

## **The Political Development of Kurt Tucholsky (1890-1935)**

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SUMMARY

This study examines the works of Kurt Tucholsky (1890-1935). Tucholsky was well-known in Germany during the nineteen-twenties and early nineteen-thirties as a poet, reviewer, essayist and satirist. However, his most significant work was in the field of political journalism, and it is this aspect of his writings which is analysed in this thesis.

The first six chapters of this study examine the development of Tucholsky's political opinions. His short articles in the Social Democratic newspaper Vorwärts indicated an early scepticism about the moral standards and political institutions of Wilhelminian society. From 1914 the existence of censorship temporarily restrained his social criticism, but his experience of military service on Germany's Eastern Front transformed him into a pacifist and a bitter opponent of German militarism.

Tucholsky greeted the Revolution of November 1918 with enthusiasm, since it promised to sweep away the Wilhelminian system. Along with other left-wing writers, he supported the ideal of intellectual engagement and Die Weltbühne, the weekly journal to which he contributed, was to become the leading organ of independent, progressive writers throughout the Weimar Republic. Tucholsky believed that his country required a period of peaceful consolidation. He opposed the violence of the revolutionary left almost as fiercely as he attacked the Conservatives who had formerly ruled Germany; and in Ulk he gave cautious support to the Democratic Party. However, he soon began to recognise that the new government, led by the Social Democrats, was compromising with the officers, judges and civil servants of the old regime. Tucholsky pointed out rightly

that such tactics would endanger the Republic. In March 1920 he emphasised his concern for the future of Germany by joining the USPD and contributing to its newspaper, Die Freiheit. Until 1922 he regularly warned his country's politicians against the threat from the right, but he became frustrated as his prophecies were ignored and his advice was rejected. During the crisis of 1923 he lapsed into a despairing silence, but his appointment as the Paris correspondent of the Weltbühne restored his enthusiasm for literary work.

By the mid-1920's Tucholsky's political views had undergone a gradual change. He no longer believed that the Republic might provide a framework for democratic reform. On the contrary, Weimar democracy now seemed to be a mere facade, concealing the fact that power remained with the bourgeoisie and the army. Tucholsky's opinion was reinforced when Fieldmarshal Hindenburg was elected as the second President of the Republic in 1925. Tucholsky rightly feared the anti-Republican plans of Hindenburg's advisers, and he recognised the danger that Germany might prepare for war in order to avenge the defeat of 1918. In order to resist this development, and also to put into practice the Marxist principles which he now held, Tucholsky sought an alliance of left-wing forces and advocated a second revolution, more radical than that of 1918.

During the late 1920's Tucholsky adopted a radically left-wing position. He accepted the revolutionary tenets of Marxism, sympathised with the KPD and wrote regularly for Communist newspapers. However, the KPD leaders did not respond to his offers

of encouragement and his constructive criticism; they were not interested in discussing with the intellectual left, but only in compelling the latter to join the party and obey its unquestioning discipline. Tucholsky refused to do so, partly because he wished to preserve his artistic integrity and partly because he was beginning to suspect that the KPD was being exploited by Stalin as an instrument of Soviet foreign policy.

Tucholsky had lost much of his interest in political polemic by the time of the National Socialist electoral victories in the early 1930's. He opposed the advance of Fascism in Germany in a number of satirical poems and prose articles ; but he regarded Fascism merely as a new variant of Wilhelminian Conservatism, and underestimated the persuasive powers of its leader. Recognising that the progressive cause was facing inevitable defeat, Tucholsky wrote his last political articles in the spring of 1932 and committed suicide in his Swedish exile three years later.

In the latter part of this study Tucholsky's significance as a political writer is assessed through a detailed analysis of the important themes in his work. The relationship of the intellectual and polemicist with the leading Realpolitiker of the Weimar era, Ebert, Noske and Stresemann, is studied in Chapter 7. This is followed by an examination of his attitude to the German officers and the Prussian militarism which they represented. His comments on the judiciary, the educational system, the press and the middle classes are considered in Chapter 9.

Tucholsky was an intellectual, a man of integrity who refused to betray his idealistic, humanitarian convictions in slavish obedience to the doctrine of any political group. Nevertheless, even as a young man he was aware of the value of solidarity with progressive organisations. His commitment to the left-wing cause after the war led him to give temporary support to the DDP, the USPD, the Pacifist Movement and the KPD. However, none of these groups retained his allegiance, and he finally abandoned politics in despair. Tucholsky has been criticised from the right for Utopian radicalism and from the left for bourgeois individualism. This study concludes that he was prepared to make concessions to the Social Democrats in the early years of the Republic, and to the Communists in the late 1920's; but neither party listened to his pleas that they should change their policies. Their failure to retain Tucholsky's support was partially due to his intellectual idealism, but largely caused by their own lack of perception and political errors.

## CHAPTER 1

Kurt Tucholsky, the eldest son of a prosperous Jewish family, was born in Berlin on January 11th, 1890. He attended two of the best-known grammar schools in the city, studied law at the universities of Berlin and Geneva and gained his doctorate in 1915. However, he gave only brief consideration to a legal career; his vocation lay elsewhere. As a seventeen-year-old schoolboy he wrote the first of his newspaper articles to be published. In the next twenty-five years it was followed by a further 2500 journalistic and literary works, ranging from lyric poetry to political polemic, from witty feuilletons to speculations on the after-life. In the 1920's he became one of his country's foremost satirists, and a controversial figure whose writings aroused enthusiasm on the left and indignation on the right. Tucholsky strove to influence events in Germany in his own time, and his books abound in references to contemporary politics; yet forty years after his death his works are more widely read than during his life-time.

The young Tucholsky began his journalistic career in 1907, with a Märchen (1) which satirised Wilhelm II, who had controlled Germany since Bismarck's resignation in 1890. The Emperor enjoyed considerable popularity among the middle and upper classes, who regarded him as the symbol of Germany's increasing strength and prestige, and a guarantee that the existing social order would be preserved. A significant minority, led by

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(1) Märchen, Ulk, 22/11/07, Gesammelte Werke, Vol.1, p.13.

the Social Democrats and some progressive Liberals, recognised the Emperor's weaknesses : his penchant for theatrical poses and resounding cliches, and his belief in the Divine Right of the Hohenzollerns. Wilhelm's most formidable opponent was Maximilian Harden, who in the pages of his magazine Die Zukunft for years exposed corruption among the Emperor's advisers.(2) Wilhelm's blunders were also frequently satirised in the magazine Simplicissimus, which was founded in Munich in 1896 and soon became, in Tucholsky's words:

„das A und O der politischen deutschen Satire".(3)

The young author of Märchen joined the number of writers on the Liberal left who were sceptical about the Emperor's ability. Tucholsky was to become a bitter critic of Wilhelm's domestic and foreign policy, but for the time being he chose a different target. Wilhelm was wont to apply his dogmatic attitude in the artistic field, with a naiveté equalled only by his political dilettantism. He enjoyed the stilted plays of Lauff and Wildenbruch and the pompous sculpture of the Siegesallee and dismissed contemptuously the works of modernists such as Wedekind or Zille. Tucholsky's fairy-tale in turn ridiculed Wilhelm's aesthetic tastes. The schoolboy's lack of respect for traditional authorities was to remain an important weapon of the adult satirist. However, the significance of this early article should not be over-estimated. Tucholsky did not begin to write regularly until the summer of 1911.

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(2) Cf. Arthur Rosenberg, Die Entstehung der Weimarer Republik, Frankfurt, Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1961, p.41.

(3) Die moderne politische Satire in der Literatur, Dresdener Volkszeitung, 14/5/12.

Märchen is the first work in the authorised West German edition of Tucholsky's writings, prepared by his widow, Mary Tucholsky, and by F. J. Raddatz. The three volumes, which first appeared in 1961, are entitled Gesammelte Werke (4), since they contain only some three-quarters of Tucholsky's literary output. Most of the pre-war articles contained in the first 200 pages of Volume I were originally published in the periodical Die Schaubühne, a weekly theatrical review with which Tucholsky began a long and fruitful collaboration in January 1913. Since the editor of Die Schaubühne, Siegfried Jacobsohn, was primarily interested in cultural rather than political matters, Tucholsky contributed to his journal up to 1914 only a few articles which are relevant to this survey.

However, the impression that Tucholsky was not concerned about political questions in his youth can now be shown to be false. Even before joining Jacobsohn, Tucholsky had occasionally written for newspapers owned by the Social Democrats. The number and significance of these early writings has only recently been revealed, as a result of research in the Institute for Social History in Amsterdam. Some sixty poems and short prose articles by Tucholsky were published in Vorwärts in the three years between the summer of 1911 and the outbreak of war.

Although Tucholsky's father had died in 1905, the young student was by no means impoverished. He may have wished to supplement his income, but he was drawn to journalism mainly by personal interest and by the desire to test his own ability. The

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(4) Gesammelte Werke, Vols. I-III, Rowohlt, Reinbek, 1961.

decision to write for Vorwärts is nevertheless remarkable.

The newspaper had been edited by prominent intellectuals from a middle-class background such as Wilhelm Liebknecht and Kurt Eisner. However, the pre-war SPD still consisted largely of manual workers and was devoted to serving their interests, rather than those of society as a whole. The Social Democrats were hated and feared as revolutionaries, by the upper and middle classes alike. It is therefore important to analyse why Tucholsky committed himself to politics in general, and, still more significantly, why he chose to ally himself with the despised "Reds".

Political engagement was common among German intellectuals of this period. By the end of the nineteenth century, they had acquired an important role in society, but this improvement in their status was accompanied by the realisation of their political impotence. Excluded from responsibility, they became hostile to the holders of power and joined in a movement known as Aktivismus.

The aims of the Aktivisten were first expressed in 1910 by Heinrich Mann in the essay Geist und Tat (5). Mann pointed to the gulf between the advanced nature of German intellectual thought and the reaction and corruption of the political system. Instead of confining themselves to abstract speculation, intellectuals had a duty to become agitators and put their superior insight into the service of the people in its fight against authority. After the war Tucholsky wrote an enthusiastic review of the volume Macht und Mensch, in which this essay had been published (6). Similar

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(5) Cf. Heinrich Mann, in Macht und Mensch, Munich 1919, pp.6-9.

(6) Macht und Mensch, (review by Tucholsky) WB 17/6/20, GW 1, pp.679-81.



ideas were put forward by Franz Pfemfert's weekly Die Aktion, and they were to be developed during the war by Kurt Hiller in Das Ziel.

In an essay published in the Schaubühne in 1913, (7) Tucholsky demonstrated his awareness of this discussion by praising Ibsen as an example of the committed intellectual. He returned to the theme in the article Vormärz, in which he lamented the over-indulgence in reflection by some of his fellow-intellectuals and their reluctance to seek political remedies for Germany's problems:

„Es geht uns nicht gut. Wir haben hundert Dogmen der Reflexion, aber kaum eins des Handelns. Wir gleichen dem Tausendfüßler, der vor lauter Überlegung nicht mehr weiß, welches Bein er zuerst heben soll und demgemäß stehen bleibt. Macht und Geist sind zwei Faktoren, die einander ferner sind denn je".(8)

Tucholsky's political campaign may be seen as an endeavour to bridge this gap by offering his insight to those in a position to put his ideas into practice. This explains why, unlike Heinrich Mann, he was at first uninterested in writing for his fellow-intellectuals, and why he rejected an esoteric philosophical platform such as that found by Ossietzky in Das Freie Volk. In order to gain influence it was necessary to appeal to a larger audience. The Social Democratic workers fulfilled this condition, being both numerous and well organised.

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(7) Wenn Ibsen wiederkäme, Schaubühne, 28/8/13, *ibid.* pp.79-81.

(8) SB 2/4/14, GW 1, p.169.

Tucholsky's own dislike not only of the Emperor but also of the political system as a whole provided a second reason for supporting the SPD. Only they could give effective resistance to Chancellor Bethmann and the General Staff. Only the workers, demonstrating in favour of an extension of the franchise, could ignore with impunity the outbursts of the Berlin Police President, Jagow (9).

Bethmann and Jagow were typical representatives of a political system in which the Cabinet and civil service were responsible to the Emperor rather than to the Reichstag. Prussian authoritarianism, based on the traditional alliance of „Thron, Altar und Militär“ had triumphantly unified Germany, and thanks to the political skill of Bismarck, the old Prussian leaders had maintained their supremacy. The estate owners from east of the Elbe had a self-confidence which drew Tucholsky's reluctant admiration:

„Ostelbien ist... ein Fundus, auf dem man seinen breitbeinigen Standpunkt haben kann. Die Arme solcher Kerle haben Bewegungsfreiheit". (10)

Yet Tucholsky and other progressive writers recognised that energy and strength of will and previous services to the Hohenzollerns were insufficient qualifications for the leadership of Germany in an age of rapid industrialisation. The Junker whom Tucholsky satirised in the poem Bund der Landwirte (11) had never been noted for their intellectual gifts, and the economic strength which they had previously derived from their large estates was on the wane.

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(9) Cf. Tucholsky's attack on Jagow as 'Napolium vom Alexanderplatze' in the poem Spiele nicht mit Schießgewehr! (Vorwärts, 8/8/11).

(10) Vormärz, GW 1, p.169.

(11) SB 26/2/14, *ibid.* p.154.

In common with many young writers in pre-war Germany, Tucholsky considered that political commitment was morally necessary, and he strongly opposed the existing regime as being outmoded. However, this does not explain his unwillingness to support the claims of his own class to assume responsibility for the state.

The reason for the omission lay in the attitude of the German Bürgertum. With the exception of such convinced democrats as Naumann and von Gerlach, few middle-class politicians had any ambition to change the Wilhelminian system. The Nationalliberalen had become the government's most loyal supporters, since it compensated them for their political impotence with a pre-eminent position in commerce and industry. Tucholsky rejected this subservient attitude; economic advantages were no substitute for democracy.

Tucholsky was not the only German writer repelled by the passive conservatism of his own class. In the same pre-war period, Heinrich Mann was describing the career of Diederich Heßling, the classic Untertan.<sup>(12)</sup> Further evidence that such ideas were common on the intellectual left may be found in the early writings of Carl von Ossietzky.<sup>(13)</sup> However, Tucholsky's reasoning for the time being went further than that of Heinrich Mann or Ossietzky. The Bürgertum refused to recognise the need for the introduction of democracy into Germany, or to perceive the weapon with which that change could be accomplished: organisation and solidarity. The

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(12) Mann's Der Untertan was not published until 1918.

(13) Cf. Raimund Koplin, Carl von Ossietzky als politischer Publizist, Berlin, Leber Verlag, 1964, p.15.

middle-class intellectual Tucholsky was prepared to learn from the workers who were fighting together against the Imperial system.(14) This recognition that the working-class movement offered the best chance of improving the German political system was probably the decisive factor in persuading Tucholsky to write for Vorwärts.

After the revocation of Bismarck's anti-Socialist law in 1890, the rise of the SPD had been rapid. The party increased its share of the vote at successive elections, encouraging the belief that it must eventually gain an absolute majority. The psychological effect on new adherents such as Tucholsky of the SPD's electoral triumph in 1912 was considerable.(15) The party gained a third of all votes cast and, with its 110 deputies, it became the strongest group in the Reichstag. The set-back for the right-wing parties and the Chancellor delighted Tucholsky, and in a satirical poem he demanded Bethmann's resignation.(16)

Tucholsky's hopes for reform were disappointed. The Social Democrats still had few allies in the Reichstag, and in any case that institution had little influence. The composition of the Prussian Landtag was even more conservative, since its members were chosen by the notorious Dreiklassenwahlrecht, which severely restricted the SPD representation. Tucholsky might invite the voters to overturn the regime:

Die Schlotbarone und die Landgendarmen -  
„blast sie doch um!!“(17)

But there was little chance of such a revolutionary turn of events.

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(14) Bürger-Solidarität, Vorwärts, 16/8/13.

(15) Cf. Vergeßlichkeit, Vorw. 31/1/12.

(16) Wer in der Wilhelmstraße singt, Vorw. 13/1/12

(17) Landtagswahl, Vorw. 16/5/13.

Still more worrying was the fact that the Social Democrats were losing in revolutionary zeal what they had gained in electoral popularity.(18) Their leaders Ebert and Scheidemann were evolutionary reformists without plans for radical social change. This gradual acceptance of the existing state by the SPD was the background to Tucholsky's conclusion of 1914:

„Die politische Opposition, und vor allem die Sozialdemokratie, haben sich gründlich diskreditiert".(19)

His criticism of the Weimar SPD for over-indulgence in compromise was foreshadowed in the additional comment:

„Unsere Radikalen mögen wir ja nur deshalb nicht, weil sie keine sind".(20)

Thus the SPD's influence as a progressive force, which had originally attracted Tucholsky, proved more apparent than real. Tucholsky's decision to publish in an SPD newspaper had represented a Zweckbündnis, and if the hollow Wilhelminian culture and antiquated political system could not be destroyed by the party, he felt justified in reducing the number of his contributions to Vorwärts.

Tucholsky's middle-class upbringing likewise encouraged him to seek an alternative literary outlet. Although he undoubtedly admired the discipline and spirit of the workers, he knew little of their daily lives. Only twice before the war did he discuss their every-day problems, in the essay Doping (21) and the poem Die

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(18) On the SPD during this period, cf. Carl E. Schorske: German Social Democracy, 1905-17, Harvard 1955.

(19) GW 1, p.169.

(20) *ibid.*

(21) Vorw. 11/8, '12

Sonne. (22) The latter demonstrated Tucholsky's sympathy for their suffering, but he confined himself to externals such as the contrast between Prussian patriots, boasting about their country's position as a world power, and a worker talking to his son of the miserable life which he too would have to face. This poem could hardly be said to foreshadow Tucholsky's subsequent development as a writer of propaganda verse, and its message amounted to resignation rather than revolution.

Tucholsky's articles in Vorwärts demonstrate that even at this early stage in his career he was as interested in the specifically political development of Germany as in its cultural affairs. Youthful over-optimism was evident in the belief that the SPD could, or indeed wished to, undertake fundamental reforms of German society. Just as the content of his writing was progressive in intent but often superficial, so the artistic form of his propaganda verses showed that in spite of his natural talent he still had much to learn.

In January 1913 Tucholsky discovered the literary outlet which he had been seeking since his gradual disillusionment with Vorwärts. He joined Siegfried Jacobsohn's weekly review Die Schaubühne, which under the new name Die Weltbühne was to remain his most important forum until the end of his journalistic career nineteen years later.

In his contributions to Vorwärts, Tucholsky had enjoyed access to a large readership. When he joined Die Schaubühne, that journal had a circulation of only a thousand; it dealt almost exclusively with the theatres and music halls of Berlin and had little or no political content. Even in the late 1920's, during

the editorship of the controversial Ossietzky, its circulation did not rise much above 16000. Tucholsky was able to use the journal to speak to a small band of devotees, well-educated and independent-minded left-wingers. In order to continue reaching the masses, he still occasionally contributed to Vorwärts, thus practising a journalistic double allegiance which he was to copy in the 1920's. (23)

His work for Die Schaubühne provided Tucholsky with several advantages. The positive qualities of the journal stemmed from the character of its editor. Jacobsohn allowed his contributors to express themselves without fear of editorial censorship. Tucholsky soon respected him not only as a friend but also as an intellectual and stylistic mentor, who assisted him in developing his talent. The mutual benefits derived from Tucholsky's association with the journal have been expressed by Schulz:

"Tucholsky braucht das Organ, um seine unerhörte Vielseitigkeit hier behutsam ausreifen zu lassen; das Organ braucht Tucholsky, um Jahr für Jahr durch seine nimmermüde Schaffenskraft an Weite und Originalität zu gewinnen". (24)

Gradually Die Schaubühne changed its character, as Jacobsohn recognised that the shallow, pompous Wilhelminian culture reflected failings in the political sphere. In 1913 he opened its pages to the analysis of events in the Berlin Stock Exchange by Vindex, and in the following year he published Tucholsky's openly political essay, Vormärz.

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(23) As well as writing for the Weltbühne in the 1920's, Tucholsky contributed to the Berliner Tageblatt, Die Freiheit, Vossische Zeitung und Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung.

(24) Cf. Klaus-Peter Schulz, Tucholsky, Reinbek, Rororo-Bildmonographie 1959, p.38.

Tucholsky's work for Die Schaubühne provided the external stimulus for the creation of his pseudonyms, those "homunculi", each of which reflected one aspect of his personality and literary activity. Tucholsky did not wish the small weekly which published so many of his early articles to appear dominated by one man. A more important reason for the adoption of the pseudonyms lay in the very diversity of his talents, which, he claimed, might have given rise to suspicion in an age of specialisation.(25) Whatever the characteristics of the individual personae, clarity of style, combined with personal and political integrity pointed to the common origin of their work. Peter Panter specialised in non-political book reviews, while Theobald Tiger wrote poems which ranged from the sentimental to the highly political in nature, and he also provided one of the mainstays of the Berlin cabaret. Kaspar Hauser, created as an alter ego of Tiger when the latter was seconded to Ulk in December 1918, subsequently produced the Wendriner sketches and the Nachher series, among Tucholsky's deepest reflections on the human condition. Ignaz Wrobel, the uncompromising polemicist, is the most important of the pseudonyms for this study. Tucholsky also published under his own name, when he considered the article to be of fundamental importance.(26)

In 1914, Tucholsky contributed regularly to the Schaubühne and less frequently to Vorwärts. By continuing to publish in the latter, he could comment on the position of the military in Germany and on the threat of war. Since the days of Frederick

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(25) Mit SPS, Preface, GW 2, p.1004: „Eine kleine Wochenschrift mag nicht viemal denselben Mann in einer Nummer haben.. Und es war auch nützlich, fünfmal vorhanden zu sein - denn wer glaubt in Deutschland einem politischen Schriftsteller Humor? dem Satiriker Ernst? dem Verspielten Kenntnis des Strafgesetzbuches? dem Städteschilderer lustige Verse?"

(26) Such an article was Wir Negativen, WB 13/3/19, GW I, pp.372-77.



the Great, the Prussian army had been noted for its strength and efficiency, and the victories of Königgrätz and Sedan had increased its social prestige. Military service was compulsory throughout the Empire, but officers were drawn mainly from the aristocracy. They regarded themselves as a class apart, infinitely superior to mere civilians. This attitude caused resentment on the left, particularly when in 1913 some demonstrators in the town of Zabern in Alsace were arrested and temporarily imprisoned by the commander of the local garrison. The affair was discussed in the Reichstag, where Bethmann defended the officers involved. (27) The Chancellor's clumsy excuses irritated his opponents further, and a vote of censure was passed by a large majority. Tucholsky was therefore speaking for left-wing opinion when he demanded of Bethmann:

„Schieb ab, schieb ab, du sollst dich nicht mehr quälen-  
Man sagt mir doch, du seist Major?  
und kannst den jüngsten Leutnant, nicht befehlen?--  
Schieb, schieb ab! Und laß 'nen neuen vor!--" (28)

Although Tucholsky had much to learn about the writing of propaganda verses, his description of Bethmann's inability to restrain the military was correct. Nevertheless the Chancellor refused to resign, and the position of the army in the state remained unshaken.

The final significant theme of Tucholsky's early social criticism was his opposition to war. In the tense political atmosphere of the years from 1911 to 1914, with the European military blocs engaging themselves in potentially catastrophic adventures in North Africa and the Balkans, it was natural for

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(27) Cf. Rosenberg: Entstehung, p.54.

(28) Abzug!, Vorwärts, 10/12/13.

Tucholsky to give some thought to the causes of modern war.

His most important article on this theme was Der Sadist der Landwehr, (29) published in July 1914, a week after the assassination of the Austrian Crown Prince in Sarajevo.

Tucholsky's polemical refutation of a bellicose brochure by a retired Stabsarzt represented a timely warning to his compatriots. The Stabsarzt had expressed opinions which were to be uncritically echoed by a majority of German journalists when war broke out less than a month later: the demand that German troops be instilled with hatred of the enemy as an antidote to any scruples which they might have against war service.

Such propaganda naturally roused Tucholsky's humanitarian instincts. However, his opposition should not be equated with the unconditional pacifism which he supported after the mass slaughter of the World War. Far from claiming that there could be no such thing as a just war, he explicitly incorporated an escape clause:

„Daß einmal ein ganzes Volk in berechtigtem Haß gegen ein andres aufflammt und zu den Waffen greift, ist richtig und erklärlich".(30)

This was the situation which most Germans believed to exist a month later. However, he rejected the modern Volkskrieg and gave a radical interpretation of its political causes:

„Man muß nicht vergessen, daß moderne Kriege wesentlich auf kapitalistischen Gründen beruhen, und daß alles

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(29) Vorw. 6/7/14, GW 1, pp.211-13.

(30) ibid. p.213.

andere ein wohl angelegter Schwindel ist:  
die Volksbegeisterung und die flatternden  
Fahnen und die Orden und alles das".(31)

This argument at first recalls the anti-militarist criticism of Karl Liebknecht. However, this Marxist interpretation of the causes of war appeared nowhere else in Tucholsky's articles in Vorwärts; nor did he attempt to demonstrate in any detail the alleged responsibility of the capitalist system for war between nations.

The most impressive feature of the article was Tucholsky's clear-sighted rejection of the devices used by the authorities to make war palatable to the public: the creation of an atmosphere of war hysteria, and the maintenance of enthusiasm by means of patriotic symbols bearing little resemblance to reality. As the crisis grew more serious and the SPD reaffirmed its desire for peace, Tucholsky suggested in a satirical article for Vorwärts (32) that those demonstrating in favour of war were romantic children, men exempted from active service or agents provocateurs. Tucholsky's obvious opposition to war was that of a perspicacious observer, suspicious of official Wilhelminian propaganda, and of a humanitarian idealist, who abhorred the "tierischen Instinkte"(33) which that war would unleash.

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(31) *ibid.*

(32) Demonstranten-Briefe, Vorw.27/7/14, published in the East German edition of Tucholsky's works by Roland and Christa Links, East Berlin, Verlag Volk und Welt, 1972, Vol.1, pp. 310-313.

(33) GW 1, p.213.

When war did break out in August 1914, Tucholsky's actions proved that he was as unimpressed by the scenes of patriotic jubilation as he had implied a month earlier. He had no desire to enlist at once in the ranks of the national crusade, to be in Paris in six weeks, as many volunteers believed. But he shared the general conviction that his country must be defended. This evidently appeared to him one of the "just wars" described in Der Sadist der Landwehr, and so he did not object on conscientious grounds to all military service. He therefore compromised, by completing his Dr.juris before complying with the call-up in 1915.

The personal circumstances of Tucholsky's war service contributed to his later unconditional pacifism, but they do not provide a complete explanation. He spent the war far from the mass slaughter in France and Flanders. Tucholsky served instead on the Eastern Front: until the summer of 1916 in a sappers' battalion, then as squadron librarian in Kurland, and finally for some months as a military police administrator in occupied Rumania.

Life in the Etappe did not place Tucholsky's humanitarianism under the strain of having to kill any of the enemy. Lice and fleas, rather than the Russians, were the main problem. Nevertheless, Tucholsky was hopelessly out of his element in uniform, as was shown in his letters to Dr. H. E. Blaich, to whom he could express his feelings without fear of censorship or court-martial. (34)

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(34) Letter of 4/3/16, in Ausgewählte Briefe, Reinbek, Rowohlt, 1966, p.30.

Unsatisfied by the mechanical performance of menial tasks and by the low cultural level of his companions, he sought refuge in a personal island of culture, populated by his favourite authors: Schopenhauer, Christian Wagner, Raabe and Busch. If Tucholsky as a cultured intellectual was bored by the narrowness of army life, as a liberal humanitarian he found his domineering superiors intolerable(35). Life became more bearable, thanks first to his meeting his future wife, Mary Gerold, in November 1917, and then to the improved conditions of his service in Rumania: his highest tribute to duty there was to describe it as "angenehm und zivil".(36) But he had little ambition to become a career civil servant and when Theodor Wolff, of Mosse's Berliner Tageblatt, offered him the editorship of the paper's satirical supplement, Ulk, shortly before the end of the war, the enthusiasm with which he accepted revealed the journalist returning to his vocation.

Tucholsky's public literary response to the war poses problems of interpretation absent from the letters to Blaich or Mary Gerold. His initial reaction was to refuse to compromise his convictions by glorifying war. Such coolness and self-possession were an achievement, at a time when fellow-poets far from the front line were hailing war as the liquidator of the hollow Wilhelminian epoch, and as a Stahlbad which provided life with its

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(35) Letter to Blaich, 6/8/17, *ibid.* p.51.

(36) Letter to Blaich, 15/6/18, *ibid.* p.49.

ultimate meaning. On the other hand, Tucholsky felt no desire to defy the rigid censorship. Officially its jurisdiction was limited to military matters, but in practice the censor also intervened against political writers hostile to the government, under the pretext that they were undermining national morale. One such victim was Franz Pfemfert, who was forbidden to publish any political articles in Die Aktion. These events hardly encouraged Tucholsky to criticise the war openly. As a middle course he adopted, knowingly or not, the policy followed by the famous Viennese journalist Karl Kraus, of a silence about the war which amounted to tacit dissent.(37) Against a background of war hysteria, Kraus had reasoned that if such a well-known figure refrained from all comment on the war, this would be implicit condemnation of it. Tucholsky himself published hardly any articles between August 1914 and October 1916. Looking back two years later he justified his own silence by disclaiming any capacity for the martyrdom which active opposition might have entailed, and adding:

„Es gibt für einen anständigen Kerl nur ein Entweder-Oder bei diesen Dingen: entweder er widersetzt sich, das kann man auch schweigend, oder er macht mit, er.. reimt das Blut der andern auf sein eigenes Gut.. und begründet die Notwendigkeit des Krieges kosmogenetisch. Und das Blut fließt, fließt.."(38)

However much respect may be felt for Tucholsky's refusal to join in the orgy of patriotic literature during the autumn of 1914, it should be pointed out that his retrospective explanation was incomplete. The desire to preserve his personal integrity

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(37) In the essay In dieser großen Zeit, published in Die Fackel during December 1914, Kraus demanded: „Wer etwas zu sagen hat, trete vor und schweige".

(38) An Theobald Tiger, WB 18/7/18, GW 1, p.286.

was only one reason for Tucholsky's silence. External factors also played a role in his decision: first the need to concentrate on his doctorate, then the atmosphere of the Armierungsbataillon, which was hardly conducive to literary production. Significantly, he published his first series of war-time articles in the Schaubühne just after his transfer to Kurland, where less onerous duties gave him time and restored his inclination to write.

A journalist's natural desire to practise his trade free from interference dictated that in 1916 Tucholsky should concentrate on non-political writing. Witty feuilletons such as Die letzte Seite(39), and book reviews like Das Geheimnis des gelben Zimmers (40), were typical of this phase of his career; the satirical Märchen later published in book form as Träumereien an preußischen Kaminen(41) represented his major literary achievement. When he did describe his war experiences, in Unterwegs 1915(42), his sympathy for the common soldier was evident, but the article had no pacifist or revolutionary overtones.

However, the opposition to authority evident in Tucholsky's letters to Blaich is not entirely absent from his published work. Careful examination of several essays and poems written in 1916-17 reveals that, however unwilling Tucholsky was to challenge the censor regularly and directly, he often succeeded in outwitting him. One tactic which he employed involved an apparent profession of loyalty which was combined with an ambiguity designed to alert

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(39) SB 23/11/16, GW 1, pp.229-31.

(40) SB 29/3/17, *ibid.*, pp.241-44.

(41) The Träumereien were published by the Felix Lehmann Verlag, Charlottenburg, in 1920.

(42) SB 31/8/17, GW 1, pp.248-53.

the reader. Germany's leaders were continually asking the population to "hold out" and "see it through"; their slogan was "Durchhalten!" On one occasion Tucholsky appeared to support them by echoing their motto:

"Ihr mahnt den Jüngling, tapfer durchzuhalten.  
Gewiß, das scheint ja seine Pflicht-" (43)

but the use of the non-committal "scheint" rather than "ist" appears more than coincidental from a soldier who was himself considering deserting to Sweden(44). Another device used by Tucholsky to criticise authority was to attack unpleasant manifestations of capitalism on the Home Front, with its profiteers, swindlers and bellicose propagandists exempted from active service. The censor could not deny the existence of such abuses, but the accusations in Der Kriegslieferant(45) and An einen garnisonsdienstfähigen Dichter(46) by implication raised the question of whether support was being given to those involved through official channels. Finally, the traditional device of writers critical of a suspicious authority, the allegory, was employed in Die Katze spielt mit der Maus, which concluded:

"Natürlich ist die Katze ein Tier wie andre auch.  
Und sie ist stärker als die Maus, und das hat sie  
ausgenutzt, weit über die Nahrungsfrage hinaus.  
Sie hatte die Kraft. Und die Maus litt.  
Und dieser Schnitt klafft durch alles, dieser Riß  
spaltet alles - da gibt es keine Brücke. Immer  
werden sich die zwei gegenüberstehen: die Katze  
und die Maus". (47)

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(43) Memento, SB 3/10/16, ibid., p.221.

(44) Letter to Blaich, 28/6/17, Briefe, p.49.

(45) SB 14/12/16, GW 1, p.233.

(46) SB 21/6/17, ibid. pp.244-5.

(47) Interpretations of these lines vary. The East German critic Eichenberg (Thesis, Tucholsky, der Marxismus und die deutsche Arbeiterbewegung, Potsdam, 1962, p.12) sees them as "Kritik an den Besitzverhältnissen der kapitalistischen Gesellschaftsordnung". Marianne Doerfel: Kurt Tucholsky als Politiker, Mainz, 1971, p.51, regards them with more likelihood as a confirmation of the influence on Tucholsky of Schopenhauer's pessimistic view of human nature. The allegory was published in the Schaubühne, 9/11/16, GW 1, pp. 226-8



This article may be interpreted as a veiled attack on the relationship between officers and men in the German army. The need for an indirect treatment of this theme is obvious, but it was in Tucholsky's mind at this period. He revealed himself more directly to Blaich:

„Der Kriegsschauplatz zerfällt nach wie vor in zwei Teile. Nicht etwa Russen und Deutsche, sondern in Vorgesetzte und Mannschaften. 'Die Vorgesetzten' hat hier neulich einer gesagt, 'sind der Krebschaden der Armee'. Ein wahres Wort". (48)

Nevertheless, the anti-militarism and aversion to his superiors which emerges from the "cat and mouse" analogy does not in itself indicate political maturity on Tucholsky's part. Two products of his war-time writing testify instead to continued inexperience and inconsistency: his contributions to the regimental magazine Der Flieger and the so-called Kriegsanleihegedicht.

Tucholsky's creation of, and contributions to, the squadron newspaper have been exhaustively analysed by Doerfel (49). At first sight it appears strange that he agreed to edit a Feldzeitung. Doerfel's explanation is probably correct: that Tucholsky found the activity provided him with a degree of freedom from other, more directly military tasks, and with the opportunity to keep in training. She points out that Tucholsky must have regarded his work for Der Flieger as "eine recht läßliche Sünde" (50), but she herself treats it more seriously. It is unfortunate that Tucholsky, who was later to apply rigorous standards to the war-time activities of other writers, should have lent his pen to the venture.

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(48) Letter of July 1916, Briefe, p.34.

(49) Doerfel, op.cit., pp.39-49.

(50) *ibid.*, p.49.

However, his distaste for the paper rapidly became evident.

After only three months as editor he wrote to Blaich:

„Über den Flieger sind wir uns doch einig;  
ich arbeite nur noch mit dem größten Wider-  
willen daran; es ist nicht möglich, mit Behörden  
etwas Gescheites zu machen, und ich verspüre  
keine Lust, mich etwa zum Märtyrer einer Sache  
aufzuwerfen, die mich nichts angeht". (51)

He had discovered that Lieutenants Hartmann and Milch were not merely nominally responsible for the paper, but also controlled its editorial policy, which was summed up in the nationalistic slogan: "Michel, werde hart!" In view of Tucholsky's lack of influence, the significance of his contributions to Der Flieger should not be exaggerated.

Inexperience, combined with a misplaced sense of humour, likewise explains the Kriegsanleihegedicht. Tucholsky read in the Frankfurter Zeitung of a competition for poetry, inviting the public to subscribe to the Ninth War Loan. Tucholsky's poem, apparently not awarded a prize, concluded:

„Sei's eine Mark, sei's der gebräunte  
Und heitere Schein-bemüß dich mal!  
Bei Beethoven war's auch die Neunte-  
Trotz alledem - sei klug und zahl!" (52)

Tucholsky regarded the competition as a way of passing the time, as other readers might have looked on the crossword, and gave no thought to its further implications. He was far from being the enthusiastic supporter of the war that the poem might suggest; in fact he loathed the slaughter:

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(51) Letter of 6/8/17, Briefe, p.50.

(52) Quoted by Hans Prescher: Tucholsky, Berlin, Colloquium-Verlag, 1959, p.15.

„Die Menschheit hackt sich durch Fleisch und Blut einen Weg der "Idee", durch lebendige Menschen - in den Fibeln liest sich das nachher recht hübsch, man darf nur nicht dabeisein". (53)

41. Der Flieger and the Kriegsanleihegedicht do represent blemishes on Tucholsky's record, but comparatively minor ones. Their real significance is in shedding light on the stages of his development: the consistency which characterised his post-war pacifism had not yet triumphed over his immaturity.

