SDP saw Germany and Sweden as threats to the freedom of the Finnish nation. The KPD considered the imperialism of the Entente to harm the working class everywhere. Their view of the conflict was based purely on class, whilst the propaganda of the SDP included a strong nationalist element.

³⁷⁰ Broué 2005, 630.

³⁷¹ Broué 2005, 406.

³⁷² Mitchell 1965, 180.

³⁷³ Matikainen 2018, 93.

This section was dedicated to the second research question: *to which ideas did the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany appeal in their propagandas to motivate and persuade people to join their cause during the revolutions in 1918 and 1919?*

To conclude, both the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany persuaded their target audiences to join the fight to end capitalism, oppression, and slavery. People were motivated to join the fight because their freedom and even survival was at stake. Considerable differences were also present, among them continuous agitation by the Communists against the political leadership of the 'so-called Soviet Republic'. Arguments based on appeals to morality were only presented by the Finnish Social Democrats. The most intriguing difference is present in the target audiences and how they were approached: The German Communists presented themselves as advocates of the working class, and only the working class. The Finnish Social Democrats wanted to unify the Finnish nation against the extremely wealthy layers of the bourgeoisie, as well as foreign imperialist nations.

9. Depictions of future societies in Finland and Bavaria

During the revolutions, the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany presented plans and described the organized form of their societies in the future. The topic is linked to Ellul's concept of the propaganda of integration. This section is dedicated to the third and final research question:

Based on the propaganda of the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany, which ideas and ideologies were to shape the new order of society?

9.1 The Finnish society based on Social Democracy

The Social Democratic Party of Finland published numerous articles concerning the future society. The most important topic was clearly education (32 articles). Many articles also concentrated on work and ownership (13 articles). Less emphasis was put on the new constitution (8 articles), the structure of the state (4 articles) and justice and equality (4) articles.

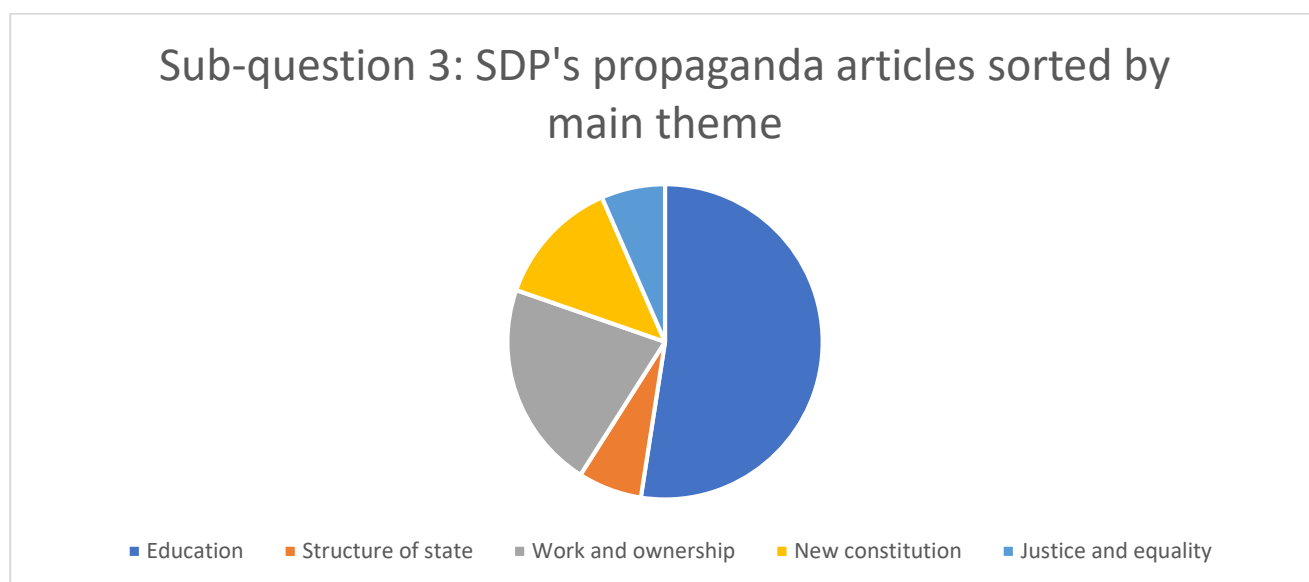


Chart 5: Propaganda articles concerning the future society published in *Työmies* 27.1.-12.4.1918, sorted by main topics.

Education

Education was clearly the most important topic concerning the future order of society. The People's Delegation's stance towards public education was praised in *Työmies*. The societal question was also described a question of pedagogy.³⁷⁴ According to the Social Democrats, progress and reforms in school system and in society were considered to be tied to each other.³⁷⁵

³⁷⁴ *Työmies* 15.2, 3. Wallankumouksen läheisin vaikutus kansakoululaitokseen., *Työmies* 7.4, 5. Mietteitä koulukysymyksestä.

³⁷⁵ *Työmies* 11.4, 2. Mietteitä.

Meanwhile the current Finnish school system came under criticism. Bourgeois influence in the schools was highlighted, as expressed in this quote: “*Let us cleanse our schools from rot. Only then can we expect education to flourish*”.³⁷⁶ The new school system was to be democratic, free, universal and not subservient to the upper classes³⁷⁷. A reform of schools was not totally revolutionary. Whereas certain old elements were deemed unnecessary and even harmful, it was openly admitted that some previous traditions were to continue³⁷⁸.

Some societal problems were blamed outright on education. The bourgeoisie were condemned for building a spirit of class division in schools. As a concrete example, the strong division between civil servants and the common people was blamed on education, more precisely on a doctrine of inequality taught to children³⁷⁹. A democratization of the school system was thus deemed necessary for the good of the people.

This process of democratization was to be applied in many ways. To avoid problems, an alternative model on education was to be built on democratic principles. The Social Democrats deemed a school committee necessary, so that regular people could influence the educational system. People were persuaded to give their opinion on various themes such as the length of mandatory education.³⁸⁰ Along these lines, the Social Democrats portrayed themselves as mediators of the voice of the people.

The democratization process included improvements on education for the disabled. A system of travelling priests skilled in sign language, who were to educate and offer spiritual guidance to deaf people, was deemed lacking and outdated. Calls were made for the state to provide teachers that could educate and assist the deaf population properly. Such teachers would preferably be socialists or of a liberal worldview, instead of being members of the conservative clergy.³⁸¹

Schools were deemed too alien to the people and they were described as something too far from the daily lives. According to the Social Democrats, a ‘*medieval spirit*’ was still present in the school life. A more local approach, regional boards, was called for monitoring and inspecting schools. The Prussian centralization and uniform system for the whole country was rejected in favor of a system that respects local special characteristics.³⁸²

³⁷⁶ Työmies 9.2, 3. Kouluoloista: “*Puhdistakaamme koulumme mädänneisyydestä. Sitte wasta woimme odottaa siwistyksen pääsewän täyteen kukoistukseensa.*”

³⁷⁷ Työmies 4.2, 1. Koulut palwelemaan jalon kaswatuksen arwoja ja ihanteita.

³⁷⁸ Työmies 21.2, 2. Kansakoulun työohjelma.

³⁷⁹ Työmies 31.1, 5. Nurja kaswatus kantaa hedelmää.

³⁸⁰ Työmies 14.2, 4. Koulujemme uudistus.

³⁸¹ Työmies 8.4, 2-3. Kuuromykät ja walistustoiminta.

³⁸² Työmies 9.2, 2. Koulujen tarkastuksen kansanwaltaistuttaminen.

An important vision existed between cities and countryside. The Social Democrats did not take a tough stance on children working in the autumn and thus shortening the yearly education by one month. School was set to start one month earlier in cities, and they would use that time mostly in nature, because their knowledge of nature was deemed lesser than that of children living on the countryside. A system of small schools with just one teacher were described harmful to the children and could only be accepted in special cases, for instance when there are no more than 20 pupils.³⁸³

The most urgent thing to change was the composition of the board of directors in each school. This was set to happen via democratically elected city councils³⁸⁴. More working-class influence was justified by numbers, as most pupils came from working-class background. The Social Democrats argued that schools with closer ties to general population produce better results in education.³⁸⁵ Only electing new leadership was not considered sufficient by the Social Democrats, and this change had to be reflected in a new curriculum³⁸⁶.

Numerous articles concerning the content of education appeared in *Työmies*. Religion as a subject received considerable attention. The concepts and ‘delusions’ of Moses were not to be educated as unquestionable truths anymore. According to the Social Democrats, moral education based on social science ought to replace religious education.³⁸⁷ The content of the new subject was still largely compatible with Christianity, and this was not even denied by the Social Democrats. The substitution of religious education was advocated for two reasons: the theory of redemption was deemed harmful, and Christianity was contradictory to the education of the evolutionary conception of nature.³⁸⁸

Christianity was likened to religious fanaticism in the propaganda of the SDP. Religious people were depicted as more prone to violence. Examples included the White Guards as well as the Inquisition. As such, people were persuaded to abandon Christianity, and the Social Democrats argued that it has been unable to end violence throughout the centuries. The Christian doctrine of redemption was mockingly represented as entertainment and a comfort system in support of the ‘politics of robbery’ practiced by the bourgeoisie. The doctrine of original sin was criticized as a scapegoat mechanism. Forgiveness to those who repent for their sins was considered an enabler mechanism of atrocities.³⁸⁹

³⁸³ Työmies 17.2, 1,3. Kansakoulun uudistus.

³⁸⁴ Työmies 17.3, 2. Kansakoulujen johtokuntien uudistaminen.

³⁸⁵ Työmies 17.3, 2. Kansakoulujen johtokuntien uudistaminen.

³⁸⁶ Työmies 15.2, 3. Wallankumouksen läheisin vaikutus kansakoululaitokseen.

³⁸⁷ Työmies 4.2, 1. Koulu palvelemaan jalon kasvatuksen arvoja ja ihanteita.

³⁸⁸ Työmies 28.3, 4. Kansakoulun opetusohjelmasta.

³⁸⁹ Työmies 28.3, 4. Kansakoulun opetusohjelmasta.

It is important to note that the Social Democrats accused the bourgeoisie of misunderstanding the message of Christianity. It was noted that Christ did not mean redemption the way the bourgeoisie took it. Corruption of the message was blamed on Paul the Apostle and Augustine of Hippo.³⁹⁰

The Finnish Social Democrats were therefore not anti-Christian in principle. They were picking and choosing parts of the Bible they deemed useful while discarding and criticizing those that were not compatible with their worldview and ideology. Christian worldview needed to be replaced, but at the same time it provided the basis of the new moral education. For instance, the basic rule was a mere rewording of the Golden Rule found in Christianity, "*do unto others as you would have them do unto you*"³⁹¹.

The stance on religion shares some commonalities with Karl Marx. Marx famously stated, that "*religion is the opium of the people*" and that "*the real happiness of the people requires the abolition of religion*", but he had more to say on this issue. Marx was not happy to only remove this illusion of religion. He wanted to change the condition that required an illusion, and as such he did not see the end of religion alone as something terminating human servitude.³⁹² Ultimately, as exploitation and oppression were beaten in transition to socialism and enlightenment reached more and more people, religions would disappear³⁹³. The SDP aimed to overcome the world view of Christianity, although it also accepted the basic moral outlook that came with the religion. Ultimately both Marx and the Social Democrats acknowledged, that religion was not the source of all problems in society.

The Social Democrats argued that the purpose of schools is to grant knowledge based on scientific experiments. Such knowledge was found first and foremost in modern natural sciences, mathematics and history. People were supposed to individually form their view of the world based on these subjects. The individual did not long for some eternal prize granted by an outside force, as was the case in Christianity. The knowledge that truth and justice shall win in the end was his prize and solace.³⁹⁴

Laws of nature took the place of God in the new moral education. Natural sciences and mathematics were to be the basis of truth and the moral education. The subject also touched on the topic of crime. The new man was supposed to change his ways and make good of his crimes automatically, as his sense of moral duty improves through evolution. He would willfully act accordingly in all situations

³⁹⁰ Työmies 28.3, 5. Kansakoulun opetusohjelmasta.

³⁹¹ Työmies 14.3, 2. Siweysoppi kansakoulun opetusohjelmassa.

³⁹² Kołakowski 1981a, 129.

³⁹³ Kołakowski 1981b, 282.

³⁹⁴ Työmies 28.3, 5. Kansakoulun opetusohjelmasta.

and accept his place in society.³⁹⁵ It is worthy of note, that the Social Democratic press was divided on this stance of a moral education. Some thought that the topic should not be treated as a separate subject.³⁹⁶

Overall, strong emphasis was put on education based on natural sciences. The Social Democrats highlighted the large gap between science and religion³⁹⁷. The supremacy of natural sciences they advocated for can be summarized in a direct quote:

*“We are no longer satisfied with out-of-date explanations and prophecies. Instead, we demand knowledge freed from shackles of superstition [...] All citizens need an expansion of humane knowledge. Let us demand the correct view of the universe.”*³⁹⁸

Nature was deemed ‘everything’ to humans and as such it was to be concentrated on in schools. Natural history, practical courses on agriculture, physics, astronomy, chemistry and geology were all to be addressed in mandatory basic education. It was deemed important to have increased knowledge about the laws of nature and the whole universe.³⁹⁹

Overall, this view was in line with the thinking of Karl Kautsky. He believed science to be capable of synthesizing knowledge into larger collections of facts and more potent explanations. Kautsky saw laws of nature as eternal and unchanging, with social processes following deterministic ‘natural necessity’.⁴⁰⁰

Practicality and application to everyday life was deemed important in this field of education. The Netherlands was portrayed as a forerunner in the education of natural history. The Social Democrats advocated that their methods and material were to influence future curriculum.⁴⁰¹

History was one of the three subjects to produce true knowledge and thus important to the Social Democrats. The core of education in this subject was found in cultural developments and the struggle of nations for enlightenment. Social and economic factors were to be included, and class relations, ways of life etc. was to be included.⁴⁰² A flaw was identified in the current education of history: all

³⁹⁵ Työmies 14.3, 2. Siweysoppi kansakoulun opetusohjelmassa.

³⁹⁶ Matikainen 2018, 273.

³⁹⁷ Työmies 5.4, 5. Enemmän luonnontiedettä kansakoulujen ohjelmaan.

³⁹⁸ Työmies 5.4, 5. Enemmän luonnontiedettä kansakoulujen ohjelmaan.: ”Emme tyydy enää vanhanaikaisiin selityksiin ja ennustuksiin, vaan waadimme taikauskon kahleista wapautunutta tietoa...Kaikki kansalaiset tarwitsewat inhimillisen tietopiirin laajennusta. Waatikaamme oikea kuwa maailman kaikkeudesta.”

³⁹⁹ Työmies 23.2, 2. Luonnontieto kansakoulun opetusohjelmassa.

⁴⁰⁰ Kołakowski 1981b, 36.

⁴⁰¹ Työmies 10.4, 4. Luonnontiedon opetus kansakoulussa.

⁴⁰² Työmies 13.3, 2. Kansakoulun työohjelma.

kinds of bloody wars were examined and described from the side of the victor in a romanticized fashion. A more realistic approach was called for, one that also included class struggle.⁴⁰³

The Social Democrats presented a problematic example based on education of the Swedish crusades to Finland. They argued that a point of view that emphasizes Christianity is flawed, and that the event should be described as imperialist. Another example concerned the revolutionary period in France, where the leadership of the revolution(s) were described as thieves and hooligans who brought France to ruin. Instead, education ought to focus on the 'high ideals' of the new France, such as republic, justice, freedom, comradery and equality.⁴⁰⁴

Education of languages was also among the topics brought up among the pages of *Työmies*. Mother tongue was deemed one of the central subjects, as the correct use of one's own language was deemed necessary to become an educated and informed citizen. Reading and writing were deemed important, as was grammar. Finnish terms were to be educated in a uniform way all around Finland.⁴⁰⁵ Finnish literature and folklore ought to be studied in schools. This included for an example sections from the national epic Kalevala.⁴⁰⁶

The SDP demanded reforms for universities. Those with university degree were deemed deeply disconnected from the working people. Universities were to become institutions of the people, to be ruled and used by them. The Social Democrats considered universities to be state institutions. Their autonomy was rejected in favor of a system lead by the state, like in Germany and Switzerland. To create enlightened and skilled leaders to the nation, it was hoped that young and talented workers from the countryside could be sent to universities for further education.⁴⁰⁷

The Social Democrats demanded that popular, exoteric courses and lectures were to be given to the working class. This would spread the educational effect and restore public faith in universities. Additionally, universities would be able to understand the people better.⁴⁰⁸ Studies in a university were to be free of charge to abolish privileges between people⁴⁰⁹. To finance these changes, the supposedly outdated Faculty of Theology were to be abolished.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰³ *Työmies* 20.2, 5. Kansan opetuksen uudestaan järjestäminen.

⁴⁰⁴ *Työmies* 8.4, 3. Historian opetus kansakoulussa.

⁴⁰⁵ *Työmies* 7.3, 2. Kansakoulun työohjelma.

⁴⁰⁶ *Työmies* 5.4, 2. Kansakoulun lukukirjojen uudistus.

⁴⁰⁷ *Työmies* 6.3, 5-6. Yliopisto ja kansa.