The final phase of Tucholsky's war-time literary production began in the summer of 1918. Tucholsky recognised that the censor, discredited by unfavourable military developments, was loosening his grip over the public expression of opinion, and that he could now risk open criticism of authority. Jacobsohn, who had himself been occupied since April in widening the scope of the former Schaubühne to correspond to its new format as Die Weltbühne, Zeitschrift für Politik, Kunst, Wirtschaft, welcomed Tucholsky's aggression as a counter-balance to the moderation of his leader-writer, Robert Breuer.

The striking feature of Tucholsky's return to direct social criticism in 1918 was the contrast between the devastating attacks on the old regime, which appeared to imply an unreserved welcoming of fundamental political change, and his comparative uncertainty about the positive aims to be pursued by the progressive forces. He began with a lampoon against censorship. (54) This was followed by a satirical attack on the Vaterlandspartei, which had pressed for German

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(53) Letter to Blaich, 6/8/17, Briefe, p.47.

(54) Zensurdebatte, WB 10/6/18, GW 1, p.280.

annexations from Belgium to the Baltic states and supported the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with the defeated Russians:

„Alt-Deutschland macht in Politik  
und zieht Bilanz aus diesem Krieg:  
Indien muß badisch werden!  
Ägypten her! Die Ostsee auch!  
Wir treten alle vor den Bauch  
mit sieghaften Gebärden!" (55)

For the future of Germany and of Europe as a whole, Tucholsky evidently preferred the idea of a Verständigungsfrieden, and in August 1918 he denounced the war and its propagandists in Zum ersten August. (56) But as the military situation worsened, Tucholsky's hopes that Germany could still reach an understanding with the Entente were to prove as ill-founded as the anticipation of victory by the German right.

The climax of Tucholsky's attack on his country's traditional rulers was the poem Landratsdämmerung. (57) The old local government administrators who had owed their loyalty to the Emperor and his appointed ministers were now being forced to transfer their support to a parliamentary government which included the Social Democrat, Scheidemann and the progressive Catholic leader, Erzberger. Tucholsky greeted this change of government with some enthusiasm, but seems to have considered that it did not go far enough. Where Max von Baden's coalition accepted the pledges of support given by the Landräte, Tucholsky responded more radically. The old Prussia had ceased to exist, and its representatives should accept the consequences by resigning before they were dismissed:

„Deine Welt geht under. Eine andre auf.  
Pack ein, als König der Klitsche.

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(55) Wünsche, WB 4/7/18, *ibid.*, p.255.

(56) WB 10/8/18, *ibid.*, pp.289-90.

(57) WB 24/10/18.

Der Kräftige schwingt sich zum Sattel hinauf.  
Du warst doch sonst so für Nietzsche!  
Hör an: Im Kreise kein Autokrat,  
nur Bürger mit Obliegenheiten.  
Das war dein gesegneter Krieg, der das tat.  
Pack ein!.."

In his progressive criticism, however, Tucholsky was hampered by his continued absence from Germany. In his Feldpolizeistelle in Turn-Severin he could base his judgments neither on personal observation nor on up-to-date information on events at home. The resultant uncertainty provides a partial explanation for his vagueness about possible goals for the reformers. As the old Landrat lost influence, Tucholsky proclaimed:

„Wir ernten die junge Saat,  
Herr Landrat, und neue Zeiten!" (58)

The political characteristics of this new time and the identity of its leaders were left to his readers' imagination. His battle-cry "Links ran!" (59) gave no additional information, and the warning

„Die Zeit ist aus. Jetzt kommen wir:  
Die ändern! Die ändern!" (60)

left considerable doubt as to what "the others" would do when they took over.

However, his temporary political vagueness sprang also from his concern with cultural developments. A brief period of leave in April 1918 had convinced him that even the superficiality of pre-war Berlin had been preferable to the downright corruption of four years later, in which the tone was set by profiteers and prostitutes. (61)

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(58) *ibid.*

(59) Kolonne, Berliner Tageblatt, 14/10/18, GW 1, p.306.

(60) Nationale Verteidigung, WB 31/10/18, *ibid.* p.315.

(61) Cf. letters to Mary Gerold of 29/4/18, and 6/5/18, Briefe, pp.357-60.

Tucholsky foresaw that these groups would exert a pernicious influence on social and cultural standards in the post-war period. In addition, he was instinctively aware of the extent of the economic problems which would face a defeated Germany.(62) The combination of these social and economic factors explains Tucholsky's apocalyptic view that German culture could look forward to a period of Geistlosigkeit similar to that after the Thirty Years War.(63) Since he believed that any impending cultural change would be for the worse, a degree of ambiguity in his response to political change could hardly be avoided. Furthermore, Tucholsky's lack of interest in political theory(64) prevented him from appreciating the significance of the German Revolution on his return to Berlin in November 1918. Not until the spring of 1919 did Tucholsky formulate a positive political aim: that democratisation of individual consciousness which he described as "die geistige Revolution".(65)

Tucholsky's writings during the war fall into three main periods. In the first, lasting from the outbreak of war to his transfer to Kurland, he published little, partly out of unwillingness to join in the officially encouraged glorification of war and partly due to external pressures. Though he was aware that his lot in the Armierungsbataillon was preferable to trench warfare, his letters to Blaich testified to the boredom of an intellectual in an alien environment, and the disgust of a humanitarian who did not measure

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(62) Letter to Mary Gerold, 26/7/18, *ibid.*, p.387.

(63) *ibid.*

(64) Doerfel, *op.cit.*, p.53, points out the absence from his letters of any consideration of the Russian Revolution.

(65) Zur Erinnerung an den ersten August 1914, WB 14/8/19, GW 1, p.358.

a man's value by the number of his epaulettes. The increased leisure which accompanied his office work in Kurland gave him the opportunity to resume his journalistic activity. He still had to fear the censor, and though he occasionally attempted to deceive the authorities, most of his articles were innocuous reviews and feuilletons. His political immaturity was evident in his work for Der Flieger and in the Kriegsanleihegedicht. Finally he took advantage of the gradual relaxation of censorship to attack the old regime, though his welcome for change was tempered by regret about his country's inevitable cultural decline. Still no political theorist, he took some time before deciding on a positive goal for his campaign for reform.

## CHAPTER 2

The Germany to which Tucholsky returned in December 1918 had recently undergone far-reaching changes. In September the dictator Ludendorff had belatedly recognised that the war was lost; the most fervent supporter of a Siegfrieden had compelled his negotiators to arrange an immediate truce in order to prevent complete collapse. The German people, which had for years been deceived by official announcements of victories, suddenly discovered that its optimism had been ill-founded and its sacrifices in vain. Tucholsky's initial bewilderment, though accentuated by the inadequacies of his sources of information, typified the response of his compatriots. By mid-October he was able to assess his country's position realistically:

„Sie schreien zwar zu Hause furchtbar, sie wollen sich von Amerika nichts gefallen lassen - aber ich fürchte, ich fürchte... sie werden's müssen".(1)

All of President Woodrow Wilson's demands, whether for disarmament, the introduction of democratic government, or the abdication of the Emperor, were to be accepted unconditionally by Germany within the following three weeks.

Ludendorff's abrupt retirement was accompanied by an attempt to shift the blame for defeat on to the civilian politicians. Wilson was not alone in pressing for democratic reform in Germany; he was merely echoing the traditional demand of Social Democrats, left-wing Liberals and Zentrum members for governmental responsibility. In October 1918 Ludendorff granted their wish, at a time when unpopular decisions could no longer be avoided. The new Chancellor, Prince Max of Baden, held liberal views, and he brought Social Democrats into the government for the first time. Nevertheless, he

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(1) Letter to Mary Gerold, 19/10/18, Briefe, pp.410-11.



had no political experience, and his main supporters, the SPD, were in a difficult situation. The party leaders Ebert and Scheidemann wished to prevent a violent revolution, since they feared that it would further jeopardise Germany's international position. In addition, they had obtained from Prince Max the promise of important democratic reforms, the implementation of which depended on his continuing in office. However, Ebert had to contend with the impatience of his own radical supporters. By the beginning of November it became clear that the armed forces were unwilling to risk their lives for a lost cause, and that the Berlin metal workers, stimulated by their revolutionary shop stewards, could not be restrained much longer. As the leader of the only intact political force, Ebert was compelled to abandon the new constitutional monarchy and to succeed Prince Max as Chancellor. With the old dynasties collapsing around him, the new Chancellor hastily agreed to lead a coalition government of three moderate Social Democrats and three left-wing Independents. This prompt action temporarily averted bloodshed, but the political truce was to be brief.

This was the situation which Tucholsky discovered on his return from Rumania. As he had long hoped, the authoritarian Empire had fallen, but neither the Emperor's enforced abdication nor Scheidemann's proclamation of the Republic on November 9th in themselves decided Germany's future. Scheidemann was a reluctant revolutionary, mainly concerned to forestall a similar announcement by the more radical Karl Liebknecht. In the ensuing months the character of the new Republic was determined: on the one hand by the

defeat of the revolutionary left, and the murder of its leaders; on the other hand by the failure of the Social Democrats to create and stabilise democratic institutions during their short period of governing alone, and to win the expected majority at the elections to the National Assembly in January 1919. In order to retain power they entered a coalition with the middle-class parties, which involved further compromises of their Socialist principles. The opportunity for fundamental change was not to recur.

The reaction of Tucholsky to events during the weeks of revolutionary upheaval was at first superficial. He wrote to Mary Gerold in mid-December that his fellow-Berliners seemed over-excited:

„Sie arbeiten nicht mehr, sondern halten  
Versammlungen ab und toben herum". (2)

After four years of bloodshed Tucholsky was convinced that Germany needed peace in domestic as well as foreign affairs. He therefore opposed any threat of disorder, whether from the revolutionary left or the Social Democratic government and its new troops. The violence which he had feared broke out in the Spartacus Rising of January 1919. Events were moving too swiftly for Tucholsky to develop a coherent programme for reform. His general political views during this period can best be assessed from his comments on the left-wing groups which were competing for his allegiance: the Spartacists, Majority Socialists and Democrats.

The Spartakusbund, renamed in January 1919 the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands, was the most radical of the left-wing parties. It was led by Rosa Luxemburg, a persistent critic of the pre-war SPD for its compromises with reaction. She was supported by Karl Liebknecht, who since his release from prison in October 1918 had been making plans for a seizure of power by the workers. Both were

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(2) Letter of 19/12/18, *ibid.* p.415.

aware that such a Socialist revolution went far beyond the establishment of a parliamentary system, as desired by the MSPD and the majority of the population, and Rosa Luxemburg rightly warned against over-optimism and premature radicalism. However, the majority of the delegates to the first Congress of the KPD ignored her plea, voted for non-participation in the elections and for an armed uprising to bring about the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The support for the Spartacists which existed among the German public was generally based on a misunderstanding of their aims. Many workers admired Liebknecht as a fighter for peace rather than a revolutionary Socialist. Such approval as Tucholsky bestowed on the Spartacist leaders was based on an analogous misconception; their willingness to turn intellectual insight into political action made them symbols of the engagement which he had long advocated:

„Sie packten zu und sie setzten sich ein,  
Sie wollten nicht nur Theoretiker sein".(3)

Liebknecht's energy likewise won his respect, since it contrasted with the apparent dilatoriness of the government.(4) Nevertheless, the outlets which this energy found, the organising of mass demonstrations, led Tucholsky to describe the impulsive orator as "ein Wirrkopf von mittleren Maßen".(5) The self-sacrifice and steadfast devotion to the cause shown by Rosa Luxemburg won his approval to a much greater extent. In an obituary for the two he wrote:

„Sie hatte die stärkste Manneskraft".(6)

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(3) Zwei Erschlagene, WB 23/1/19, GW 1, p.361.

(4) Berliner Kämpfe, WB 16/1 19, *ibid.*, p.360.

(5) *ibid.*, p.361.

(6) *ibid.*

However, it should be pointed out that Tucholsky was responsible for the expression of somewhat different opinions in Ulk. A series of unfriendly references to Liebknecht culminated in the article Die Revolution in der Schule(7) in which Berlin school-children wrote disparagingly of the revolutionaries:

„Liebknecht war der anführer der streiker,  
seine Frau hieß Rosa von Lukzenburg,  
ich kann ihn nicht leiden den er sieht aus  
wie ein straudieb..."(sic)

Although almost certainly Tucholsky did not write the piece himself, Kurt Hiller was correct to point out in 1930 that such criticism represented a lapse in taste on his part as verantwortlicher Chef-redakteur.(8) However, this attack was made at a time when the Spartacist leaders were being treated as objects of execration in the press. The January uprising had begun as a series of demonstrations organised by the left wing of the Independent Socialists to protest against the dismissal of one of their number: Emil Eichhorn, the Police President of Berlin. But Luxemburg had consistently advocated the overthrow of Ebert in Die rote Fahne, and Liebknecht was the best-known member of the Revolutionary Committee: it was therefore not surprising that the KPD as a whole was blamed for the disorder which ensued. Right-wing newspapers even incited their readers to assassinate Liebknecht and Luxemburg. In comparison, Tucholsky's comments were mild. In addition, it could be said in Tucholsky's defence that he was still uncertain about his new role as editor; he told a subsequent Communist critic,

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(7) Ulk, 17/1/19.

(8) On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Bund revolutionärer Pazifisten, Hiller summed up the affair in a statement of 17th March 1930: "Die Satire von 1918 ist zwar, unter der Perspektive von 1930, unerfreulich aber nicht böseartig". (Cf. Tucholsky's scrap-book in the Tucholsky-Archiv, Rottach).

Franz Leschnitzer, that it was sometimes difficult to know where to draw the line.(9) In any case, the article did not compare in importance with the testimony of Zwei Erschlagene:

„Wie man sich selber die Treue hält,  
wie man gegen eine feindliche Welt  
mit reinem Schilde streiten kann,  
das vergißt den beiden kein ehrlicher Mann!"(10)

The qualified approval of Tucholsky for the Spartacist leaders as individuals was based on the half-truth that they embodied his ideal of intellectual commitment, and on sympathy for them after their murder by Freikorps officers. This approval did not imply understanding of their Marxist aims or acceptance of their violent methods. When he claimed at the end of the obituary:

„Wir sind, weiß Gott, keine Spartakiden".(11)

he spoke the truth.

Tucholsky did not begin to comment on Marxist theory until the spring of 1919, and his opinions are dealt with later in this chapter. During the Revolution itself he discussed the Spartacists' political aim, the establishment of the Rätesystem in place of parliamentary democracy, and commented on their tactics of violence and strikes.

Tucholsky's support for a new Germany was not equivalent to approval for the Rätesystem as a prelude to the dictatorship of the proletariat. For this form of government, based not on parliamentary strength but on influence within the Workers' and

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(9) Cf. Franz Leschnitzer: Von Börne bis Leonhard, Rudolstadt, VEB Greifenverlag, 1966, p.184, and Tucholsky's scrap-book.

(10) Zwei Erschlagene, *ibid.*, p.362.

(11) *ibid.*

Soldiers' Councils, Tucholsky felt no enthusiasm. The Russian Soviet model seemed unsuitable for Germany, since by excluding important sections of the population from power, it would destroy the new democracy which Tucholsky supported. He objected to the Councils on practical grounds also. The Rätekongreß of December 1918 roused him to satirise what appeared a new form of bureaucracy:

"A und S - eine liebe Erscheinung!  
Von jeher war das meine Meinung.  
Wir haben zu wenig Beamte im Haus.  
A und S. Vielleicht heißt das "aus"?" (12)

This attitude was short-sighted. Tucholsky failed to recognise that the Councils, if given governmental encouragement, might have performed a useful function in supervising the anti-democratic officers and administrators whom the Revolution had left in their old posts. (13) Nevertheless, Tucholsky's miscalculation was less serious than that of the Spartacist leaders themselves. With their lengthy experience, Liebknecht and Luxemburg should have recognised that they possessed comparatively few supporters among the Councils; this was clearly demonstrated by their failure to be elected as delegates to the Rätekongreß, and by the domination of that Congress by Ebert and the MSPD. (14) The expectation of the KPD leaders that a revolutionary system successful in Russia a year before could be copied in Berlin contributed to their defeat.

Tucholsky's denunciation of Spartacist tactics was equally explicit. His disapproval of the use of force was evident even in the sympathetic obituary for Liebknecht. He repudiated Liebknecht's

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(12) Weihnachten, Ulk, 20/12/18.

(13) Cf. Eberhard Kolb, Die Arbeiterräte in der deutschen Innenpolitik, 1918-19, Düsseldorf, Droste, 1962, p.360.

(14) *ibid.*, p.145.

willingness to take the political struggle into the streets and pointed out that he had been leading many anarchists and criminals over whom he had had little control. The irresponsible tactics of Liebknecht had caused his own downfall:

"Den Meergott verschlangen die eigenen Wogen". (15)

In rejecting violence, Tucholsky demonstrated his moral idealism. The cause of human dignity could not be served by armed conflict, as he later asserted in an attack on the Bolshevik doctrine, which he summarised as

"Nieder mit der Gewalt! Darum nur noch einmal Gewalt!" (16)

This objection of principle was accompanied by one of practice. Premature revolutionary activities by the left were likely to strengthen the appeal of the right-wing forces at the elections. This explained Tucholsky's criticism:

"...Karl Liebknecht, wie bist du rein und fanatisch, auf die Dauer wirkst du doch unsympathisch; du bestärkst den Radau, treibst den Rechten die Mühlen - ich glaube, du sitzt grade zwischen zwei Stühlen..." (17)

Such internecine struggles could only weaken the progressive left at a time when solidarity was necessary against an enemy whose defeat had been only temporary:

"Spartakus! Deutsche! So öffnet die Augen!  
Sie warten, euch Blut aus den Adern zu saugen -  
Der Feind steht rechts!" (18)

Since counter-revolutionary Freikorps units were being formed as Tucholsky wrote this poem, his assessment of the situation was justified. He deduced that the duty of the independent radical

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(15) GW 1, p.361.

(16) Cf. Otto Flake, WB 27/10/21, *ibid.*, p.847.

(17) Weihnachten, Ulk, 20/12/18.

(18) Achtundvierzig, WB 12/1/19, GW 1, p.328.

was to endeavour to separate the fraternal combatants. This position was neither uncommon nor inconsistent. The great majority of the Berlin workers rejected both the Spartacist rising and the SPD's restoration of the old authorities; they supported the efforts of the USPD to mediate between the contending parties and avoid a bloodbath.(19)

It was probably the government's unwillingness to compromise which led Tucholsky to change the emphasis of his criticism. Noske, the new Minister for Military Affairs, was formally justified in breaking off negotiations with the rebels and insisting on unconditional surrender, but his tactics alienated a large number of workers who shared Tucholsky's view.(20) Tucholsky's new position was evident in the poem Berliner Kämpfe(21), written during the rising. The actions of the Spartacists, however misguided, now seemed to bear favourable comparison with the panic of the typical Bürger, who regarded politics as "geschäftliche Störung". Tucholsky suggested that the government was at fault in trying to meet force with force, and he defended the rebels:

„Ist Ruhe die erste Bürgerpflicht,  
die von Empörern ist es nicht".

This change of opinion about Spartacist violence was nevertheless unrepresentative of Tucholsky's general attitude at this date; by March he had returned to a rejection of force, whatever its source.(22)

Tucholsky likewise had little sympathy when the Communists appeared to be employing the syndicalist weapon: the

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(19) Cf. Kolb, op.cit.,p.233.

(20) *ibid.*, p.239.

(21) WB 16/1/19, GW 1, p.361.

(22) Gegen rechts und gegen links, UlK, 21/3/19.



attempt to bring down the government by means of strikes in important industries.(23) His comparison of the coercion employed formerly by industrialists to prevent strikes and that now employed by the Räte to bring them about revealed the instinctive rather than rational basis of his opinions:

"Stinnes im Krieg: Wer streikt oder muckt  
fliegt in den Schützengraben!  
Und die Massen schweigen gequält und geduckt  
um das Leben, das Leben zu haben.

Die Räte heute : Der Bürger mag  
krepieren, und wir sind oben!  
Verloren ist jeder Arbeitstag  
Die Terroristen toben..."(24)

Instead of examining the background to the industrial disputes, such as poor pay and working conditions and rising prices, Tucholsky merely condemned the leaders of the strike as Affen. Ebert himself, a persistent advocate of hard work and increased productivity as the only method for Germany to achieve economic recovery, could hardly have opposed the strikers more emphatically.

In spite of his personal respect for the Spartacist leaders, Tucholsky rejected their aims and methods. His sympathies lay with parliamentary government rather than proletarian dictatorship. Even a year later the most bitter accusation which he made to Noske and his colleagues was

"Die sozialdemokratischen Parteifunktionäre...  
treiben die Masse dem Bolschewismus in die Arme.."(25)

a prospect which he still regarded with horror. Nevertheless, this quotation reveals Tucholsky's growing hostility towards the Social Democrats, an attitude which was only beginning to emerge during the Revolution itself.

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(23) The Spartacists were not the only, or indeed the leading, political force among the strikers, but most of the press blamed the disorder on the KPD.

(24) Generalstreik, Ulk, 7/3/19.

(25) Militaria, WB 22/1/20, GW 1, p.591.

From November 1918 to February 1919, the threat of a revolutionary seizure of power by the Spartacists drew more numerous comments from Tucholsky than the SPD's defensive strategy. Though some reference to the Social Democratic performance in government is necessary in view of Tucholsky's later claim that they missed the opportunity for social change, his mature judgment had not yet been formed. For this reason only a brief outline of SPD policy and Tucholsky's immediate reaction to it is given in this chapter; his later polemic, made with the benefit of hindsight, is examined in Chapter 7.

An important factor in the German Revolution was the discrepancy between the SPD's radical slogans and its conservative passivity in government. Such a combination of boldness and caution might have seemed likely to win Tucholsky's support, for although he advocated far-reaching reforms, he opposed violence and dictatorship. However, the SPD's attitude to reform was in practice less enthusiastic than the rhetoric with which the party leaders sought to pacify their impatient supporters. After the defeat of the Spartacists, Tucholsky expected action rather than compromises with the old regime. The political reconstruction of Germany was necessary, but it should be on a different, democratic basis. Tucholsky's demand for government action was vague : he advocated a policy of "schlagen, brennen, stürzen".(26) But his dislike of the SPD's procrastination was clear. Ebert, who preferred continuity to innovation, ignored the warnings of Tucholsky as he had those of his Independent colleagues. Once it became obvious that the foundations of the old system remained intact,

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(26) Das Lied vom Kompromiß, WB 13/3/19, *ibid.*, p.378.

Tucholsky realised bitterly that no new democratic spirit was likely to emerge:

„Wenn Revolution nur Zusammenbruch bedeutet, dann war das eine; aber man darf nicht erwarten, daß die Trümmer anders aussehen als das alte Gebäude". (27)

Tucholsky also criticised the SPD out of an instinctive distrust of unimaginative Realpolitiker. He was temperamentally far removed from the "braven Leisetreter" (28) who sought to exclude idealism from the conduct of politics, and who lacked the ability to inspire the exhausted German people to fresh efforts.

By March 1919 Tucholsky had recognised that he and Ebert were politically incompatible. The SPD had abandoned its revolutionary ideals, and Tucholsky regarded the party with as little enthusiasm as he did the Spartacists. Neither excessive radical zeal nor over-indulgence in compromise seemed likely to encourage the democratic attitudes which Tucholsky desired as the characteristic feature of the new Germany.

The SPD was not the only organisation which disappointed Tucholsky by its conservatism. His interest in the progressive, middle-class Deutsche Demokratische Partei proved equally short-lived. Its founders, the university professors Max and Alfred Weber, and Theodor Wolff, editor of the Berliner Tageblatt, wished to break away from the traditions of the liberal parties of the Empire. They intended to assist the Social Democrats in the re-shaping of Germany. (29) This determination to make a new start

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(27) Wir Negativen, *ibid.*, p.372.

(28) Eisner, WB 27/2/19, *ibid.*, p.380.

(29) Cf. Lothar Albertin: Liberalismus und Demokratie am Anfang der Weimarer Republik, Düsseldorf, Droste, 1972, p.410.

met with Tucholsky's approval, especially as he had begun his work as editor of Ulz and had access to the same broad middle-class public which Wolff was attempting to win over for democracy and the Republic.

Tucholsky shared Wolff's concern about the German Bürgertum to which they both belonged. The young satirist was alarmed by an apparent moral decline among this group. The gamblers and speculators of post-war Berlin met with his distaste, and in the democratic Berliner Volkszeitung he reflected nostalgically:

„Wo ist die gesunde Mitte geblieben?  
Wo ist der aufrechte Bürgerstand?  
Der fehlt uns so sehr im deutschen Land". (30)

His first solution to the problem was to advocate that two or three respected middle-class families should demonstrate their disapproval of the Schieber by ostracising them. This example of good taste and strong will would be followed by others, and in time the social position of the nouveaux-riches would be undermined. (31) This naively elitist plan did not recur in Tucholsky's writings after the Revolution.

Tucholsky's articles in Ulz complicate rather than clarify his political position. He was compelled by the pressures of work for the mass-circulation Berliner Tageblatt to moderate the views expressed in Tiger's weekly Leitgedicht:

„Bei Mosse sind einem die Ellenbogen geschnürt,  
und in .. der Weltbühne kann ich koppheistern,  
wie ich mag..." (32)

In Ulz he published his critical reaction to the Spartacists, to strikes and unrest, while the Weltbühne provided his main platform

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(30) Spaziergänge in Berlin, BVZ, 24/2/19.

(31) Krankheit und Besserung, BT 3/11/19.

(32) Letter to Blaich, 16/3/19, Briefe, p.68.

for attacking the restoration of the old order. A further indication that Tucholsky felt restricted in Ulk lies in the literary superiority of his Weltbühne articles. Only one of his poems in Ulk, Krieg dem Kriege(33) compares in polemical sharpness with his best contributions to the Weltbühne.

The simultaneous rejection by Tucholsky of Junker reaction, Spartacist violence and Social Democratic compromises led him to give some support to the DDP in the January elections, by having the brief and unsigned poem Wahl (34) published in Ulk. In the Weltbühne his reservations were demonstrated by his refusal to allude to the elections, let alone endorse any party. However, the support for progressive democracy which motivated his temporary alignment with the DDP was again evident in the important poem Gegen rechts und gegen links (35), published in March 1919:

„Und rechts und links die Terroristen  
und jeder, der Gewalt verehrt,  
Die Reventlows, die Spartakisten,  
Und wer von Unterdrückung zehrt -  
Ihr sollt nicht raten und nicht taten  
Denn gegen jene Unterschicht  
Da helfen wahre Demokraten  
Ihr nicht!"

Unfortunately for Tucholsky, "wahre Demokraten", even within the DDP, were few, and his efforts to encourage them proved unsuccessful. The black, red and gold colours of the bürgerliche Revolution of 1848 had been selected for the flag of the new Republic, and Tucholsky attempted to popularise this symbol:

„Schwarz ist der Stahl.  
rot ist das Blut.  
Golden flackert die Flamme!"(36)

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(33) Ulk, 13/6/19, GW 1, pp.423-33.

(34) Ulk, 17/1/19.

(35) Ulk, 21/3/19.

(36) Schwarzrotgold, Ulk, 15/4/19.

But the contemporary German Bürger had little interest in democratic slogans. His main concern was money and he had supported the DDP to prevent a Socialist majority rather than to ensure a coalition with the SPD. The increasing influence of such conservative attitudes within the party made it obvious to Tucholsky that the DDP would not persuade the German people to reject the old hierarchical society which he detested.

Tucholsky's political position during the weeks of revolutionary upheaval seems at first inconsistent. He supported far-reaching reforms, yet rejected the Spartacists who were pledged to introduce such changes. He opposed the violence of the left-wing revolutionaries, and also that of the government troops who crushed the rising. His editorship of Ulk was a further source of contradiction, since it led him to seek a position equally distant from Junker reaction and Communist revolution. He abandoned this position only when he recognised that the DDP and its middle-class supporters opposed reform.

However, at this early period the occasional inconsistency in Tucholsky's attitude was inevitable, on account of his inexperience and of the complicated political situation. It was paradoxical that Ebert, the leader of a traditionally Marxist party, should be violently opposed to the spread of revolution, and that Liebknecht, Germany's best-known pacifist, should be leading criminals as well as discontented Socialists into battle. It is therefore not surprising that Tucholsky took until March 1919 to formulate the political programme of the Negativen.

The positive standard which Tucholsky required for the assessment of events was provided by a belief in man's innate humanity:

„Wir lieben in den Menschen den Gedanken  
an die Menschheit". (37)

This explained his opposition to violence and war. He approached political questions from an ethical stand-point, since he was beginning to recognise that, to a certain extent, inhumanity and moral evil were the result of the social system. A society dominated by the Prussian spirit of unquestioning obedience allowed no freedom for moral choice or humane principles. The acceptance of the rigid discipline imposed by one's superiors in return for the opportunity to enforce a similar discipline on one's subordinates bred not responsible men but Untertanen, obsequious or tyrannical depending on the situation. (38) In view of this interdependence of moral and social evils, it was logical for Tucholsky to attack them simultaneously. (39)

The close relationship of moral and social factors in Tucholsky's early post-war writings was manifested not only in the ethical motivation of his campaign. Moral idealism also characterised the method by which he believed that German society should be transformed:

„Wir werden dafür zu sorgen haben, daß ohne zerschlagene Fensterscheiben und ohne politische Morde in den Köpfen unsrer Volksgenossen eine geistige Revolution entsteht, wie sie bisher gefehlt hat". (40)

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(37) Wir Negativen, GW 1, p.377.

(38) Der Untertan, WB 20/3/19, *ibid.*, p.385.

(39) Unser Militar! WB 20/2/19, *ibid.*, p.347.

(40) Zur Erinnerung an den ersten August 1914, WB 14/8/19, *ibid.*, p.358.

He therefore attacked conservative institutions compromised during and after the war, such as the army and the judiciary. However, he did not devote himself solely to negative criticism, but endeavoured also to put forward constructive proposals for reform. His abstract, moralising approach to reform, which concentrated on changing the attitudes of his compatriots, points to another fact: that he was an intellectual rather than a political theorist. His relationship with other left-wing intellectuals will be examined, with particular regard to the parallel between Tucholsky and Kurt Eisner. Finally, the question is raised of Tucholsky's theoretical attitude to politics during this period. His opinion of the Marxist doctrines which had been at least nominally accepted by the Social Democrats since the Erfurt Programme of 1891 is especially significant.

The progressive stance of Tucholsky found immediate expression in the demand that the new Republican rulers should sweep away the outworn institutions of the old regime:

„Es soll mit eisernem Besen jetzt,  
grade jetzt und heute ausgekehrt werden,  
was in Deutschland faul und vom Übel war und ist". (41)

He therefore criticised the army, (42) the judiciary, (43) and the civil service. (44)

This criticism gave rise to the belief that Tucholsky and other left-wing intellectuals were strong in their negations but

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(41) Wir Negativen, *ibid.*, p.376.

(42) Cf. Helm ab! WB 28/11/18, *ibid.*, p.319-320, and the Militaria series.

(43) Spartakus in Moabit, WB 13/2/19, *ibid.*, p.370.

(44) Cf. Der Apparat, Berliner Tageblatt, 21/10/18, *ibid.*, pp.310-312, and Wir Negativen, p.373.



weak in suggesting positive alternatives; that their work amounted to mere zersetzende Kritik. Tucholsky was a self-proclaimed Negativer, but it should be pointed out that his criticism was far from being solely or even primarily destructive in intent. Throughout his career he could justifiably claim that his polemics were manifestations of underlying idealism:

„Wir kämpfen mit Haß aus Liebe" (45)

he declared. Hatred of the oppressors was the logical corollary of a determination to assist the oppressed. At this early stage in Tucholsky's career, his polemics had an additional "positive" purpose: by holding the old evils up to scorn, he could help his compatriots to learn from previous mistakes. One example of apparently negative criticism which had an important positive aim was his attack on the German officers for abusing their positions of power during the war: his purpose in recalling their activities was to prevent a recurrence of such abuses in the new Republican army. (46)

This constructive stance by Tucholsky in the immediate post-revolutionary period has not received from critics the attention which it merits. A willingness to make positive proposals which was frustrated by the persistent refusal of Germany's leaders to put such suggestions into effect was characteristic of Tucholsky's campaign. If he had been preoccupied with zersetzende Kritik, his detailed examination of the Imperial German army would not have culminated in the advocacy of a new spirit, of the officer's function

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(45) *ibid.*, p.373.

(46) *ibid.*

as "ein befehlender Kamerad".(47) His later rejection of the Reichswehr stemmed not from doctrinaire pacifism but from a recognition of its counter-revolutionary aims, revealed in the brutality with which Noske's Freikorps suppressed disorder in Berlin.

His positive attitude was also evident in the first of his post-war articles on the judiciary. Justitia(48) was a reasoned appraisal of the problems faced by judges in passing sentence, and Tucholsky admitted his agreement with the conventional view that the state had the right to punish wrong-doers:

„Es ist wichtiger, daß einer büßt, damit Tausende die Gesellschaft verschonen".(49)

He pointed out correctly that sentences often appeared inconsistent, but his criticism was made to stimulate reform:

„Was wir vermissen, ist der einheitliche Zug, die bewußten Grundsätze, die durch die deutsche Rechtsprechung gehen sollten".(50)

He did not denounce the judges, or claim that their background prevented them from administering justice impartially. His moderation may be explained by the fact that the judges had had little opportunity to demonstrate their conservatism. He took up his more radical stance in response to the heavy sentences imposed on captured Spartacists, and even then he demanded not universal pardons but merely discrimination in assessing the motives and magnitude of each offence:

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(47) Unser Militär! *ibid.*, p.347.

(48) Berliner Tageblatt, 14/1/19.

(49) *ibid.*

(50) *ibid.*

„Straf du (Justitia) die Lumpen bei den Spartakisten.  
Steck die ins Zuchthaus, die beim Kampf geklaut.  
Vergreif dich nicht an die Idealisten!" (51)

Tucholsky's criticism of the army and the judiciary began with an attempt to advocate constructive policies. Only after it became clear that his suggestions had been ignored, that under the new regime the reactionary forces were continuing to flourish, did his "negative" polemic come to the fore.

The attack on the military made by Tucholsky immediately after the war is discussed in detail in Chapter 8. Significant in the present context is its moral rather than directly political motivation. He was outraged by the officers' abuse of power because it revealed a spirit which fell far short of his own humane values. He did not wish to expose individual offences but to attack the army's self-centred, elitist ethos, which had dominated Wilhelminian society. His targets were therefore the spirit of Prussianism, that

„Knechtsgeist, der nicht gehorchen kennt, ohne zu kuschen-  
der keine sachliche Unterordnung will, sondern nur blinde  
Unterwerfung" (52)

and its corollary, the servile Untertan-mentality.

Since Tucholsky saw the main enemy of progress in the realm of abstract attitudes, his solution was sought in the transformation not of political institutions, but of the manner in which they were administered:

„Die Reformen, die wir meinen, sind nicht mit Vorschriften  
zu erfüllen und auch nicht mit neuen Reichsämtern...  
Was wir brauchen, ist eine anständige Gesinnung". (53)

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(51) Spartakus in Moabit, GW 1, p.370.

(52) Offizier und Mann, WB 9/1/19, *ibid.*, p.331.

(53) Wir Negativen, *ibid.*, pp.375-6.

Such progress towards democracy was not to come from above, since Tucholsky had little confidence in the ability of the old institutions to reform themselves, or in the dilatory government of the Weimar Coalition. Instead he envisaged that it would come from below, from his oppressed compatriots, whom he exhorted to tolerate their servitude no longer. The change of attitudes demanded by Tucholsky was necessary, as had been recognised by a recent historian.(54) However, this approach to reform was narrow, and in seeking the intangible objective of the "geistige Revolution", Tucholsky achieved mixed results. It led him, reasonably enough, to oppose Realpolitiker in the Ebert mould, but also led him into neglecting practical proposals for reform. The Hamburg Points on army discipline were left unmentioned in Tucholsky's articles on the military, and economic reform did not seem important either. For the time being it was easier to proclaim such abstract ideas as

„Wir wollen den deutschen Sinn reformieren!"(55)

than to analyse in detail the arguments for or against large-scale nationalisation. Tucholsky's vision of the new Germany as a realm of Sachlichkeit and anständige Gesinnung owed much to his humanitarian idealism, but also revealed his inability to recognise the need for political and economic action.

Tucholsky's approach to reform was influenced less by political considerations than by his status as an intellectual. The alienation of German intellectuals and their increasing opposition to the holders of power was, as has been pointed out,(56) a feature of pre-war Germany. During the war Heinrich Mann, Ludwig Rubiner and Gustav Landauer were driven together in the Aktivismus movement

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(54) Reinhard Rürup, Problems of the German Revolution, in Journal of Contemporary History, Vol.3, No. 4.,p.116.

(55) Olle Kamellen, WB 6/2/19, GW 1, p.366.

(56) Cf. Chapter 1.

✓ by their common pacifism. The political aims of the movement's leading exponent, Kurt Hiller, were vague and expressed in emotional terms; his assertion

„Wir wollen, bei lebendigem Leibe, ins Paradies" (57) was characteristic. However, the tactics which Hiller advocated were clear; the German intelligentsia was to organise itself and win for its superior insight a position of power. (58)

Nevertheless, when the Revolution did come, the Berlin intellectuals failed to justify Hiller's optimism. As a social group composed of individualists, they proved impossible to organise into a united "Partei des deutschen Geistes". Hiller's own Rat der geistigen Arbeiter published its radical programme in the Weltbühne, (59) but it soon lost Jacobsohn's support and disintegrated amid the recriminations of its members. The intellectuals in Munich were for a time more successful, but the efforts of Eisner, Toller and Landauer to reconcile the concepts of Geist and Macht were ultimately frustrated by the counter-revolutionaries.

Tucholsky was not himself an active member of this movement, as has been explained by Hiller. The latter also denied that Tucholsky had been significantly influenced by the Aktivisten; Tucholsky was considerably younger than Heinrich Mann, Landauer and Hiller himself, and had reached his opinions independently.

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(57) In Das Ziel, Jahrbuch für tätigen Geist, Vol.1, 1915, quoted by Paul Pörtner in Literatur und Revolution 1910-25, Vol.2: Zur Begriffsbestimmung der Ismen, Neuwied, Luchterhand, 1961, p.404.

(58) *ibid.*: "Angehörige der Partei des deutschen Geistes! Nun oder nie wird euch zufallen, was ihr so lange erstrebtet: die Macht.."

(59) WB 21/11/18.

(60) Hiller's letter to Horst Günther Weise is quoted in the latter's thesis, Tucholsky als Literaturkritiker, Harvard, 1962, p.360.

This assessment of Tucholsky as an independent thinker is probably correct, since his views often differed from Hiller's own. At this stage in his career Tucholsky would never have described himself as a Socialist, as Hiller did. He also disagreed with the disappointed Hiller's denunciation of democracy as mere "Piefkewirtschaft! Philistokratie!" in the spring of 1919. (61) However, the moral rather than aesthetic motivation of Hiller and Tucholsky was identical. Even before the war, Tucholsky had sympathised with the idea that intellectuals had a duty to involve themselves in political affairs. (62) In the programme of the Negativen he formulated this sentiment as strongly as Hiller himself:

„Wozu führen denn letzten Endes die Erkenntnisse des Geistes, wenn man nicht ein Mal von den Höhen der Weisheit herunterklettert, ihre Ergebnisse auf das tägliche Leben anwendet und das zu formen versucht nach seinem Ebenbilde?“ (63)

The idealistic, unpolitical nature of Tucholsky's demand for a "geistige Revolution" also reflected the attitude of many German intellectuals, such as Hiller and Ossietzky. (64) Tucholsky made a further concession to the principles of the Aktivisten when he asserted in Wir Negativen:

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(61) Hiller, Ein Ministerium der Köpfe, in Geist werde Herr, Berlin, Erich Reiß-Verlag, 1920, p.129.

(62) Cf. Chapter 1.

(63) Wir Negativen, GW 1, p.374.

(64) Hiller recognised in late 1918 that political revolution should be followed by a change in attitudes, in the speech Wer sind wir? Was wollen wir?, Geist werde Herr, p.73:... "wahre Revolution ist erst da, wo die kulturelle Revolution gelang. Eine tief durchgreifende, um- und umwühlende Erziehung des Volkes zum Geist, sie erst ermöglicht die Sicherung der geringen revolutionären Errungenschaften von gestern und heute.." Ossietzky expressed similar opinions in a passage recalling the spirit of Wir Negativen, quoted by Koplin, op.cit.p.30: "Es muß ausgesprochen werden, daß uns nichts mehr an die Tradition bindet, daß es zwecklos ist, Halbheiten durchzumogeln, daß endlich jene geistige Erneuerung durchgeführt werden muß, die der deutsche Michel jahrhundertlang versäumt hat".

„Der unbedingten Solidarität aller Geldverdiener muß die ebenso unbedingte Solidarität der Geistigen gegenüberstehen". (65)

Such similarities of opinion suggest that Hiller was correct in claiming that even if Tucholsky did not belong to any Aktivist organisation, he was in sympathy with the basic aims of its members.

The most informative parallel between Tucholsky and an Aktivist leader has so far been ignored by critics, although the comparison between Tucholsky and the Bavarian premier, Kurt Eisner, merits as much analysis as Tucholsky's relations with Hiller. Since Tucholsky praised intellectual engagement, even when he disagreed with its political goal, his attitude to the idealist described by Heinrich Mann as

„Der erste wahrhaft geistige Mensch an der Spitze eines deutschen Staates" (66)

deserves study.

Although Tucholsky distrusted Eisner's apparent Bavarian separatism (67) and seldom commented directly on his career, the parallel between their views is striking. Eisner, like Tucholsky, was a left-wing intellectual and writer from a middle-class Jewish family in Berlin. (68) Eisner also emphasised the need for a revolutionary change in social attitudes towards the acceptance of democracy. (69) He found the old, hierarchical society intolerable for ethical rather than directly political reasons, since its lack of freedom restricted moral choice and was contrary to human dignity.

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(65) Wir Negativen, op.cit., p.375.

(66) Heinrich Mann: Kurt Eisner, eine Gedenkrede, in Macht und Mensch, p.170.

(67) Tucholsky allowed a cartoon to appear in Ulk on 13/12/18, showing Eisner as the "Elefant im Münchener Porzellanladen".

(68) The summary of Eisner's views is based on the articles by Paul Pörtner: The Writers' Revolution, in Journal of Contemporary History, Vol.3, No.4 (1968), pp.137-51.

(69) *ibid.*: "What we want is democracy, not the travesty of democracy which goes with ballot paper and parties, but true democracy, rooted in the will of the people, in which every individual is democratic, thinks democratically, acts democratically". (Eisner in a speech at Basle, 10/2/19).

Eisner's career as a revolutionary leader met most of the criteria advanced by Tucholsky in Wir Negativen. He recognised the need for the intellectual to bring his insight to bear in practical affairs; and the energy with which he forced his way to power provided a good example of "konkret gewordene Geistigkeit". (70) Tucholsky's comments on the need to destroy the old before attempting to build the new Germany might have been written about Eisner's bloodless victory over the Wittelsbach monarchy.

Eisner is now remembered as a pacifist and anti-militarist. It was a demonstration in favour of an immediate cease-fire which led to his seizure of power on November 8th. Both his coup d'etat and his apparent separatism stemmed from the belief that a Bavarian state led by an opponent of the war would receive better terms from the idealistic President Wilson than would the Empire of Wilhelm II. Eisner was hated on the right mainly on account of his publication of documents purporting to prove the responsibility of the Imperial regime for the outbreak of war. Such tactics might have freed the Republican government from the burden of guilt inflicted on the country by its predecessor. This process of Volksaufklärung was carried on in later years by Tucholsky himself. Like the Bavarian premier, he was accused of Nestbeschmutzung on this issue. Tucholsky was able to rebut the charge in Wir Negativen (71) but no such opportunity was granted to Eisner; he was murdered by a young lieutenant on February 21st, 1919. The ability to mediate successfully between the different left-wing forces in Bavaria had been one of Eisner's greatest achievements. This success had corresponded to Tucholsky's demands

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(70) Wir Negativen, GW 1, p.374.

(71) GW 1, p.375.



for unity among the progressive groups. But after Eisner's death the pattern of left-wing riots and reactionary repression was repeated in Munich.

The parallel between Tucholsky's theoretical demands and the aims and actions of Eisner during the Bavarian Revolution covers the major points in Tucholsky's programme. Eisner demonstrated both the possibility and the value of intellectual engagement in politics. An ardent supporter of genuine democracy, Eisner, like Tucholsky, regarded moral criteria such as human dignity as essential features of the new Germany. Both were Jewish Literaten, opposed to violence, militarism and war, and as a result both were accused of anti-German activities when they sought the future good of their country.

It is, however, impossible to state definitely that Tucholsky's development was influenced by Eisner's example. Certainly his obituary for Eisner left no doubt of his awareness that the latest victim of the Nationalists had shared many of his own aims: progressive engagement, idealism and pacifism.(72) On two other occasions Tucholsky singled out Eisner from among the victims of right-wing terrorism, in the satirical article Der Preußenhimmel (73) and in Der selige Noske. (74) Even the relative scarcity of such references to Eisner in Tucholsky's early years might be attributed to his writing for a Berlin public to whom the Spartacist riots were more familiar and exciting reading than Eisner's premiership in distant Munich.

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(72) Cf. Eisner, *ibid.*, pp.379-80:

„Es starb Jaurès, Karl Liebknecht, Luxemburg,  
Kurt Eisner...”

The pacifism, not explicitly expressed, is the only quality which links the four victims.

(73) Freie Welt, January 1920, *ibid.*, pp.577-79.

(74) WB 2/2/22, *ibid.*, p.902.

However, the evidence that Eisner influenced Tucholsky's thought is inconclusive. Nothing in Tucholsky's writings proves that he was aware how close were their respective positions on such issues as the need to encourage democratic attitudes among the German people, let alone that Tucholsky took up his position because of Eisner's example. The best explanation for the similarity of view is that both men independently reached the same conclusions due to their common awareness of ideas current among the Aktivisten. As a result, Eisner came closer than any Weimar politician to Tucholsky's own ideal.

It has been established that Tucholsky's involvement in current affairs immediately after the war owed more to idealism than to a firm grasp of political theory, which seemed to him irrelevant to the problems of German society. He made no exception to his general distrust of such theory in the case of Marxism, a fact which placed him intellectually in the liberal rather than the Social Democratic camp.

Tucholsky was basically an idealist in the philosophical as well as the more general sense of the term. It is true that his interest in political reform was increasing, but he still sought changes mainly within the abstract realm of the German people's attitudes. The materialism which provided the philosophical basis for Marxism seemed to offer an incomplete picture of human development, and Tucholsky was therefore unwilling to believe that men's ideas were conditioned primarily by their role in the productive process.(75) Tucholsky likewise did not accept that, as Marx had stated(76), society was divided into

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(75) Cf. Marx's Vorwort zur Kritik der politischen Ökonomie, in Marx und Engels, Werke, East Berlin, Dietz, 1963, Vol.13, pp.9-10:  
"Es ist nicht das Bewußtsein der Menschen, das ihr Sein, sondern umgekehrt ihr gesellschaftliches Sein, das ihr Bewußtsein bestimmt.."  
In the above quotation from Herren und Kerls, Tucholsky uses the phrase "die soziale Umgebung" as an equivalent for what Marx saw as the role of the individual in the productive process. This suggests that as yet Tucholsky did not fully understand Marx's point.

(76) Cf. Marx und Engels, Manifest der kommunistischen Partei, in Werke, Vol.4, p.462.

antagonistic classes, each with its own class-consciousness. Instead Tucholsky took the liberal view that although similarities of economic position were important, the differences in individual character were still more significant. The clearest example of Tucholsky's stand-point was in the article Herren und Kerls:

„In jeder Schicht gedeihen Proleten und Träumer  
und feine Menschen und Idealisten und unbekümmerte  
Dummköpfe; die soziale Umgebung macht viel, aber bei  
weitem nicht alles am Menschen aus". (77)

These were not the sentiments of one who saw history as a succession of class struggles, which would culminate in the dictatorship of the proletariat. Indeed, the very word "dictatorship" must have sufficed to make such a social system unacceptable to Tucholsky, in view of his uncompromising opposition to "die Unfreiheit des Deutschen". (78) The ardent advocate of freedom from the shackles of the old, caste-ridden Prussian society could not tolerate in its place what must have appeared to be another dictatorial form of government, even though on a numerically broader base. In spite of insisting that his fellow-countrymen should accept democratic principles and put them into practice, Tucholsky was comparatively uninterested in economic affairs, and he ignored the issues of economic democracy and nationalisation which were being widely discussed among left-wing intellectuals in 1919.

Tucholsky's employment of Marxist terminology was also infrequent and occurred generally in a negative context. He used the terms Bürger and Proletarier in Wir Negativen in a manner which owed little to the definitions of the Communist Manifesto. Tucholsky defined the Bürgertum in intellectual rather than economic terms, and considered its distinguishing feature the anti-democratic mentality of the true Prussian. (80) When

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(77) Berliner Tageblatt, 2/6/19.

(78) Der Untertan, GW I, p.385.

(79) Not until 1928 did Tucholsky charge the SPD with the failure to undertake "eine revolutionäre Sozialisierung der Industrie".  
November-Unsturz, Schwarze Fahne, GW II, p.1301

(80) GW I, p.373.

he referred to proletarians, it was to offer sympathy and help on humanitarian, not political grounds, to the "Unterdrückten, die nicht immer notwendigerweise Proletarier sein müssen". (81)

Tucholsky's individualism was the corollary of his rejection of Marxist collectivism. The passage quoted above from Herren und Kerls confirmed that its author saw society as composed of individual human beings rather than of classes held together by a common function in the economic process. Individualism was also indicated by his loathing of the national worship of collectivities; their proper role, he declared in Wir Negativen (82), was not as an end in themselves but as "ein Hilfsmittel für die einzelnen". This was the spirit in which Tucholsky later approached such groups as the USPD, the Pacifist Movement and the KPD, and it was far removed from the Vereinsmeierei so typical of his compatriots. Tucholsky considered that his fellow-countrymen used such collective groups dishonestly, in order to compensate for their own weakness (83), and to explain away offences which they would not have committed as individuals. (84) Such collectivities also served often as a hindrance rather than a help, shackling the individual with extra duties without providing him with additional rights.

After four years of war, the most demanding collective was evidently the state. The intellectual basis of Tucholsky's pacifism lay in the conviction that the state had no claim over the lives of its male inhabitants. He revealed this stand-point in a letter to Mary Gerold in the last months of the war, and for many years it provided the best summary of his view on the relationship between the individual and the

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(81) *ibid.*, p.377.

(82) *ibid.*, p.376.

(83) Cf. Das Mitglied, WB 1/6/26, GW II, pp.457-8.

(84) Zur Erinnerung an den ersten August 1914, GW I, p.356.

community:

„Es kommt nur auf den einzelnen an,  
Das Volk und das Ganze sind eingebildete Dinge,  
die wir uns gemacht haben". (85)

This rejection of the state should not be confused with that of the Marxist, for whom the bourgeois state serves as the instrument of the exploiting class against the proletariat. Not until his stay in Paris in 1924 did Tucholsky adopt this opinion.

At this early stage in his career, Tucholsky's attitude to Marxism varied between the indifference of a writer uninterested in political theory and the hostility of a liberal individualist. From his sparse comments on the subject, it may be deduced that he opposed the basic tenets of the division of society along economic lines into antagonistic classes, and its corollary, the inevitability of the proletarian revolution and dictatorship. On a more philosophical level, he also rejected the materialism and collectivism characteristic of Marxism in favour of an idealistic, individualistic position. As Prescher has pointed out:

„Rein marxistische Gedankengänge sind in seinen  
Veröffentlichungen aus dieser Zeit nicht enthalten;  
ein Marxist würde den Tucholsky dieser Periode  
als einen bürgerlichen Humanisten bezeichnen". (86)

His later radicalism was a response to the failure of Weimar democracy. That failure had not yet become apparent; indeed the government of President Ebert and Chancellor Scheidemann and ministers from the SPD, DDP and Zentrum appeared to have strengthened its position by defeating its left-wing opponents. However, Ebert's triumph was bought at the price of an alliance with the anti-Republican right, which was impatiently waiting to start a counter-offensive. The next phase of Tucholsky's career was therefore concerned with the battle for parliamentary democracy in Germany.

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(85) Letter of 14/7/18, Briefe, p.372.

(86) Prescher, op.cit., p.24.

### CHAPTER 3

The Revolution and its aftermath increased Tucholsky's interest in political affairs and helped his opinions to mature. The qualities which distinguished the next phase of his career began to emerge under the stimulus of external events between the summer of 1919 and early 1920. Gradually it became clear that Tucholsky had been over-optimistic in hoping that his compatriots would adopt a favourable attitude towards democracy, particularly at the local level. The old authoritarianism persisted, and it was reinforced by popular resentment against the unexpectedly rigorous terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Though progressive intellectual engagement was more urgently needed than ever, Tucholsky now realised that it must take a new form. Democracy could best be secured by appealing to the supposedly progressive government. Reforms were particularly necessary in view of the signs that the counter-revolutionary forces which had suffered a temporary defeat in November 1918 were regaining their influence and self-confidence. The change in Tucholsky's attitude began purely negatively, with increasingly radical denunciations of militarism. Then he turned to directly political criticism designed to stimulate government action. At the same time he reinforced his own commitment to reform by abandoning his earlier sympathy for the DDP and joining the USPD, which by March 1920 was the fastest-growing left-wing party in Germany.

The harsh terms imposed by the victorious Allies at Versailles played an important part in dispelling not only Tucholsky's optimism but also the desire for reform among many of his compatriots. Tucholsky himself had not shared his fellow-countrymen's blind trust that the Treaty would enshrine President Wilson's liberal Fourteen Points, and feared with

good reason that the French would maintain their uncompromising attitude in the negotiations.(1) When it became clear that Germany was to lose territory and her colonies, pay reparations, accept restrictions on the size and equipment of the armed forces, admit her "war guilt" and hand over so-called "war criminals", the reaction of Tucholsky was naturally unenthusiastic. Nevertheless his response represented a longer-term view than was customary in a German press which almost unanimously remained content to echo the indignant "Unannehmbar!" of Premier Scheidemann. By contrast, Tucholsky avoided facile polemic and came to the correct conclusion that Germany had little alternative but to sign:

„Bis zum Ende grade stehen?  
Lieber 'in Ehren untergehen?'  
Untergehn, wenn der Sturmwind braust?  
Ein Volk geht nicht unter-  
ein Volk verlaust...  
Werden wir also nicht unterschreiben?  
Wird uns was andres übrig bleiben?..."(2)

Protestations of injured innocence were rejected in favour of a determination to learn from the mistakes of the Empire which had led up to the war.

At this point in the discussion of the Treaty, only the USPD among the German parties supported Tucholsky's realistic view.(3) By contrast, his previous allies in the DDP were bitterly opposed to any "surrender", and this hostility was nowhere more apparent than in the leading articles of the Berliner Tageblatt. As the editor of ULk, Tucholsky could hardly adopt an attitude significantly different from that of Theodor Wolff. Though Tucholsky ultimately triumphed over this obstacle,

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(1) Volk in Not, ULk, 9/5/19.

(2) Bilanz, WB 15/5/19.

(3) The USP did not share Tucholsky's motivation, They stressed the suffering likely to be inflicted on German workers, since they would have to bear the brunt of any resumption of hostilities, and recommended acceptance of the Allied ultimatum in the hope that the Treaty could be re-written after the impending social revolution in Western Europe.

his first reaction to the probable editorial pressure was to take refuge in uncharacteristic platitudes.(4) A week later, however, he followed Wolff and confined himself in Friede? to the polemical attack on the Allies which he had avoided in the Weltbühne:

„Und ihr? Ihr sprachet vom Völkerbund,  
Wir trauten den Vierzehn Punkten.  
Wir dachten, ihr machtet Europa gesund  
als wir Waffenstillstand funkten...

Friede? Das ist der blanke Hohn!"(5)

It was nevertheless significant that he still refused to reject the terms outright; he remained convinced that, sooner or later, submission was inevitable.

The efforts of Tucholsky to take the discussion of the Treaty in Ulk beyond the vehement criticism of his colleagues that its acceptance amounted to national dishonour culminated in the poem Krieg dem Kriege!(6) This embodied the Tageblatt's hostility to the terms, but for a reason characteristic of Tucholsky rather than Wolff: that it would drive Germans into supporting a war of revenge. Between the Armistice and the publication of the Allied peace terms, international understanding had seemed a feasible goal, with the war-weary German masses a receptive audience. Clemenceau's determination to exact full vengeance for the French defeat in 1871 seriously weakened the Pacifist Movement in Germany. Conversely, it permitted the Nationalists to regain the initiative, with defiant statements from the safety of the opposition benches.(7) The SPD and Zentrum were forced on to the defensive, after accepting the odium of signing the Schmachfrieden. This transformation of the political atmosphere amply justified Tucholsky's attack on Clemenceau. His fears inspired Tucholsky

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(4) Kopf hoch!, Ulk, 16/5/19.

(5) Ulk, 23/5/19.

(6) Ulk, 13/6/19, GW 1, pp.432-33.

(7) Cf. Hindenburg's report to Noske that military resistance in the west would be impossible, but that this course should nevertheless be followed, since "as a soldier I must prefer death with honour to a shameful peace". (Quoted in Carsten, op.cit., p.42)



to embark on his career as the Weimar Cassandra, with a prophecy which was to be punctually fulfilled:

„... Die Imperialisten,  
die da drüben bei jenen nisten  
schenken uns wieder Nationalisten.  
Und nach abermals zwanzig Jahren  
kommen neue Kanonen gefahren". (8)

Tucholsky's major contribution to the discussion of the Versailles terms was the realisation that they would act as a catalyst of future hostilities. For this reason he opposed the Treaty. However, he was not blind to the accidental advantages which its implementation might bestow on Germany. As a confirmed anti-militarist, Tucholsky welcomed the restrictions on the German armed forces; since his compatriots could not defeat their own military, the Allies were doing her a service by demanding disarmament. Tucholsky believed that his country would have fared better if she had adhered to the spirit of this point, since the forces created to circumvent the restrictions provided little external protection, and served as anti-Republican mercenaries.

Almost as revealing as the points of the Treaty which Tucholsky discussed directly were those aspects which he passed over without comment. The so-called Ehrenpunkte, notably the admission of German war guilt, elicited from Tucholsky little response, although this issue had stirred most wrath on the right. On the subject of the lost colonies, Tucholsky was even less ready to oppose the Versailles settlement, since he believed that Germany's treatment of her former Empire had indeed disqualified her as a future colonial power. (9)

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(8) GW 1, p.433.

(9) Ein weißer Rabe, WB 4/12/19, *ibid.*, p.539.

The response of Tucholsky to the Treaty was far more calm and responsible than that of the press as a whole. He admitted from the first that Germany had little alternative but to accept the Allied ultimatum, but he correctly foresaw that it would give rise to future conflict. However, the military and colonial restrictions seemed to him, in Poor's words, "a blessing in disguise".(10)

The Versailles settlement had a double significance in Tucholsky's development. First, it provided propaganda ammunition for the Nationalists. This not only prompted Tucholsky to advocate counter-measures against the reactionaries themselves, but also led him to reflect on those responsible for the continuation of right-wing influence. He was therefore compelled to recognise the fatal results of the compromises by the SPD. Secondly, it is almost certain that Tucholsky found the attitude of the DDP unacceptable; unlike the Democrats, he recognised that the Treaty would have to be signed. The right-ward shift of public opinion and the DDP's flight from responsibility stimulated his re-appraisal of the political situation.

The summer of 1919 was marked not only by the Versailles controversy but also by the signing of the Weimar Constitution. The constitutional compromise stirred no more enthusiasm in Tucholsky than among the public at large. More significant to Tucholsky was the fact that a measure of stability had returned to Germany; this allowed him to reflect on the situation in the country rather than the Constitution. He was compelled to recognise that the restructuring of society along democratic lines was as distant as ever; schools, universities and civil

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(10) Poor, *op.cit.*, p.99.

service remained bastions of reaction.(11) A journey through some of the less progressive provinces confirmed Tucholsky's belief that, to judge from its lack of impact on the conservative Stammtisch in Klein-Piepen-Eichen, the revolution might never have taken place. For a short time, Tucholsky continued to hope for the advent of a Gedanken-revolution, but his optimism was fast giving way to a resigned contemplation of the coming "winter of our discontent".(12)

In common with other Aktivisten, Tucholsky had come to recognise the pointlessness of further reliance on intellectual solidarity as a force for change. In their Berlin Congress in June 1919 the Räte geistiger Arbeiter had rejected their earlier ideal of engagement independent of existing organisations; a position, in Hiller's words, "links über den Parteien"(13), in favour of work within political parties. Tucholsky himself was to follow this example by joining the USPD. This transitional period in his career was marked by a last effort to combine his two aims of engagement and the reform of social attitudes through the appeal for fellow-intellectuals to devote their energies to the political enlightenment of the provinces. However, he can have had little hope of success, since the remaining Aktivisten were unlikely to derive inspiration from the prospect of "Kleinarbeit und der Mut zum Trivialen".(14)

The unchanged nature of his compatriots' opinions became obvious to Tucholsky after two political trials: the trial of the murderers of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, and the indictment of Lieutenant Marloh for

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(11) Cf. Preussische Professoren, WB 22/5/19, GW 1, pp.420-22; Die Schule, WB 24/7/19, ibid., pp.451-2; Noch immer, WB 17/7/19, ibid., pp.448-9. The soundness of Tucholsky's view is confirmed by Kolb, who notes how few Social Democrats gained posts in the Prussian bureaucracy. (op.cit.,pp.266-7).

(12) Eindrücke von einer Reise, WB 16/10/19, GW 1, p.499.

(13) Cf. Eva Kolinsky: Engagierter Expressionismus, Politik und Literatur zwischen Weltkrieg und Weimarer Republik, Stuttgart, Metzler, 1970, p.119.

(14) Eindrücke von einer Reise, GW 1, p.498.

shooting thirty unarmed sailors of the Volksmarinedivision. The approval with which the special military courts greeted the assassination of the Spartacist leaders, the obstacles placed in the way of those endeavouring to establish the true sequence of events demonstrated the strength of the old order. (15) The immediate reaction of Tucholsky was a bitter denunciation of militarism, combined with a defiant optimism about the future:

„Das Ding liegt so: da steht der Militarismus, da stehen wir. Und weil die Welt nicht in Staaten, wohl aber in Fortstrebende und Zurückzerrende verfällt, müßt ihr beiseite gehen, in voller Uniform, in Feldbinde, Ordensschmuck und Helm. Und was die Toten rufen, ruft unser Herz: Ecrasez l'infâme!" (16)

By the time Marloh faced trial in December 1919, the tone of Tucholsky's polemic had changed; he declared stoically:

„Ich kämpfe weiter, aber ich resigniere". (17)

The majority of his compatriots had retained their exaggerated respect for the army and condoned its brutality. For once even Tucholsky was driven to admit his helplessness; none of his five personae could devise a form of expression to convince his fellow-citizens:

„Pathos tuts nicht und Spott nicht und Tadel nicht  
und sachliche Kritik nicht.  
Sie wollen nicht hören". (18)

By January 1920 it had become obvious to Tucholsky that the coalition government led by the SPD and Trade Union leader Gustav Bauer was devoid of all reforming zeal. There was no sign that it could master the post-war economic crisis. Still more serious was its failure to create

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(15) Cf. Die lebendigen Toten, WB 15/5/19, *ibid.*, p.418: "Der Militarismus ist nicht tot: er ist nur verhindert".

(16) *ibid.*, p.419.

(17) Prozeß Marloh, WB 18/12/19, *ibid.*, p.546.

(18) *ibid.*, p.547.

adequate defence forces against counter-revolution. Now that the Social Democrats had served their purpose of protecting Germany against Bolshevism, the radical right considered them ripe for replacement by an openly Nationalist government. On several occasions Tucholsky warned of the danger of Noske's support for militarism and demanded his resignation. (19)

Tucholsky's case against Noske was for a time weakened by his inability to suggest how the minister might have created a Republican force to resist revolutionary disorder. When Tucholsky surmounted the despair which had characterised Prozeß Marloh, he emerged from his personal crisis with new political insight. By February 1920 Tucholsky no longer confined his polemic to the morally unsatisfactory conduct of the officers or to the minister's support for militarism, but went on to examine the situation in which the troops had been enlisted, and to advocate a preferable course:

„Ein Heer? Die Gewerkschaften waren vollzählig da, gut und zuverlässig an Gesinnung, leicht zu bewaffnen und meist aus alten Soldaten bestehend. Noske ... führte das alte Offizierkorps, dessen Macht erloschen schien, neuen herrlichen Zeiten entgegen". (20)

To his ethical and social criticism, Tucholsky had added a new dimension of political criticism. It was also significant that Tucholsky appeared to have abandoned his earlier hopes for change through an appeal to the majority of his fellow-countrymen. (21) As yet he provided no detailed plan to be implemented by the government, but this was hardly surprising, since he believed that the Bauer administration lacked interest in reform.

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(19) Cf. Henry Noske, WB 4/9/19, GW III, p.1334; and the motto of Prozeß Marloh, GW 1, p.543.

(20) Das leere Schloß, WB 19/2/20, *ibid.*, p.499.

(21) The last article to concentrate on such an appeal was Militaria, WB 22/1/20, *ibid.*, p.592: "Gebt den Offizierstypen... keine Untergebenen mehr her... dann gehen sie ein".

The SPD had failed to exert decisive influence(22) and its tenure of power was likely to be brief.(23) However, Tucholsky did put forward one general suggestion:

„Um zu regieren, dazu gehören vor allem Mut und Macht. Dazu gehört die große Geste, die da sagt: Jetzt sind wir die Herren.. Wir herrschen! Wir repräsentieren! Wir decken das Alte auf und zeugen Neues! Wir. Wir. Wir."(24)

A month later, after the Kapp Putsch, Tucholsky was to take the next step with a detailed programme to stabilise democratic government.

A final element in this period of Tucholsky's development was his abandonment of the DDP. His disillusionment with the party was understandable, since it had ceased to subscribe to Wolff's progressive ideals. The DDP's election campaign had been financed by right-wing industrialists. Von Siemens and his colleagues, the discredited reactionaries whose rehabilitation Tucholsky had deplored in Osterspaziergang(25), attempted to turn the party into a bulwark against Bolshevism. This conservative support drove the party to the right and led to contradictions in its policies. While the party continued to seek votes among workers and clerks by offering reform and the extension of public ownership, it promised its industrial paymasters to oppose economic experiments. To avoid losing either wing of its support, the DDP preferred compromise and passivity to any sponsorship of controversial reforms. Tucholsky considered that its contribution to the establishment of a truly democratic Germany amounted not to actions but only to the eloquence of its leader, Friedrich Naumann.(26) The materialist German middle-classes could not be won over to the progressive cause by a party

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(22) Das leere Schloß, *ibid.*, p.599.

(23) *ibid.*, p.603: "Diese Regierung ist auf die Dauer unhaltbar",

(24) *ibid.*

(25) BVZ, 20/4/19, GW 1, p.399.

(26) Wir Negativen, *ibid.*, p.375.

whose belief in democracy was enshrined in its name but ignored in practice:

„Der kleine November-Schwips des Jahres 1918 hielt ganze sieben Tage an - dann begründeten sie die Deutsche Demokratische Partei, die mit der Idee der Demokratie so viel zu tun hat wie die Schopenhauer-Gesellschaft mit Schopenhauer. Wenn bei uns die Ideen populär werden, dann bleibt die Popularität, die Idee geht gewöhnlich zum Teufel". (27)

One such inconsistent politician within the DDP seemed to be Walther Rathenau, a leading industrialist who was now endeavouring to persuade the public that he had for years been a democrat at heart. Tucholsky saw in Rathenau only the fanatical opponent of German surrender in October 1918, and concluded that there was no place in Republican politics for such unreliable characters:

„Neue Anschauungen müssen von neuen Männern getragen werden". (28)

In the light of Rathenau's subsequent development as a democratic Erfüllungs-politiker, Tucholsky's suspicions proved unjustified. However, his article amounted also to an attack on a type of politician widely represented in the DDP: men who had "placed themselves on the basis of the Constitution" for personal advantage rather than out of conviction.

The earlier conditional loyalty of Tucholsky to the DDP was shaken by the party's move to the right and by the growing contrast between its principles and its political practice. In a situation in which decisive action was called for, the position of the Democrats became unacceptable both to Tucholsky and to the majority of the party's supporters at the January elections. The latter generally gravitated towards the more

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(27) Macht und Mensch, *ibid.*, p.679.

(28) Der Schnellmaler, WB 29/5/19, *ibid.*, p.425.

right-wing Deutsche Volkspartei, which had made progress by blaming the Republic for problems stemming from military defeat. (29)

The suspicions of Tucholsky that the reactionary forces were preparing to destroy the Republic were confirmed in the Kapp Putsch of March 1920. This evidence of the vulnerability of the new state was the final element which caused Tucholsky to dedicate the next phase of his career to loyal, if critical support for the Republic as a framework for possible progress.

The rebellion began when a Freikorps unit, the Ehrhardt Brigade, was encouraged to revolt by the commander of the Reichswehr in the Berlin area, General Lüttwitz. The disloyalty of the latter had been common knowledge among his colleagues for some months, and even Noske had had some doubts about him. (30) Nevertheless, the advent of the crisis took the minister by surprise. At a council of war hastily convened by Noske, most of the generals followed Seeckt's example and refused to resist the rebels. As a result the government was forced into ignominious flight from Berlin.

But if the centre-left coalition had been discredited by its inability to prevent the coup, the rebels received a still more demoralising lesson. The coup had been poorly planned; its political leader, General-landschaftsdirektor Kapp, had not expected it to take place until summer and the Freikorps, though they had for some time talked of overthrowing the Republic, likewise lacked a plan of campaign. (31) They were given no time to develop one. Before leaving for Dresden, the Social Democratic

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(29) The slogan of the DVP at the 1920 election was:

„Von roten Ketten macht euch frei  
allein die deutsche Volkspartei!"

(30) Noske, op.cit., p.202.

(31) Robert G L Waite: Vanguard of Nazism, The Free Corps in Germany, harvard, 1952, pp.156-7.



ministers, supported by the Free Trade Unions, called a general strike. The unity of the workers in response to this summons brought the collapse of Kapp's enterprise within four days. The violence of the rebels during their brief rule led to a great increase in anti-militarist feeling. On its return to power the government of Ebert and Bauer was presented with an opportunity to start afresh and "create a truly Republican military force on which it could rely in the uncertain and difficult years which lay ahead". (32)

There was general recognition in the Weltbühne and in the SPD itself that radical reforms were necessary. One result of this mood was the Bielefeld Agreement between the unions, the striking Ruhr workers and the right-wing Social Democratic Ruhrkommissar, Carl Severing. The signatories of the agreement accepted the need for reforms, including the formation, in consultation with the unions, of a coalition government of the SPD and USPD, who were to introduce an extensive programme of nationalisation.

Though these demands were supported by the leader-writer of the Weltbühne, Heinrich Ströbel, the proposals of Tucholsky were much more modest. He did not insist on the exclusion of the bourgeois politicians from power, but contented himself with the advice to the new administration, irrespective of its composition, that the rebels and their supporters should be punished, the Reichswehr replaced by a people's militia and in the process purged of counter-revolutionary officers. (33) Such reforms would have amounted to no more than the fulfilment of long-established SPD policy. The request for Noske's removal from public life could hardly be described as radical; in any case, it had already been half-fulfilled when

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(32) *ibid.*, p.168.

(33) Kapp-Lüttwitz, WB 25/3/20, GW 1, pp.620-1.

Noske had resigned as Reichswehrminister after an attack on his military policy by Scheidemann.

However, even such moderate proposals were not implemented by the Social Democrats. Scheidemann was unwilling to take ministerial responsibility for carrying out the necessary reforms, and demonstrated a preference for brave words rather than action. (34) Control of the army passed to the unreliable Seeckt. Reichswehr troops, led by former rebel officers, were sent into the Ruhr to quell disturbances by workers who had answered the government's call to strike and were reluctant to surrender their arms for fear of reprisals by the right. However difficult the position of the SPD, the occupation of the Ruhr demonstrated once again that since the Revolution the party feared its natural supporters, the working masses, more than its sworn enemies. Tucholsky's remaining proposals for change were also rejected. He called for a propaganda campaign against militarism, the dismissal of reactionary civil servants, and a democratic reorganisation of German schools. Chancellors Bauer and Müller shared Scheidemann's tendency towards verbal radicalism rather than action, an attitude which Tucholsky summarised with heavy sarcasm:

„Warum denn gleich tun? Das wäre schön dumm.  
Reden genügt ja dem Publikum". (35)

The Putsch represented a potential turning-point in the history of the Republic. For the first time Tucholsky's assessment of long-term trends was proved correct, and the irresolution of Republican politicians shown to be a mistake. However moderate Tucholsky's proposals, their implementation would have offered some safeguards for the future of democracy in Germany. But in spite of the doubts about the loyalty of

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(34) Worte und Taten, WB 22/4/20, *ibid.*, p.635.

(35) *ibid.*

Seeckt's Reichswehr, the SPD ministers remained wedded to the idea of a strong military force to protect the country against foreign invasions and Communist risings. In addition, they refused to recognise that the conservative judges, civil servants and teachers constituted a serious danger to the Republic. The elections of June 1920 brought the party its reward when almost half of its former supporters turned to the more resolutely Socialist USPD.

In the context of this study the most important of the new recruits to the USPD was Tucholsky himself. He joined the party in March 1920, though whether before or just after the coup is uncertain. By the winter of 1919-20, the USPD had gained greatly in numerical and organisational strength from working-class discontent with the performance of the SPD in government. However, the influx of revolutionary workers and the murder of the Independent leader, Hugo Haase, caused the policy of the USPD to move to the left. Its advocacy of the Rätesystem led to complete parliamentary isolation.(36) The consolidation of the reactionary forces made this position impractical. The advent of a second revolution was becoming increasingly unlikely, the Councils had lost almost all their influence, and the Independents would therefore have been well advised to concentrate on defending the achievements of November 1918 in the Reichstag. However, the more realistic right-wing USPD leaders who called for a strengthening of democracy were in the minority and could not shape party policy.(37) After the defeat of Kapp, the left wing of the USPD, led by Ernst Däumig, the theoretician of the former Revolutionary Shop Stewards, was

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(36) The Aktionsprogramm drawn up by the party's Leipzig Congress in December 1919 is quoted by Wolfgang Treue, in Deutsche Parteiprogramme, 1861-1961, Göttingen, Musterschmidt, 1961, p.98.