⁴⁰⁸ *Työmies* 6.3, 5-6. Yliopisto ja kansa.

⁴⁰⁹ *Työmies* 14.3, 5. Hiukan yliopistojen kehityshistoriasta.

⁴¹⁰ *Työmies* 6.3, 5-6. Yliopisto ja kansa.

Ownership and work

The Marxist view of history is visible in connection to the topic of ownership. Oligarchy was said to rule with the support of the dominating modes of production. To guarantee everyone a right to fruits of their labor, a socialization of the means of production needed to happen.⁴¹¹ Change was taking place slowly, but production became more concentrated and its management more centralized. This was the road to socialism, and when the working class took over the system, they could finally use the means of production for the good of themselves and the society. The development had not yet reached its full potential in the Finnish society, which the Social Democrats admitted was underdeveloped. Thus, the revolution included building up industry just as much as it included socializing the means of production.⁴¹² All production units were overseen by the society beginning on January 30. Plants that were used to harm society were taken over by the state.⁴¹³

Whereas previously mentioned statements concerning ownership applied to industry, the Social Democrats also put a lot of emphasis on the countryside. In addition to persuading farmers and peasants to join the revolutionary movement, the party published plans to rework land ownership. Emancipation of the crofters was deemed the first step in this plan. Instead of calling it a gift, the Social Democrats argued they were serving justice⁴¹⁴. Denmark was a role model in this issue, because the state had basically forced landowners to sell peasants the land they worked on⁴¹⁵. A strong current of reformism can be identified in this issue.

The Social Democrats declared private ownership of land the reason for malnourishment⁴¹⁶. Rather than focusing on food production, capitalists were accused of using farms to make money in commerce, as the price of farms soared. As such, private ownership was deemed a fraud.⁴¹⁷ According to the Social Democrats, possibilities to increase the area under cultivation were shackled, so a strange ‘laissez-faire’ attitude was also presented towards farming. The emancipation of farmers would allow them to produce as much food as they could was called for. They were to be free from taxation so that they could use the profits to improve their productivity in the future. The Social Democrats saw local industry dependent on this, as wealthier people could afford to buy industrial products. Means

⁴¹¹ Työmies 16.2, 2. Kansain oikeus.

⁴¹² Työmies 5.2, 3. Wallankumouksen tehtävät.

⁴¹³ Työmies 31.1, 2. Torppareille, pienviljelijöille ja maaseudun työväestölle.

⁴¹⁴ Työmies 4.2, 2. Torppariwapautuksen oikeutus.

⁴¹⁵ Työmies 16.2, 5. Syrjäisen mietteitä.

⁴¹⁶ Työmies 31.3, 1. Yksi wälttämättä saawutettawa korjaus

⁴¹⁷ Työmies 31.3, 6. Maan yksityisomistuksen kirous.

of production only fit to suit an individual worker ought to be owned privately, they argued. They even admitted that all this privatization of land was not necessarily in line with socialism.⁴¹⁸

It is noteworthy, that this view clashed with classic Marxism. Karl Marx argued that the liberation of the proletariat basically happened through the elimination of class distinctions by abolishing private property.⁴¹⁹ However, Vladimir Lenin, who had little enthusiasm for upholding ‘correct’ Marxist views and instead preferred practical solutions, also supported anti-Marxist approach to this question in Russia. Lenin accepted an alliance with the peasants, not only during the revolution, but also afterwards.⁴²⁰ This was one of the few cases, where the SDP fully aligned itself with Leninist thought.

The principle of emancipation was however compatible with socialism and the Social Democrats saw a different, longer route to achieving it. This takes us back to the underdevelopment of production in Finland, a country not yet ready for socialism, argued the Social Democrats. Be that as it may, all crofters were declared independent from the landowners, who had owned their lands until 30 January. Companies that owned land fit for farming had to give it all away to the state.⁴²¹

The content of work received attention in *Työmies* as well. Work was deemed essential to living: “*The material and spiritual well-being of the nation, which is strived for, can only be achieved through creative work*”, was the message in *Työmies*. The issue was taken very seriously, and creative work was deemed a matter of life and death.⁴²²

The relationship toward work was not wholly uncomplicated. On one hand, the proletariat could not aim for idleness, as it was deemed a feature of the bourgeois society and ultimately harmful to workers. Idleness could not exist in a socialist society, because there would be no unemployment and acting idle in such setting would be deemed theft, which no one wants to practice voluntarily.⁴²³ The relationship between work and socialism is well illustrated in this direct quote:

“Socialism requires, and makes sure, that all members of a socialist society take part in productive or organizing work. It does not allow idleness to exist in any form, instead

⁴¹⁸ *Työmies* 31.3, 1. Yksi wälttämättä saawutettawa korjaus

⁴¹⁹ Kołakowski 1981a, 130.

⁴²⁰ Kołakowski 1981b, 406.

⁴²¹ *Työmies* 31.1, 2. Torppareille, pienwiljelijöille ja maaseudun työväestölle.

⁴²² *Työmies* 12.3, 2. Luowa työ: ”*Kansan aineellinen ja henkinen hywinwointi, johon pyritään, saawutetaan ainoastaan luowalla työllä*”

⁴²³ *Työmies* 18.3, 6. Toimettomuus – proletariaatin ihanneko?

*it declares a universal duty to work and assures everyone equal rights to the fruits of labor.*⁴²⁴

Such a system was identified to exist in Soviet Russia. This socialist conception of work was not shared by all Social Democrats. A liberal, individualist point of view to work had at least some acceptance. An argument was presented, that no one should be forced to work, but those who did not, would not enjoy the support of society. That support included receiving enough food to live. The view was seen to be in line with the bible as well.⁴²⁵ It is noteworthy, that contrary to the narrative occasionally expressed in *Työmies*, a duty to work was declared towards the end of the conflict on 6 April⁴²⁶.

Work and gender were also discussed together. A division between male and female work was assumed and seemed to be based on physical requirements. Public funds, in this case in Helsinki, were allocated to physically demanding jobs that women were not coping with. Whilst the situation was deemed bad and unfair, handouts were also deemed detrimental to one's willfulness to work. The public sector was expected to solve this problem and organize work.⁴²⁷ Such thinking followed the previously established conception of socialism and the duty to work.

To further distance themselves from the old order of society, wages were also present in the pages of *Työmies*. In a socialist society the workers had the right to receive a fair living wage. This was mentioned in the context of tipping, a type of system that was deemed devastating to workers. As working conditions improved, it was said that the workers will gladly work out of a sense of duty rather than out of lust for tips.⁴²⁸

The issue of progressive taxation was mentioned only briefly. It is remarkable how little attention this topic received. Surprisingly, the model proposed by the Social Democrats was based on Prussia's system of taxation. A simple structure and righteous progression were the fundamentals from which such a system could be built.⁴²⁹

Equality and justice

⁴²⁴ *Työmies* 18.3, 6. Toimettomuus – proletariaatin ihanneko?: ”*Sosialismi edellyttää, että kaikki sosialistisen yhteiskunnan jäsenet ottawat osaa tuottavaan tai järjestävään työhön ja pitää myös huolen siitä, että niin tapahtuu. Se ei siis salli toimettomuutta missään muodossa vaan julistaa kaikki työvelvollisiksi ja turvaa samalla kaikille yhtäläiset oikeudet työn tuloksiin.*”

⁴²⁵ *Työmies* 10.2, 5. Työvelvollisuudesta jairkamieslakoista.

⁴²⁶ *Työmies* 7.4, 1. Julistus työvelvollisuuden määräämästä wallankumousaikana koskewan lain kiireellisestä toimeenpanosta.

⁴²⁷ *Työmies* 23.3, 5. Naisille työtä järjestämään.

⁴²⁸ *Työmies* 3.4, 4. Juomarahajärjestelmää wastustamaan!

⁴²⁹ *Työmies* 9.3, 2. Werotus progressiiviseksi.

According to the Social Democrats, laws held one of the most important positions in the life of a society. For administration of justice to be respected, it needed to be freed from its 'bureaucratic spirit'.⁴³⁰ Previous research has tied this process of dismantling bureaucracy to democratization: It was important to the Social Democrats that the members of courts were elected by the people⁴³¹.

The SDP labelled the judicial system an old, outdated institution. Civil servants in this field were deemed out of touch with the everyday lives of the people. A plain fix and adjustment to the new system was also deemed impossible. Instead, a draft of a new system based on revolutionary courts and its ideals was presented in *Työmies*. The workers were to elect four members and a chairman to each court, replacing old district courts. Said elected people would not need to be lawyers by education. As revolution would ultimately lead to new conceptions of terminology and suitable punishments, reason and conscience should guide the new judicial process, claimed the SDP. Former dehumanization of the accused, as it was expressed in *Työmies*, would not happen in courts filled with normal people applying reason.⁴³²

The concept of punishment received some attention too. An argument was presented that criminal punishment breeds more crime, as once convicted people could not find work and thus could not feed themselves without committing crimes. To fix this issue, the Social Democrats argued that prisons ought to be organized in a way that "*the conditions would be more like in an academy than in a torture chamber*". Former prisoners would be directed to settlements to work in various fields, mostly in agriculture. Such settlements would be completely voluntary, in case a former convict could not find work in the private sector.⁴³³

The topic of equality was presented together with the law. It was argued in *Työmies* that the working class being overrepresented in crime was due to their social standing. The bourgeois law, where everyone is treated equally, was flawed, because the working class lacked rights and only had responsibilities.⁴³⁴ Another aspect to equality was gender. The SDP suggested that a civil register ought to replace parish register, and it was clearly stated, that men and women were finally considered equal in every way under the current system. Children were to take surnames from both parents, not only from their fathers.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁰ *Työmies* 7.4, 1. Laki ja oikeus.

⁴³¹ Matikainen 2018, 261.

⁴³² *Työmies* 16.2, 5-6. Uutta oikeuslaitosta suunnitella.

⁴³³ *Työmies* 26.3, 6. Iäksi tuomittu.: "*Wankilaolot olisi järjestettävä enemmän oppilaitosmaisiksi kuin kidutuskammioiksi.*"

⁴³⁴ *Työmies* 7.4, 1. Laki ja oikeus.

⁴³⁵ *Työmies* 30.3, 5. Wapauden siivilirekisteri.

The new constitution

The revolutionary state of things was not meant to be an end, but rather a mean to achieve goals concerning the state, education and economy⁴³⁶. The draft of a new constitution was presented to the readers of *Työmies* on 24 and 26 February⁴³⁷. Its content was also explained to the readership in closer detail later.

This constitution was set against a previous draft of a constitution presented by the bourgeoisie. The basis of the constitution was in broad democracy, and it was to give all power to the people from capitalists, bureaucrats and so on.⁴³⁸ The Social Democrats argued that democracy should not be limited by wealth or age, although the age of eligibility to vote was set at 20 (down from 24) in the draft. There would be no limitations to one's eligibility to vote apart from having been sentenced of a crime.⁴³⁹

A right of initiative, a chance to propose new legislation would be given to the people. Referendums would be held if certain conditions applied. They could even be used to overturn a decision made by the People's Delegation, the Parliament or even the court of law.⁴⁴⁰ Again, democracy showed itself as the most important feature of society to Finnish socialists.

The bourgeois draft would have given executive power to the president, which was strongly opposed by the Social Democrats.⁴⁴¹ It was noted in a later article in *Työmies*, that a strong president could easily rule in the interest of the wealthy bourgeoisie⁴⁴². The People's Delegation were to also wield executive power, however only under the supervision of the Parliament. The Parliament would also choose members of the delegation. This system was promoted as something opposite to both autocracy as well as oligarchy.⁴⁴³

The concept of ownership made an appearance in the constitution. The draft of the People's Delegation was defended on the basis, that it allowed the people a chance to move toward a socialist society through collective ownership. Ownership of the means of production by the society would lead to well-being and prosperity of the whole society, the Social Democrats advocated.⁴⁴⁴ An example concerned the sausage industry. It was argued that important food production, such as that

⁴³⁶ *Työmies* 23.2, 3. Työväen wallankumouksen ohjelmasta.

⁴³⁷ *Työmies* 24.2, 5-6. Suomen Waltiosäännön ehdotus, *Työmies* 26.2, 6-7 Suomen Waltiosäännön ehdotus.

⁴³⁸ *Työmies* 27.2, 2. Kansanwaltuuskunnan ehdotus Suomen waltiosäännöksi.

⁴³⁹ *Työmies* 20.3, 2. Kansanwaltuuskunnan ehdotus Suomen waltiosäännöksi.

⁴⁴⁰ *Työmies* 20.3, 2. Kansanwaltuuskunnan ehdotus Suomen waltiosäännöksi.

⁴⁴¹ *Työmies* 1.3, 2. Kansanwaltuuskunnan ehdotus Suomen waltiosäännöksi.

⁴⁴² *Työmies* 20.3, 2. Kansanwaltuuskunnan ehdotus Suomen waltiosäännöksi.

⁴⁴³ *Työmies* 21.3, 2. Kansanwaltuuskunnan ehdotus Suomen waltiosäännöksi.

⁴⁴⁴ *Työmies* 1.3, 2. Kansanwaltuuskunnan ehdotus Suomen waltiosäännöksi.

of sausages, were to be brought under municipal ownership. Such change would fix an issue regarding poor quality, it was argued.⁴⁴⁵

Certain freedoms were also included in the draft. Freedom to strike, if it were not a situation of emergency to the nation, would be included in the constitution. Freedom of movement, religion and association were also included. The bourgeois draft of constitution was attacked on the basis, that it could not always properly defend these freedoms.⁴⁴⁶ Consumer goods would also be traded duty-free when possible, although the language remained vague⁴⁴⁷.

Structure of the state

The new socialist state attempted to break away from the former bourgeois order of things. On 28 January it was declared that a revolutionary government was being assembled immediately. Distancing the new regime from the old was communicated straightforwardly, as the question was not about putting new men into old offices, but rather destroying the existing official authority altogether.⁴⁴⁸ The main reason for radically changing the government and crushing state bureaucracies was that they could then never rise and oppress the people again⁴⁴⁹.

The Social Democrats discussed some professions in this context. Civil servants, especially teachers were curiously deemed enemies of democracy. The body of civil servants was even described as a rotten fruit that needs to be shaken off.⁴⁵⁰ This is in stark contrast to the previously identified message, where the SDP likened some of the civil servants to the working class. Softer tone was used against railway personnel, although they were also seen in a negative light. The railways were looked upon as overly complicated and corrupt in administration. Simplification and other reforms were deemed possible now, given the Social Democratic leadership in the country.⁴⁵¹

Overall, this theme did not receive much attention in comparison to education. Given that, it is justifiable to emphasize the SDP's conservative approach to state and society. Previous research has highlighted the elements of continuation and preservation of newly acquired rights in this revolution⁴⁵². The Social Democrats did just enough to distance themselves from the old bureaucracy, while simultaneously avoiding in-depth discussions on the new order of society.

⁴⁴⁵ Työmies 5.4, 5. Makkarateollisuus ja sen kunnallistaminen.

⁴⁴⁶ Työmies 1.3, 2. Kansanvaltuuskunnan ehdotus Suomen valtiosäännöksi.

⁴⁴⁷ Työmies 20.3, 2. Kansanvaltuuskunnan ehdotus Suomen valtiosäännöksi.

⁴⁴⁸ Työmies 28.1, 1. Wallankumousjulistus Suomen kansalle.

⁴⁴⁹ Työmies 29.1, 1. Kansanvaltuuskunnan julistus.

⁴⁵⁰ Työmies 13.2, 5-6. Opettajain osuus luokkasodassa.

⁴⁵¹ Työmies 15.2, 5. Wirkakoneiston yksinkertaistuttaminen rautateilläämme.

⁴⁵² Matikainen 2018, 247.

9.2 The German Communist Party and the coming society

The propaganda of integration was not employed as extensively by the KPD as other forms of propaganda. The reason is simple: the purpose of propaganda of integration is to secure a social body, to make it stable. This aim became truly relevant only once the Communists assumed leadership of the Bavarian Soviet Republic. Since the revolutionary period was not long either, the window for effective propaganda of integration was short. In any case, articles published during this period were detailed and revealed the core tenets of the future communist society.

Among the topics presented were work and ownership (5 articles), the structure of the state (4 articles) and education (1 article). Especially the system of governance was explained extensively.