(37) The conflicting positions within the party are illustrated in Eugen Prager's official Geschichte der USPD, Berlin, Verlagsgenossenschaft Freiheit, 1921, p.203.

as unwilling as the SPD leaders to form a united Arbeiterregierung. (38)

Tucholsky took part in the election campaign of June 1920, writing several articles for Masse's Berliner Volkszeitung, and particularly for the USPD daily, Die Freiheit, and its sister newspaper, Freie Welt. He was still principally concerned with the battle against his traditional enemy, Prussian militarism, and he looked on the campaign as an opportunity to remind his readers of their suffering during four years of war. Tucholsky condemned the Nationalists and the DVP as the instigators of the conflict. (39) He sensed the disillusionment of many workers towards the SPD as well as towards the former officers, and the optimism prevalent in his new party was evident in his advice to voters:

„Geht heute zur Urne und denkt an vier Jahre!  
An vier Jahre, die gewesen sind, und an vier Jahre,  
die kommen werden. An vier Jahre schmutzigster  
Vergangenheit und an vier Jahre folgeschwerster  
Entwicklung. Dieser Stimmzettel ist beides : eine  
Quittung und ein Wechsel auf die Zukunft.

Ich weiß, daß sich viele von uns im grimmigen Herzen  
die Abrechnung mit manchen ihrer bunten Peiniger noch  
anders vorgestellt haben als so-mit diesem einen  
Briefumschlag. Aber dieser eine Briefumschlag kann  
genügen, um euren Willen, der in der großen Zeit  
gebändigt und gefesselt am Boden lag, Geltung zu  
verschaffen". (40)

This emphasis on the power of the ballot box was appropriate in the election issue of the party daily, but the number of USPD deputies in the Reichstag mattered to Tucholsky only as an indication of political trends. He remained sceptical about future prospects, even though the USPD quadrupled its strength at the election and almost overtook the SPD itself.

The pessimism of Tucholsky was due in some measure to the fact that the official policy of the USPD was considerably more radical than

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(38) Cf. Rosenberg, Geschichte, p. 98.

(39) Erinnerung für die Wahl, Berliner Volkszeitung, 5/6/20.

(40) Vier Jahre und ein Tag, Freiheit, 6/6/20.

his own views. It is true that, in the heat of his denunciations after the Kapp Putsch, he advised the readers of the Weltbühne

„Wir haben keine Revolution gehabt, Macht eine".(41)

However, in the light of his political programme as a whole, this request should be seen only as encouragement to fulfil the promise of the November Revolution and protect its achievement, the Republic, against its reactionary enemies. It did not amount to a call for Socialist revolution or the establishment of a Workers' Republic. In the inner-party conflict between the adherents of a Rätesystem and the supporters of parliamentary democracy, the whole tenor of Tucholsky's warnings to successive Republican governments placed him in the second category. Had he secretly favoured a revolution from the left, he would hardly have exhorted the workers to remain loyal to the Republican government.(42) When the USPD split in October 1920, Tucholsky expressed regret (43) that the progressive forces should be further divided at a time of Nationalist consolidation. The controversy within the party had been engineered by the Russian Bolsheviks, who hoped to turn their small and ineffective ally, the KPD, into a mass party embracing all those workers who opposed the SPD. After a brilliant speech by the Chairman of the Comintern, Zinoviev, the majority of the delegates to the USPD Congress at Halle voted to accept the Russian conditions, unite with the KPD and affiliate to the Comintern. However, Tucholsky remained unconvinced by the Russian rhetoric, and his support for the rump of the USPD never wavered until its reunification with the SPD in the autumn of 1922.

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(41) Kapp-Lüttwitz, GW 1, p.621.

(42) Cf. Dollar-2000 Mark, Freiheit, 20/8/22: "Und wir rufen den Arbeitern zu: Seid auf der Hut! Laßt euch nicht provozieren! Wer sich jetzt an euch herandrängt, um euch Irrsinnstuten anzuraten, ist entweder bezahlt oder ein Wahnsinniger. Hände weg!"

(43) Hepp Hepp hurra!, Freiheit, 15/10/20, GW 1, p.746.

The anxiety which Tucholsky felt about future trends was stimulated less by the divisions in the USPD than by the electoral confirmation of his fear that the Nationalists had regained lost ground. The industrialists of the DVP and the agrarian, anti-Semitic DNVP won victories as striking as those of the Independents. The parliamentary situation became critical when the demoralised leaders of the SPD, afraid of losing their remaining working-class supporters, left the task of government to a middle-class coalition, which included the DVP. Although the SPD returned to the government on three subsequent occasions, in 1921, 1923 and 1928, in a Grand Coalition, its influence was far less significant than during the immediate post-war period. The phase of Republican opportunity gave way to a period when German democracy was forced back on to the defensive.

The minority governments of the Zentrum-leaders Fehrenbach and Wirth ushered in "the era of Catholic democracy".(44) Neither had more success with the foreign and economic problems than their Social Democratic predecessors. In spite of the conciliatory Erfüllungspolitik of Wirth and Rathenau, which was supported by both the USPD and the Weltbühne, the issue of reparations payments was not solved. The currency continued to depreciate and neither the middle classes nor the workers could keep pace with inflation. In their despair they were driven to seek salvation from the anti-Republican extremists of the right and left. To those such as Tucholsky who had hoped that the November Revolution would be followed by the restructuring of society along democratic lines and by radical political reform, the developments of 1920-22 were a bitter disappointment. For several years he remained loyal to the Republican cause, which appeared to hold out the only hope of progress; but successive governments, generally well-intentioned and weak-willed, ignored his warnings and prophecies of

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(44) Cf. Rosenberg, Geschichte, p.100.

disaster.

In June 1920 Tucholsky took the opportunity of a review of Heinrich Mann's essays to explain his own concept of democracy. The abstract idea stirred his imagination and his approach was idealistic rather than formalistic. Democracy was "eine Sache des Herzens", a far deeper concept than the "traurigen Parlamente" which were endeavouring to put the principle into practice. Nevertheless Tucholsky recognised the need to encourage them. As long as the Communists maintained their irresponsible efforts to overthrow the government by an armed uprising, and the Socialists were divided, Tucholsky and other left-wing intellectuals continued to support the Republic.(45) But Tucholsky believed, like Heinrich Mann, that he had the right and the duty to attack the imperfections of the existing state in the name of democratic equality:

„Nun kann nur Nein sagen, wer das Ja tief in sich fühlt..  
Es gibt etwas auch außerhalb der Berufe und der sozialen  
Position, das uns alle gleich macht, soweit Menschen  
gleich sein können. Mütter können das. Männer können  
das auch".(46)

Two years later, in spite of all the intervening disappointments, Tucholsky renewed his commitment to democracy:

„Eine, wo der Mann zu sagen hat, der Freie und  
der Verantwortungsbewußte".(47)

This humanitarian ideal, combining freedom and equality, provided the standard by which Tucholsky judged the Republican governments of the next few years.

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(45) For Ossietzky's similar view, cf. Koplin, op.cit.,p.46: "Die Weimarer Verfassung.. gab.. künftigen Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten genügend Raum, um auch die Schichten des deutschen Volkes zu integrieren, die ihm noch feindselig entgegentraten: wenn das bisher nicht geschehen sei, dann deshalb, weil die Deutschen das Wesen der Demokratie noch nicht erkannt hätten".

(46) Macht und Mensch, GW 1, p.681.

(47) Wir alle fünf, WB 24/8/22, ibid., p.1042.

In the spring and summer of 1920, the writings of Tucholsky were dominated by his political persona, Wrobel. The abortive rebellion demonstrated for him the areas where democracy had to penetrate if the Republic were to survive. His suspicions of the conservative Bürgertum had been well-founded. Even if the Berlin middle classes had hesitated to support the rebels, their provincial counterparts had shown, in March and at the June election, their opposition to the Republic.(48)

Tucholsky also recognised the unreliability of the judiciary, which treated the crimes of Nationalists as mere trifles, but punished left-wing offenders severely.(49) Most of the Kapp rebels were amnestied and only one, von Jagow, faced trial. Other anti-Republicans, such as the right-wing student volunteers from Marburg University who shot fifteen allegedly Spartacist prisoners, were acquitted, an incident which Tucholsky described with savage irony.(50) The students in question were typical products of an educational system which encouraged monarchist propaganda in schools and universities. Tucholsky noted in March 1920 that the failure to achieve reforms in the field of education constituted a long-term danger to German democracy. He pleaded in vain for government action to allow the democratic spirit to take root among German youth.(51) Tucholsky believed that radical change was necessary in all these fields if the democratic system was, as implied by the Constitution, to become the automatically accepted form of the state.

The most important lesson of Kapp's unsuccessful rebellion was the unreliability of the army. The new Reichswehrminister, Geßler, proved

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(48) In der Provinz, Freiheit, 16/5/20, *ibid.*, p.649.

(49) Cf. Chapter 9.

(50) Marburger Nachwuchs, Freiheit, 23/6/20, GW 1, pp.686-7.

(51) Kapp-Lüttwitz, *ibid.*, p.621.



as deaf to Tucholsky's advice as his predecessor, and in spite of his incompetence and conservatism(52) he retained his post for eight years. The warnings of Tucholsky culminated in the article Die Reichswehr, which concluded with a threat of what would happen to the Republic if its leaders did not act against the army while there was still time. In advising his readers:

"Bedankt euch in acht Jahren bei dieser Regierung, diesem Staatsrat, diesem Reichstag".(53)

Tucholsky anticipated that the Realpolitiker who supported the army against his attacks would by then have been swept away by their protégés. His fears were justified and even his estimate of when the military would strike proved correct. As Schulz has pointed out:

"In acht Jahren wird... General von Schleicher hinter den Kulissen des Reichswehrministeriums in der Bendlerstraße die Fäden ziehen, um das Kabinett Hermann Müller, die letzte parlamentarische Regierung der Weimarer Republik zu stürzen".(54)

A more immediate cause for concern was the propensity of the military for the assassination of its political opponents. The murder of the pacifist Hans Paasche was followed by that of Matthias Erzberger, whom Tucholsky described as the "Konkursverwalter der Pleitefirma Deutsches Reich".(55) Tucholsky warned that the failure to protect Republican politicians and the connivance at the escape of the murderers represented an invitation to the latter to continue their work. Since the government refused to take action against the Organisation Consul, it was only a matter of time before his comment about the dead Erzberger:

"Du warst der Erste nicht - bist nicht der Letzte"(56)

was proved correct by the murder of Walther Rathenau in June 1922.

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(52) Tucholsky described Geßler as "weder ein Republikaner noch eine Begabung" (Geßler, Welt am Montag, 7/11/21, *ibid.*, p.854.

(53) Die Reichswehr, WB 23/3/22, *ibid.*, p.909.

(54) Schulz, *op.cit.*, p.82.

(55) Nachruf, WB 8/9/21, *ibid.*, p.824.

(56) *ibid.*

In the early summer of 1922 Tucholsky took up his political polemic again, after a comparative lull in this activity during the previous year.(57) He was stirred less by the hope that Wirth's Grand Coalition might be sympathetic to reform than by a premonition that immediate action was needed to prevent the collapse of the Republic. Its leaders appeared to lack all conviction.(58) Favourable opportunities to expose their Nationalist opponents had been allowed to pass; no effective Republican propaganda campaign had been launched against the militarist ethos which dominated the rural press and, through films celebrating Frederick the Great, the cinema also. Hindenburg was paid a state pension which enabled him to travel the country preaching the virtues of the old order. The workers and progressive sections of the middle classes had been given no support although they were willing to stand up for the Republic, irrespective of the party to which they belonged.(59)

The possible consequences of governmental indecision were described by Tucholsky in Was wäre, wenn...(60) in which he speculated on the course of a possible military coup. The successful rebels would arrest the government ministers and have left-wing leaders shot. The resistance of the workers would be crushed, and the middle classes would praise the restoration of law and order in a hierarchical society. The reactionaries who had retained their posts would give open rather than covert support to the Nationalists:

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(57) This is illustrated by the number of articles published under the pseudonym Wrobel. GW 1 includes 38 in 1920, only 20 in 1921 and 30 to the end of August 1922.

(58) Die Geschäftsreisenden, in Welt am Montag, 12/6/22, *ibid.*, p.968.

(59) *ibid.*: "Die Republik hats gar nicht einmal so schwer. Wir alle, ohne Unterschied der Partei, stehen ihr zur Verfügung".

(60) WB 22/6/22, *ibid.*, pp.975-80.

„Die Bevölkerung lag, in schweren Ketten gefesselt,  
am Boden.

Und dankte einer Republik, die nichts für sie  
getan hatte". (61)

Tucholsky's warning was fulfilled at least partially two days later;  
the murder of Foreign Minister Rathenau was intended by its perpetrators  
as the signal for a Nationalist rising. However, Ludendorff and the  
reactionary organisations were not prepared to risk another failure like  
that of March 1920, and they were also taken aback by the hostility  
of public opinion after the assassination.

The murder of Rathenau united the democratic parties in a  
denunciation of the extreme right. Chancellor Wirth became a convert  
to Tucholsky's own slogan "Der Feind steht rechts!" (62) The attacks  
by Tucholsky on the government's lack of resolve had been justified, and  
for a moment it seemed as if his energetic advice might be followed:

„Vier Jahre Mord - das sind, weiß Gott, genug.  
Du stehst vor deinem letzten Atemzug.  
Zeig, was du bist. Halt mit dir selbst Gericht.  
Stirb oder kämpfe!

Drittes gibt es nicht". (63)

As he had done after the Kapp Putsch, Tucholsky recognised the  
importance of this political opportunity, and he went beyond general  
exhortations with a detailed plan for purging the army, police, judiciary,  
civil service and local government, schools and universities of all  
unreliable or openly monarchistic elements. In his opinion such men  
accepted only one argument:

„die unlogische, nicht objektive, ungerechte, einfache  
Macht". (64)

His programme of two years before was extended; the blatant conservative  
bias of the courts and the reactionary administrations and social structure

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(61) *ibid.*, p.980.

(62) *Achtundvierzig*, WB 2/1/19, *ibid.*, p.328.

(63) *Rathenau*, WB 29/6/22, *ibid.*, p.989.

(64) *Die zufällige Republik*, WB 13/7/22, *ibid.*, p.997.

in Bavaria and East Prussia, compelled him to advocate an amnesty for all Republican political prisoners, and the strengthening of the authority of the central government over the individual states. The "new ideas of a new Republic" (65) had to be carried into the farthest corners of Germany, or the state would succumb to the next Nationalist assault.

When Tucholsky put forward this programme he had grounds for hope that the Republic had learned its lesson. The Republikschutzgesetz became law, imposing drastic penalties on those who plotted against the state and its ministers. The new Staatsgerichtshof gave appropriately severe sentences to the surviving assassins of Rathenau, and to the two Nationalists who had attempted to murder Scheidemann. However, as soon as the energy of the government abated, the judiciary began to employ the new law only against the Communists. Open rebellion against the Republic was followed by a "trockener Putsch" (66), the manipulation of the instruments of power against the Weimar state. Soon the attempted assassination of Republican personalities could once more be treated as a trifling offence, and excused by slanderous criticism of the victim's career, as in the case of the assault on Maximilian Harden. The trial of Harden's attackers had a similar effect on Tucholsky to that of Marloh three years before. He was forcibly reminded of the widespread support in Germany for the right:

„Es geht um einen Mordversuch gegen einen politisch Andersdenkenden, und Grenz sagt: Fünfzig Prozent des deutschen Volkes stehen hinter mir! Das ist richtig. So verlumpt, so amoralisch, so verkommen ist ein Teil dieser Nation. Er kennt sie". (67)

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(65) *ibid.*

(66) Der trockene Putsch, Freiheit, 16/7/22, *ibid.*, p.100-103.

(67) Grenz, a Nationalist bookseller, had been the instigator of the assault.

(68) Prozeß Harden, WB 21/12/22, *ibid.*, p.1077

Again Tucholsky was driven to conclude that a country whose people rejected all enlightenment was past saving. However, whereas Prozeß Marloh represented "ein milder Tag" in its author's career, the disappointment of 1922 lasted longer. During the following year Tucholsky wrote fewer articles than in any corresponding period between 1918 and 1932. The unwillingness of the Republic to protect itself and its supporters had induced in him a deep-seated pessimism. His own struggle on its behalf had almost ceased after he had been taken to court for alleged libel of the Reichswehr in the article Die Erdolchten. (69) Though Tucholsky won his case, his comments on the issue resembled an epitaph for the phase of his career in which he had consistently worked for the protection of the democratic Republic:

„Immer und immer wieder rafften wir uns auf;  
immer und immer wieder haben wir geraten  
und zu helfen versucht; immer wieder, im  
Interesse der Sache und im Interesse der  
Republik haben wir geschwiegen und da nichts  
gesagt, wo wir vielleicht hätten schaden können-  
immer und immer wieder haben wir Stange gehalten.  
Wofür eigentlich-?" (70)

The personal resignation of Tucholsky after the Harden Trial was prolonged by the political developments of 1923, when the economic and diplomatic crisis in Germany came to a head. The openly reactionary government of so-called Fachminister, led by the industrialist, Heinrich Cuno, was beneath Tucholsky's contempt. This was hardly surprising, since one of Cuno's chief advisers on foreign and financial policy was the DNVP leader, Karl Helfferich. It was the latter's propaganda campaign which had created the political climate in which Erzberger and Rathenau had been murdered. However, Tucholsky's disapproval had rational as well moral grounds. The non-payment of reparations by Cuno provided the French

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(69) WB 30/3/22, GW 1, pp.925-32.

(70) Geßler und wir, WB 27/7/22, *ibid.*, p.1013.

premier, Poincaré, with the excuse to send troops into the Ruhr, and the government's policy of passive resistance led to the final collapse of the German currency. Tucholsky's political acumen had enabled him to foresee many of the dangers to democracy, but he relapsed into despair when it became obvious that his labours had been in vain. The height of the crisis in the summer of 1923 evoked from him only the tired comment:

„Als wir Republik sagten, haben wir das da nicht gemeint".(71)

The most significant elements of the political situation - the dangerous separatist movement in the Rhineland, the reactionary government in Bavaria led by von Kahr, who was openly defying Berlin, the fate of the Communist-supported administration in Saxony and Thuringia were deemed unworthy of individual consideration: they seemed merely symptomatic of the Kleinstaaterei which, he believed, would eventually destroy the state.(72) Tucholsky's vision of Germany's future was distinguished neither by reasoned analysis nor by polemical energy:

„Diese neuen Kleinstaaten.. werden sich zu dem Deutschland des Oberkommissar Wilhelm mit seinen Marmortouilletten Kempniskis verhalten wie die finstersten Kongo-Neger zu einem Inka-Reich der Sonne. Warte nur, balde!"(73)

This loss of all hope for social progress in Germany explains Tucholsky's decision to eschew political comment during the crisis of 1923, a response which he was to repeat nine years later, as the Republic tottered towards final collapse. However, personal reasons also contributed to his abstention from Zeitkritik. The amount of time available for writing was reduced when he was driven by inflation to take a job in

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(71) Potsdam! WB 12/7/23, *ibid.*, p.1115.

(72) Die Kegelschnitte Gottes, WB 12/7/23, *ibid.*, p.1124: "Dieses Reich, das über kurz oder lang zerfallen dürfte und sich in eine Reihe mühselig konstituierter Kleinstaaten auflösen wird.."

(73) *ibid.*

a bank. Though the contact between Tucholsky and high finance in the person of the bank-owner, Hugo Simon, may have stimulated the Wendriner series(74), he found the environment uncongenial.

A more serious cause of Tucholsky's disillusionment was his increasing dislike of life in Berlin. He had implicitly recognised that the German capital was a cultural centre of some standing by writing his theatrical reviews and by contributing to the flowering of post-war cabaret. Indeed, the Berlin of the 1920's seemed to many artists and intellectuals something of a cosmopolitan paradise(75); and no doubt its atmosphere was infinitely more stimulating than that of the traditionalist provincial towns. But Tucholsky found more in the capital to blame than to praise. For years he had been criticising the Berliners: their materialism, their over-organised daily life, their perpetual and pointless haste; above all, their inability to relax and to treat their fellow-citizens as human beings.(76) This witty but superficial analysis was later supplemented by disapproval of the social trends set by the city's nouveaux-riches, those profiteers and speculators who feasted while their neighbours starved.(77) By 1923 he had evidently decided that amid the general misfortune any polemical attack on Berlin would be churlish, and such satires as 'n Augenblick mal!-(78) and Morgens um acht(79) described the city with good-natured contempt rather than cold distaste. However, his dislike of Germany was rapidly increasing; by now the whole country inspired in him the same feeling of claustrophobia as its capital. In December 1923 he concluded his review of the film The Kid with rhetorical

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(74) Tucholsky created the figure of the Jewish business-man, Wendriner, in July 1922, but he only began to appear with some regularity in 1925.

(75) Cf. Peter Gay, Weimar Culture, New York, Harper and Row, 1968, p.128.

(76) Berlin! Berlin! WB 29/3/19, GW 1, pp.449-51.

(77) Das Gesicht der Stadt, Freiheit, 16/11/20, *ibid.*, pp.756-59.

(78) Acht-Uhr-Abendblatt, 26/5/23, *ibid.*, pp.1097-99.

(79) WB 28/6/23, *ibid.*, p.1111-12.

questions to its hero, Charlie Chaplin. Tucholsky admired Chaplin's portrayal of the "little man" as a welcome diversion from the reality of Germany; but still more attractive than such fantasies was the idea of escape:

„Weißt du, daß wir Bessern hier versauern  
und nicht aus der ewigen Schule herauskommen können,  
aus dem Kasernenhof, aus dem Internat Deutschland?  
Wir sind festgebacken und warten. Weißt du,  
wie wir warten? Auf die Stunde, die in die Freiheit  
führt?" (80)

Far from being a haven of democracy, freedom and culture, his country had become "ein schlecht geheizter Warteraum voll bössartiger Irrer" (81) and Tucholsky could hardly wait for the train to take him elsewhere.

Tucholsky's wish was granted sooner than he could have expected. In the short term at least his prognostications about the future proved false. The newspaper industry profited from the gradual economic recovery, and funds became available for long-cherished projects such as Tucholsky's departure to become the Weltbühne's correspondent in Paris. He arranged to supplement his income by writing unpolitical feuilletons for the liberal Vossische Zeitung, published by the Ullsteins, and edited by Georg Bernhard. Meanwhile Tucholsky's personal situation was improving as dramatically as his financial position; after obtaining a divorce from his first wife, he was free to marry Mary Gerold.

It was therefore no surprise that Tucholsky's response to Paris in the spring of 1924 was rhapsodic rather than rational, and that some of his first contributions were declined by Jacobsohn as over-subjective and lacking in perspective. The city had the initial advantage of being hundreds of miles from Berlin, but its intrinsic qualities also appealed

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(80) The Kid, WB 6/12/23, *ibid.*, p.1135.

(81) Kleine Reise 1923, WB 3/1/24, *ibid.*, p.1143.



to Tucholsky. The rhythm of life was more relaxed, and the friendly inhabitants allowed him to sit and dream in the sunshine.(82) Whereas Berlin had been a city of stuffy provincial egotism(83), the atmosphere of Paris was characterised by its Menschlichkeit: politeness and unpretentious hospitality.(84) Tucholsky was carried away by this mixture of relief at escaping from the old and joy of discovering the new, and Jacobsohn's reserved judgment was understandable.(85)

In the field of political analysis, optimism about the French scene also appeared justified. At the elections of May 1924, the Poincaré government, responsible for the invasion of the Ruhr, was defeated by the Cartel des Gauches, led by the more liberal Herriot. The German press had reacted with some Schadenfreude, and Tucholsky attempted to correct their misconceptions.(86) The result did not signify a sudden outburst of enthusiasm for Germany, or the readiness to renounce reparations; Poincaré's aggressive methods had been rejected, but his aim of making Germany pay was shared by his opponents. In any case, the whole issue had played a minor role in the election campaign.

However, Tucholsky did detect hopeful signs in the French mood, as symbolised by the defeat of Poincaré. France wanted to be left in peace, and was prepared to co-exist with its eastern neighbour. This represented an opportunity for improving Franco-German relations, and Germany should abandon her diplomatic isolation and meet the French half-way:

„Frankreich streckt erneut die Hand hin-  
die Welt streckt erneut die Hand hin.

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(82) Parc Monceau, WB 15/5/24, *ibid.*, p.1152.

(83) Immer raus mit der Mutter....! WB 5/6/24, *ibid.*, pp.1162-3.

(84) Das Menschliche Paris, Vossische Zeitung, 19/6/24, *ibid.*, p.1170.

(85) Cf. Pariser Dankgebet, WB 25/5/26, GW II, pp.448-9.

(86) Paris, WB 22/5/24, GW I, pp.1152-57.

Wir haben keine Bedingungen zu stellen-  
denn sie haben den Krieg gewonnen. Nicht wir...

Es muß vernünftig und besonnen von einer Demokratie  
zur andern verhandelt werden. Dazu müssen freilich zwei  
da sein. Frankreich hat eine".(87)

Germany gave her answer a week later. In the elections of May 1924, the democratic parties, weakened by the years of unrest and economic collapse, were defeated and the Nationalists emerged as the largest party. At the outset of Tucholsky's career in Paris, he was therefore confronted by bitter evidence of the failure of the forces of democracy at home. His patience had been taxed in supporting the Republicans until 1922 and in refusing to attack their incompetence in 1923. This new defeat suggested that the liberal democracy of Weimar was a lost cause, and encouraged Tucholsky to look elsewhere for a solution to Germany's problems

In 1920 Tucholsky had begun a new phase of his career as a supporter of parliamentary democracy and the Weimar Republic. Although it at no time measured up to his ideals, it appeared to hold out possibilities of overcoming the hated Wilhelminian world of privilege and subordination and of attaining his goal of equality and human dignity. His political proposals after the Kapp Putsch and the murder of Rathenau were demands for radical reform rather than revolution. For two years he warned, cajoled and prophesied in an effort to exert a positive influence on government policy; only the most prejudiced observer could deny his writings from 1920 to 1922 the title of constructive criticism. However, he was embittered by the continued rejection of his advice, especially since the results of government policy appeared to vindicate his own judgment. Germany went on struggling from one crisis to the next, and that of 1923, which threatened to engulf her, also temporarily silenced Tucholsky. His work in Paris was to take account of the earlier disappointments, and to demonstrate an increasingly radical response to them.

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(87) *ibid.*, p.1157.

#### CHAPTER 4

The move to Paris gave a new impetus to Tucholsky's work. Though at first he adhered to Georg Bernhard's instructions and confined himself largely to French affairs, his interest in German politics gradually revived. In 1924 the Weimar Republic, like Tucholsky himself, appeared to have emerged strengthened from the crisis of the previous year. The state of emergency ended, and Seeckt surrendered his dictatorial powers to the Cabinet. The National Socialists were temporarily broken by the failure of their November coup in Munich, and their leader was writing Mein Kampf in Landsberg prison. The French troops left the Ruhr, and the plans to set up an autonomous Rheinische Republik collapsed. In the economic field, the currency was stabilised and inflation brought under control. Parliament's acceptance of the Dawes Plan and the American loans which it brought in its train apparently settled the problem of reparations and provided the investment capital which allowed the expansion of German industry. These developments led Republican politicians to believe that the state had overcome its difficulties.

In this relief they were joined by Tucholsky, at least in retrospect. Three years later he was to comment on the insurrections of the para-military units, "diese Horden", and to emphasise how fortunate Germany had been in 1923 to escape from the impending right-wing dictatorship.<sup>(1)</sup> Nevertheless, at the time Tucholsky refused to celebrate the survival of German democracy; instead he was inclined to scepticism about the country's long-term prospects. Tucholsky recognised that the crisis

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(1) Cf. Fememörder, Prager Tageblatt, 17/4/26: "...die Zusammenhänge zwischen der Schwarzen Reichswehr und den zahlenden Gutsbesitzern sind so ernster Natur, daß man heute erst sieht, an welchem entsetzlichen Unglück Deutschland gerade vorbei gekommen ist. Hätten diese Horden losgeschlagen, so wären die Folgen unabsehbar gewesen".

had resulted in a shift of power away from the workers and in favour of the employers. Symptomatic of the change was the fact that during their term in the Stresemann government, the Social Democrats had been unable to save the eight-hour day, one of their proudest achievements of 1918. The industrialists claimed that in the difficult economic situation a longer working day was necessary to increase production, a view with which the middle-class politicians Stresemann and Marx concurred. Once again it was shown that the SPD had obtained inadequate safeguards to protect its positions of power. Indeed, Wilhelm Marx's government was the only Western European administration opposed to the eight-hour day: its contribution to the International Congress on Labour Questions of June 1924 amounted to the accusation that its critics among the other powers were interfering in Germany's internal affairs. In his report of the Congress, Der Achtstundentag, Tucholsky dismissed this uncooperative attitude with a quotation from Karl Marx:

„Und doch zeigt die ganze Geschichte der modernen Industrie, daß das Kapital, wenn es nicht im Zaume gehalten, rücksichtslos und unbarmherzig daran arbeiten wird, die ganze Arbeiterklasse auf diesen äußersten Stand der Herabwürdigung zu bringen".(2)

In fact the following five years apparently demonstrated the opposite: that it was possible for workers to improve their living standards under capitalism, and that this improvement tended to encourage evolutionary rather than revolutionary socialism.(3) The relative economic recovery was followed during the early 1930's by a crisis which again revealed the fundamental opposition between the interests of workers and employers. However, the main significance of Tucholsky's quotation of Marx lies in

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(2) Der Achtstundentag, WB 31/7/24, East German edition of Tucholsky's works, East Berlin, Verlag Volk und Welt, 1973, Vol.3, p.346.

(3) The Marxist "Verelendungstheorie" had first been criticised by Eduard Bernstein. Cf. Peter Gay: The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism, Eduard Bernstein's Challenge to Marx, New York, Columbia University Press, 1952, pp.184-5.

providing an indication of the former's political development.

In spite of the signs of economic stabilisation, Tucholsky was beginning to sympathise with the radical left, as was shown by his acceptance of that basic Marxist tenet, the inevitability of class conflict.

Armed with these opinions, Tucholsky reached new conclusions about the underlying forces in recent German history. He now believed that the horrors of 1923 were part of the strategy of the capitalists. They had encouraged the Freikorps and Hitler in a campaign to destroy the working-class movement. Once these allies had served their purpose, they had been replaced by the conciliatory spirit of 1924. The change of style might annoy the Olle Germanen, the implacable anti-Semites who had provided an inviting target for Tucholsky's satire(4), but it satisfied the more flexible industrialists:

„Der Ausflug ins Romantisch-Völkische scheint beendet, jeder Tag, der verstreicht, tut den Leuten Abbruch, weil ja nichts geschieht, und weil das tödliche Netz der Börsen den Zaubewald grau umspinnt. Was nun heraufkommt, ist viel gefährlicher. Es ist die gänzlich unromantische Form des kaufmännischen Deutschen".(5)

The defeat of the extreme right, described by Tucholsky, became clear to the public a month later, when the DNVP parliamentary group split over the Dawes Plan: half of their members recognised its value to German industry and allowed it to pass. The willingness of the Nationalists to cooperate with the centre parties heralded the advent of the conservative Bürgerblock governments, which were to rule Germany until the 1928 election. In 1925, when the success of the moderate right was more evident, Tucholsky issued through the figure of a Bankdirektor an appropriate summary of the

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(4) Olle Germanen, WB 3/3/25, GW II, pp.59-60.

(5) Der Geist von 1914, GW I, p.1203.

political situation:

„Alles ist still. Im Reichstag liegen sie sich in den Haaren.  
Laß sie liegen. Kein Bolschewismus. Kein Experiment". (6)

Although such findings were largely valid, Tucholsky's strength lay not only in the field of political analysis; he also knew how to illustrate his generalisations through the creation of fictional personalities. Most of the Weltbühne writers would have agreed with Tucholsky that the business world of Germany was controlled by ruthless conservatives, but it took a gifted satirist to create such a figure in the person of the Jewish businessman, Herr Wendriner. A series of feuilletons appeared in the years 1924-26, generally in monologue form. This study may allude only briefly to Wendriner's personal pettiness, his trivial reflections on life and his constant preoccupation with his business interests, even when he is ostensibly relaxing at the theatre or on holiday. (7) More significant is his role as a modern version of the Wilhelminian Untertan, obsequious to his creditors, harsh to his debtors. (8)

Shortly before the first article in the Wendriner-series in June 1922, Tucholsky anticipated the latter's character, while describing the conservative bourgeoisie in general. Wendriner is a prime specimen of the

„Kaufleute, die keine andre Sorge kannten als eine Unterbrechung ihrer Geschäftstätigkeit". (9)

His impatience with political activity soon becomes obvious; although the telephonists, whose strike interrupts his call, are demonstrating only as

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(6) Die freien Deutschen, WB 16/6/25, GW II, p.147.

(7) Cf. Ingeborg Pistohl's study: Die Gestalt des Bürgers im Werk Kurt Tucholskys, Bonn, P.H.Rheinland, 1969, p.14:

„Wendriner ist der Typus des modernen Managers, der überhaupt nicht mehr abschalten kann, ständig vom Gedanken an das Geschäft verfolgt wird, und diesen Zustand schon gar nicht mehr als Last empfindet, sondern für selbstverständlich hält".

(8) Herrn Wendriners Jahr fängt gut an, WB 5/1/26, GW II, pp.315-17.

(9) Was wäre, wenn...? WB 22/6/22, GW I, p.980.

a mark of respect for the murdered Rathenau, Wendriner soon dismisses them as Communists. He even has hard words for Rathenau's presumption in pursuing a political career(10), and thereby giving his fellow-Jews a bad name. Wendriner's character exemplified for Tucholsky the absence of a liberal German Bürgertum, the natural defenders of constitutional democracy. Although the existence of the Republic does not prevent Wendriner from making money, he still vaguely associates it with growing militancy on the part of the workers, and therefore with the Bolshevism which he detests:

„Wieder Lohnerhöhung? Die Leute sind ja verrückt...  
Man hat leider viel zu wenig an die Wand gestellt.  
Ich bin gewiß für sozial, ich meine, die Leute  
müssen ihren Lohn haben, aber sie können uns doch  
nicht erwürgen. Die Leute richten ja den gesamten  
Mittelstand zugrunde".(11)

Instead of allowing his son to join the Republican Reichsbanner, he dotes on the uniforms of the reactionary Reichswehr.(12) The defeat of 1918 has taught him nothing, for he considers that Germany should rebuild her navy; in spite of the rampant anti-Semitism of the former Imperial court, he even has kind words for Wilhelm II.(13) The survival of the worst forms of Prussianism seems to Wendriner and his fellow-businessmen a fact to be ignored or greeted with mild approval:

„Ob ihre Kinder die Wehrpflicht wieder bekämen  
("Bei meinen Beziehungen!"); ob die Schulen den  
schlimmsten Preußen ausgeliefert wurden...  
sie lebten in einer andern, glatt geschmierten Welt".(14)

If such narrow-minded businessmen were, in Tucholsky's opinion, the real rulers of the Weimar state, his attitude to the Republic could

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(10) Herr Wendriner telefonierte, WB 6/7/22, *ibid.*, p.991

(11) Herr Wendriner läßt sich die Haare schneiden, WB 22/9/25, GW II, p.224.

(12) Herr Wendriner läßt sich die Haare schneiden, *ibid.*

(13) Herr Wendriner nimmt ein Bad, WB 30/6/25, *ibid.*, p.153.

(14) GW I, p.980.

hardly be favourable. Though for years Tucholsky had supported the Republic as a framework for democratic reform, by the mid-1920's such a development appeared impossible. He had previously considered that the lack of resonance enjoyed by his pleas to successive governments had been caused by the latter's incompetence and ill-will.(15) However, by 1925 Tucholsky believed that their failure to use the machinery of state to introduce reform was inherent in their position as stewards of the capitalist system. When opposed to the economic power, which lay with right-wing industrialists, even progressive political authorities had automatically been forced to surrender. The economic rather than the political and ideological factor was of primary importance to the individual and the state. This openly Marxist view was first proclaimed by Tucholsky in the article Horizontaler und vertikaler Journalismus. Similar social classes in different countries might display local customs and prejudices, but:

„Sieht man.. sehr viel tiefer: durch ihre Vergnügungen, ihre Liebschaften, ihre Lektüre hindurch, so wird ihr Leben entscheidend von ökonomischen Bedingungen bestimmt".(16)

Tucholsky went on to endorse the doctrine of materialism: not only men's social lives, but also their ideas and attitudes were conditioned by their economic position:

„Verändere das Budget, und du veränderst das ganze Weltbild".(17) he declared. It is true that Tucholsky chose to express this view only on a single occasion, but he did not feel it necessary to deny the validity of materialism until his disillusionment with left-wing politics in the 1930's.(18)

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(15) Der Wagen, Berliner Volkszeitung, 16/7/22, GW I, p.1000-01.

(16) WB 13/1/25, GW II, p.16.

(17) *ibid.*, p.19.

(18) Cf. letter to Hasenclever, 17/5/33, Briefe, p.257.



The acceptance of two fundamental Marxist theories was symptomatic of Tucholsky's determination to fight the bourgeoisie by every means at his disposal. In rejecting "bourgeois romanticism" about the daily lives of the workers, Tucholsky made use of Marxist tenets; he was writing in the Weltbühne, and there is therefore no reason to doubt his seriousness. However, he also conceded that:

„Die Lehre von Marx hat sicherlich viel Doktrinäres".(19)  
and it was the practical application of Marxism rather than its philosophical and theoretical trappings which was his main concern.