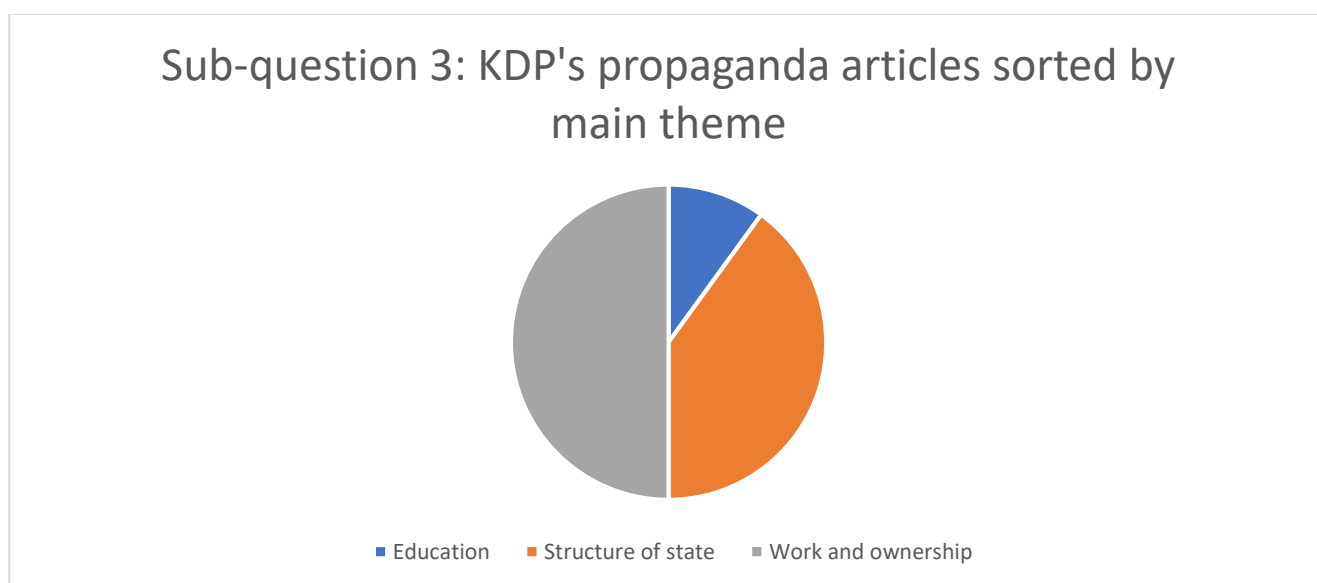


Chart 6: Propaganda articles concerning the future society published in *Münchner Rote Fahne* 7.4.-30.4.1919, sorted by main topics.

The system of governance

The Communists' view of establishing a new state order had little in common with the November Revolution. They argued that a revolution is not merely a reorganization effort of the old state. Instead, the revolution had its basis in an abandonment of the capitalist economy. It is noteworthy that the changes proposed to the state were not specific to Bavaria. In fact, previous research has found similar goals and changes proposed by the Communist leadership in Berlin in March 1919⁴⁵³.

The Communists described broadly how the new order would come into existence: As the capitalist state retaliates against proletarian interests, a concrete battle ensues. Then the proletariat understands

⁴⁵³ Müller 2010, 170.

in practice that this capitalist state must be disintegrated. According to the KPD, the victory of the revolutionary class was then inevitable.⁴⁵⁴

Whereas the new state was clearly not going to be based on the old order, the Communists acknowledged, that certain elements of the former state would have to be kept briefly alive. Food supply was specifically mentioned in this context. On the other hand, even it would have been subjected to large changes.⁴⁵⁵

Some parts of the old bureaucracy would also continue working in the old sense, creating a situation where the old and new structures existed in parallel to each other and acted against each other. For a true change to take place, the new state apparatus was to be led by those, who were not familiar with the bureaucracy and its workings. Meanwhile the old state apparatus runs its course, as it is a lot less flexible than the new communist state apparatus. As such, disorganization was a vital part of the revolutionary plan, and it was acknowledged by the Communists.⁴⁵⁶

As soon as the Soviet Republic was first declared, the Communists began to strongly advocate for their view of the council rule. The basis of a true soviet republic can be identified in this direct quote:

*“A truly proletarian soviet republic must originate from the will of the working masses themselves. The masses alone are authorized by the revolutionary councils they themselves elected for this purpose of declaring a soviet republic.”*⁴⁵⁷

Previous research has identified the important role of the masses to the German Communist Party. Earlier in 1919 they set themselves goals for capturing the revolutionary energy of the masses and employing it for revolutionary purposes⁴⁵⁸. Therefore, it is not surprising that in their propaganda the KPD authorized the masses to be in charge of the revolution.

The composition of the revolutionary councils was definitely very important to the Communists. Worker’s commissions, which already existed, were not seen fit for revolutionary purposes. Their representatives had knowledge of *“the labyrinths of the capitalist era of slavery”*. The members of the revolutionary councils needed to have traits necessary for a revolutionary fight against the bourgeoisie and capitalism. The purpose was to prepare a seizure of power and to announce the

⁴⁵⁴ Münchner Rote Fahne 26.4, 1. Die Arbeit der Räterepublik.

⁴⁵⁵ Münchner Rote Fahne 26.4, 1. Die Arbeit der Räterepublik.

⁴⁵⁶ Münchner Rote Fahne 26.4, 1. Die Arbeit der Räterepublik.

⁴⁵⁷ Münchner Rote Fahne 7.4, 1. Arbeiter! Folgt nur den Parolen der kommunistischen Partei!

⁴⁵⁸ Müller 2010, 168.

establishment of a true soviet republic at the right time.⁴⁵⁹ The revolutionary councils were to exercise total legislative and executive powers in autocratic manner⁴⁶⁰.

The Communists also demanded that the workers of each company elect an employee's representative. More importantly, a formation of a worker's council was planned. The worker's council was to take up the task of governance after the revolutionary council had fulfilled its duty. Members of the worker's council had to have knowledge in the fields of economics and administration.⁴⁶¹

These plans, going along with the previously noted leading role of the KPD in the new Soviet State are very well in line with Lenin's thought. Lenin thought that the Soviets were expressive organs and the Party's function was to administer them and to give them guidance⁴⁶². This is exactly how the KPD envisioned its system. The Party argued for establishing councils as ruling organisms while also firmly taking their role as mentors of the Councils. By contrast, the Parliament was to be dissolved⁴⁶³.

The major role played by the Councils has been identified in previous research. Historian Hermann Weber considered the role of the council system overemphasized, whereas the central issues, radical changes in society and economy, were largely set aside by the KPD⁴⁶⁴. Indeed, one sees a pattern where changes in society were to be imposed as means to achieve a council dictatorship, and not the other way around.

The revolution would go through multiple stages, with different assignments prioritized in each stage. First, the revolution had to be secured by arming the workers and establishing an army and armed guards. Their role was to protect the new government from counterrevolutionary forces. The police forces on the other hand were to be dismantled.⁴⁶⁵ The Communists argued, that arming the proletariat had nothing to do with militarism, which they had indeed opposed on many occasions⁴⁶⁶. The highest command of the commissariat in charge of protecting the revolution was to be held by a delegate of the KPD⁴⁶⁷. The important role of the masses was emphasized, but the highest command was ultimately held by the Communist Party.

⁴⁵⁹ Münchner Rote Fahne 7.4, 1. Arbeiter! Folgt nur den Parolen der kommunistischen Partei! *“Die...waren solche, von welchen man Kenntnisse...ähnliche Labyrinth der kapitalistischen Sklavenzeit erwartete.”*

⁴⁶⁰ Münchner Rote Fahne 11.4, 1. Die Ratten verlassen das sinkende Schiff.

⁴⁶¹ Münchner Rote Fahne 7.4, 1. Arbeiter! Folgt nur den Parolen der kommunistischen Partei!

⁴⁶² Lane 1981, 53.

⁴⁶³ Münchner Rote Fahne 26.4, 3. Arbeiter! Parteigenossen! Proletarier von ganz Deutschland!

⁴⁶⁴ Weber 2014, 27.

⁴⁶⁵ Münchner Rote Fahne 26.4, 1-2. Die Arbeit der Räterepublik.

⁴⁶⁶ Münchner Rote Fahne 28.4, 1. Die Mittel der Gegenrevolution.

⁴⁶⁷ Münchner Rote Fahne 11.4, 1. Die Ratten verlassen das sinkende Schiff.

Second, food supply had to be secured and partially reorganized. New institutions were to confiscate goods acquired through privilege and distribute them to those in need. According to the KPD, those in need were the Red Army, hospitals and commissions in charge of food supply. Disorganization had caused a great disturbance in food security, the Communists argued. They aimed to improve coordination between farmers and the railway system to tackle this problem.⁴⁶⁸

In addition to the system being based on councils, the nature of the governance was going to be totalitarian. As we have seen so far, the Communists were very active in promoting a dictatorship of the proletariat as their model. Indeed, the Communists presented a dictatorship as a *sine qua non* of the rule by the proletariat. The main role of the dictatorship was to guarantee the rule of the proletariat.⁴⁶⁹

What dictatorship meant to the Communists in practice ought to be clarified carefully. According to their own description on how to achieve a proper soviet republic, all socialist leaders who have worked against the interests of the revolution and the council system were to be removed from positions of influence. The Bavarian Communists considered such socialists traitors to the cause. State bureaucrats were to be removed and replaced by delegates chosen by the people.⁴⁷⁰

These actions, particularly closures of democratic institutions, had been denounced before by the KPD co-founder Rosa Luxemburg for undermining the political life of the masses. Her critique was aimed primarily at the Russian Bolsheviks. Lenin's conception of a dictatorship of the proletariat included the abolition of the parliamentary system and combining legislative and executive powers⁴⁷¹. Once again, the KPD sided with Lenin's course of action over Luxemburg's.