In his analysis of the situation in Germany, and in his references to political theory, Tucholsky was adopting an increasingly radical position. He had yet another reason for scepticism about the Weimar system: it seemed powerless to prevent a second war with France. There is no questioning Tucholsky's sincerity when he wished for the French people peace, cooperation and friendly relations with Germany.(20) In the fight against war, any ally was welcome, including the Communist one. At a time when Tucholsky's sympathies for other aspects of Marxism doctrine were growing, it was natural to reflect on the function of the capitalist state in war and peace.

Ten years after the outbreak of war, Tucholsky rejected the view of the state as the embodiment of the collective aspirations of its members; it had therefore no claim on the lives of its citizens. Instead, it was merely an instrument in the hands of the industrialists.(21) The victims of Verdun had not fallen for France and Germany, but for Schneider-Creusot and Krupp:

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(19) Horizontaler und vertikaler Journalismus, GW II, p.18.

(20) Der vierzehnte Juli, WB 22/7/25, *ibid.*, p.169.

(21) Cf. Engels: Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats, in Marx und Engels: Werke, Vol.21, 1962, p.165.

„Die Rüstungsindustrie war ihnen Vater und Mutter gewesen; Schule, Bücher, die Zeitung, ... die Kirche, ... alles das war im Besitz der Industriekapitäne, verteilt und kontrolliert wie die Aktienpakete. Der Staat, das arme Luder, durfte die Nationalhymne singen und Krieg erklären. Gemacht, vorbereitet, geführt und beendet wurde er anderswo".(22)

War between capitalist states was madness, at least on the part of the workers who bore the brunt of the fighting. Tucholsky advised the uniformed proletarian masses not to kill their fellow-workers, but to unite with them, as Marx had recommended in 1848.(23) When Tucholsky informed the workers

„Du schießt immer den Kamerad Werkmeister tot-  
niemals den einzigen Feind, den du wirklich hast".(24)

there can be no doubt that the one and only enemy was the capitalist class.(25)

Tucholsky thereby endorsed the Marxist theory on the role of the capitalist state, and also the Marxist strategy of international proletarian solidarity against the exploiting classes. However, he regarded solidarity not as an intrinsic value, but as a means to an end. Not only might it prevent war, but the strength which it would confer on the workers would help them in the Revolution which would establish a more just social order. In the early 1920's he had occasionally advocated a revolution(26), but his demands had in reality amounted only to a programme for radical reform. Now Tucholsky used the word to mean the uprising of the masses which Marx had foretold:

„Wüßte allerdings der Proletarier wirklich,  
wie es "oben" zugeht, wüßte er, was der Börsianer,  
der Fabrikant, der Großgrundbesitzer mit ihm treiben,..  
er machte das, was er in Deutschland noch nie gemacht hat -  
Revolution".(27)

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(22) Vor Verdun, GW I, p.1208.

(23) Marx and Engels: Manifest der kommunistischen Partei, in Werke, Vol.4, p.493: "Proletarier aller Länder, vereinigt euch!"

(24) Sechzig Fotografien, WB 5/6/24, GW I, p.1162.

(25) Cf. Der Achtstundentag and Vor Verdun.

(26) Cf. Schlußwort, WB 4/11/20, *ibid.*, p.755, and Die beiden Deutschland, Freiheit, 6/8/22, *ibid.*, p.1029.

(27) Horizontaler und vertikaler Journalismus, GW II, p.19.

The individualism which had provided the philosophical basis of Tucholsky's writings since before the war had also been modified by 1925. Individualism, in the field of political philosophy, is a characteristically liberal attitude, and it was logical for Tucholsky to question its value at a time when this form of democracy was losing its attractiveness for him. The change had been foreshadowed in 1923 in Tucholsky's review of an imaginary novel, Hermine, when he recommended as a subject not the fate of an individual hero, but

„etwas andres, etwas nie Beachtetes: die Kollektivität". (28)

Two years later he made an even more explicit rejection of individualism:

„Diese Geschichte (29) ist ein Einzelschicksal.  
Und somit in der Zeit des maschinellsten Kollektivismus  
unangebracht... Ich will wissen, was mit dem ist, der  
zugleich alle ist". (30)

During the period 1924-25 Tucholsky's support for Marxist theory had gradually increased. He now accepted most of Marx's fundamental principles: the idea of the class struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie; the role of the former as leader of the revolution, the primacy of the economic factor in social relationships and the doctrine of materialism which depended on it; the role of the capitalist state as a tool of the exploiting class, and the substitution of a collectivist for an individualist approach.

However, this theoretically Marxist stand-point represented only a half-way position in Tucholsky's development. The change was at first unaccompanied by any practical step such as publication in Communist journals. Proletarian engagement did not come easily to Tucholsky, and

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(28) WB 5/7/23, GW I, p.1114.

(29) Les Marchands de Gloire, by Pagnol and Nivoux.

(30) Hausse in Ruhm, WB 12/5/25, DDR-Ausgabe, Vol.3, p.513.

the tactics employed by the avant-garde of the Workers' Movement, the KPD, did nothing to ease the transition. A further stumbling-block in Tucholsky's leftward path was the presidential election of 1925, which induced a temporary reversal to his previous policy of support for Republican democracy. However, the election was also to confirm his conviction that there was no point in protecting a democratic system which had been undermined and then abandoned by those politicians nominally responsible for its defence.

The factors which led Tucholsky to hesitate before committing himself to the revolutionary left merit detailed examination. In spite of his endorsement of a collectivist approach, he was loth to restrict his own many-sided literary production to the themes of the representative individual or to the collectivity. Peter Panter continued his career as a reviewer; Kaspar Hauser began in the summer of 1925 his whimsical meditations on the after-life, the Nachher-series; Theobald Tiger wrote poems modelled on Walt Whitman, reflecting on the situation of mankind in general.(31) Occasionally, however, Tucholsky admitted that the dilemma of potential commitment was serious. In Monolog mit Chören(32), he refused to adopt the self-indulgence with his feelings which he believed typical of the bourgeois poet, and he concluded his poem with the chorus of the Internationale.

Tucholsky's hesitation also had an objective basis in the policy of the party which his theoretical views would have led him to support. In January 1924 he described the leaders of the German Communist Party as "Radeks sitzengebliebene Zöglinge"(33) taking their orders like

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(31) Alle Welt sucht, WB 11/8/25, GW II, pp.186-7; Die fünf Sinne, WB 15/9/25, *ibid.*, pp.217-19.

(32) WB 25/8/25, *ibid.*, pp.201-02.

(33) Kleine Reise 1923, WB 3/1/24, GW I, p.1143.

obedient children from Moscow, but failing to adapt them to the specific conditions of Germany. It was not merely the poor execution of Comintern orders, but the orders themselves which infuriated Tucholsky:

„Mag sein, daß Sinowjew mit seiner europäischen Taktik eine ganz bestimmte Linie einhält, aber beurteilt man diese Taktik nach ihren Wirkungen, so muß man sagen, daß die Russen entweder ihre ganze Kraft auf den Fernen Osten und keinen Wert auf Europa legen, oder daß Sinowjew ein Dummkopf ist".(34)

Tucholsky's sympathetic interest was paid not to the KPD leaders but to their followers. Some seven thousand workers had been sacrificed to their leaders' penchant for hopeless trials of strength with the armed forces and to the bourgeois state which Tucholsky detested. In particular, he championed Max Hölz, the Robin Hood of the German Revolution. Hölz had fought in Vogtland against Kapp's supporters, and in central Germany against the police of the SPD Oberpräsident Hörsing; the cause which he fought for was uncertain, since for most of his active career the official KPD would have nothing to do with him. Tucholsky did not condone Hölz's anarchism and violence, but he campaigned, along with other non-Communist intellectuals(35), for a revision of Hölz's sentence of life imprisonment.(36) Most of all, Tucholsky applauded Hölz's conduct in court, when at the risk of his life he had hurled defiance at his judges.

Though Tucholsky's criticism of the German state was more muted than that of Hölz, he associated its leader, Ebert, with the prevailing oppression rather than with a long, unavailing struggle against reaction.

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(34) Das nervöse Paris, WB 6/1/25.

(35) The demand for a re-trial or amnesty for Hölz was taken up by the Liga für Menschenrechte, whose "neutral committee" included Thomas and Heinrich Mann, Stefan Zweig and Albert Einstein; cf. Hölz's autobiography Vom "weißen Kreuz" zur roten Fahne, reprinted by Verlag Neue Kritik, Frankfurt, 1969, p.367.

(36) Vierzehn Küfige und einer, WB 27/1/25, GW II, p.28.

When Ebert died in February 1925, an election resulted which was another turning-point in Weimar history. The sight of German reaction massing for the assault persuaded Tucholsky to offer temporary support to the Republican cause, even if he felt little enthusiasm for it. Tucholsky advocated the payment of a respectable pension to Ebert's widow, on the grounds that

„Es handelt sich nicht um Frau Ebert,  
sondern um die Frau des ersten Präsidenten  
der deutschen Republik". (37)

In Die Inszenierung einer Republik (38) Tucholsky made a last effort to turn the Weimar system into a democracy worth campaigning for. His programme to fill the state's ideological vacuum amounted again to a plea for the introduction of democracy at local level, and for a purge of unreliable government employees. Nevertheless, Tucholsky's plan to "create Republicans" was not unreasonable; only the lack of energy of the Weimar parties made it appear too little and too late.

The campaign of the Volksblock was a disaster. The first mistake, which Tucholsky rightly criticised, was the inability to agree on a joint candidate who might have built up a substantial lead in the first ballot. (39) When they did unite for the second ballot, their choice fell, characteristically, not on their most successful candidate, the Social Democrat Otto Braun, or even, as Hiller suggested (40), on the progressive Catholic Josef Wirth; instead they selected Wilhelm Marx. The Zentrum leader's conservative administrations had been unpopular with SPD voters, and, in spite of his

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(37) Frau Ebert, WB 17/3/25, GW II, p.65.

(38) Vossische Zeitung, 12/4/25, *ibid.*, pp.93-5.

(39) Was nun?, WB 5/5/25, *ibid.*, p.108.

(40) Hiller: Der Reichspräsident, WB 3/3/25.

dignified bearing and skilful handling of foreign affairs(41), he lacked the magnetism which might have attracted Tucholsky's wholehearted support.

The Nationalists' choice of Hindenburg as their candidate kept the doubting Tucholsky in the Republican camp. Hindenburg had been nominated by the past and present military establishment, led by Tirpitz, and he had never made any secret of his monarchist sympathies. Tucholsky recognised that the election of "der kaiserliche Statthalter" would be tantamount to an admission of defeat on the part of the Republic. Even if Hindenburg was unlikely to invite Wilhelm II back from exile, he embodied Wilhelminian reaction. Tucholsky fought against this backward step, warning his readers of the significance of a choice which would shape Germany's future:

"Hindenburg ist: Zurück in den Gutshof, fort aus der Welt, zurück in die Kaserne. Hindenburg bedeutet: Krach mit aller Welt, unaufhörliche internationale Schwierigkeiten, durchaus begründetes Mißtrauen des Auslandes, insbesondere Frankreichs gegenüber Deutschland. Hindenburg ist: die Republik auf Abruf. Hindenburg bedeutet: Krieg".(42)

The election of April 25th justified Tucholsky's fears by resulting in a narrow victory for Hindenburg. He owed his success first to his prestige as a national hero, which outweighed that of the politician Marx. In addition, the Bayrische Volkspartei considered Hindenburg's ultra-conservatism even more desirable than Marx's Catholicism, and instructed

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(41) Tucholsky did compliment Marx for his conduct at the London Conference of 1924: "Als es hieß, der deutsche Reichskanzler habe das Wort, stand ein stiller und bescheidener Mann auf, der sachlich und fest in der Materie, aber angenehm leicht und konzilient im Ton das Seine vorbrachte. Also: der Eindruck war ausgezeichnet". (Der erste Händedruck, WB 9/10/24). But this positive assessment of Marx owed much to Tucholsky's desire to find a favourable object of comparison in order to attack Stresemann.

(42) Der kaiserliche Statthalter, Menschheit, 17/4/25, GW II, p.99.

its supporters to vote for the Prussian Protestant. Thirdly, the German Communist leaders defied Stalin's advice and upheld the Zählkandidatur of their leader, Thälmann; thereby they deprived Marx of nearly two million votes which might have given him victory.

However, Tucholsky put the main blame for the debacle elsewhere. In common with other Weltbühne writers(43), Tucholsky had always taken the risk of Hindenburg's success seriously. He believed that the Republican campaign had demonstrated the contrary attitude: complacency about Marx's chances and reluctance to attack Hindenburg's Prussian ethos. Instead the Volksblock leaders had claimed that they were Nationalists too, but more subtle, that a victory for Marx would reassure foreign opinion and stimulate business confidence.(44) Tucholsky was right to deride this opportunistic approach. But to regard the weakness of the democratic campaign as being mainly responsible for the Nationalist triumph was a travesty of history.

The other instructive aspect of Tucholsky's post-mortem was his mild treatment of the Communists. He excused the misguided Thälmann candidacy by pointing out that the error had been made under extreme provocation. A few weeks before, several members of the party had been the victims of a miscarriage of justice in the so-called Cheka Trial. The murder of a suspected informer by a local KPD group had been seized on by the Staatsgerichtshof under Judge Niedner as the pretext for uncovering a supposedly vast Communist conspiracy. By 1925 the Communists no longer

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(43) Cf. Heinz Pol: SOS, WB 21/4/25: "Die Gefahr, daß Hindenburg gewählt wird, ist groß. Sie ist besonders groß, weil wir, seine Gegner, den Kampf gegen ihn nicht richtig geführt haben".

(44) GW II, p.109.



intended to bring down the Republic in the foreseeable future, but this did not prevent Niedner from sentencing most of the accused to execution or life imprisonment. The political blunder of the KPD leaders seemed to Tucholsky an understandable result of their resentment; he could only comment resignedly:

„Sie wollten eben nur demonstrieren, sie haben demonstriert, und das kam dem alten Mann zugute".(45)

When this assessment is compared with his attacks on the Republican parties, Tucholsky's generosity towards the Communists is clear. This is logical in the light of his own conversion to socialist doctrine. Though he himself had decided that Wilhelm Marx represented the lesser evil, Tucholsky could understand the Communist refusal to differentiate between two undeniably conservative personalities. Still more significantly, the election of the Ersatzkaiser appeared to symbolise the end of the Republic. If Tucholsky was to continue his struggle against injustice, he needed new allies, and the Communist-led working-class movement appeared the last untapped reservoir of progressive forces.

Tucholsky's forecast of the results of Hindenburg's election was gloomy. He believed that the Nationalists, unlike the Social Democrats in 1918, would show no lack of ruthless energy in destroying the last vestiges of their opponents' rule. After dismissing the few remaining democrats from the civil service, judiciary and schools, they would reintroduce the Wilhelminian flag. If there was any resistance to the undermining of democracy by its elected representatives, it would be crushed in accordance with Article 48 of the Constitution, which allowed the President wide emergency powers in the event of a breakdown of law and order.(46) Tucholsky underestimated Hindenburg's sense of honour, which made the new President

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(45) GW II, p.108.

(46) These powers had been used sparingly by Ebert, who recognised that they represented a defeat for democracy, and a temporary return to the traditional authoritarian form of government.

generally keep his oath of loyalty to the Republic; indeed his election even provided the state with a greater measure of respectability in conservative circles. But Hindenburg was an old man with only a rudimentary knowledge of politics, and he was to prove wax in the hands of intellectually superior advisers:

„Der kaiserliche Statthalter ist in der denkbar schlimmsten Gesellschaft. Sie wird ihn beraten? Sie wird regieren. Und er wird tun, was er sein ganzes Leben lang getan hat: er wird unterschreiben". (47)

The expectation that these advisers would attempt to overthrow the Weimar system was proved correct in the 1930's, when the ascendancy of Schleicher, Papen and Hindenburg's son Oskar contributed to the destruction of the Republic.

Within weeks of Hindenburg's triumph, Tucholsky and other left-wing intellectuals had recovered from the shock(48); indeed they greeted this confirmation of their worst fears with something approaching relief. The prospect of a sudden end to Weimar democracy meant little, since for some time Tucholsky had been convinced that it existed only in name:

„Eine Maske ist von Deutschlands Gesicht gefallen? So feierlich kann ichs gar nicht nehmen, hier gibt es schon lange nichts mehr zu maskieren". (49)

Intellectual engagement on behalf of the Republic had appeared to Tucholsky to offer the best guarantee of reaching his aims of equality, freedom and justice in Germany. In the early 1920's he had served the Weimar system in the hope that it could be improved. Even as an incipient Marxist he might have continued to believe that bourgeois democracy represented a stage on the road to the classless society. By 1925, however, the Republic appeared hell-bent on a return to Wilhelminian authoritarianism:

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(47) GW II, p.109.

(48) Cf. Leo Lania, Eberts Erbe, WB 5/5/25.

(49) GW II, p.110.

„Es hat in der Geschichte Monarchien gegeben, die weitaus liberaler, pazifistischer und sozialgesinnter waren, als die Regierung der jetzigen deutschen Republik". (50)

Tucholsky could not accept the complacency of Republican leaders who were defending the empty shell of the Constitution, while it was being regularly violated by powerful enemies within the state machine. There seemed no point in fighting for the innocuous concept of Republican democracy, whose political exponents did not even recognise its failings. Tucholsky's career therefore took another turn: he became a bitter opponent of the facade of Republicanism which he regarded as the perversion of an originally progressive idea. (51) The much-vaunted "Sieg des republikanischen Gedankens" (52) was a myth; no such victory could be won before the whole fabric of German society was revolutionised.

Once Tucholsky had rejected the principle of the democratic Republic, he was also compelled to question the method of its implementation in Germany, the parliamentary system. During the Revolution he had supported the election to the National Assembly. However, the increase of right-wing strength allowed the Bürgerblock governments to maintain the economic and social status quo. This led Tucholsky and many of his Weltbühne colleagues to abandon the cause of Parliament altogether (53); parliamentarianism seemed a mere facade, concealing the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the workers. In addition, Parliament was out of touch with the problems of the German people. The Social Democrats might

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(50) Wofür? Das andere Deutschland, 24/12/25, *ibid.*, p.296.

(51) Cf. Der überalterte Parlamentarismus, Menschheit, 4/12/25: "Diese Regierungsform ist einmal sehr gut gewesen: als es galt, die Klasseninteressen der Bourgeoisie gegen Adel und Kirche zu verteidigen. Er war Vorbedingung und Schlüssel für den heutigen Stand der Dinge - eine Endstufe ist er nicht".

(52) Verfassungsschwindel, WB 26/10/26, GW II, p.531.

(53) Cf. Alfons Steiniger: Ernst machen! WB 30/6/25: "Parlamentarische Demokratie (ist) eine Form der Diktatur wie der Mussolinismus auch, nur: durch die Masse anonymen Statisten skrupelloser, durch die fraktionelle Bindung brutaler".

have the largest Reichstagsfraktion, but that did nothing to counteract the traditional attitudes which predominated in the countryside. It was, in Tucholsky's opinion, a measure of the political maturity of the French that they took the contrary attitude, demonstrating a lively attachment to local democracy, coupled with indifference towards the machinations of the party hacks in Paris. Although Tucholsky's sharpest denunciation of the parliamentary system was not made until 1929, it belongs thematically in this context:

„Dein Geschick, Deutschland, machen Industrien,  
Banken und die Schifffahrtskompanien-  
Welch ein Bumstheater ist die Wahl!  
Reg dich auf und reg dich ab im Grimme!  
Wähle, wähle! Doch des Volkes Stimme  
is ja ganz ejal!"(54)

Tucholsky was therefore led to consider other forms of government. While in Paris, he had learned to look beyond Germany and examine the wider European political scene. His observations led him to the conclusion:

„Es gibt zwei Mächte in Europa, die durchgesetzt haben,  
was sie wollten: der Faschismus und die Russen".(55)

These movements had been victorious because, unlike the German Republicans, they had shown uncompromising determination:

„Das entscheidende Moment ihrer Siege war  
eine tapfere Unbedingtheit".(56)

This represented a simplistic view of the historical process; mere determination has never been a guarantee of success. That Tucholsky should emphasise the triumph of the Bolsheviki comes as no surprise. The victories of Fascism in Europe were also undeniable; Fascist governments ruled in Italy, Hungary, Poland and the Balkans. However, Tucholsky's reluctant respect for the extent of the Fascist triumph did not indicate support for Fascist aims.

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(54) Das Parlament, WB 15/5/29, GW III, p.299.

(55) Was brauchen wir? WB 16/2/26, GW II, p.354.

(56) *ibid.*

During the winter of 1925-26, Tucholsky dealt several times with the theme of Fascism: not, however, with Mussolini or Horthy, but with the extreme right-wing opposition in France and Germany. He contemptuously dismissed the adherents of the "Barbiergehilfen Hitler".(57) The Action Francaise, on the other hand, seemed an organisation of some intellectual standing; its leader, Charles Maurras, was a "fanatic" but also a clear-headed man, true to his convictions. Tucholsky even claimed:

„Es ist gar kein Zweifel, daß einige Ideen des Faschismus moderner sind als die Demokratie".(58)

This statement indicated the depth of Tucholsky's disillusionment with Germany's ineffective democracy. Far from desiring a right-wing dictatorship, however, he advocated stronger left-wing resistance to the restoration of Wilhelminian Germany. Not complaints about Fascism, but action was needed:

„Das Gewäsch der Scheindemokraten gegen den Faschismus ist Angst. Er verdiente kräftigere Gegner".(59)

There seemed only one progressive force strong enough to challenge both Fascists and "so-called Democrats": the Workers' Movement. By the spring of 1926, Tucholsky was recommending an energetic course:

„Den revolutionären, unnachgiebigen, intoleranten und klassenkämpferischen Erfolg".(60)

The left-wing intellectuals of the Weltbühne were in general agreement about their country's political sickness, but their remedies varied in scope and practicability. The fate of the Aktivisten in 1918-19 had demonstrated the difficulty of persuading intellectuals to act effectively

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(57) Herr Maurras vor Gericht, WB 22/9/25, *ibid.*, p.218.

(58) It was in particular parliamentary government which aroused Tucholsky's disapproval on this occasion. (Faschismus in Frankreich, Vossische Zeitung, 8/1/26)

(59) Herr Maurras vor Gericht, WB 22/9/25, GW II, p.222.

(60) GW II, p.354.

together, and the "New Left", which contained the former Activist leaders Hiller and Flake, was to fall victim to the old errors. The details of their debates cannot be discussed here(61), but a summary of the most significant controversies is necessary, in order to place Tucholsky's views in perspective and to assess their degree of originality and practicality.

Since the rift between the SPD and the KPD, the progressive forces in Germany had been weak, and the conservatives had recaptured their positions of power. No counter-offensive could be mounted until the left-wing parties recognised the need to adopt a measure of cooperation. Theorists such as Hiller accordingly advocated that the left-wing intellectuals, uncommitted to either party, should build a bridge between enlightened members of the Communist and Socialist camps.(62) Taking up the proposal to establish a Rat der Republikaner(63), Hiller recommended for the Council a compromise programme designed to appeal to as many progressive groups as possible, and gradually induce the desired re-alignment of the left. The idea of a purge of counter-revolutionaries from government service was aimed primarily at non-Socialist democrats, while the demand for a refusal of military service was intended to attract militant pacifists. Socialists and Communists alike could hardly reject the call for workers' interests to be protected on questions of wages, hours, taxation, housing and trade, or the reform of the educational system. The desirability of such goals was for Tucholsky self-evident. He did not criticise Hiller's programmatic efforts or the name which he suggested for the new grouping: Die deutsche Linke.(64)

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(61) Cf. Istvan Deak, Weimar Germany's Left-wing Intellectuals, Berkeley, Calif. 1968, pp.154-58.

(62) Hiller: Politische Neugruppierung, WB 26/5/25.

(63) Alfons Steiniger: Es lebe die zweite Republik, WB 19/5/25.

(64) Die deutsche Linke, WB 22/9/25.

Tucholsky did not immediately decide to take part in the discussion, since he had no ambition to become the author of "Aktionsprogramme". He entered the controversy in response to an attack on the Weltbühne theorists by the Social Democrat, Hermann Schützinger. Tucholsky answered the charge that the left-wing intellectuals were lacking in discipline with a counter-attack: for years the SPD had demonstrated any amount of discipline, and the quality had contributed to their failure. His strictures had some justification, since the SPD leaders had interpreted the term as an excuse to use procedural devices and appeals for loyalty as a weapon against internal opposition: a practice unlikely to commend the concept to independent intellectuals.

However, when Tucholsky described the role which he envisaged for the Deutsche Linke, he was guilty of uncharacteristic over-optimism:

„Umwälzungen haben immer so angefangen, mit zunächst unbeachteten Konventikelunterhaltungen, und alles, was später eine Partei wurde, was zuvor eine Sekte. Wir säen Keime. Einer wird schon aufgehen". (65)

The fallacy in this argument has been pointed out by Poor. (66) For every sect which has grown into a successful party, a thousand make no impact and fade into oblivion, and the Deutsche Linke was to be one of them.

In April 1926 Tucholsky produced his most important article on the Deutsche Linke. The proposals of the Weltbühne writers had been becoming impractical and their controversies increasingly sterile. The idea of a new party to exist alongside the Social Democrats and the Communists had been put forward by Max Peters, and in his argument with Schützinger, Tucholsky had given it indirect support by evoking the sect

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(65) GW II, p.351.

(66) Poor, op.cit. p.131.

which might become a party. But in Was haben wir-?(67), Tucholsky made it clear that he rejected the idea of a separate party; there were already enough divisions on the left. Instead he envisaged the Deutsche Linke as

„ein Ideenzentrum, das Energien ausstrahlt.  
Ein Kräftepunkt, von dem aus Männer der befreundeten  
Lager angefeuert, vor Irrtümern bewahrt bleiben,  
vorwärts gepeitscht, mit der Nase auf Wichtiges  
gestoßen werden können". (68)

The idea of a progressive pressure group raised the question whether Tucholsky would be willing to work with representatives of the SPD and KPD, or whether he would support only the latter; this was answered by implication by his continued attacks on the Social Democratic hierarchy, while he spared the Communists.

In this attitude, Tucholsky joined Hiller, who, in September 1925, had provided the movement with a much more radical programme than his original proposals. Their lack of resonance, far from discouraging Hiller, led him to reject "empty" Republicanism and advocate Marxist goals to which the Social Democrats had in practice ceased to subscribe:

„Beseitigung der Profitwirtschaft, Vergesellschaftung  
der Produktionsmittel, internationale Produktionsregelung..  
und mit alledem Aufhebung der Lohnsklaverei, Vernichtung  
des Klassenstaates. (69)

Hiller's views were attacked by Otto Flake, who by now had a negative attitude towards political activity by intellectuals. He regarded the efforts of the Weltbühne writers as pointless, since they did not reach those groups which had any influence within the state. This criticism was not unreasonable. But instead of exploring the possibility of commitment alongside a major political group, as Tucholsky was to do, Flake withdrew in disillusionment.

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(68) *ibid.*, p.398.

(69) WB 22/9/25.



Tucholsky had respected Flake's views for many years, but he rejected such defeatism.(70) The purpose of the Deutsche Linke, Tucholsky claimed, was to work hand in hand with those left-wing parties which supported the idea of the class struggle, the Communists and those few Social Democrats still worthy of the name, and to persuade their leaders to put its progressive precepts into practice. Tucholsky believed that the left-wing intellectuals had already been successful in this endeavour, and he was confident about future prospects.(71) The group's programme did not exist in a vacuum, as Flake had maintained. Tucholsky took the opportunity to express agreement with Hiller's proposals, quoted above, as a valid contribution to the debate:

„In dem von Hiller entworfenen Mindestprogramm ist zu finden, daß eben ein Minimum an wirtschaftlichen und politischen Forderungen aufgestellt wird - man kann nicht gut klarer, nicht gut weniger verblasen sein".(72)

Tucholsky was not content with the abstract advocacy of an alliance between Communists, left-wing Socialists and the masses who supported them; during the spring of 1926 he himself worked for such a united front on the question of the Fürstenabfindung. In December 1918 Tucholsky had celebrated the collapse of the monarchy.(73) However, relations between the new state and its former rulers were not broken off. The exiled Hohenzollerns owned land and property in Germany, and they demanded financial compensation for their losses. Mindful of constitutional niceties, the Republican leaders allowed Wilhelm's

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(70) The difference of opinion between Flake and Tucholsky is observed by Doerfel, but she asserts: "Flake tendiert jetzt - wie Tucholsky schon lange - in Richtung auf eine totale Negation". (op.cit., p. 150). In spite of the convenient vagueness of the words "tendiert in Richtung auf", the remarkable reversal of rôles undergone by the protagonists in her estimation should be challenged.

(71) GW II, p.398.

(72) *ibid.*, p.397.

(73) Bruch, Ulk, 13/12/18, GW I, pp.322-3.

lawyers to plead in court before judges whom he had appointed to their posts. From the outset, Tucholsky treated with scornful sarcasm the negotiations with Wilhelm von Abfundien:

„Nimm hin Million auf Million!  
Das ist das Land, wie es immer war:  
es rackert für deinen Thron".(74)

The question remained a matter for each Land to settle with its former ruler until in 1926 a bill was introduced to compensate the princes on a unified national basis. Communists and Social Democrats demanded instead the complete expropriation of the princes. Taking advantage of a constitutional clause which allowed a plebiscite on any issue where there was widespread public interest, they campaigned vigorously for the Fürstenenteignung.

Here was the ideal opportunity for the Deutsche Linke to press for left-wing unity, and for Tucholsky to vent his own dislike of the Hohenzollerns. The Weltbühne propaganda for expropriation was led by Emil Rabold and Robert Kuczinski(75), but Tucholsky made a considerable contribution. As a former law student, he was aware of the difference between those few items which could be described as the princes' private property, and the lands, palaces and treasures which they had held as trustees for the state(76); these had been perquisites which belonged to the people and had been returned to them after 1918. The plebiscite was not a matter of the German people wishing to expropriate the princes, but a defensive manoeuvre to prevent "die Enteignung des deutschen Volkes durch die Fürsten".(77) Instead of lavishing its limited resources on the Hohenzollerns, the government should provide better pensions for those

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(74) GW I, pp.611-2.

(75) Cf. Enseling, Die Weltbühne, Organ der intellektuellen Linken, Münster, Fahle, 1962, p.161.

(76) Der Hund und der Blinde, WB 1/6/26, East German edition, Vol.4, p.413.

(77) GW II, p.400.

wounded in Wilhelm's war.(78) Tucholsky's tactical proposals also displayed common sense rather than originality: statistics were to be presented to make possible a comparison between the monthly wages of the average worker and the proposed unearned income for Wilhelm, "den Deserteur in Doorn".(79)

Tucholsky's main value to the campaign was as a satirist. In the article Neues aus den Untersuchungsausschüssen, he criticised both the circumstances of the abdication and the suggested payment:

„Für den während der Revolutionstage umsonst ausgestandenen Schreck sowie für die damals verbrauchten Fahrgelder tritt ein Aufschlag von 10% in Kraft; läßt sich die Auszahlung mangels Bargeld aus Staatsmitteln nicht tätigen, so tritt eine Enteignung der deutschen Steuerzahler nur nach vorheriger Entscheidung des Reichspräsidenten ein. Die letzte Bestimmung kann bei Regenwetter aufgehoben werden".(80)

Although the plebiscite failed to obtain the support of a majority of the electorate, its sponsors had grounds for satisfaction with a poll of 15½ million, half as many again as the combined left-wing vote at the previous election. The display of left-wing unity seemed to augur well for the future, since a joint action had weaned the SPD away from their former allies on the right. However, Tucholsky was not satisfied. During the campaign he had recognised that the Social Democratic establishment had feared the possibility of its own victory; as in April 1925 he diagnosed that the approach of the Republicans had been the biggest obstacle to success.

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(78) Das Buch vom Kaiser, WB 29/12/25, *ibid.*, p.301.

(79) Ein Lump, WB 13/7/26, *ibid.*, p.471.

(80) WB 16/2/26, *ibid.*, p.356.

If Tucholsky's contribution to the plebiscite campaign has gone unnoticed by previous critics, his attacks on the Anti-Pornography Law of 1926 have been discussed by Prescher(81) and Nittenberg(82). A brief examination of his attitude to censorship will suffice here.

It was natural for a writer to have a professional interest in fighting censorship. Before the war, Tucholsky had admitted its value in preventing the public showing of sensationalist films; but sanctions appropriate to an industry in its infancy were not applicable to the artistically advanced German theatre.(83) After the war he criticised the banning of literary works for alleged indecency; among the authors and painters who fell victim to the censoring office of Regierungsrat Brunner were Verlaine and Zille.(84)

The Gesetz zur Bekämpfung von Schmutz und Schund had in Tucholsky's opinion more serious implications for German cultural life. If, as the Bill's preamble maintained, Parliament really wished to protect young people from corrupting influences, Tucholsky considered that the goal could best be achieved by radical social reform to improve the environment of poverty and squalor in which many of them were compelled to live.(85) He suspected that the real aim of the Bill, which had received strong support from the Catholic Zentrum, was to censor works aimed at an adult public. The existing laws seemed to represent more than adequate protection against pornography. The final and most important reason for Tucholsky's opposition to the Bill was his fear that it would be abused, like the Republikschutzgesetz, as a weapon

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(81) Prescher, thesis, pp.45-47.

(82) Joanna Nittenberg, thesis, Vienna, 1970, p.142.

(83) Verbotene Filme, SB 2/10/13, GW I, p.92.

(84) Der Zensor geht um! WB 25/11/20, GW I, pp.764-66.

(85) Eveline, die Blume der Prärie, WB 21/9/26, GW II, p.508.

against pacifists and revolutionaries.(86) Even evidence that the censorship committees had adhered to instructions and withheld from the public mainly worthless products failed to mollify him.(87) However liberal the attitude of the Berlin authorities, Tucholsky was convinced that provincial bodies, such as the Landesjugendamt in Catholic Düsseldorf, would continue to apply the regulations in a less flexible manner.(88)

The other forms of censorship which Tucholsky criticised at this time was the insidious right-wing bias of the broadcasting services. Although he had some justification in regarding German radio as yet another reactionary stronghold, the demand "Die Rundfunkzensur muß fallen!"(89) proved as unsuccessful as his attacks on the Anti-Pornography Law. Significantly, his most effective comment on the radio authorities was made in the form of a humorous satire(90), and he did not participate in the detailed discussion which was taking place simultaneously in the Rote Fahne.(91)

Tucholsky's unwillingness to contribute to the Communist press was partly due to the contempt which he felt for the low intellectual level and technical shortcomings of the Rote Fahne. He was also reluctant to surrender his intellectual freedom. Nevertheless, the contrast between his conversion to Marxist theory and increasing support for the Communist-led Workers' Movement on the one hand, and his reluctance to publish in

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(86) *ibid.*, p.507.

(87) Ia, WB 8/10/29, GW III, p.208.

(88) Schmutz und Schund bzw. Geldverknappung, WB 29/4/30.

(89) Rundfunkzensur, WB 17/4/28, GW II, p.1109.

(90) Des deutschen Volkes Liederschatz, WB 22/3/27, GW II, pp.749-52.

(91) Cf. the articles by "SB" of 10/2/27, and 5/8/27, reprinted by Manfred Brauneck in Die rote Fahne, Munich, UTB, 1973, pp.249-52 and 271-73.

party journals on the other has a further biographical explanation. His work as a political writer was restricted by new duties.

In December 1926 Siegfried Jacobsohn died of a heart attack. Tucholsky was shocked by the loss of his mentor(92), but he was confronted by a more urgent problem than personal grief. As the Weltbühne's leading contributor, Tucholsky was an automatic successor as editor. He therefore had to return to the Berlin which he detested, and experience his country's political malaise.(93) In addition, the temporary separation from his wife led to a gradual breakdown of their marriage.

The most unfortunate consequence of Tucholsky's new duties lay in their interference with his career as a writer. Tucholsky was a conscientious businessman(94), but he lacked the coordinating skill necessary to captain the Weltbühne's team of writers.(95) He was therefore relieved to hand over responsibility for the day-to-day running of the journal to Ossietzky in the summer of 1927. Ossietzky's hatred of the military rivalled Tucholsky's own, and he had grown equally disillusioned with the centre-left parties.(96) But this identity of views did not ensure a fruitful relationship. Ossietzky printed all Tucholsky's articles, as befitted the work of his leading collaborator; but he could not act as the source of ideas, advice and inspiration which Jacobsohn had been:

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(92) Dem Andenken Siegfried Jacobsohns, WB 14/12/26, GW II, p.572.

(93) Cf. his letter to Mary Tucholsky, 18/1/26, Br. p.477.

(94) Early in his career Tucholsky had learned from Jacobsohn the importance of answering letters promptly; cf. Gedanken an Siegfried Jacobsohn, WB 29/11/27, GW II, p.959.

(95) Cf. Schulz, op.cit. p.96.

(96) Ossietzky had even helped to found the Republikanische Partei in 1924 as a protest against the lukewarm defenders of democracy; predictably, this creation of journalists and intellectuals was a failure.

„Er antwortet fast gar nicht; ich habe schon, glaube ich, vierzehn Tage nichts von ihm gehört-auf Anregungen, Vorschläge, Witze - nichts".(97)

During his period as editor of the Weltbühne, Tucholsky wrote few articles of lasting importance, although ironically enough the year 1927 witnessed two of his greatest literary successes. Ein Pyrenäenbuch, which was not so much an orthodox travel book as the account of Tucholsky's inner experiences, "eine Reise durch mich selbst"(98), had been written the previous year. Mit 5 PS, the first of a popular series of Sammelbände of Tucholsky's articles, involved much Kleberei and re-examination of earlier work, but included few original articles.