Other actions proposed by the KPD included disbanding all counterrevolutionary troops, arranging disarmament of the bourgeoisie and internment of all officers. In the meantime, the proletariat was to be armed and revolutionary guards were to be established immediately.⁴⁷²

Despite boldly advocating for a dictatorship, the Communists were not against elections in principle. Worker's and Soldier's Councils were to have clear elections to form a mainstay of the communist rule⁴⁷³. In this context it must be said that the KPD refused to govern the Soviet Republic unless the majority of the elected representatives were Communists⁴⁷⁴.

⁴⁶⁸ Münchner Rote Fahne 26.4, 2. Die Arbeit der Räterepublik.

⁴⁶⁹ Münchner Rote Fahne 29.4, 1. Zwischen Schwäche und Verrat.

⁴⁷⁰ Münchner Rote Fahne 26.4, 3. Arbeiter! Parteigenossen! Proletarier von ganz Deutschland!

⁴⁷¹ Kolakowski 1981b, 502.

⁴⁷² Münchner Rote Fahne 26.4, 3. Arbeiter! Parteigenossen! Proletarier von ganz Deutschland!

⁴⁷³ Münchner Rote Fahne 26.4, 3. Arbeiter! Parteigenossen! Proletarier von ganz Deutschland!

⁴⁷⁴ Münchner Rote Fahne 12.4, 1. Warum wir nicht mitmachen!

Other definitions of the concept of a dictatorship of the proletariat also exist. Originally, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels used the term to describe the Commune of Paris in 1871. According to historian Leszek Kołakowski, the Commune was “*based on democratic principles, a multi-party system, free elections and the free expression of opinion*”.⁴⁷⁵ The Communist Party of Germany similarly named its state model a dictatorship of the proletariat, but it had none of the aforementioned characteristics. Its model was actually the opposite to what Marx and Engels thought, given the totalitarian nature, single-party system, limited elections and censorship of the press!

Lenin on the other hand classified dictatorship of the proletariat as a council system by the proletariat, under the guidance of the Communist Party. The Party’s Central Committee truly held the power, as no important decision could be taken by any state institution without consulting the Committee first.⁴⁷⁶ Similar definition is identifiable from the articles in the *Münchener Rote Fahne*.

Work and ownership

The topics of work and ownership were intertwined in the propaganda of the KPD, because their conception of ownership was tied to work. Some plans concerning ownership were announced in *Münchener Rote Fahne*. The Communists were to bring forth a conversion from the capitalist economy to a communist through extreme means. “*It (the communist government) will not shy away from any intervention in private property*”, they announced.⁴⁷⁷

More specific plans included a socialization of the press. Until then any endeavors against the council system were to be prevented in a dictatorial manner.⁴⁷⁸ It is noteworthy, that the Communists outright declared themselves opponents of press freedom⁴⁷⁹. Their demands were explicit and they included “*a subjugation of the whole bourgeois press, including and especially the „social democratic” press*”.⁴⁸⁰ It should be noted, that the same course of action was taken by the Bolsheviks in Soviet Russia during the Civil War⁴⁸¹. Lenin’s stance towards the bourgeois press was extremely harsh. To tolerate their existence meant that you were not a socialist.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁵ Kołakowski 1981b, 50.

⁴⁷⁶ Lane 1981, 53.

⁴⁷⁷ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 11.4, 1. Die Ratten verlassen das sinkende Schiff. “*Sie wird vor keinen Eingriffen in das private Eigentum zurückschrecken.*”

⁴⁷⁸ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 11.4, 1. Die Ratten verlassen das sinkende Schiff.

⁴⁷⁹ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 11.4, 3. Die Pressefreiheit in der „sozialistischen Regierung”.

⁴⁸⁰ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 26.4, 3. Arbeiter! Parteigenossen! Proletarier von ganz Deutschland!: “*...Unterdrückung der gesamten bürgerlichen Presse einschließlich und ganz besonders der „abhängigen” Presse.*”

⁴⁸¹ Kołakowski 1981b, 487.

⁴⁸² Kołakowski 1981b, 506.

The banking system in place was to be arranged in a new manner as well. Financial sabotage of the revolution was to be prevented through a closure of banks and their assets were to be seized⁴⁸³. The industrial council would organize the whole economic process of the new state.⁴⁸⁴ . Businesses were accused of attempts to repel the socialization the means of production, which the Communists said would eventually end up in the hands of the workers.⁴⁸⁵

The importance of work to the Communists should not be understated. This aspect can be captured appropriately in a short, direct quote: “*Only he who works should eat*”⁴⁸⁶. Some fundamental rights were indeed reserved to workers and workers only⁴⁸⁷. As such, every member of the society was expected to work, otherwise they would not be full members of society.

The KPD conveyed a message that was clearly hostile towards property. Property was deemed a misery, a source of many problems in society. On top of that, the fear of losing property was deemed harmful to efforts of socialization. This fearful attitude was characterized as an ‘excuse’ and a ‘lie’, a ‘primitive right of property’, and it could not be removed through mere social reform. Property was depicted as something blocking inner peace and the love people feel for each other, the highest quality in human beings, it was written in *Münchner Rote Fahne*.⁴⁸⁸ In a way, this attitude revealed both the will to socialization, as well as an anti-material stance within the party.

Property was thus tied to the concept of alienation. Philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach had identified religion as a source of this problem of alienation. According to him it disabled one’s ability to live together in harmony, directing the energy of love away from mankind⁴⁸⁹. Karl Marx had another opinion on the issue, as he did not consider religion the root of the problem of alienation. He put emphasis on the idea of reconciling one’s division between private interest and community.⁴⁹⁰ The Communists followed Marx’s thinking on this issue and set (private) property against the interests of a collective, the society.

Education

The KPD did not publish detailed plans concerning education in *Münchner Rote Fahne*, but the topic evidently held some importance to them, as one article was completely dedicated to the topic. The

⁴⁸³ Münchner Rote Fahne 26.4, 2. Die Arbeit der Räterepublik.

⁴⁸⁴ Münchner Rote Fahne 26.4, 2. Die Arbeit der Räterepublik.

⁴⁸⁵ Münchner Rote Fahne 7.4, 4. Die Arbeitgeber organisieren sich!

⁴⁸⁶ Münchner Rote Fahne 10.4, 3. Aus dem Berliner Rätekongreß. “*nur wer arbeitet soll essen.*”

⁴⁸⁷ Münchner Rote Fahne 10.4, 3. Aus dem Berliner Rätekongreß.

⁴⁸⁸ Münchner Rote Fahne 29.4, 2. Die Qual des Besitzes.

⁴⁸⁹ Kolakowski 1981a, 115-116.

⁴⁹⁰ Kolakowski 1981a, 127.

party did not promote a mere revolutionization of the education institution, but a full revolutionization of education altogether.

Previous revolutions had had an impact on education: Socialist teachers could now be found in schools, a group of socialist university students existed and there were even some socialist professors, however the education system remained almost the same. Especially the highest level of administration in education remained untouched by the November Revolution. As such, the Communists argued that schools were administered predominantly in reactionary manner.⁴⁹¹

The Communists wanted to broaden education among the nation. Education would be distributed to everyone equally and conservative teachers could be replaced by those of socialist orientation. The structure of the new education system was to be based on this principle: “*Education to the nation and through the nation.*”⁴⁹² Such plans can be considered typical from a party trying to win over the masses.

The KPD was ultimately not overly enthusiastic about education. It was not portrayed as something that could fix all societal problems. The Communists emphasized how the highly educated failed as guardians of the spirit and humanity in the First World War. The war was not outright blamed on the way education was conducted, but it certainly failed to prevent all the misery that came along. The Communists saw the future education coming from the ‘slaves’ instead of the best elements of society. Much like in the formation of the new state, education ought to be constructed by those who were not highly educated, as they were the only ones that could truly change the system. Therefore, positions of governance in education, libraries, press, and book printing were to be reserved for the masses themselves.⁴⁹³

The contradiction in the KPD, which historian Werner Müller identifies, was briefly mentioned in the chapter concerning research tradition. The discovery is very relevant in connection to education. The Communist Party of Germany in Bavaria advocated the masses to be educated by themselves, by those who were among the lowest strata of society. On the other hand, the Communists remained pessimistic about the ability of education to do good. As seen before in connection to democracy, the masses were required to adopt a specific revolutionary worldview by consuming the propaganda of the KPD, created by the party elite, rather than by learning from each other.

⁴⁹¹ Münchner Rote Fahne 30.4, 3. Revolutionierung der Bildung.

⁴⁹² Münchner Rote Fahne 30.4, 3-4. Revolutionierung der Bildung.

⁴⁹³ Münchner Rote Fahne 30.4, 4. Revolutionierung der Bildung.

9.3 Comparison of the plans and goals for future societies

Despite an imbalance in the source material, the topics of education and work were present in the propaganda of both parties. Some similarities were present, and they are examined first.

It should first be noted, that neither party expressed interest in trade unions. These organizations would not be influential in either future society, as they would have collided with the Parliament in Finland or the Councils in Bavaria.

On the topic of education, both the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany expressed their disappointment in the bourgeois education systems. Revolution of education from below was deemed necessary in both Finland and Bavaria. The SDP wanted a working class dominated administration on the basis that most pupils were from working-class families. The KPD advocated for a system, in which the less educated masses would be in charge; otherwise, true change could not take place. Both parties wanted to broaden education to include everyone in their societies.

Small distinctions were also present on this topic. The SDP clearly considered the issue to be much more important and dedicated numerous articles to explain their plans for a future education system. The Social Democrats also had a more positive outlook to education and saw it tied to progress in general. The KPD expressed explicit doubt in the prospect, that education would be able to fix all societal problems. Since the highly educated could not prevent the World War, education could not be viewed exclusively in positive light. The Bavarian Communists did not explain their views on the substance of education, unlike the Social Democrats of Finland.

The topic of work and ownership was expectedly presented by both the SDP and the KPD. Some noteworthy differences can be identified between the parties. The Finnish Social Democrats, drawing from Kautsky's interpretation of Marxism, acknowledged that socialism must be preceded by a developed and concentrated industry. Therefore, they could not simply force a full socialization of the means of production. The German Communist Party did not communicate their plans with theoretical considerations. Instead, they presented large plans to reorganize the whole economic system. They would also immediately seize the assets of any faction hostile to the revolution. The SDP had a quite similar approach to this last point, and it can be argued, that both parties ultimately aimed to socialize the means of production in the future.

According to the two political parties, both countries were suffering from a shortage of food. Only the SDP tied this problem to the question of ownership. The Social Democrats presented plans on how they would increase food production and improve its distribution. Their approach to the issue was not entirely socialist and they acknowledged it. Instead of establishing common ownership of the

land, the party wished to expand private ownership of land and the means of production to crofters, who previously rented the land they worked on. The KPD approached the problem from a different angle: Disorganization had caused problems in food supply. They also blamed the embargo imposed by the Entente for causing malnourishment in Germany.

Additionally, the SDP highlighted topics such as creative work, gender as well as wages and taxation. The KPD did not venture into these topics specifically. The Communists had a negative approach to ownership and saw property as an obstacle between fellow people and them living their lives in harmony. The SDP approached the same question through the concept of creative work: not only material, but spiritual well-being was rooted in work rather than in a lack of private property in the society. There was a clear difference, how these two parties saw people reaching a state happiness and living fulfilling lives.

The two parties approached Karl Marx's theory of alienated labor from different points of view. Historian Kołakowski describes Marx's view on labor as follows:

“Marx, following Feuerbach, bases his own view of humanity on labour, understood as physical commerce with nature. Labour is the condition of all spiritual human activity, and in it man creates himself as well as nature, the object of his creativity”⁴⁹⁴

This view was echoed by the SDP, as it emphasized the importance of creative work. According to Marx, as labor became more alienated, it ceased to be an act of self-affirmation and turned into a source of unhappiness. It is the alienation of work that dehumanizes the worker by preventing him to produce in a correct human manner.⁴⁹⁵ This manner was precisely the ‘creative work’ underlined by the Social Democrats.

The Communists focused on a different aspect in relation to alienation. Their focus was on private property. Marx saw private property derive from alienated labor, and then becoming a source of said alienation. To emancipate the workers, Marx saw a need for both a positive abolition of private property and a recovery of the original view of humanity with its implications on labor.⁴⁹⁶ The two political parties put emphasis on the side that was in line with their own goal: the SDP did not consider Finland ready for the abolition of private property, so their focus was on working conditions. The KPD agitated for a full socialization through force, and the party did not dwell too much on content of work.

⁴⁹⁴ Kołakowski 1981a, 133.

⁴⁹⁵ Kołakowski 1981a, 138-139.

⁴⁹⁶ Kołakowski 1981a, 139-140.

Perhaps the most fruitful comparison is found in the characteristics of the states these two political parties attempted to establish. So far it has been clear, that the SDP was a strong defender of democracy and the Parliament, whereas the KPD pushed for a dictatorship of councils.

They both, unsurprisingly, attempted to distance themselves from the old order. The previous regimes were bad not only due to corrupted individuals, but both the SDP and the KPD saw great flaws in the whole governing systems before their rule.

There is great irony in the fact that Karl Kautsky, the important ideologue to the Social Democrats in Finland, wrote that both Russia and Finland had been converted into a dictatorship of the proletariat⁴⁹⁷. His view was certainly not shared by the Social Democratic Party of Finland. The people of Finland were to be given a right to propose new legislation and even overturn decisions made by the People's Delegation via referendums. This highlights the great importance of democracy to the SDP.

Such an idea would have sounded ludicrous to the KPD, given that the party refused to govern unless the masses had adopted their mindset through consummation of their propaganda. However, they did not reject the idea of elections and appeared to consider them a legitimate way to find the best, most capable men to fill positions in the new state. If the candidates were communists, it would seem. The main difference between the two parties might precisely be in their own approach to the dichotomy between democracy and dictatorship. To SDP, the people ultimately held authority over everything, even socialist governments. The KPD considered the masses to have authority, but only once they accepted the ideology of the Communist leadership.

Judicial system and a new constitution were examined in depth only by the SDP. The KPD briefly mentioned the topic while presenting their way towards a proper council system. To achieve the Soviet Republic envisioned by the KPD, all former courts of justice were to be abolished and replaced by revolutionary tribunals⁴⁹⁸. No comprehensive description of the tribunals or the whole legal system was presented in *Münchener Rote Fahne*. Lenin, like the Communists in Bavaria, insisted on a dictatorial government by a small elite of professional revolutionaries. According to him, a dictatorship meant "*unlimited power based on force and not on law*".⁴⁹⁹ This can explain why the KPD hardly published anything on the justice system. Following Lenin's definition of a dictatorship explains why they would ignore such a meaningful topic.

⁴⁹⁷ Matikainen 2018, 237.

⁴⁹⁸ *Münchener Rote Fahne* 26.4, 3. Arbeiter! Parteigenossen! Proletarier von ganz Deutschland!

⁴⁹⁹ Lichtheim 1982, 330. Kołakowski 1981b, 498.

There were also non-ideological factors the parties had to take into consideration regarding Lenin and the Russian Bolshevik Party. The much more careful stance towards the Bolsheviks by the SDP has been noted in previous research. This stance was based on both ideological and tactical reasons. Social democratic goals, aims to govern as a democracy instead of a dictatorship and the strong nationalist tradition all played a role in the relations between the Finnish People's Delegation and the Bolsheviks.⁵⁰⁰ Becoming too close with the Bolsheviks could have put Finnish independence into jeopardy. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk also blocked any further possibility of close co-operation between the SDP and Bolsheviks.

The attitude toward freedoms were approached from distinct positions. The Finnish Social Democrats had a positive view towards guarding certain freedoms such as freedom of movement, association, and religion. It is noteworthy that the People's Delegation considered the censorship of the bourgeois press problematic, and it was not an easy decision for them to make even during the war⁵⁰¹! These freedoms would be irrelevant in a dictatorship of the proletariat. The propaganda of the KPD strongly hinted, that they only cared about one freedom and that is the freedom (and duty) to be a communist. The ideological contrast between the fairly liberal Social Democratic Party of Finland and the totalitarian Communist Party of Germany was massive on this issue and this fact cannot be understated.

Another noteworthy difference is found in the attitudes towards separation of powers. The Social Democrats contrasted the People's Delegation's draft for a new constitution with that of the bourgeois faction. We can see that they laid emphasis on the People's Delegation wielding executive power under the supervision of the Parliament. The opposite of such arrangement can be found in the plans of the KPD: The Communists wanted to abolish the Parliament and couple total legislative and executive powers under revolutionary councils, following Lenin's thinking closely.

The SDP's approach to change was surprisingly conservative for a party involved in a revolution. The structure of governance was to remain largely the same. The Parliament was to remain a powerful institution and socialization efforts were not going to be rather limited. An extreme, complete revolutionary revision of the state apparatus did not come into question. The opposite was true in Bavaria, where the Communists allowed old institutions to exist only out of necessity and for a short time period.

⁵⁰⁰ Rinta-Tassi 1990, 239.

⁵⁰¹ Matikainen 2018, 222.