The new Weltbühne-editor was involved in several political controversies. His already strong dislike of the Social Democrats was reinforced by correspondence with Reichstagspräsident Paul Löbe. Tucholsky was dismayed when his application for parliamentary lobby passes was turned down on the grounds that the Reichstag was already overcrowded with visitors. At first he suspected that some obscure civil servant was interfering with the political coverage of a journal unpopular in official circles. Tucholsky's irritation turned to anger when a personal approach to Löbe, himself formerly a prominent journalist, was dismissed on similarly legalistic grounds. His reply pointed out the consequences of such high-handed treatment:

„Die behördlichen Stellen des Reiches und der Länder beklagen so oft die mangelnde Mitarbeit von Intellektuellen. Ich glaube nicht, daß man sie auf diese Weise fördert".(99)

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(97) Letter to Mary Tucholsky, 11/7/27, Br. p.480.

(98) Ein Pyrenäenbuch, GW II, p.690.

(99) Cf. Ein Briefwechsel, WB 22/2/27, GW II, p.734.

This was reasonable criticism, though Tucholsky later went too far in ridiculing Löbe as "der Wanderbursch mit dem Schirm in der Hand".(100)

Tucholsky next took up the cause célèbre in left-wing circles of the Italian anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti. After a trial in a United States court noted for xenophobia rather than impartiality, they had been sentenced to death. For seven years they had been uncertain of their fate, until a last appeal for a retrial was rejected. In common with many European intellectuals, Tucholsky protested to the American ambassador against the execution(101), but civilised opinion failed to sway the American government. Tucholsky's dislike of the USA as the leading capitalist power was reinforced by this apparent miscarriage of justice.

When Tucholsky's short period as editor of the Weltbühne is examined, it must be admitted that he had temporarily lost direction as a writer. From time to time resignation was evident in his work. He claimed that:

„Ich gehöre seit dem Jahre 1913 zu denen,  
die den deutschen Geist für fast unwandelbar  
vergiftet halten, die nicht an eine Besserung  
glauben, die die verfassungsmäßige Demokratie  
für eine Fassade und für eine Lüge halten". (102)

This statement provides confirmation of his pessimistic mood; it represents the background to Poor's claim that in the later stages of his career Tucholsky "fought a desperate ad hoc battle" on small issues, having given the larger ones up as lost.(103) However, this comment is an

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(100) Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, Berlin, Neuer Deutscher Verlag, 1929, p.207-8. "Löbe ist einer der besseren Leute seiner unsäglichen Partei; er trägt eine reine Weste und verrät seine Grundsätze niemals, denn er hat keine".

(101) An den Botschafter, WB 19/4/27, GW II, p.770-1.

(102) Stahlhelm oder Filzhut? WB 17/5/27, GW II, p.790.

(103) Poor, op.cit., p.187.



exaggeration, probably caused by acceptance at face value of Tucholsky's comparison of himself with Cassandra and Tiresias. Even as an unhappy editor whose literary and political career was hanging fire, Tucholsky did not yet despair. His left-ward development towards active support for the KPD had been temporarily halted, rather than effectively reversed.

Poor is wrong to assert that as early as 1927 Tucholsky regarded Germany as a hopeless society. His hope rested in the tactic which was to preoccupy the next three years of his career:

"den antidemokratischen, hohnlachenden,  
für die Idee der Gerechtigkeit bewußt  
ungerechten Klassenkampf". (104)

## CHAPTER 5

The uncertainty which often precedes an important decision was uppermost in Tucholsky's mind at the beginning of 1929. He had finally left the bustle and excitement of Paris for the seclusion of a Swedish village. The pressure of literary production for a weekly newspaper seemed more irksome since Jacobsohn's death, and the political scene offered little comfort. Tucholsky felt it necessary to maintain the element of distance from current affairs represented by Panter and Hauser; indeed this period saw many of their wittiest articles.(1) He even considered abandoning his political writing altogether, in preparation for a serious literary work, and decided against this course as much for financial as for intellectual reasons.(2)

These factors must be borne in mind in assessing Tucholsky's conduct when he plunged into the political struggle once more. The feeling of resignation which had afflicted him in 1919 and 1923 could temporarily be overcome by uncompromising support for the radical left; but if that cause failed him, the prospects for his polemical writing were grim. The period 1928-30 therefore represented the culmination of Tucholsky's career as a left-wing polemicist, to be followed only by resignation. In his work for the Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung and in the controversial book Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, he appealed to a working-class readership to prepare for the revolution which would sweep away the unjust social system of Germany.

Tucholsky's decision to write political verse in the Communist

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(1) Cf. Deutsch für Amerikaner, WB 2/7/29, GW III, pp.125-27, and the Lottchen series such as Ankunft, Voss, 6/9/28, GW II, pp.1226-7; Lottchen besucht einen tragischen Film, Voss, 20/10/29, GW III, pp. 220-223.

(2) Cf. his letter to Emil Ludwig, 20/1/29, Briefe, p.190.

press reflected a stage in his development rather than a response to external events. When he began contributing to the AIZ in the summer of 1928, the economic crisis which was to shake western capitalism to its foundations was still a year distant, and the immediate future appeared to promise continued stability and a gradual improvement in the living standards of the workers. Tucholsky could hardly have anticipated the coming changes, but he felt the need for a larger audience. After shedding the responsibility of editing the Weltbühne, he had the time to publish his work elsewhere. In addition, Ossietzky had himself assumed the role of the Weltbühne's chief political commentator, which reduced the burden of expectation resting on Ignaz Wrobel.

The reasons for Tucholsky's devotion to the working class, from which he was separated by birth, career and social status, have been analysed by Poor.(3) He points out that Tucholsky, in common with other left-wing writers of middle-class origin, may have felt a sense of guilt that he himself had escaped the misery so prevalent around him.(4) As Tucholsky wrote in Deutschland, Deutschland über alles:

„Damit ich dieses Bilderbuch schreiben kann, ist nötig: daß ich satt bin; daß ich ein Dach über dem Kopf habe; daß ich die Muße und die Zeit habe, mir die Bilder, die mir der Verlag übergeben hat, anzusehn; daß mein Vater mir in der Jugend so viel Geld gegeben hat, daß ich etwas mehr als das ABC und das Einmaleins gelernt habe.. Manchmal gelingt es einem heldenhaften Proletarier unter heroischen Anstrengungen, diese Schranken zu durchbrechen und trotz Hunger, Kälte und Halbbildung mit nächtlicher Arbeit und gewaltiger Willensanstrengung das zu erreichen, was der Kaufmannssohn leichter erreicht".

Although Tucholsky wished to reach a working-class public, he remained suspicious of the main KPD newspaper, Die rote Fahne. However, there were also positive reasons for the decision to publish in the

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(3) Poor, op.cit. pp.133-4.

(4) Poor refers to the article Das Volk. (Deutschlandbuch, p.17).

semi-official Communist press empire directed by Willi Münzenberg. He had long given theoretical support to the idea of "die tendenz-fotografisch illustrierte Kampfzeitung"(5) and claimed that photographs could capture attention more quickly than leading articles and enjoyed greater credibility than cartoons, since the camera could not lie.(6) The AIZ, with photographs of "factories, strikes, labour exchanges, demonstrations, mass meetings and famine disasters"(7) appeared to be just such a "Kampfzeitung", and it had a circulation of around 400,000 copies.(8) Its entrepreneur was also well-known as the creator of the Internationale Arbeiter Hilfe, a Communist ancillary organisation by means of which many left-wing sympathisers were attracted to the KPD.

The flamboyant Münzenberg was far more gifted than the average party hack, but like any Communist deputy, his loyalties were to the Zentrale. Therein lay a danger which threatened not only Tucholsky but also a large number of his colleagues. According to Deak(9), many left-wing intellectuals hoped to reach an understanding with Münzenberg in order to overcome the disastrous fratricidal strife within the Labour Movement. Not only did they fail to make use of Münzenberg, but he in fact turned them into "the first fellow-travellers in the history of international Communism".(10) Since Tucholsky himself wrote more than thirty articles for the AIZ in two years, it might be asked if Deak's strictures apply to him.

The expression "fellow-traveller" denotes one who sympathises

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(5) Die Tendenzfotografie, WB 28/4/25, GW II, p.107.

(6) Adolf Behne, writing in the Weltbühne six weeks later, disagreed. (Das denkende Bild, WB 2/6/25).

(7) Münzenberg, quoted by Koszyk, op.cit., p.332.

(8) Cf. Peter de Mendelssohn, Zeitungsstadt Berlin, Berlin, Ullstein, 1959, p.264.

(9) Deak, op.cit., p.162.

(10) *ibid.*

with many Communist aims and gives the party moral support while remaining outside it. This definition is certainly appropriate to Tucholsky, with his idealisation of the working class and advocacy of revolution. However, the term is best avoided in an academic context, since it represents not merely a statement of fact, but also a value judgment; it implies at best naiveté and at worst cowardice.(11) Tucholsky's work for Minzenberg was characterised by over-optimism, but, as will be seen from a detailed examination of his articles in the AIZ, the emotive term "fellow-traveller" does him less than justice.

In 1931 several of Tucholsky's poems were re-issued in an anthology of left-wing verse, Rote Signale. While reviewing the volume for the Weltbühne, he commented indirectly on his own literary practice. Tucholsky declared that the mere evocation of proletarian misery should be avoided, since the workers needed no reminding of their poverty. He himself had only rarely been content to offer sympathy to the sufferers.(12) Instead Tucholsky had tried to reveal to the workers methods of escaping from their misery, and to reinforce their ranks by winning over their colleagues. As he explained(13), the artistic value of such Gebrauchslыrik was not an end in itself. What mattered was the effect of such verses on their readers:

„Der politische Zweck... benutzt, um auf die Massen zu wirken, die Formen der Kunst, deren nicht alltägliche Ausdrucksformen ihm sehr gelegen kommen. Die Wirkung soll sofort erfolgen, sie soll unmittelbar sein, ohne Umschweife ... Die Verse der Gebrauchslыrik sind gereimtes oder rhythmisches Parteimanifest".(14)

On the last score Tucholsky has been criticised. Party manifestos, even when put into a literary form by an experienced writer of

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(11) Cf. Gaitskell's attack on the members of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament as "pacifists and fellow-travellers" at the Labour Party Congress in 1960.

(12) Cf. Nie allein, Dt. Dt. and GW III, pp.298-99.

(13) Gebrauchslыrik, WB 27/11/18, GW II, p.1318.

(14) ibid., p.1319.

propaganda verse, can be dull reading, as Tucholsky later admitted.(15) As Schulz claims, poems like the Fragen an eine Arbeiterfrau(16) do not represent Tucholsky's verse at its most effective. But whereas Schulz's opposition(17) stems largely from the poem's contents, the real weakness is its didactic approach. Tucholsky probably felt that a German working-class wife would have had little formal education and therefore had to be advised directly and without subtlety, but the result is uninspiring.

Tucholsky's propaganda verses were generally more successful. They originated with photographs which illustrated, for example, the Asyl für Obdachlose.(18) He would follow his broadside against the capitalists with slogans designed to encourage the workers to remedy the injustices of German society. They were to stand together and fight the lock-outs in the heavy industry of the Rhine and Ruhr(19) and refuse to be bribed into inactivity by the government's charity for the old and infirm:

„Wohltaten, Mensch, sind nichts als Dampf.  
Hol dir dein Recht im Klassenkampf!"(20)

According to Tucholsky, the class struggle would solve the problems of the workers. In the articles Nur(21)and Wohltätigkeit(22), he combined this sentiment with a polemical illustration of the Marxist theory on the origin of profits. Marx believed that the capitalists paid

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(15) Rote Signale, GW III, p.979.

(16) AIZ, 1928, GW II, p.1123.

(17) Schulz, op.cit., p.119:"Das klingt verdächtig nach einem Plansoll der Gesinnung, nach 'sozialistischem Realismus', und wer es nicht besser weiß, würde unvermeidlich annehmen, diese "Fragen" seien in den letzten Jahren für ein 'SED-Lesebuch zum proletarischen Hausgebrauch' zusammengereimt worden, stammten aber nimmermehr aus den in zwei Jahrzehnten erprobten Feder Theobald Tigers".

(18) AIZ, 1928, GW II, p.1232-33.

(19) Aussperrung, Dt. Dt., pp.58-9, GW III, p.296.

(20) GW II, p.1233.

(21) Dt. Dt., pp.222-3 and GW III, pp.310-11.

(22) Dt. Dt., p.224 and GW III, pp.311-12.

their workers a wage which was only just sufficient to maintain their Arbeitskraft, by providing them with the necessary food, clothing, lodgings and cultural opportunities.(23) But the labour-power of the proletarians produced for their employer a much greater value in goods and services than that for which they were paid. This extra production Marx described as surplus value (Mehrwert), and he pointed out that by turning this product of cooperative work into the profit of private individuals, the capitalists were stealing the fruits of the workers' labour.(24) By 1929 Tucholsky recognised that this economic system gave neither manual nor intellectual workers their due, and he wrote bitterly:(25)

„Er (Der Arbeiter) zieht die Schrauben an,  
als wären es seine eigenen und als bekäme er es bezahlt.  
Er bekommt es nicht bezahlt; er bekommt nur seinen Lohn".

This support for Marxist theory was explicit enough, and elsewhere in Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, Tucholsky provided a poetic analysis which clarified Marx's theorising for a proletarian public:

„Die Mark ist tausend- und tausendfach  
in fremde Taschen geflossen;  
die Dividende hat mit viel Krach  
der Aufsichtsrat beschlossen.  
Für euch die Brühe. Für sie das Mark.  
Für euch der Pfennig. Für sie die Mark."(26)

Though the revolutionary message displeases Schulz, even he admits(27) that it is a fair description of the late 1920's, when laissez-faire capitalism was at its height.

Tucholsky had long ceased to believe that the economic and social inequalities of Germany could be progressively reduced by the SPD's policy of gradual reform. He claimed that, ten years after the

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(23) Cf. Marx and Engels, Werke, Vol.23, pp.184-91, in the first volume of Das Kapital.

(24) Cf. the Marxist Mehrwerttheorie, *ibid.*, pp.207-8.

(25) Nur, Dt. Dt. p.223 and GW III, p.311.

(26) Wohltätigkeit, GW III, p.312.

(27) Schulz, *op.cit.*, p.141.

Revolution, conditions for the workers had scarcely improved. The SPD tactic of entering coalitions with middle-class parties had been a failure.(28) The significance of this renewed attack was that in May 1928 the SPD had re-entered the government. However, their position within the coalition was too weak to enable the achievement of such fundamental reforms as the re-organisation of the Reichswehr or the restoration of the eight-hour day. Hermann Müller's government could hope only to maintain law and order, defend Republican institutions and protect the workers' living standards.(29)

Tucholsky found such passivity in the face of poverty and injustice unacceptable. He attacked the Social Democratic leaders in the Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung for abandoning the traditions of Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht. Wels and Müller were bureaucrats (Bonzen), and traitors to the cause of socialism.(30) Tucholsky made clear his support for the KPD by quoting from the Internationale:

„Wacht auf, Verdammte dieser Erde,  
die stets man noch zum Hungern zwingt!"(31)

Tucholsky overlooked the fact that the edition of the AIZ which contained the unflattering portraits of the SPD leaders described in his Sozialdemokratische Ehrentafel also carried photographs of the newly-elected Communist deputies, few of whom appeared more distinguished than their rivals.(32)

Tucholsky's readiness to attack the SPD while sparing the Communists was apparent in his response to the fighting in Berlin on May 1st, 1929. A Communist May Day demonstration had been forbidden by the

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(28) Die Sicherungsverwahrung, WB 4/12/28, GW II, p.1329.

(29) Cf. Rosenberg, Geschichte, pp.191-92.

(30) Sozialdemokratische Ehrentafel, AIZ, 1928 and Rote Signale, 1931.

(31) Zwei alte Leute am ersten Mai, AIZ, 1930, GW III, p.435.

(32) The SPD leaders in the Ehrentafel were Wels, Stampfer, Hermann Müller, Erhard Auer, Hörsing, Noske, Leinert, Landsberg, Kuttner, Heilmann and Breitscheid.



Social Democratic Police President Zörgiebel. Under instructions from Moscow, the KPD went ahead with their preparations. After some skirmishes, the demonstrators set up barricades in working-class districts; though the armed police eventually restored order, some thirty lives were lost, generally those of civilians unconnected with the riots.

The AIZ did not require Tucholsky's help to make political capital out of the May Day events, and he chose Das andere Deutschland as his platform. (33) While the democratic press and even left-wing Social Democrats such as Heinrich Ströbel put most of the blame on the Communists for defying the police ban, Tucholsky blamed Zörgiebel and the SPD for the bloodshed. Tucholsky recognised that Moscow's hope of a workers' rising had been unjustifiable. However, he felt that the Communists should never have been given the opportunity to widen the split in the working-class movement: the prohibition of the May Day demonstration had been a scandalous assault on socialist traditions which no imperial bureaucrat would have dared. Tucholsky directed the full force of his attack against the military training of the Schutzpolizei and its development into a counter-revolutionary force, with an ethos similar to that of the Reichswehr. The subject had exercised him since 1922, (34) and seven years later he could feel that he had been vindicated:

„Der Militarismus steckt nur in den Köpfen  
der Polizeioffiziere:.. die spielen Krieg,  
die bereiten Feldzüge gegen die eigenen  
Landsleute vor - Und der sozialdemokratische  
Polizeipräsident hat sie nicht in der Hand". (35)

Tucholsky's opinion of the Prussian police was not mere left-

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(33) Das Märchen von Berlin, DAD, 1/6/29, GW III, pp.77-80.

(34) Die Schupo, WB 29/6/22, GW I, p.987.

(35) GW III, p.80.

wing polemic, since it has been supported by Rosenberg.(36) However, once again, Tucholsky excused the errors of the Communists. Had they not insisted on the demonstration, even claiming that the ban had been lifted, Zörgiebel's men would have had no opportunity to go into battle. It is true that Tucholsky was not alone in his opinion, and that Ossietzky went even further by participating in an unofficial "People's Court", which produced propaganda for the Communist version of the May Day events.(37) Though this helps to put Tucholsky's attitude into perspective, his opinion was still one-sided. He remained convinced that the SPD could do nothing right, and that revolutionary tactics were now required.

The slogans which provided the climax of Tucholsky's verses in the AIZ and the Deutschlandbuch were often revolutionary in character, whether in the form of the simple imperative Kämpfe!(38) or the traditional refrain "Brüder! Zum Licht, zur Freiheit empor!"(39) Though such battle-cries roused the workers, they were of necessity vague, and Tucholsky's prose articles illustrate his opinions more clearly. Doerfel states that he envisaged a spontaneous mass uprising(40), or in his own words "ein Elementarereignis".(41) She then asserts that he gave no details about the preparation and aims of such a revolution. On the first two points she is correct, on the third wrong.

The analysis of Tucholsky's career as a propagandist of revolution should mention the gulf between such opinions and his idealistic optimism of early 1919. The metamorphosis had not come easily, and cannot be

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(36) Rosenberg, Geschichte, pp.177-8.

(37) Cf. Koplin, op.cit., pp.129-33 and Ossietzky's articles Zörgiebel ist schuld! WB 7/5/29, and Areopag, WB 11/6/29, in Rechenschaft, pp.100-4 and 113-17.

(38) Wohltätigkeit, Dt. Dt., p.224, GW III, pp.311-12.

(39) Aussperrung, Dt. Dt., p.58, GW III, p.296.

(40) Doerfel, op.cit., p.156.

(41) Huh, wie schauerlich!, WB 5/7/27, GW II, p.822.

explained away by a fascination for the "poetry of the Revolution" as opposed to "colourless reform".(42) For ten years Tucholsky had watched successive governments vainly attempting to reform society, and had himself campaigned against militarism and reaction. Tucholsky was not a Utopian, but after bitter experience he had given up hope for reform; revolution therefore appeared to offer the only possibility of progress. When the former opponent of Spartacist terrorism announced eight years after the Revolution,

„Ich für mein Teil halte revolutionäre Bluttaten  
für gerechtfertigt", (43)

he had not lost his concern for the sanctity of human life. But Tucholsky now felt that a sacrifice was necessary to make life worth living for the majority of his compatriots and to prevent another war. This was no mere "revolutionary romanticism" but a pragmatic choice of the "lesser evil".

On the subject of the clandestine preparations for a revolution, and its method of accomplishment, Tucholsky's silence is understandable. He was not a party organiser, and even if he had been, it would have been naive to betray his plans to his opponents. However, Tucholsky contributed willingly to the discussion of revolutionary aims. In 1928 it was natural to reflect on the mistakes made ten years before.(44) With these errors in mind, Tucholsky shaped a programme for the future; imagining himself at the head of a Communist workers' government, he summarised his policy thus:

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(42) Doerfel, op.cit., p.157.

(43) GW II, p.822.

(44) November-Umsturz, Schwarze Fahne, November 1928, GW II, pp.1302-03.

„Sozialisierung der Bergwerke;  
Sozialisierung der Schwerindustrie;  
Aufteilung des Großgrundbesitzes;  
Absetzung der Länderbürokratie;  
radikale Personalreform in der Justizverwaltung;  
Personalreform an Schulen und Universitäten;  
Abschaffung der Reichswehr;  
Schaffung eines sittlichen Strafgesetzes...  
Steuerliche Erfassung der Bauern".(45)

The Marxist character of the plans for public ownership of the means of production is clear. It is possible to decry such ideas as impractical, and Tucholsky admitted that some of his readers would do so, but to deny that Tucholsky ever expressed an opinion about the aims of a revolution is nonsense. When Tucholsky proclaimed: "Es lebe die Revolution!"(46), he had a clear idea of the changes which it should bring.

A retrospective article dealing with the November Revolution(47) occupied a prominent place in the controversial Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, which was published in Berlin by Münzenberg's Neuer Deutscher Verlag in 1929. The articles, many of which had already appeared in the Weltbühne(48), had their effectiveness reinforced by the skilful photo-montage of John Heartfield. The ironically titled book amounted, in Poor's words, to "a bitter and sometimes shocking attack upon everything which Tucholsky disliked in Germany"(49): militarism, the judiciary, the conservative Spießbürger, the Reichstag, Wilhelm II and Ludendorff, Stresemann and Löbe. Not surprisingly, the Nationalists were furious:

„Ein Kübel geifernden Hasses wird  
über das Land und seine Bewohner ausgeschüttet".

the readers of the Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung were informed.(50)

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(45) Was würden Sie tun, wenn Sie die Macht hätten?, Literarische Welt, 9/11/28, GW II, p.1303.

(46) November-Umsturz, GW II, p.1303.

(47) Schöne Zeiten, Dt. Dt., pp.33-35.

(48) For example, Deutsche Richter, Dt. Dt., p.156-8, originally in WB 12/9/26.

(49) Poor, op.cit., p.181.

(50) Cf. Tucholsky's scrapbook in the archive in Rottach.

Particular offence was caused by a photomontage of German generals, accompanied by the quotation from a well-known children's book on zoology: "Tiere sehen dich an". Tucholsky later wrote to the novelist Jakob Wassermann that this had been Heartfield's idea; he himself disagreed with the caption, out of respect for the animals.(51) However, other polemical passages of the book were definitely written by Tucholsky, and spared neither the right nor the Republicans. The final article, Heimat, which praised Germany's landscape, could hardly compensate for the previous two hundred pages of criticism, since the German people could take no credit for their scenery. The evocation of his old "love-hate" relationship with Germany

„Wir haben das Recht, Deutschland zu hassen,  
weil wir es lieben"(52)

was intended to refute the accusation that he and the left in general were lacking in Heimatliebe, but no positive ending could have reconciled many of his readers to the satire which had preceded it.

Among critics of the Deutschlandbuch, two objections predominate. First, Tucholsky is blamed for playing into the hands of extremists of the right and left by helping to discredit the existing Republican system. The second objection is to the relevance of the satire, and its alleged lack of proportion. Tucholsky was apparently attacking as specifically German certain evils which were characteristic of the western world as a whole. In addition, he was continually reviling Wilhelminian Germany instead of recognising that ten years had passed since the fall of the Empire. For this reason even Poor describes the dominant quality of the book as its "lack of timeliness".(53)

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(51) Letter of 1/3/31, Briefe, p.212.

(52) Heimat, Dt. Dt., p.231 and GW III, p.314.

(53) Poor, op.cit. p.181.

Tucholsky would not have denied his sympathy for the proletarian revolution or his dislike of the reformist policies and personal mediocrity of the Social Democrats. The satirical attacks on Löbe(54) and Noske(55) illustrate this disapproval. It is easy to point out that the Communist ranks included equally unsavoury characters and ask why Tucholsky spared die Thälmmänner, but the answer has already been given: he looked on the party, and more especially its supporters, as the only remaining progressive force in German society.

The accusation that the book was "grist to the mill of the extreme right"(56) is less easily answered. Laqueur's claim that the book confirmed right-wingers in their prejudices against left-wing intellectuals is unimportant. Tucholsky had given up hope of winning over the Nationalists and intended instead to strengthen their opponents for the inevitable battle. But the attack on Republican institutions had an unfortunate effect at a time when the National Socialist Movement was setting out on the road to success. In his Swedish exile Tucholsky could hardly be blamed for underestimating the Nazi danger, since he was in the company of most of his country's leading statesmen. However, when a review of the Deutschlandbuch in the Nazi press praised Tucholsky's anti-Republican polemic as "Förderung der NS-Propaganda"(57) he took sufficient notice to preserve the article in his scrap-book. Whatever his intentions and however sound the excuses for ignoring the Nazis in his satire, this unexpected testimonial represents a serious objection to the book.

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(54) Der Wanderbursch mit dem Schirm in der Hand, Dt. Dt., pp.207-08.

(55) Cf. Rechenaufgaben, Dt. Dt., p.40.

(56) Walter Z. Laqueur, Weimar, A Cultural History, 1918-33, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1974, p.46.

(57) Der National-Sozialist, 6/10/29, in Tucholsky's scrap-book.

Poor is not alone in asserting that the Deutschlandbuch has an anachronistic quality. The accusation was first made by the contemporary critic, Herbert Ihering, who also alleged that Tucholsky kept harping on the same themes, and claimed that the Germans had no monopoly of the weaknesses which Tucholsky had pilloried.(58) Tucholsky's reply was characteristically aggressive. He was attacking the same targets, such as the military and the judiciary, because they remained as dangerous as ever. Tucholsky's diagnosis that Germany was suffering from "die Fortdauer einer wilhelminischen Gesinnung"(59) can hardly be faulted. His compatriots had elected Hindenburg President and another ageing reactionary, the pan-German industrialist Hugenberg, had just become leader of the Nationalists. These figures and their supporters were symptomatic of a specifically German fascination with the glories of the Empire.

Secondly, Tucholsky questioned the implication that his work was entirely negative in intent. He claimed that it represented the attempt to act as a spokesman for those victims of German society who were unable to express their feelings in writing. This was the book's positive content:

„Immer, wenn ich schreibe, denke ich an das Leid  
der Anonymen, an den Proletarier, den Angestellten,  
den Arbeiter, an ein Leid, von dem ich durch  
Stichproben weiß".(60)

This unsentimental sympathy is evident in Jubiläum(61), Nie allein(62), and Mutterns Hände(63), and constitutes the opposite pole to the attacks

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(58) Cf. Ihering in Das Tagebuch, 12/10/29.

(59) Letter to Ihering, 18/10/29, Briefe, p.132.

(60) *ibid.*

(61) In *Dt. Dt.*, pp.41-2.

(62) *ibid.*, pp.124-31, *GW III*, pp.298-99.

(63) *ibid.*, p.171 and AIZ, 1929, *GW III*, p.1138.

on the middle and upper classes. Finally, in reply to Ihering's accusation that it was easy to indulge in polemic from a safe distance, Tucholsky retorted that his satire did expose him to danger; indeed within a month a Nazi mob rioted after he had read from his works in Wiesbaden, and a doctor mistaken for him was assaulted.(64)

Although the Deutschlandbuch represented the climax of Tucholsky's work as a satirist and polemicist, it can scarcely be regarded as his most effective book. It suffers from a naiveté towards political extremism and a lack of proportion in the indiscriminate attacks on Republicans and Social Democrats. Such tactical errors should not, however, be allowed to obscure Tucholsky's concern for the under-privileged and his justifiable indignation towards their tormentors. In 1919 he had described the satirist as unjust in the interest of the abstract idea of justice, and he went on to illustrate unconsciously his own later position as the writer of the Deutschlandbuch:

„Der Satiriker ist ein gekränkter Idealist:  
er will die Welt gut haben,  
sie ist schlecht und nun rennt er gegen das  
Schlechte an".(65)

Tucholsky's engagement for the revolutionary left had caused him personal difficulties before the riot in Wiesbaden. For over four years he had contributed feuilletons to the democratic Vossische Zeitung. In September 1928 the editors, among them his old collaborator Szafranski(66), expressed their concern at his work for the AIZ, asking if it was fair to attack capitalism while accepting a retainer from the Ullsteins.(67)

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(64) Cf. letter to Walter B. Meyer, 27/11/29, Briefe, p.210.

(65) Was darf die Satire? BW 27/1/19, GW I, p.363.

(66) Szafranski had produced the illustrations for Rheinsberg.

(67) For the following, cf. letter to Mary Tucholsky, 18/9/28, Briefe, pp.488-91



Tucholsky was honest enough to recognise that Szafranski and Korff had a point. His position was also weakened by the fact that his financial security depended largely on his articles for Ullstein, since the Weltbühne alone could not pay him an adequate salary, and, in spite of Tucholsky's offer of a closer liaison, Münzenberg would have been unable to fill the gap. However, Tucholsky could rightly assert that his recent articles in the Vossische Zeitung had been very popular.(68) More important was the fact that the Ullsteins had hired only Tucholsky's non-political persona, and he therefore felt that they had no right of comment on his work for the AIZ. In any case, he would allow no one to interfere with his artistic freedom. Korff and Szafranski, recognising the danger of losing a successful columnist, backed down, and Tucholsky was able to continue writing for the Vossische Zeitung for the next three years.

In spite of the anti-climactic ending, this controversy was significant. However aggressive Tucholsky's stance might appear, he had been compelled to recognise that the alternative of abandoning Ullstein for Münzenberg was not merely financially untenable. The Communists themselves regarded him with little enthusiasm. Much of his work in the next two years was devoted to the search for an answer to his "great personal dilemma"(69): the relationship of the intellectual sympathiser to the Communist Party.

In the course of his journalistic career, Tucholsky gave his support to three major parties: the DDP, the USPD and the KPD.(70) However great his sympathy for the workers, his dislike of the SPD and

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(68) Cf. Wo kommen die Löcher im Käse her? Voss. 29/8/28, GW II, pp. 1212-15.

(69) Doerfel, op.cit., p.158.

(70) In a curriculum vitae which accompanied an application for Swedish citizenship in 1934, he claimed to have been a member of the SPD, after the merger with the rump of the USPD. However, no information has come to light about the duration of this membership and it had no visible effect in his writings:Cf. Text und Kritik, no.29: Kurt Tucholsky, p.4.

his enthusiasm for the Revolution, he never became a member of the KPD. Nor did he participate in any of the Communist Writers' Congresses or join such "front organisations" as the Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller; on the contrary, he became involved in controversy with them. In spite of the insinuations of one critic(71), the decision not to join the party was not due to a fear of losing his job with the Ullsteins. The reasons for his hesitation went deeper, reflecting the difficulties faced by an intellectual from a middle-class background in winning acceptance from the party functionaries on his terms rather than theirs. Tucholsky was unwilling to abandon his comfortable way of life or sacrifice his integrity as a writer on the altar of slavish obedience to the party line. His final objection was political rather than personal: he was beginning to recognise the tactical errors of that line, dictated in accordance with the overall strategy of the Bolsheviks in Moscow rather than by the Karl-Liebknecht-Haus in Berlin.

Tucholsky discussed his dilemma in two important articles, Gebrauchsliteratur(72) and Die Rolle des Intellektuellen in der Partei(73) without finding a solution. His good intentions were transparent: instead of blaming the KPD for their suspicions of intellectuals like himself, he held up as a warning the decline of the SPD since the loss of such brilliant but unproletarian figures as Liebknecht and Jogiches, Eisner and Landauer.(74) Thus he turned a potentially embarrassing request into a eulogy of two former KPD leaders and diverted his attack from the real target, the fourth-rate intellectuals of the KPD, to the philistines among

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(71) Doerfel, op.cit., p.158.

(72) WB 27/11/28, GW II, pp.1318-22.

(73) Die Front, 1/1/29, GW III, pp.13-18.

(74) GW II, p.1322.

the Social Democrats. To escape the charge that his way of life contrasted with his political sympathies, and probably also to reassure party functionaries, he disclaimed any desire to act as "leader" of the proletariat: instead he and his colleagues, men of words rather than action, would be content with the subordinate role of assisting the workers. (75) Tucholsky even asserted:

„Ich halte einen Zusammenhang der radikalen  
Intellektuellen mit der KPD für einen Segen  
und für ein Glück". (76)

In pursuit of this objective, he declared that fellow-intellectuals should accept the need for discipline, for steady, unspectacular work and for political common sense. This represented a considerable concession, and was the nearest Tucholsky ever came to the KPD. But even his willingness to conciliate the party leaders had its limits, whether they be ascribed to bourgeois individualism, personal integrity or good sense. As the price of his cooperation he attempted to impose on the party conditions which would ensure mutual success. The KPD leaders were to recognise that the situation of Germany differed from that of Russia, and those incapable of such perception should be replaced.

These conditions represented the minimum safeguards required by the left-wing intellectuals. Hiller, writing on a similar theme a month later in the Weltbühne, was far less enthusiastic towards the Communists (77), preferring instead to pursue the idea of a united front which would embrace Communists and Social Democrats, and would be organised by the small splinter-groups between the two hostile sister-parties. Thälmann and his colleagues should have recognised the difference between the two positions, and the opportunity offered by Tucholsky's constructive

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(75) *ibid.*, p.1321.

(76) *ibid.*, p.1322.

(77) Cf. Deak, *op.cit.* p.169.

proposals. However, Communist functionaries were hamstrung by party directives which opposed any compromise. Both articles were seen as a concerted attempt by the intellectuals to dictate terms for collaboration with the party, and Hans Conrad, editor of the periodical Die Front, set out in December 1928 to demolish the fragile bridge which Tucholsky had been trying to construct.

Conrad had as little time for Tucholsky's suggestions as for Hiller's belief that Germany's tragedy lay in the division of the Labour movement. In an inauspicious echo of the "Block, nicht Brei!" slogan of Hugenberg's DNVP, he rejected any idea of a united front with the SPD or other groups to the right. Conrad claimed that the real troubles of the country lay elsewhere:

„Die Tragödie Deutschlands ist nicht zuletzt die jämmerliche Halbheit seiner "linken" Intellektuellen, die da über den Parteien thronen, weil es "einem in den Reihen nicht leicht gemacht wird". (um mit Kurt Tucholsky zu sprechen). Diese Leute haben 1918 glänzend versagt, sie versagen noch heute". (78)

Instead of offering condescending advice to the party, intellectuals should combine revolutionary theory and practice, as Marx and Lenin had done, by experiencing for themselves the conditions under which the proletariat lived and worked.

This demand for personal and ideological conformity could hardly encourage Tucholsky in his attempt to mediate between the Weltbühne writers and the KPD, but he did not yet abandon hope. After all, many of Conrad's objections had been irrelevant: unlike Marx and Lenin, he did not aspire to lead the proletariat, and it was therefore unnecessary to sacrifice his material well-being to become a "genuine" proletarian. Tucholsky forebore to mention that he had already made this point in

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(78) Deutschlands Tragödie, in Die Front, No. 7, II. Jg. 1929, p.197.

Gebrauchsllyrik, and he rejected polemic in favour of reasoned analysis of the uncomfortable position of the intellectual sympathiser:

"Der Kampf der Arbeiterklasse führt zum Siege; er ist gerecht. Wir haben es sehr schwer, uns von der Grundlage unserer Erziehung, unserer Ausbildung, unserer Arbeit loszulösen. Man schilt uns von der Bürgerseite her: Bolschewisten. Man mißtraut uns von der Funktionärseite der Arbeiterparteien her - niemals haben uns die Arbeiter mißtraut, sofern wir uns zurückhaltend und sympathisierend angeschlossen haben". (79)

However, even this conciliatory definition won Tucholsky no new friends in the party. The distinction between the workers and their spokesmen was unacceptable in a monolithic organisation, constructed on the principle of obedience to the leadership. Conrad, himself an intellectual speaking on behalf of the workers, was also unlikely to forgive Tucholsky the accusation of inverted snobbery. (80) In spite of a final plea that what mattered was to work for the common cause (81), Tucholsky's second article was sharper in tone than that of five weeks before, while its contents made no new concessions to Communist dogmatism.

Conrad's polemical reply was therefore no surprise. (82) His comment that Tucholsky should be satisfied to be a private in the revolutionary army showed that he neither understood nor cared about Tucholsky's problematical relationship with the party functionaries. The proposal that Tucholsky should work in the revolutionary factory newspapers, or in the sphere of political theory was inappropriate. Still more serious was Conrad's refusal to recognise any view-point other than

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(79) GW III, p.15.

(80) *ibid.*, p.14: "Es gibt heute einen Snobismus der schwieligen Faust, der unerträglich geworden ist".

(81) *ibid.*, p.17.

(82) Über die Rolle des Intellektuellen in der proletarischen Revolution, Die Front, Jg.2, No. 11, p.280.

the gospel according to Lenin.(83) Tucholsky and his colleagues should join the party, or they would be treated as enemies. The discussion between Conrad and Tucholsky had not been a genuine dialogue: it had amounted only to a repetition of old arguments.

From the summer of 1929 the Communist line in literary affairs was represented in Germany by a new organisation, the Bund proletarisch-revolutionärer Schriftsteller.(84) The BPRS too began to attack the progressive non-party intelligentsia, thus widening the gulf between Tucholsky and the KPD. His article in celebration of the Weltbühne's twenty-fifth anniversary(85) found no favour. To some extent the objections of the BPRS were justified; what Tucholsky offered as a future programme:

„aus Teutschland Deutschland zu machen  
und zu zeigen, daß es außer Hitler,  
Hugenberg und dem fischkalten Universitätstypus  
des Jahres 1930 noch andre Deutsche gibt".(86)

was undeniably vague.

Nevertheless, the most important reason for the indignation of the Linkskurve(87) lay in Tucholsky's defence of the Weltbühne's position above the parties in general and the KPD in particular:

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(83) *ibid.*: "Wir haben ein Programm, das Programm Lenins, den Leninismus. Wer es mit der Sache der Arbeiterklasse ernst nimmt, der ist verpflichtet und der kann im Rahmen dieses Programms ausgezeichnet revolutionäre Arbeit leisten, dann nämlich, wenn er die Rolle einer zielklaren Partei des Proletariats als Führerin im Befreiungskampfe der unterdrückten und leidenden Menschheit erkannt hat".

(84) The leading members of the BPRS included Johannes R. Becher and Georg Lukacs.

(85) Fünfundzwanzig Jahre, WB 9/9/30, GW III, pp.510-21.

(86) *ibid.*, p.521.

(87) Cf. Die Linkskurve, quoted by Doerfel, *op.cit.*, p.165: "Befangen, unernst und unwahrhaftig ist eine derartige "Würdigung" des Vergangenen. Wo aber sind die Perspektiven für die Zukunft? Was will die Weltbühne? Welchem Ziel gilt ihr Kampf?"

„Es führt notwendig zu einer Verengung des geistigen Horizonts, wenn die Parteien den Maßstab ihres Dogmas nun auch an Leistungen legen, die zunächst auf dem Felde des Geistes getan werden". (88)

The relationship of intellectual and party could only be settled on the latter's terms, and Tucholsky by now had abandoned the search for a compromise. His endeavours throughout had been directed by the need to reach a progressive mass audience and by over-optimism with regard to the flexibility of the KPD: however well-meaning the attempt, it appears in retrospect somewhat naive.

Tucholsky's attitude to the KPD certainly reflected his personal situation, that "uncomfortable position between two stools". However, the actions of the KPD itself, and of its Russian masters, also played a large part in his increasingly unfavourable assessment of party policy in the 1930's.

The political record of the KPD in the Weimar era was poor, far poorer indeed than Tucholsky was ready to admit. In its early years the party had the excuse that its outstanding leaders had been murdered, but it brought further misfortune on itself by the masochistic expulsion of Levi, Reuter and Rosenberg. They were made scapegoats for successive drastic changes in party policy, since the undemocratic KPD could neither tolerate disagreement within its ranks nor admit that its new leaders were less than infallible. This was the tendency which Tucholsky later criticised by attributing to the party the observation:

„Schade, daß Sie nicht in der Partei sind- dann könnte man Sie jetzt ausschließen!" (89)

Such perception on Tucholsky's part was still distant. Concerned

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(88) GW III, p.518.

(89) Schnipsel, WB 26/1/32, GW III, p.1000.

about the SPD's encouragement of militarism and the weakness of the Republicans, he had little interest in the KPD's early and self-inflicted disasters: the premature uprising of January 1919, the mass strikes in the spring of that year, the so-called Märzaktion in central Germany of 1921. The party refused to lend its support to the Republic against counter-revolution, and was incapable of overturning it and establishing a left-wing dictatorship. Germany's acute political and economic weakness of 1923 was allowed to pass with only brief participation in the Arbeiterregierungen in Saxony and Thuringia and the hopelessly isolated Hamburg Rising in October to show for this unique revolutionary opportunity. By the mid-1920's the party's membership was stagnating, and its influence on the factory floor and in the trade unions was waning.

The result of these failures was the subservience of the KPD to the more successful Russian Bolsheviks. The latter imposed on their German colleagues a collective leadership whose consistent blunders contrasted unfavourably even with the SPD. Yet Tucholsky never lampooned the obtuse Thälmann or the adventurer Neumann as he did their SPD counterparts. The remark in December 1925 that the KPD lacked leaders (90) appears a misleading understatement.

The dangers inherent in the KPD's position after its leaders had been degraded to the executive arm of the Comintern were threefold. First came the Russians' over-confidence in their own ability as revolutionaries, their tendency to assume that the methods which they themselves had used would in turn lead to the success of the KPD. (91)

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(90) Abreißkalender, WB 15/12/25, GW II, p.289.

(91) Die Augen der Welt, WB 11/8/31, GW III, p.910.



When the latter failed, their leaders could be replaced, but the direction of the policy from Moscow remained. This was what Tucholsky meant when he begged the Russian leaders to get to know the German situation better.(92) By 1928 his hopes of a liaison with the KPD encouraged him to put forward the proposal that German Communist leaders themselves should recognise that their country was not Russia.(93) The weakness of his argument was that it ignored what he had recognised three years before: that the Comintern hierarchy rather than puppets like Thälmann was responsible for the fixation with Russian methods. The idea that the German Zentrale could independently dismiss members for slavish loyalty to Moscow was absurd.

The "remote control" of the KPD by the Comintern was undesirable for a second reason: the fundamental nationalism of the German people. The pre-war SPD had been regarded by many as "vaterlandslose Gesellen". The Communists' loyalty to the USSR as the supposed "Vaterland der Werktätigen" did nothing to increase their popularity, since patriots were as numerous among the workers as elsewhere. When the KPD tried to conceal its true loyalties with an exaggerated display of "Nationalbolschewismus"(94), most workers recognised the sudden conversion for the opportunistic manoeuvre it was.

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(92) Gegen den Strom, WB 13/4/26, GW II, p.413.

(93) Gebrauchslyrik, *ibid.*, p.1322.

(94) Cf. Werner T. Angress: Stillborn Revolution, Princeton 1963, pp.336-7, and his account of Radek's eulogy of the Freikorps leader Schlageter, who was executed by the French for sabotage during the occupation of the Ruhr. Angress points out that Radek's speech amounted to "a tactical manoeuvre rather than a fundamental revision of policy, an attempt to split the ranks of the various nationalist groups by proving that only the Communists could in the long run offer effective opposition to the Versailles Treaty".

The alignment with a foreign power, let alone one traditionally regarded with deep suspicion, helps to explain why even in the crises of 1923 and the early 30's, with their SPD rivals discredited by their toleration of Cuno, Stresemann and Brüning, the Communists failed to win over a majority of the workers to the revolutionary cause. Other factors contributed to this failure: the strong link between the Social Democrats and the Trade Unions, and the apolitical inertia of many workers who had joined the SPD in their youth, had grown accustomed to the monthly round of meetings and outings, and had lost interest in the advent of the proletarian revolution. This last reason, an attitude of mind rather than a political or economic factor, was noted by Tucholsky (95), but he closed his eyes to the more fundamental problem of persuading workers that the distant USSR was more important to their future than Germany itself.

However, the gravest disadvantage of the KPD's subservience lay in the fact that the Comintern itself was no more than an instrument of Russian government policy. In the early 1920's the Soviet Union was under pressure from its own counter-revolutionaries, the Polish nationalists and the constant threat of renewed Allied intervention. Lenin therefore encouraged risings against the German government in the hope of establishing a sympathetic left-wing administration in Berlin, or at least of reducing the Nationalist threat from that quarter.

By 1921 Lenin was compelled to acknowledge that social revolution outside the Soviet Union was no longer likely. The New Economic Policy was introduced, and the Russians began establishing normal diplomatic and trading relations with neighbouring governments. As a result of the

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(95) Cf. Ein älterer, aber leicht besoffener Herr, WB 9/9/30, GW III, p.524.

Treaty of Rapallo in 1922 their first "bourgeois partner" was Germany, a fellow-outcast in the international field. Stalin continued his predecessor's policy out of conviction: it seemed more profitable to do business with the Reichswehr and accept credits for the equipping of Russian industry than to seek to bring down the capitalist system in Germany. For all its revolutionary rhetoric, the KPD was demoted to the status of a reserve force, a threat to be employed in emergencies, but otherwise restricted to organisational activities.

In retrospect this analysis is obviously correct. At the time both the German workers and their bourgeois opponents accepted the KPD at face value, as a genuinely revolutionary party. Tucholsky gradually began to suspect the truth, but he did not become certain until after the Nazi seizure of power. The economic alliance between the Soviet Union and the capitalist west was common knowledge when Tucholsky commented on it, very mildly, in 1932:

„Warum sagen die Russen eigentlich niemals, wieviel Geld sie sich im Ausland geliehen haben? Ihre Leistung verkleinerte es nicht". (96)

His indignation at the Soviet betrayal of their German comrades appears to stem largely from astonishment that the Bolsheviks could put credits from the Nazi government above the fate of the persecuted workers. (97) Yet this was no new policy, merely the logical extension of Stalin's decision to build "socialism in one country" and leave the rest of Europe to take care of itself. Again Tucholsky's determination to trust the Communist workers too long blinded him to the inadequacies of their German and Russian leaders.

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(96) Schnipsel, WB 29/3/32, *ibid.*, p.1038.

(97) Cf. letter to Heinz Pol, 7/4/33, Briefe, p.227.

Another consequence of the KPD's dependence on the Comintern was the necessity of following Stalin in the struggle for power within the Russian party. When Stalin purged the Bolshevik Central Committee of the "right-winger" Bucharin, the KPD too adopted "ultra-left" tactics.(98) Instead of seeking alliances with the Social Democrats against the bourgeois parties, they fought the SPD as "Social Fascists". Twice they joined the Nazis against the Prussian SPD(99), believing that Thälmann and not Hitler would emerge triumphant. To be sure, they offered their fellow-Marxists the opportunity of a united front: all that was necessary was that the Social Democratic workers should reject their treacherous leaders in favour of the Communist Zentrale. This was not an offer of compromise but a demand for surrender, and not surprisingly the SPD would have none of it. Tucholsky's judgment was therefore at fault when he claimed that the Social Democratic and not the Communist leaders represented

„die schlimmsten Hindernisse bei der so nötigen Einheitsfront gegen den Faschismus".(100)

though it could be said in his defence that other left-wing intellectuals took a similar view.(101) Once again Tucholsky refrained from criticising the Communists, out of a misunderstood respect which by 1933 he bitterly regretted.(102) In a letter written after abandoning his journalistic

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(98) Cf. Ossip K. Flechtheim: Die KPD in der Weimarer Republik, Offenbach, 1948, p.248.

(99) The KPD supported the Nazis in the plebiscite for early elections in Prussia and the strike of the Berlin Transport Workers.

(100) Auf dem Nachttisch, WB 2/6/31, in a review of Die Sowjetunion by Max Hodann.

(101) Cf. Koplin, op.cit., p.167: "(Ossietzky) ließ dabei nahezu gänzlich jene Tatsache unbeachtet, die am augenfälligsten die Unfähigkeit der KPD bloßstellte, der Situation in den Jahren vor der NS-Machtergreifung gerecht zu werden: die selbstmörderische Taktik der KPD, den Hauptangriff gegen den "Sozialfaschismus" der SPD zu richten".

(102) Letter to Pol, 20/4/33, Briefe, p.227.

career, Tucholsky at last described KPD policy with the contempt which it deserved:

„Die KPD hat in Deutschland von vorn bis hinten dummes Zeug gemacht, sie hat ihre Leute auf der Straße nicht begriffen, sie hat die Massen eben nicht hinter sich gehabt".(103)

Tucholsky's attack on the KPD after the fall of the Republic cannot detract from the indirect support which he gave to the party in the late 1920's. The Communist workers were the last agents to whom he entrusted the role of creating a more humane, egalitarian Germany. In order to remain in contact with them, he endured the dogmatism and intellectual inferiority of the KPD leaders, though he showed no mercy towards similar failings in the SPD. He commented only briefly on the policy of the Comintern: his loyalty to the USSR as the land of the proletarian revolution even led him to pledge support for Russia in any war begun by the capitalist west, including Germany.(104)

Nevertheless, Tucholsky's direct support for the KPD was limited. He joined neither the party nor any of its auxiliary organisations, thereby incurring the wrath of those whom he hoped to conciliate. However closely he identified himself with the party's apparently revolutionary goals, the barriers on both sides remained: their suspicions of the bourgeois intellectual, his recognition that the Communists, like the USPD and the Pacifist Movement, fell short of his ideal. At the close of his dialogue with the KPD, he described these barriers in the poem Hej!

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(103) *ibid.*, pp.227-8.

(104) Wie würden Sie sich im Falle eines Krieges gegen die USSR verhalten?, Moskauer Rundschau, 22/6/30, p.477: "Handelt es sich .. um einen europäischen Zusammenschluß von Mächten, die mit Hilfe der Kirche gegen jenes Rußland hetzen, das ihnen wegen der eigenen Arbeiterbewegungen ein Dorn im Auge ist, so kann meine Stellung nur eindeutig sein: für Rußland gegen jene Mächte, auch dann, wenn es sich um Deutschland handelt".

"Auch sie: dieser Welt hingegeben  
-erwarte nicht den Himmel von ihnen-  
auch sie: Nationalisten:  
freilich mit einer Idee;  
auch sie: für den Krieg  
auch sie: erdgebunden...  
Bist du stark genug  
mitzuarbeiten am Werk?  
Noch nicht-  
geh noch nicht hinein." (105)

For six years Tucholsky stood outside "das russische Haus", shouting advice and encouragement to those within and refusing to discuss their failings with outsiders; but he decided not to go in, and finally turned away in disgust at the conduct of his former friends.

Tucholsky's attitude to the Soviet Union itself went through a series of changes parallel to those which governed his opinion of the KPD. The immediate aftermath of the October Revolution drew no comment from him, since he was engaged directly in the struggle to create a better Germany. As long as he believed that the Weimar Republic could be improved by constructive work from within, he remained sceptical about Russian achievements and resisted any credulous enthusiasm among his fellow-intellectuals.

In this context Poor mentions(106) Tucholsky's review of a travel book by the Communist sympathiser, Alfons Goldschmidt.(107) Though he respected the author, Tucholsky complained that Goldschmidt had seen in Moscow only what he wanted to see. Belief in Lenin did not entitle Goldschmidt to go into ecstasies about Soviet every-day life, or to leave unmentioned the country's obvious problems:

„Welch ein Reich! Es gibt wenig zu essen,  
es gibt fast nichtsanzuziehen, es wird in  
klarer nationalistischer Tendenz Krieg geführt".(108)

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(105) Hej-! WB 29/10/29, GW III, p.228.

(106) Poor, op.cit., p.142.

(107) Aus Moskau zurück, Freiheit, 13/10/20, GW I, pp.742-45.

(108) *ibid.*, p.743.

Goldschmidt would rightly have denounced such tendencies in Germany, and Tucholsky considered that it would have taken more courage to admit them than to paint a roseate picture of Bolshevik progress.

As Tucholsky's discontent with events in Germany increased, he too began to look elsewhere for inspiration. In the 1920's the Soviet Union faced a unique double challenge(109); it was

„ein hinter der europäischen Zivilisation zurückgebliebenes Land, das alles einholen will, was es in 200 Jahren versäumt hat. Es versucht dort ferner eine revolutionäre Regierung, ihr Programm durchzusetzen".

In the latter capacity, as the home of the revolution, it attracted his support. He felt great personal admiration for Lenin, as the leader of that revolution, and regarded the early death of the Russian statesman as a tragedy.(110)

Tucholsky's support for the USSR was reinforced by the recognition that its enemies were the opponents of progressive democracy: the Nationalist right. The disarray on the right in 1918 had rapidly been remedied by the evocation of a supposed "enemy": Bolshevism. Eduard Stadtler organised a campaign against Liebknecht and the KPD, portraying them as bloodthirsty anarchists. Having established the Bolsheviks in the national consciousness as

„blutgierig, das Messer zwischen den Zähnen, in Lumpen gehüllt und jederzeit bereit, sich auf ganz Europa zu stürzen", (111)

the extreme right perpetuated this myth in the German press long after Lenin had abandoned any intention of fomenting revolution in Western Europe. This picture was a travesty of Russian aims and achievements;

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(109) Auf dem Nachttisch, WB 2/6/31.

(110) Auf dem Nachttisch, WB 2/11/30, GW III, p.359.

(111) Schnipsel, WB 26/4/32, *ibid.*, p.1048.

but the German Nationalists feared the Bolsheviks in their role as a revolutionary ideal. Their attacks on Moscow often amounted to the attempt to put pressure on the Labour Movement at home. As Tucholsky declared:

„Rußland ist ihr schlechtes Gewissen". (112)

Tucholsky answered such indirect attacks on the German workers by defending their Bolshevik mentors.

The important qualities of the USSR in the 1920's did not end with the success of the revolution and economic consolidation. Another feature of the Bolshevik state was its authoritarian system of government. This was by no means exceptional in central and eastern Europe between the wars; nor was it a specifically Leninist innovation, merely a continuation of the repressive Czarist tradition. Nevertheless it was an aspect of Bolshevik policy which Tucholsky for a long time underestimated: seeing only revolutionary determination, he ignored the terror which accompanied it.

Gradually Tucholsky became suspicious of the authoritarian dictatorship and the necessity for ideological conformity which at this period characterised Russian society. As Doerfel points out (113), the first warning sign was the publication in 1928 of an official Bolshevik history of the Red Army, in which its creator and organiser during the Civil War, Trotsky, went unmentioned. Tucholsky made no attempt to analyse the difference of opinion between Stalin and the apostle of "permanent revolution", which had led to the latter's banishment: this was an internal Russian issue on which he felt inadequately informed. But he did object, quite reasonably, to the "byzantinische Geschichtsfälschung"

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(112) Rußland, WB 10/3/31, *ibid.*, p.799.

(113) Doerfel, *op.cit.*, p.174.



as a sign of weakness and fear on the part of the Bolshevik authorities.(114) He felt similar disquiet when the entire intelligentsia of Moscow ignored the visiting Ernst Toller, because he had been attacked in Pravda.(115) Tucholsky's criticism of those involved for a lack of intellectual independence was nevertheless still naive; he failed to realise that such independence was incompatible with the situation in Stalin's Russia.

Tucholsky's subsequent attempt to explain away miscarriages of justice in Soviet courts represented a masterpiece of circumspection, as he strove to understand the Russian point of view. As an individualist, Tucholsky declared himself unqualified to appreciate the effects of such sentences. Thereby he came close to the attitude for which he had criticised Goldschmidt: the condoning of an injustice in Russia which he would rightly have castigated in Germany. However, Tucholsky was beginning to lose faith in the Soviet judges, and in the state in which they presided:

„Noch hat man nicht den Eindruck, daß die urteilenden Genossen Pharisäer seien-  
durchaus nicht. Der Weg, den sie gehen,  
kann sie jedoch dahin führen, es zu werden".(116)

The dilemma of Tucholsky was that a Socialist revolution in Germany would only be possible with Communist help, but even if such a Socialist regime emerged, it was unlikely to be more progressive and democratic than its Russian model. His enthusiasm for the Soviet Union was waning, and he did not contribute to its frequent glorification in the AIZ.(117) However, he also refrained from mentioning its problems, the food shortage which had resulted from the collectivisation of agriculture, or the housing problem, and he made no direct criticism of the personality cult which was beginning to surround Stalin.

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(114) Dank vom Hause Stalin, WB 8/5/28, GW II, pp.1132-3.

(115) Auf dem Nachttisch, WB 3/3/31, GW III, p.794.

(116) Auf dem Nachttisch, WB 5/5/31, *ibid.*, p.850.

(117) Cf. Koszyk, *op.cit.* p.332.

When this restraint is compared with Tucholsky's violent attacks on Western capitalism, it becomes clear how anxious he was to give the Russians the benefit of the doubt as long as possible. The discrepancy was noted by an anonymous contributor to the Weltbühne in April 1931; he wrote a poem in Berlin dialect, Der Menschenfreund. Tucholsky replied in like manner: (118)

„Erst Jewitter, denn n Rejenbojn.  
Keener weeß: wat wittn nu zuletzt?  
Aba wat wird jejn die jelogn!  
wat wird jejn die jehetzt!  
Bei die adern is et ooch beschmissen.  
Rußland is n Mahnruf ant Jewissen.  
Mensch, ick kann nich.  
Ja, da is so manches Blut jeflossen,  
Mensch, ick kann nich...  
Doch ick weeß in mein Sinn:  
alle Proletarier sehn nach hin.  
Anjekläfft, jefürcht, umstellt:  
det is ehmt für die ganze Welt  
... eene Hoffnung".

In spite of the evocation of the old shibboleths, such as the hostility of the bourgeois states and the loyalty of the workers throughout the world, this "answer" has rightly been described by Prescher as unconvincing. (119) The repetition of "Mensch, ick kann nich" implies an emotional commitment to the Soviet Union rather than a rational refutation of the accusation of double standards. However faint the hope might be, Tucholsky clung to it desperately, sensing that it was his last.

Tucholsky's positive attitude towards Soviet Russia had latterly been subjected to the same strain as his indirect support for the KPD. After Hitler's seizure of power, the betrayal of the German Communists by Stalin and the Comintern destroyed his last illusions. (120) The members of the proscribed KPD were thrown into prison or concentration camps, or

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(118) Der Menschenfreund von einem Anonymus; Antwort, by Tucholsky, both in WB 7/4/31.

(119) Prescher, thesis, p.112.

(120) Cf. letter to Arnold Zweig, 15/12/35, Briefe, p.338: "... dieser lächerliche Stalin, der seine Leute verrät.."

shot by the SA without trial while the Kremlin looked on benignly. When Stalin did intervene, it was to send some Communist exiles back to Hitler's Germany in order to stamp out their "deviationist" views. Tucholsky could still admit that since the October Revolution Russia had taken a great step forward into the 20th century, and he told his friend Hasenclever that the thought of the Bolshevik state being destroyed by Nazi troops was "etwas Tragisches und Schreckliches". (121) Nevertheless, he was bitterly disappointed and regretted his earlier restraint towards the faults of the USSR.

Above all Tucholsky objected to the narrow nationalism inherent in Stalin's response to Hitler's accession: that exclusive concern with short-term Russian interests which led him to become Hitler's ally six years later. The Russian dictator had manipulated Marxist ideology for his own benefit, and was only interested in maintaining his own power. It is ironic that Tucholsky's recriminations after he had abandoned his journalistic career represented a more accurate picture of the Soviet State than his earlier forbearance and optimism had allowed:

„Rußland ist nicht mehr die Sache,  
für die der Proletarier kämpft-  
es ist nicht mehr der Hort des Klassenkampfes.  
Ein Petroleumstaat wie jeder andere auch". (122)

The question of Tucholsky's attitude to Marxist theory is more controversial than his opinion of the party and the country which claimed to embody it. Some East German critics (123) have claimed that he lacked detailed knowledge of the Marxist classics and the doctrine which they contained. The point is refuted by Weise's rejoinder that the mere fact

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(121) Letter of 7/10/34, *ibid.*, p.289.

(122) Letter to Pol, 7/5/33, *ibid.*, p.229.

(123) Walter Victor: Bericht über Kurt Tucholsky im Auftrage der Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR, 1959, p.4, and Klaus Bellin: Untersuchungen zur Literaturkritik Tucholskys, Potsdam, 1960, p.51.

that Tucholsky did not review works by Marx or Engels was no proof that he had not read them.(124)

In fact this survey has already demonstrated (125) Tucholsky's familiarity with the basic tenets of Marxism. He approved of the doctrine of materialism, and thus accepted the theoretical foundation of Marx's political philosophy. Abandoning his earlier individualism, he adopted a collectivist view of politics. Tucholsky went on to agree with Marx's division of capitalist society into bourgeoisie and proletariat, and to endorse the latter's struggle against their exploiters. The state appeared to him as a weapon employed by the bourgeoisie in the subjugation of the proletariat, and he supported Lenin's suggestion that in the event of war the workers should fight their real enemies at home rather than their foreign comrades. Tucholsky rejected parliamentary democracy in favour of a revolution leading to a Socialist government, which would as its first action abolish private ownership of the most important means of production and introduce the dictatorship of the proletariat. Furthermore, by 1928, Tucholsky had become convinced that the abstract advocacy of such aims was not sufficient service to the revolutionary cause, and was popularising these ideas among the workers by writing in the Communist press.

In spite of such evidence, some critics(126) still give credence to Tucholsky's own opinion, as stated to his brother Fritz in 1934, that he had never been a Marxist.(127) Others make this case by implication rather than direct assertion. Poor, for example, claims that Tucholsky was uninterested in any ideology, Marxist or otherwise.(128) However, Poor

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(124) Weise, thesis, p.185.

(125) Cf. Chapter 4.

(126) Doerfel, op.cit., p.155.

(127) Cf. letter of 24/2/34, Briefe, p.317: "Die Theorie ist eben falsch - ich bin nie Marxist gewesen".

(128) Poor, op.cit., p.145.

quotes only from articles written during and after 1930, and so he fails to deal with the crucial period from 1925 to 1930. Other critics sidestep the issue by asserting, correctly but irrelevantly, that in spite of his indirect support for the KPD, Tucholsky never became a Communist.(129) Marxism is a theoretical doctrine, while Communism in the 1920's was an amalgam of Marx's doctrines and the political practice of Lenin and Stalin. It is possible to collaborate to a limited extent with a party without endorsing all its aims. This attitude may be demonstrated by the token gesture of refusing to pay a membership fee, thereby remaining separate from the organised faithful. In the theoretical field, the position of a sympathetic outsider is more difficult to maintain: there is no process by which one denies payment of a symbolic obolus to an abstract concept. When a writer publicly accepts the major points of Marxist theory and supports its revolutionary aims, he may justifiably be termed a Marxist. Whatever reservations Tucholsky may have felt on the subject, he did not express them in writing; they cannot therefore be checked or taken into account in this survey. The present writer believes that Tucholsky can be described as a theoretical Marxist between 1925 and 1928, and as a theoretical and practising Marxist until around the end of 1929.

The extent of Tucholsky's adherence to Marxism should be borne in mind in any consideration of his increasingly critical attitude towards the doctrine from 1930 onwards. The vehemence with which he rejected Marxism after 1933 may well be attributable to the disappointment of a former believer. The transformation began cautiously enough, parallel to his gradual disillusionment with the KPD and the Soviet Union. Two factors

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(129) Schulz, op.cit., pp.119-20.

stimulated his criticism: the attempt by some Marxists to turn their doctrine into a substitute for religion(130), and his admiration for the psychoanalytical work of Sigmund Freud.

Dogmatism was foreign to Tucholsky's nature; he sought the truth and the ideal but was realistic enough never to claim that he had found them. He had begun to doubt the idea that human beings were by nature good, but were corrupted by their social environment, and to question the Marxist solution to the problem: that the political system should be changed in order to improve men's moral standards.

This view had originally been popularised by Rousseau, whose book Du Contrat Social provided a blue-print for the ideal society out of ethical motives. Marx had followed a similar line, using the term Entfremdung (alienation) to describe the attitude of the proletarian to his job.(131) Marx considered that work played an essential part in human development, and that men should be able to recognise the value of their own activity. Under capitalism, however, work was merely a means of self-preservation. Compelled to sell his labour-power at a price below its true value, the proletarian lost control over his labour and the products which it created. He was no longer a conscious craftsman, but the mechanical performer of a repetitive task of uncertain significance. The abolition of private property in the means of production would allow the proletarian to take pride in his work once more, since as a result of public ownership he would be working for himself and receiving the full fruits of his labour. This liberation of the proletariat would also mean freedom and a new moral stature for mankind as a whole.

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(130) Cf. the criticism of "kommunistische Theologie" in Von den Kränzen, der Abtreibung und dem Sakrament der Ehe, WB 17/2/31, GW III, p.786.

(131) Marx and Engels, Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte, in Werke, Ergänzungsband, Erster Teil, pp.511-20.

Tucholsky rejected this optimistic view. Instead he quoted a passage from Freud's newly-published essay Das Unbehagen in der Kultur, in which the psychoanalyst maintained that even the abolition of private property would not suddenly turn men into angels. Their innate sadistic impulses would lose one important outlet(132), but others would remain, especially sexually inspired aggression.(133) The high priests of Marxism were wrong to put forward their doctrine as the only panacea for the world's ills:

„Es ist an der Zeit, den Unentwegten mitzuteilen, daß man den Marxismus nicht wie eine Käseglocke über die Welt stülpen kann. Er deckt sie nicht".(134)

The criticism that Marxism had become an article of faith rather than reason, and that other doctrines could also help men with their problems was not in itself a complete rejection of Marxist principles. Tucholsky envisaged a combination of psychoanalysis and Marxism(135) His respect for the former was indicated when he described Freud's writings as

„Elf Bände, die die Welt erschütterten".(136)

and it was no dishonour for Marx's achievement to be ranked alongside them. Tucholsky still admitted that the materialist philosophy which provided the basis for Marx's political work had much to commend it, especially when compared with idealist doctrines which talked of man's "reine Seele", and dismissed his economic welfare as unimportant.(137)

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(132) Cf. Freud: Abriß der Psychoanalyse and Das Unbehagen in der Kultur, Frankfurt, Fischer, 1972. The passage from the latter is quoted by Tucholsky in Replik, WB 22/4/30, GW III, p.424.

(133) Cf. Henri Barbusse und die Platte "Lord help me-!", WB 19/11/29, ibid., p.254.

(134) Gesunde und kranke Nerven, WB 14/10/30, ibid., p.557.

(135) GW III, p.557.

(136) Auf dem Nachttisch, WB 5/5/31, ibid., p.847.

(137) ibid., p.557.

Marxism had provided a healthy reaction to such abstract theorising.

However, it could not cure those

„geistige Betriebsstörungen, die ewig sind  
wie die Welt" (138):

that was a task for the psychiatrist. But few Marxists responded to the challenge to define critically the limits in efficacy of their gospel: improvements in the social framework were still regarded as sufficient to solve men's mental problems. Two years later Tucholsky finally lost patience with such dogmatism:

„Wenn ich so die unentwegten Marxisten lese,  
dann frage ich mich immer: wird eigentlich in  
Rußland auch gestorben? Und was ist der Tod  
bei denen? Ein Betriebsunfall? Ein kleinbürgerliches  
Vorurteil?" (139)

In 1934 he even wrote to Hasenclever that the "pure materialism" on which Marxism was based was as nonsensical an attitude as pure idealism. (140)

Tucholsky's doubts about the theoretical basis of Marxism were serious. Doerfel's description of his attitude

„In seiner Kritik versucht er, da wo es nur ein  
absolutes Ja oder Nein gab, Fairness walten zu lassen". (141)

is correct, though couched in unduly pejorative terms. But these weaknesses in the underlying philosophical aspects of Marxism might not have sufficed to transform his opinions. After all, Marx's philosophical writings were not his most important contribution to scholarship. As the political scientist John Plamenatz has explained:

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(138) *ibid.*, p.558.

(139) Schnipsel, WB 21/6/32, *ibid.*, p.1078.

(140) Letter of 7/10/34, Briefe, p.288.

(141) Doerfel, *op.cit.*, p.175.



"Marx was not really a philosopher at all; that he appears to have been one is merely an accident of German history. It was the fashion in his day for men to derive their political theories from their general views about the nature of the universe".(142)

Tucholsky had other reasons for gradually withdrawing from his Marxist allegiance. From 1925 onwards he had been willing to sacrifice his individualism and think in terms of the happiness of the workers as an organised group. Their strength lay in solidarity, and so he had encouraged them to maintain it against the capitalists. His own failure to reach an understanding with the Communists probably was responsible for his disenchantment. The central figure of the poem Hej-! rejects all the houses competing for his support.(143) Thousands were in a similar position, and Tucholsky justified their refusal to submit to the discipline of a group; they were to go their own way as he was doing himself.

Isolated in a Swedish village, Tucholsky began to regard all mass organisations as equally abhorrent, since irrespective of their political affiliation they symbolised the "Hordenwahnsinn" of mankind. In a complete reversal of his position of 1925(144), he asserted that one day individualism would again become modern, and it is evident from his tone that he approved of this development:

„Dann wird einer kommen, der wird eine gradezu  
donnernde Entdeckung machen: er wird den  
Einzelmenschen entdecken. Er wird sagen: es  
gibt einen Organismus, Mensch geheißen, und auf  
den kommt es an. Und ob der glücklich ist,  
das ist die Frage. Daß der frei ist, das ist  
das Ziel".(145)

This was a rejection not merely of capitalist states like Germany, but of any group which usurped authority over the individual. The praise

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(142) John Plamenatz: German Marxism and Russian Communism, London, Longmans, 1954, p.9.

(143) GW III, p.230.

(144) Cf. GW II, p.287.

(145) Blick in ferne Zukunft, WB 28/10/30, GW III, p.580.

of this liberal principle amounts to another oblique attack on Marxism.

Tucholsky's final public criticism of Marxism concerned a more practical issue. According to the Communist Manifesto, capitalist society contained two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. This rigid division according to ownership of the means of production was open to attack. Marxists might claim that clerks and staff employees possessed as little land and as few shares as the workers, but their class consciousness did not allow the German Angestellten to describe themselves as proletarians. Tucholsky contended that Marxists should adapt their theory to this subjective reality rather than deny its existence.(146) Their failure to do so provided him with another example of dogmatic rigidity.

If Tucholsky was sceptical about Marxism between 1930 and 1932, his private comments on the subject after 1933 amounted to outright rejection. It should nevertheless be noted that he still admired the writings of the young Marx, and thought it worth while to strip the doctrine of its pseudo-religious trappings and set it in its historical context. He also refused to blame Marx for the errors of his followers. When they based their optimistic belief that the revolution would triumph on Marx's theory, that history progressed through thesis and antithesis to a higher synthesis, Tucholsky did not attack Marx for ambiguity. On the contrary, it was his interpreters who had failed to give due emphasis to the need to work for a revolution, rather than merely to organise a political party and indulge in bloodthirsty rhetoric. The victory of the despised bourgeoisie was a refutation not of Marxism but of contemporary Marxist tactics:

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(146) Auf dem Nachttisch, WB 22/4/30, *ibid.*, p.430.

„Das kommt davon, daß diese Leute  
ihren Marx nicht gelesen haben".(147)

In general, however, Tucholsky regarded Marxism latterly as an "Irrlehre, im Keim verkehrt".(148) He dismissed the proposition that "das Sein bestimmt das Bewußtsein" as no more sensible than the assertion that men's health was determined by the state of their teeth.(149) He also claimed that he and his correspondent Hasenclever had always known it to be false. This may be true of Hasenclever, but Tucholsky himself had accepted the validity of the concept in 1925(150) and not denied it since. His recognition that man was not a mere "homo oeconomicus" but "ein ganzer, runder Mensch"(151), also represents the reversal of an earlier opinion on the primacy of the economic factor in human relations.(152) Tucholsky even objected to the proposition that the workers of the world had a common class consciousness. It had never existed, except in Marx's imagination: "Klassenbewußtsein" was "das hegelsche Produkt einer Professors".(153) Indeed the idea of the Internationale had in practice had a negative effect; instead of rallying the workers across the frontiers it had stimulated their capitalist opponents to organise the successful defence of their spoils.

Tucholsky's hostility to Marxist principles from 1933 until his death is due in some degree to his disappointment with the failure of the German and Russian Communists to prevent Hitler's seizure of power. Doerfel is also correct in asserting that Tucholsky's bitterness stemmed

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(147) Letter to Fritz Tucholsky, 24/2/34, Briefe, p.317.

(148) Letter to Hasenclever, 17/5/33, *ibid.*, p.257.

(149) Letter of 1935, *ibid.*, p.303.

(150) GW II, p.18.

(151) Briefe, p.303.

(152) GW II, p.19.

(153) Briefe, p.303.

partly from the realisation that the collapse of the revolutionary mass movement meant the final destruction of his personal hopes. (154) However, the key to his violent anti-Marxism may be another remark to Hasenclever:

„Man muß diese Lehre Marxens passiert haben,  
man muß sie teilweise und kritisch anzuwenden  
verstehn". (155)

Tucholsky was able to apply Marxist standards critically, especially after 1930 when he was losing confidence in them. However, the crucial point is the duration of the period when he "passed through" Marx's doctrine. This writer believes that Tucholsky's vehemence also stemmed from the knowledge, which now filled him with embarrassment and regret, that he had himself publicly supported Marxist principles for five years. A combination of these three factors is the best explanation of his bitter conclusion:

„Es wird den Arbeitern erst wieder gut gehen,  
wenn es keinen Marxismus mehr gibt". (156)

At the root of Tucholsky's later political writings lie two apparently contradictory tendencies. His devotion to the cause of the down-trodden German workers was indicated by frequent articles in the Weltbühne, by his new readiness to write propaganda verses on their behalf and to publish the Deutschlandbuch. When he encouraged readers of the AIZ to remain loyal to "the party" which was fighting to improve their lot, he meant the KPD. The Soviet Union seemed to him a symbol of hope for workers throughout the world, and he looked forward to a successful revolution in Germany. At first his opinion of Marxist theory was equally positive. The period 1928-30, bringing a combination of theoretical conviction and practical revolutionary propaganda, represented the culmination of Tucholsky's left-ward development.