Reasons for the extreme positions of the KPD were also fueled by factors other than ideology. The KPD's publications were deemed illegal in all of Germany early in 1919 on the basis that they were 'Russian Bolshevik propaganda'. This had severe consequences to the publishing and organizing efforts of the party.⁵⁰² There were simply no reasons for the Communists to seek power through legal means or to adhere to the system in place, which had a hostile attitude towards communism.

The third and final sub-question was defined as: *Based on the propaganda of the Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany, which ideas and ideologies were to shape the new order of society?*

To conclude, the Social Democratic Party of Finland laid much emphasis on the role of education in society. Full socialization was not an immediate goal of the party, which argued for private ownership especially for the crofters. Democracy was to be the guiding principle of the new society. Even some liberal thought was presented in connection to concentration of powers, which the SDP opposed. The idea of creative work was seen important to the issue of alienation of work. The Communist Party of Germany held opposing view to alienation and highlighted the importance of socialization and ownership. The Communists saw a need to establish a dictatorship and concentrate powers. They elaborate on their ideas concerning the judicial system or education; both topics were mentioned only briefly.

⁵⁰² Müller 2010, 167-168.

10. Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to identify ideological differences between two distinct political parties, who nonetheless became involved in acts of revolution in their respective areas. Their propaganda was examined to uncover three aspects concerning revolution. How they justified their claims to power, how they persuaded and motivated people to participate in the revolutions, and what they kind of societies they were going to establish were examined in detail.

The propaganda of agitation, as defined by philosopher Jacques Ellul, was strong among both parties when they justified their claims to power. The Social Democratic Party of Finland and the Communist Party of Germany justified their rule by accusing the ruling bourgeois faction in each country of using illicit means of gaining power and exercising it in a harmful manner. Militarism, promoted by the bourgeoisie, was denounced by both as something to be defeated. Both parties idolized the October Revolution in Russia and saw it as an important predecessor. Many differences became evident: The Communists did not denounce violence as a means to an end, as long as it was used for the interests of the working class. The SDP often directed its message to the Finnish nation, whereas the KPD stuck to addressing the workers, the proletariat.

These differences were also present during the revolutionary period, when people were persuaded and motivated to join the revolutionary causes. The SDP persuaded people to act in defense of the revolution, for it was beneficial to the Finnish nation. According to the Social Democrats, the will of the nation and the working class was best represented by the Parliament. The point of view of sociological propaganda revealed an important feature, as various segments of the Finnish nation were appealed to: Workers, crofters, farmers and even civil servants were persuaded to join the revolution. The KPD persuaded people to operate under instructions from the party, as it worked to establish a council dictatorship in the interest of the proletariat. The Communists did not attempt to appeal to any group other than the industrial proletariat. Their views on the composition of the national class, as defined by Karl Marx, were therefore vastly different.

The two parties denounced Imperialism from different premises. The Social Democrats portrayed imperialism as a threat to Finland's independence. The Communists argued that imperialism was harmful to the international proletariat. Future prospects upon possible defeat were also presented in different manners. The SDP coupled urgent calls to fight for survival with a message of eventual working-class victory, no matter what happened in the Civil War. Negative outlook was presented by the KPD, and according to the party the working class was truly fighting for its existence. Appeals to morality were only made by the SDP to motivate people to fight in the Civil War. Some similarities were also present in connection to this question. Both parties persuaded their audiences to join their

fight against capitalism, slavery and oppression. Political propaganda was most prominent in connection to this research question, although the KPD continued its agitation efforts during the earlier phase of the Bavarian Soviet Republic.

Ideas for the future societies were presented by both parties as propaganda of integration. The two political parties had vastly different plans for the governing structure of future societies. The SDP supported democratic principles: power ultimately rested in the hands of the people and they could overturn decisions made by the Government. Liberal stance towards the Government was strong overall. Executive and legislative powers were separated, and the Government was to work under the supervision of the Parliament. The Communists argued for dictatorship as their model of governance. The people, the masses had the right to vote for their representatives, but the leadership of the Communist Party had the final say in policies. Decisions made by the people could be overturned by the Party if those decisions were not 'educated' enough.

Education was clearly an important topic to the Social Democrats in Finland. They published numerous articles on the topic, presenting careful plans on organization and content of education. Governing bodies, their roles and composition were carefully explained by the German Communist Party in Bavaria. It, unlike the SDP, did not present detailed plans on judicial system or civil liberties. Concepts of work and ownership were addressed by both parties. In connection to alienation of work, the SDP focused on the importance of creative work, whereas the KPD was more interested in the question of ownership as a solution. The SDP did not aim for an immediate full socialization of the means of production and argued for the need of private ownership for crofters in the countryside.

Meaningfulness of the concept of 'a global wave of revolution', beginning towards the end of the First World War, was questioned in the introduction. Strong resemblances between the structure of propaganda justify the concept. Elements of political and sociological propaganda, as well as propaganda of agitation and integration were clearly present in the press of both parties central to these revolutions. Justifications for their rule, persuasion and motivation to join the revolutionary causes, and stabilization efforts by presenting plans for the future were all presented by both parties. Consequently, classifying the revolutions in Finland in 1918 and in Bavaria in 1919 as part of the same 'revolutionary wave' makes sense, but it is also important to note the monumental ideological differences between political movements that took active roles in these revolutions.

The ideology of the Social Democratic Party of Finland was mostly in line with Karl Kautsky, although some revisionist thinking of Eduard Bernstein was also present, particularly in connection to nationalism and patriotism. The approach of the party towards revolution was ironically rather conservative, since the party presented itself as a guardian of the Parliament and independence of

Finland, two features they deemed to be under threat. These findings are well in line with the research tradition. The important role of education, emancipation of crofters, Finnish independence and democracy have all been noted before. The comparative aspect of this research has further emphasized them, but also brought forward other elements.

The Finnish Social Democrats did not accept the conventional class division in all cases. Their widespread appeals to different classes can be explained through the concept of forward-looking national class. This class would include the working class, crofters and even elements of land-owning farmers and civil servants. Another distinct feature was the stance towards Marx's theory of alienation. Instead of attempting to solve the problem through mass socialization of the means of production, which would have been in conflict with their view of allowing private property in the countryside, the Social Democrats concentrated on the content of work. Providing people the possibility to engage in creative work was their first priority. Overall, the element of continuation was strong in the SDP. The main ideological currents of years leading up to the revolution, identified by previous research, were largely still present during the revolutionary period.

The Communist Party in Bavaria on the other hand shifted massively away from the thought of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. Only a couple of months had passed from the deaths of the two co-founders, but the Bavarian department espoused a message mostly in line with Vladimir Lenin, a harsh critic of Luxemburg's thought. The only major issue where the Bavarian Communists disagreed with Lenin was the question concerning rural proletariat. The KPD saw revolutionary potential in industrial proletariat, although realistically it had no choice, as the politically active farmers were already organized under another political party, the BBB. Another feature that ought to be highlighted was the international element and dismissal of national sovereignty. Foreign threats did not come from foreign nations, but from the bourgeois ruling class which was foreign to the workers everywhere in the world.

Bolshevism was nonetheless extremely influential in the KPD in Bavaria. The thought, that the masses ought to be the ruling force in the society, but require the guidance of an enlightened party elite, comes straight from Lenin. The Communists argued that establishing a dictatorship and centralizing powers were essential to the rule of the proletariat. Revolution was not something tied to specific material conditions. The Communists asserted, that as soon as the masses had acquired sufficient revolutionary worldview, the party could begin a revolution against the bourgeois order. Following Lenin's thinking, The Bavarian Communists did not deem violence immoral if it was used for the benefit of the proletariat. These findings are not in conflict with the research tradition.

The whole phenomenon of the revolutionary wave was ultimately extremely heterogenous, even when judging by only two revolutions of the many revolutions. Socialism, in some degree, was the common factor. Even within the socialist, or more specifically speaking Marxist, tradition there were massive differences. The orthodoxy of Kautsky, the revisionism of Bernstein, the radicalism of Luxemburg and Liebknecht as well as the authoritarianism of Lenin, only to name a few of many influential currents, were often in conflict each other. The phenomenon included emphasis on both democracy and totalitarianism as well as on both nationalism and internationalism. These conflicting principles emphasize the fact, that the revolutions of this period were ultimately based on different conditions varying in each location. The global wave of revolution appears to be a collection of individual revolutions, that reveal some similarities, but also massive differences.

Further research on this topic could improve our understanding of the revolutionary wave. More revolutions could be brought into international comparison. Revolutionary agitation could be studied in those countries, that avoided drifting into the path of revolution during these tricky years. Alternatively, research could focus on the bourgeois opposition to the revolutions. Whether bourgeois parties and movements engaged in similar propaganda efforts is yet to be found out. Information on this topic could better explain the phenomenon of revolution as well as propaganda, and how it has been employed by varying political movements during revolutionary periods.

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