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(155) Letter of 7/10/34, Briefe, p.288.

(156) *ibid.*, p.303.

Tucholsky's sincerity in espousing the cause of the workers cannot be doubted. However, the very intensity of his support was a signal that the struggle could not long be maintained by an intellectual whose humanitarian enthusiasm had already given way to resignation in December 1919 and throughout 1923. Even as he threw himself into the role of poetic propagandist for Münzenberg, Tucholsky recognised that his writing career might be better served by a complete break with current affairs. His many-sided literary talents also continued to require the outlets provided by Panter and Hauser.

The detachment symbolised by the latter two personae reappeared more significantly within Tucholsky's political writings. He saw the relationship between the progressive intellectual and the working-class party as problematical, and was repelled by the suspicions of Communist functionaries and by their instructions to join the party. Discipline was desirable, as Tucholsky recognised, but his political integrity mattered more; he therefore remained a sympathiser, outside the fold.

Keeping his distance was made easier for Tucholsky by the KPD's tactics, dictated by Moscow to assist Soviet foreign policy rather than to protect the German proletariat. Although for a long time Tucholsky spared the Communist leaders from the bitter criticism heaped on their SPD colleagues, he lived to regret the omission. His attitude to the Soviet Union under Stalin gradually changed too. When compared to the bourgeois democracies it still appeared worthy of support, but problems existed there too, and the solutions imposed by the Bolsheviks on their own country were sometimes as questionable as the instructions to the KPD.

Marxist theory fared little better in Tucholsky's estimation than its exponents after 1930. He first reduced its status to that of a means to an end: the class struggle was necessary, as was the belief in ultimate victory, but there could be no sudden transition from Weimar Germany to the new Jerusalem. Tucholsky cited Freud as evidence against the proposition that men's problems could all be solved by political revolution. In private letters after his retirement from journalism, he rejected materialism and the primacy of the economic factor, and even denied that he had ever been a Marxist. The last assertion should not be unthinkingly accepted, as it has been by many critics. It illustrates Tucholsky's disappointment and regret, and is in fact untrue.

## CHAPTER 6

Between 1930 and 1932 the decline of the German Republic helped to weaken Tucholsky's resolution to resist the impending catastrophe. The Grand Coalition broke up in 1930 when the industrialists of the DVP and the trade unionists of the SPD could not agree on a programme to cope with unemployment and the budget deficit. The new Chancellor, Heinrich Brüning, was uninterested in obtaining a parliamentary majority for his deflationary economic policy, and relied instead on emergency presidential decrees. Suspicious of Brüning's authoritarianism, the Social Democrats helped to defeat his government, but the resultant election of September 1930 proved disastrous both to the Chancellor and to his left-wing critics. After a violent propaganda campaign, the National Socialists, previously an ineffective splinter-group, won 107 seats to become the second-largest party in the Reichstag. The Communist share of the vote also increased.

From 1930 parliamentary democracy was under pressure from both political extremes and was undermined by the government itself. Earlier in his career Tucholsky had indulged in polemic against more progressive politicians than Brüning. However, it is characteristic of his later writings that he only produced one mildly satirical reference to the Chancellor's ability to survive difficult situations.(1) The SPD's decision to tolerate Brüning also met only token resistance from Tucholsky.(2) Ossietzky might still demand that the SPD create a new state based on a return by the party to the principles of social rebellion(3), but Tucholsky had long given up hope of progress from that quarter. He also was

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(1) Deutsches Chaos, WB 4/8/31, GW III, pp.902-03.

(2) *ibid.*, p.902.

(3) Koplin, *op.cit.*, p.170.

beginning to recognise that his link with the KPD might not provide an intellectual standpoint worth fighting for. As he began to study Marxism more critically, so this Jewish-born atheist examined the role played in Germany by the Catholic Church.

A detailed discussion of Tucholsky's attitude to the meta-physical aspects of religion lies outside the scope of this survey.(4) There is evidence that he studied the subject in his last years, but that he could not make the final step to religious belief.(5) Unlike many of his colleagues, he was no mere "patentierter Freidenker"; he regarded such an attitude as simplistic.(6) Symptomatic of this open-minded approach was his readiness to correspond with a Catholic journalist, Marierose Fuchs, in an effort to clarify their respective positions. Admitting that as an outsider he could not fully appreciate the secrets of Catholic dogma, Tucholsky nevertheless recognised the generations of scholarship responsible for "den richtigen, den echten Katholizismus".(7) What he saw in Germany, on the other hand, was debased "Vulgärkatholizismus" which had to be fought. Tucholsky thereby distinguished between the Church as "Hort des Glaubens" which he refused to criticise, and its secondary role as a "politische Institution im Staat".(8)

The political influence of the Catholic Church resulted from the indispensability of the Catholic Centre Party for any coalition government. After the war its leader, Erzberger, had supported the Republic and worked

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(4) Schulz, op.cit., pp.133f.

(5) In one of his last letters to Hasenclever, Tucholsky quoted a passage from the Danish metaphysician, Kierkegaard, about "den Dichter, der über sich selbst hinaus möchte und der es nur zur religiösen Sehnsucht, nicht zur Frömmigkeit selber bringt... Ich fühle das genau so". (Letter of 29/1/35, Briefe, p.308.)

(6) Carl Sonnenschein, WB 6/1/31, GW III, p.761.

(7) Tucholsky's letters to Fuchs have now been published as Briefe an eine Katholikin, Rowohlt, 1970. This quotation is from his letter of 16/1/29, BK p.16.

(8) Letter of 14/8/29, ibid., p.13.



towards European peace by striving to improve relations with France. His successors Wirth and Marx were skilful tacticians who guaranteed the continuation of this enlightened foreign policy in spite of virulent attacks from the extreme right. Tucholsky had noted with approval this contribution to national stability.(9) The Zentrum also helped to maintain Braun's coalition government in Prussia, thereby ensuring democratic control of the most important German province throughout the Weimar era.

By the late 1920's the major aims of the Zentrum's foreign policy had been implemented by Stresemann and Marx. When the party was confronted by domestic problems, it adopted a more conservative line.(10) It insisted on maintaining separate Church schools, in order to retain its influence over Catholic children. More controversial was its belief in the sanctity of marriage, reaffirmed by the Papal Encyclical of 1931. The Zentrum also led the opposition to birth control and abortion. Tucholsky believed that such moral rigour ignored the changes in social attitudes towards sexual intercourse, and he regarded the restrictions imposed on Catholic wives as intolerable. This conduct represented in his opinion an abuse of political influence, and he felt justified in organising resistance to the Church which invoked divine law in order to ensure an adequate supply of Catholics for the factories or the trenches. Not the doctrine but its practical application led Tucholsky to advise the proletariat: "Tretet aus der Kirche aus!"(11)

Nevertheless the Catholic Church in Germany was not a purely conservative force, without sympathy for the suffering of the poor. It

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(9) Cf. Der erste Händedruck, WB 9/10/24.

(10) Old Bäumerhand, der Schrecken der Demokratie, WB 14/12/26, GW II, p.562.

(11) Auch eine Urteilsbegründung, WB 12/5/31, GW III, p.857.

could point to the many caritative works organised in Berlin by Carl Sonnenschein, a "one-man Salvation Army" (12), for whose energy Tucholsky felt great support. Sonnenschein looked on his humanitarian activities as intrinsically important, and Tucholsky defended him against the charge of seeking to convert those to whom he gave assistance. After Sonnenschein's death, Bishop Schreiber of Berlin appeared a likely successor, since he too sympathised with the masses on such issues as poor housing and unemployment.

Tucholsky praised Sonnenschein and Schreiber for attempting to find a solution to social problems. Nevertheless he disagreed with their plans to reconcile the workers with their employers, and regarded as illusory the exhortation that the latter renounce some of their wealth to improve the position of the under-privileged. The Marxist remedy of the class struggle was more likely to succeed, and Tucholsky described the Church's alternative as a correct diagnosis, but an inadequate therapy. (13) Schreiber's ideas were merely "pseudo-Socialism"; inevitably so, since the Zentrum was becoming dominated by rich industrialists. The efforts of individuals could not disguise the fact that the Church as a political institution was playing a reactionary role, and Tucholsky pledged that he would fight against it on the side of the workers.

Tucholsky was correct to suspect that the Zentrum was moving to the right. Its new leader, Monsignor Kaas, represented the conservative wing; and although Brining had worked in the Christian Trade Unions, he too believed in order rather than reform. It is difficult to assess how far their authoritarian policies stemmed merely from personal inclination, and how far they reflected prevailing attitudes within the party. The

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(12) *ibid.*, pp.760-1.

(13) GW III, p.348.

Zentrum deputies gave enthusiastic support to Brüning's economic and constitutional plans; but their conservatism did not extend to the toleration of Papen, even though he had represented them in the Prussian Landtag and had a large share-holding in their newspaper, Germania. Tucholsky's attack on the industrialist right of the party was therefore only partially justified.

To understand the changes in Zentrum policy it is necessary to recognise, as Tucholsky did, that it owed its loyalty not to a form of government or an economic principle, but to the Vatican and to the well-being of a socially heterogeneous electorate. Its leaders had been monarchists under the Protestant Hohenzollerns, Republicans under Ebert and Hindenburg, and would always be on the side with the strongest battalions.(14) As early as February 1930 Tucholsky noted the sympathy of some sections of the Catholic press for the National Socialists(15), and a year later he declared that only the Nazi attacks on the Vatican and Alfred Rosenberg's cult of Wodan were preventing the Zentrum from open defection to the Fascist cause.(16) The negotiations between Hitler and Kaas in the summer of 1932, and the Zentrum's subsequent support for Hitler's Ermächtigungsgesetz can therefore hardly have surprised Tucholsky. However, the Pope's decision to sacrifice the party in order to achieve a Concordat with Hitler shocked him into comparing Pius XI with the other figure who had betrayed his German supporters, Stalin.(17)

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(14) Tucholsky recognised this fact, even while praising the party's services to democracy: "Das Zentrum ist niemals treu republikanisch gewesen, so wenig, wie es treu monarchistisch war - es ist eine Sache für sich, mit ganz besondern Interessen, mit besondern Strömungen, besondern Fundamenten". (Der erste Händedruck, WB 9/10/24). Six years later he wrote: "Im ganzen ist es wohl so, daß diese Partei immer wartet, wer beim Kampf die Oberhand gewinnt; bei dem ist sie dann". (GW III, p.349).

(15) *ibid.*, p.349.

(16) *ibid.*, p.795.

(17) Cf. letter to Fritz Tucholsky, 5/12/35, Briefe, p.327.

Tucholsky's interest in the Catholic Church related not to its dogma, which he regarded with sympathetic incomprehension, but to its political role. Its main agent, the Zentrum, had distinguished itself in foreign policy, but Tucholsky condemned its intolerance in the domestic field. He considered the Church's efforts to solve social problems as well-meant, but of necessity inadequate, because of the Zentrum's industrialist wing, which preferred an alliance with the NSDAP. The direction of the Zentrum from Rome finally led to its dissolution, since the Pope believed that the Catholic Church in Germany could better be served by appeasing Hitler than by antagonising him; this was a decision which Tucholsky opposed on moral grounds.

The failure of the left and the Church to extend or even maintain progressive democracy in Germany was all the more disturbing because that democracy was under attack from the National Socialists. The rise of the Nazis stemmed partly from the economic crisis, which caused mass unemployment and created a mood of despair in which the lower middle classes proved especially receptive to right-wing radicalism. Hitler's speeches provided them with a series of traditional scape-goats, such as Communists, Jews, and Republicans, while his para-military SA appealed to their love of uniforms and impressed them by its display of force. Goebbels' skilful propaganda, with its lavish and self-contradictory promises to the various special interest groups, won more converts. As their movement gained control of the streets and steadily increased its electoral strength, many Nazis began to believe in the inevitability of their success.

Nevertheless, it would be simplistic to claim that Hitler's victory was certain. Whatever the dynamic of the NSDAP, it could hardly

have triumphed so completely but for the weakness of its opponents. The last Republican Chancellors assisted the Nazis by undermining democracy, though their motives varied. Brüning merely wished to prevent the Reichstag from interfering with his financial policy, Papen had vague visions of an authoritarian Neuer Staat, and Schleicher hoped to tame the NSDAP by saddling them with responsibility for unpopular but necessary government decisions. The Social Democrats played a passive role, waiting for the end of the economic crisis to strengthen democracy once more; they refused to take to the streets against the Nazis.

Tucholsky was justified in claiming that the Republic no longer believed in itself. Its police gave the Nazis freedom of the streets, while its judges condoned terrorism from the right.

„Hier beginnt die Schuld der Republik:  
eine Blutschuld“

Tucholsky wrote at the beginning of Brüning's term of office.(18) As so often in the past, Tucholsky's warning proved correct. In January 1933 the Nazis took over power in the unspectacular manner foreseen by Tucholsky's Hellseher:

„Putsch trocken. Ich sehe kein Blut.  
Ich sehe die aufgeregte Insel Deutschland.  
Faschismus Lagerbräu... Wozu ein Putsch?  
Die Herren haben ja beinahe alles, was  
sie brauchen: Verwaltung, Richter, Militär,  
Schule, Universität..."(19)

On the subject of possible resistance to a right-wing government, Tucholsky was pessimistic.(20) The workers were the only group likely to put up a fight, but they had no chance of success. They were

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(18) Die deutsche Pest, WB 13/5/30, GW III, p.441.

(19) Der Hellseher, WB 1/4/30, *ibid.*, p.398.

(20) *ibid.*, p.399.

divided among themselves; the best were dead or in prison and those who remained lacked weapons with which to fight the army and the police. Tucholsky therefore prophesied only a few brave but hopeless uprisings. Here too his forecast was fulfilled; in spite of many acts of individual heroism, the working classes could offer no effective resistance to Hitler.(21)

Those who might have expected to suffer most at the hands of the triumphant Nazis were the Jews. Tucholsky's relationship with the German Jews is examined in detail later in this chapter. Relevant in the present context is the last article in the Wendriner series, Herr Wendriner steht unter der Diktatur(22), written shortly after the Nazis' first major electoral success. Poor rightly describes this article as

"a chillingly accurate description of certain aspects of the later Nazi dictatorship".(23)

Wendriner is surprisingly content with the situation after the Nazi take-over. "H" may be from Czechoslovakia, but he knows what Germany needs: Ordnung. The characteristics of this "order" soon emerge. All Jews have to carry a special gelben Schein and an SA-man is in charge of every street. Though Wendriner naturally only dares to whisper to his friends, he clearly envisages neither resistance nor flight. In fact things have turned out better than he expected:

„Dieses System hat auch seine gute Seiten..  
es hat seine geschichtliche Berechtigung".(24)

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(21) This emerges even from such an apologia of illegal Communist activity as Jan Petersen's Unsere Straße, first published in 1935. Petersen's colleagues maintain the local KPD organisation at the cost of many lives, but can achieve little against the all-powerful NSDAP.

(22) WB 7/10/30, GW III, pp.547-50.

(23) Poor, op.cit., p.197.

(24) GWIII, p.549.

His fellow-Jews, especially those from Eastern Europe, have given the race a bad name, and deserve the scorn of the new rulers. Wendriner also rejoices over Hitler's recognition of the value of military traditions, and is relieved that the Communists will now be kept away from his safe. Tucholsky's later disgust with the German Jews stemmed largely from the fact that so many of them responded to the advent of Hitler with the misguided equanimity of Wendriner, with the same naive trust that some arrangement with the National Socialists would be possible. On this point Tucholsky knew better. When Wendriner leaves the taxi to go into the theatre, he assures his wife that it will not rain; after the performance he discovers that it is indeed raining, but, unlike his creator, chooses to ignore the omen.

Tucholsky's analysis of the NSDAP itself was not always as clear-sighted as his assessment of its opponents. On one point, nevertheless, he cannot be faulted. Although Otto Strasser and the economist Gottfried Feder talked of a German road to Socialism and liberation from Jewish Zinsknechtschaft, Tucholsky recognised that such slogans represented only a trick to win over the workers and a token concession to the radical activism of the SA.

„Die Geldgeber dieser Bewegung sind erzkapitalistisch"(25) he declared. As he had predicted, Thyssen, Kirdorf and other industrialists regarded the National Socialists as a bulwark against Communism and were unwilling to tolerate any tampering with the status quo. In any case, Hitler himself had no plans to alter the economic system. Tucholsky was right to forecast that the Nazi government would favour capital rather than labour. During the period from 1933 to the outbreak of war, profits rose sharply, especially in the field of heavy industry, while the wages of the average worker hardly increased. This proved possible

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(25) GW III, p.439.

because, as Tucholsky had also anticipated, the National Socialists almost immediately seized the opportunity to ban the KPD, exclude the Social Democrats from public life and abolish the trade unions:

„Was wirklich abgebaut wird, das wird die Kampfkraft der Arbeiter sein. Auch die zahmsten Gewerkschaften werden nichts zu lachen haben".(26)

Paradoxically, Tucholsky's recognition of the source of party funds blinded him to the relative strength of the Nazi "revolution" on the one hand and the weakness of the traditionalist right on the other. He accepted the theory that Hitler was "der Trommler", a mere figure-head who was being manipulated by his Nationalist colleagues and would be pushed aside when he had served his purpose:

„...Wie sie regieren werden? Viel harmloser, als die maßlos enttäuschten, aber bald gebändigten Kleinbürger glauben. Deren radikale Flügel wird rasch unterdrückt; auch Herr Hitler hat seine Schuldigkeit getan und kann gehen. Es wird keine Revolution sein, so wenig wie die von 1918 eine gewesen ist".(27)

An authoritarian government would emerge, similar to the pre-war Imperial cabinets:

„Nun wird Deutschland streng nationalliberal".(28)

This prognostication at least proved false. Within months of taking power, Hitler had disposed of the more recalcitrant DNVP ministers and reduced the others to obedient technical assistants; all other political parties had ceased to exist, and the Wehrmacht swore its oath of allegiance to the person of Hitler. The Nazi leader could therefore assert at the Nuremberg Party Congress of September 1934:

„Nicht der Staat befiehlt uns, sondern wir befehlen dem Staat".

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(26) *ibid.*, p.400

(27) Der Hellseher, *ibid.*, p.399.

(28) *ibid.*



Since it is unusual for Tucholsky's analysis of events and his assessment of future prospects to be so inaccurate, several questions arise: was he alone in his opinions, why did he hold them and what effect did they have on his anti-Nazi writings?

When Tucholsky underestimated the NSDAP, he was echoing an opinion widely held in Germany. Few intellectuals and even fewer politicians had learned from Mussolini's seizure of power in Italy the lesson that there were infinite possibilities for a Fascist party to take over the entire machinery of state and systematically destroy all opposition. Ossietzky misjudged Hitler's position as Tucholsky had done, failing to recognise the bargain which had been struck by the National Socialists and their industrialist paymasters.(29) Hitler's chances of success were also misunderstood by politicians of the extreme left and the Nationalist right. The Communists hoped to take power after the supposedly inevitable collapse of their rivals. A more serious miscalculation was made by the DNVP. Hugenberg helped Hitler into office out of a desire to become the "economic dictator" of Germany, but also in the expectation of dominating the politically inexperienced National Socialists. Hindenburg's advisers were also over-optimistic in assuming that they could make use of Hitler.

Tucholsky underestimated the strength of the National Socialists partly because he had spent most of his career campaigning against their rivals on the right. The main German Conservative Party in the period between 1919 and 1930 had been the DNVP, and its traditional militarism had been so deeply rooted in national consciousness that it had resisted

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(29) Cf. Koplin, *op.cit.*, p.162: "Machtaspirationen Hitlers mußten nach Ansicht Ossietzkys an dem Widerstand seiner auf Selbstherrschaft erpichten kapitalistischen Protektoren scheitern".

even Tucholsky's determined challenge. Having lived abroad for most of the period since 1924, Tucholsky found it impossible to appreciate the rapidity of its decline and the simultaneous advent of a new enemy, the NSDAP.

It is also true that the gulf which separated Tucholsky from both the DNVP and the NSDAP prevented him from putting into perspective the differences between the two right-wing groups. As a revolutionary Socialist, he found it impossible to take seriously the propaganda of the National Socialists. Conservatism was for Tucholsky synonymous with reaction, with a return to the previous Imperial order, whereas the Nazis were looking towards the future, in which they would set up their Third Reich. They also were invoking a "national revolution", which Tucholsky saw as a contradiction in terms, since he could only imagine revolution as a progressive, left-wing cause:

„Von einer revolutionären Idee ist...  
bei den Nazis nicht das Leiseste zu bemerken".(30)

However, Tucholsky believed that even if, contrary to his expectation, the National Socialists did intend to transform society, they would be restrained by their financial backers and by the suspicions of their lower middle-class supporters, a group for which Tucholsky felt only contempt:

„Der Kleinbürger hat drei echte Leidenschaften:  
Bier, Klatsch und Antisemitismus. Das wird ihm  
hier (d.h. in der NSDAP) alles reichlich angeboten:  
Bier in den Versammlungen, Klatsch in den Blättern  
und Radau-Antisemitismus in den großmüuligen  
Parolen der Partei".(31)

The definition was at best half-true. The German Kleinbürger was indeed narrow-minded and he longed for simple solutions to the country's complex problems; but he was also afraid of a further economic and social decline,

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(30) GW III, p.440.

(31) Die deutsche Pest, *ibid.*, p.440.

and prepared to support extreme measures if they were presented by as convincing a demagogue as Hitler.

Tucholsky also underestimated the Nazi leader himself. In common with Karl Kraus(32), he regarded Hitler as an uninteresting figure, and he felt that Hitler owed his rise to the weakness of his opponents.(33) Tucholsky thereby ignored the Führer's shrewdness and determination. He could not even appreciate the oratorical skill which was one of Hitler's strongest weapons:

„Die Stimme ist gar nicht so unsympathisch, wie man denken sollte... Aber sonst: nichts, nichts, nichts. Keine Spannung, keine Höhepunkte, er packt mich nicht, ich bin doch schließlich viel zu sehr Artist, um nicht noch selbst in solchem Burschen das Künstlerische zu bewundern, wenn es da wäre. Nichts. Kein Humor, keine Wärme, kein Feuer, nichts. Er sagt auch nichts als die dümmsten Banalitäten, Konklusionen, die gar keine sind - nichts."(34)

These words, written after Hitler's accession to power, demonstrate a misplaced contempt for the adversary. Tucholsky had for years criticised the Republic for failing to inspire loyalty among its citizens, yet he did not recognise the charismatic qualities of the National Socialist leader.

One reason for Tucholsky's low opinion of Hitler, and of the National Socialists as a whole, was their poor intellectual standards. Tucholsky had seen himself, along with such figures as Heinrich Mann, as a representative of Geist, a quality which Hitler conspicuously

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(32) Cf. Kraus: Die dritte Walpurgisnacht, Munich, Kösel, 1952, p.9: "Mir fällt zu Hitler nichts ein". Other progressive writers, such as Thomas Mann, were intrigued by Hitler's personality, in spite of their moral and political repulsion.(Cf. Bruder Hitler, in Altes und Neues, Frankfurt, Fischer, 1953, pp.622-29).

(33) Schnipsel, WB 26/1/32, GW III, p.1101.

(34) Letter to Hasenclever, 4/3/33, Briefe, p.247.

lacked.(35) The movement also did not possess any clear ideological position, a fact which proved advantageous to a party seeking the widest possible support. Hitler and Goebbels had no scruples about aiming their propaganda at the lowest common denominator of public opinion; as the latter confided to his diary, they were only interested in power.(36) Tucholsky's error of judgment lay in the assumption that his compatriots were politically mature; they would therefore recognise that Goebbels was "'n kleener Mann"(37), that his party was beneath contempt, and therefore unworthy to be the target of Tucholsky's polemic and satire. He asserted fastidiously that

„Es lohnt nicht - so tief kann man nicht schießen."(38)

Tucholsky's misjudgment of Nazi strength had the effect of restricting his polemic against the party. His work comprised only the prose articles already mentioned(39), and one poem in the AIZ, Deutschland erwache!(40) in which he claimed that the workers were ready to resist the Nazis. The energy and persistence with which he had engaged in polemic against militarism and class justice was now lacking.

This reticence was particularly regrettable since Tucholsky's comparatively rare satirical attacks on the NSDAP produced such effective Kampfgedichte as Das Dritte Reich(41), Die Mäuler auf!(42) and Rosen auf den Weg gestreut.(43) The last takes as its starting-point the Communist

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(35) Altes Lied 1794, WB 3/5/32, GW III, p.1054.

(36) Josef Goebbels: Vom Kaiserhof zur Reichskanzlei, Berlin, 1934, p.135.

(37) Goebbels, WB 24/2/31, GW III, p.790.

(38) Schnipsel, WB 8/3/32, *ibid.*, p.1029.

(39) Der Hellseher, Die deutsche Post and Herr Wendriner steht unter der Diktatur.

(40) Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung, 1930, GW III, p.417.

(41) WB 6/5/30, GW III, pp.437-8.

(42) WB 26/8/30, *ibid.*, pp.502-03.

(43) WB 31/3/31, *ibid.*, p.814.

slogan "Schlagt die Fascisten, wo ihr sie trefft!" which had been prohibited by the courts as an incitement to violence, at a time when the terror of the SA was at its height. There was no law against an ironic parody which kept the motto in the public mind:

„Nennt sie: die süßen Schuckerchen,  
gebt ihnen Bonbons und Zuckerchen,  
und verspürt ihr auch  
in euerm Bauch  
den Hitler-Dolch. tief bis zum Heft-  
Küßt die Faschisten, küßt die Faschisten,  
Küßt die Faschisten, wo ihr sie trefft!"(44)

However witty such poems might appear, they were no substitute for a fundamental analysis of the National Socialist phenomenon, or a direct polemical assault. Tucholsky took little part in the rearguard action led by Ossietzky. The editor of the Weltbühne exposed the falsehood of Hitler's promise to stay within the law while he simultaneously subverted it.(45) Ossietzky pleaded with Communists and Social Democrats to unite against a man determined to destroy them both(46); Hiller and von Gerlach continued the campaign. Tucholsky's premature admission of defeat was therefore by no means typical of left-wing intellectuals in Germany. All in all it must be admitted that Tucholsky did abandon the anti-Nazi struggle fairly early, since his last important political article, Für Carl von Ossietzky(47) was written in May 1932, though his defenders on this issue rightly assert that throughout the year he was a sick man.(48)

Tucholsky was nearing the end of his journalistic career when the National Socialists emerged as the greatest threat to the progressive cause since the war. He recognised the lack of determination which paralysed

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(44) *ibid.*

(45) Cf. Ossietzky's article Egal Legal, WB 24/3/31, in Rechenschaft, pp.142-44, where he attacked Hitler's plea before the Reichsgericht during the trial of three young Reichswehr officers who sympathised with Nazism.

(46) Ein runder Tisch wartet, WB 3/5/32, Rechenschaft, pp.181-5.

(47) WB 17/5/32, GW III, pp.1055-58.

(48) Schulz, *op.cit.*, p.127-8.

the Republicans, and justifiably criticised those in power for the deliberate and unintentional assistance which they gave to the NSDAP. Tucholsky foresaw the inglorious end of German democracy and also the fact that Hitler's natural opponents, the workers and the Jews, would be unable or unwilling to resist him.

Tucholsky refused to be duped by Nazi talk of changes in the economic system; Hitler would favour his capitalist paymasters rather than the workers, he surmised. However, this correct assumption led him to overestimate the strength of the traditional reactionaries who were helping Hitler to power. Men such as Hugenberg were Tucholsky's old enemies on the right, and he failed to appreciate their loss of influence. Conversely, he despised the cheap propaganda of the Nazis, underestimated the impetus of the mass movement and believed that, once in office, Hitler would be manipulated by his more experienced Nationalist rivals. Tucholsky was not alone in holding this view, but events proved it false.

Finally, Tucholsky suffered from uncharacteristic over-optimism in thinking that the emotionalism and contradictions of the NSDAP would prevent its success. He saw the movement as disgusting rather than dangerous, and, unlike many of the colleagues in the Weltbühne, only rarely indulged in polemic against it. He preferred to satirise the party, wittily but infrequently, and had abandoned the struggle against Hitler months before the Nazi leader came to power.

The last years of Tucholsky were marred by physical illness and depression. He suffered from almost constant headaches which were at first wrongly diagnosed as symptoms of a nervous disorder. Eventually he convinced his doctors that he needed surgical treatment, and a debilitating series of operations ensued, bringing at best temporary relief.

Tucholsky's failing health combined with his pessimistic view of political developments in Germany, and gradually led him to despair. Yet paradoxically this was also the period of his greatest literary success. Fifty thousand copies of the Deutschlandbuch were sold in a few months, his Sammelbände were eagerly read by an increasing number of devotees, and the short story, Schloß Gripsholm, written in 1931, was to prove his most popular work. However, Tucholsky always considered the effect of his work to be of paramount importance, and he was compelled to recognise that his endeavours were proving fruitless:

„Mir erscheint es manchmal als so entsetzlich  
wirkungslos; da schreibt man und arbeitet man -  
und was ereignet sich nun realiter in der Verwaltung?...  
Gehen die Sadisten? Werden die Bürokraten entlassen?  
Das bedrückt mich mitunter". (49)

Events in Germany confirmed his fears. In spite of the economic crisis, left-wing unity was as far off as ever, and by the autumn of 1931 he gave up hope for it. (50) The remaining democratic groups were also in retreat, seeking salvation in Brüning's Präsidialregierung. Although Tucholsky noted the paradox that the conservative monarchist, Hindenburg, was now widely regarded as the last hope of the Republic (51), he reacted not with alternative suggestions but with resignation.

Two explanations for Tucholsky's despair are therefore his illness and the disillusionment induced by the German political scene. A third point, raised by Prescher, is the motif of suffering (Leiden), which becomes increasingly prominent in Tucholsky's later works. (52) Prescher alludes first to Freud's Trieblehre, his study of the often sadistic

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(49) Letter to Franz Hammer, 5/5/31, Briefe, p.213.

(50) His last optimistic article on the subject was Die Herren Wirtschaftsführer, WB 18/8/31, GW III, p.915.

(51) Der breite Rücken, WB 25/3/30, *ibid.*, p.1342.

(52) Prescher, thesis, pp.170-76.

subconscious impulses which form part of man's personality and defy rational control. Tucholsky believed that the existence of such impulses represented an omission in Marxist theory. Freud appeared to have recognised a fundamental truth:

„Die Wahrheit: der Wille des Menschen ist nicht frei".(53)

Once Tucholsky had expressed his agreement with the proposition, his pessimism was understandable. He could not ask his readers to make rational political choices if they had no free will to choose.

Prescher maintains that the energy with which Tucholsky conducted his journalistic campaign was logically reduced by this recognition. For many years he had sympathised with the suffering of workers and political prisoners, and tried to alleviate it by direct assistance and by propaganda. Life's victims had done nothing to deserve their fate, and he longed for the day when they would lose patience with their oppressors:

„Läutert Leiden? Welchen Sinn hat es?  
Was haben sie getan, mein Gott: das Pferd, der Hund,  
der Angestellte, der Proletarier, das Fürsorgekind-?  
Sind sie schuld?  
Woran sind sie schuld?  
Nimm ihnen die Geduld!"(54)

Yet the invocation of God, even if only in the role of catalyst, was a sign that Tucholsky's own resolve to fight against suffering was weakening. This was still more apparent in a poem written eighteen months later, Die Gefangenen, which ends not with a call for rebellion but with despair and surrender:

„Gott, du siehst es-  
Erbarme, erbarme dich der Gefangenen!  
Der Mensch, der da richtet, erbarmt sich nicht.  
Hörst du sie, siehst du sie, fühlst du sie,  
die Gefangenen.?"(55)

Men could do nothing, and only God could help. This conclusion left

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(53) Auf dem Nachttisch, WB 5/5/31, GW III, p.848.

(54) Geduld, WB 17/9/29, *ibid.*, p.188.

(55) WB 14/4/31, *ibid.*, p.832.



Tucholsky with the alternative of religion or resignation, and he chose the latter.

In Prescher's opinion Tucholsky did not give up the political struggle because of events in Germany. His resignation is seen as motivated by the recognition of deep psychological truths, concerning the absence of human freedom. Prescher's case is well presented, but seems ultimately unconvincing. His argument ignores Tucholsky's ill-health and omits the obvious comparison with his silence in 1923, when he was also disgusted with German politics. The motif of Leiden is indeed important to Tucholsky's work, but it should be regarded as a symptom rather than a cause of his resignation. The theory of Freud that man was by nature cruel impressed Tucholsky not as a new discovery, but as a confirmation of what he had already sensed.(56) Tucholsky's concern with the reasons for human suffering did not cause his resignation; it sprang from his depressed reaction to illness and to the defeat of the progressive forces in Germany.

By 1931 Tucholsky had recognised that the Republican cause was lost, abandoned by its defenders to its more resolute opponents. The prophet of doom had been vindicated, a fact which may explain the grim satisfaction in the words:

„Der Lebenswille der andern war stärker;  
und wer stärker ist, hat das Anrecht auf  
einen Sieg. Beklagt euch nicht".(57)

If his fellow-countrymen were preparing for "die Reise ins Dritte Reich"(58), he had neither the energy nor the desire to stop them. There was no point in becoming a martyr. This became apparent in the summer

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(56) Cf. *ibid.*, pp.250-1 and p.255.

(57) Bauern, Bonzen und Bomben, WB 7/3/31, *ibid.*, p.824.

(58) Schnipsel, WB 26/1/32, *ibid.*, p.1001.

of 1932, when Ossietzky faced a second trial on the charge that Tucholsky's statement "Soldaten sind Mörder"(59) libelled the Reichswehr. Though Tucholsky himself was not accused, left-wing intellectuals such as Toller expected him to return to Germany as a gesture to assist them in their propaganda. Tucholsky believed that the publicity would be of only limited value, and had no desire to expose himself unnecessarily to possible assassination.

Uncertain about how his absence would be viewed in Berlin, he wrote to his former wife Mary for advice.(60) She replied that he must make up his mind. He should return without reservations, as a fighter ready to face the future, or remain in Sweden and make the final break with Germany.(61) Tucholsky decided on the second course. When Ossietzky began his term of imprisonment in connection with the Kreiser affair(62), Tucholsky produced one last vigorous polemic against the army and the courts. He promised that the Weltbühne would continue to be published in the spirit of its former editor:

„Anderthalb Jahre Gefängnis für eine gute Ware  
erhalten zu haben - das kann bescheinigt werden.  
Die Ware wird weitergeliefert".(63)

But he himself made few contributions to the "product", and abandoned all political writing.

The immediate effects on Tucholsky of Hitler's accession to power were legal and financial. Being deprived of his German citizenship seemed no great blow to Tucholsky. He refused to protest, since he felt that in victimising their opponents the Nazis were acting as

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(59) Der bewachte Kriegsschauplatz, WB 4/8/31, *ibid.*, p.105.

(60) Letter, 29/3/32, Briefe, pp.494-6.

(61) Cf. Schulz, *op.cit.*, p.124.

(62) Cf. Chapter 8,

(63) Für Carl von Ossietzky, GW III, p.1058.

any revolutionaries would. It was only unfortunate that his own side had not been able to inflict such treatment on the Nazis instead.(64) The burning of his books in a public auto-da-fé elicited from him no more than ironic amusement.(65) However, the confiscation of his assets and royalties was more serious, since he no longer had many sources of income.

Tucholsky suffered most from the permanent loss of his reading public. This in turn led to an alienation from his native language, a problem which has been analysed by Poor(66):

"Tucholsky was a stylist and a satirist, skills which required an intimate knowledge and unique insight into the workings of a society and its language... Not only did he have little to say to any other audience, but his style was more untranslatable than that of most German authors".

Although he spoke excellent French and later learned Swedish, he felt himself insufficiently versed in either language to demonstrate his literary ability in it. In any case, he saw no point in participating in political discussion outside Germany. This reluctance to publish in a foreign language makes his refusal to contribute to the emigrant German press at first appear all the more surprising. The result of this refusal is that his opinion on developments in Germany can only be assessed from the correspondence with his brother, his colleague Heinz Pol, and especially his friend Walter Hasenclever.

In the twenties and early thirties Berlin had been one of the centres of European cultural life. The liberal atmosphere of the German capital came to an end with the rise of Hitler. Many leading German

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(64) Letter to Fritz Tucholsky, 31/8/33, Briefe, p.315.

(65) Letter to Hasenclever, 7/5/33, *ibid.*, p.258.

(66) Poor, *op.cit.*, p.205.

writers of Jewish birth, and those known to hold left-wing views, were obliged to emigrate in 1933, leaving the field free for the mediocrities on the literary right, such as the Blut und Boden school. Centres of emigrant resistance were established in Prague and Vienna. Frau Jacobsohn continued to publish the Weltbühne from Vienna under the editorship of W. S. Schlamm. Tucholsky thus had many opportunities to publish in the exile press, had he wished to do so.

Tucholsky's refusal to work for the exile journals was the logical extension of his decision to cease publication in the Weltbühne in the winter of 1932. The progressive cause had been defeated, as he had warned it would be, and its supporters should accept the consequences. His reaction to the Nazi take-over was to re-emphasise his contempt for the movement:

„Man kann nicht schreiben, wo man nur noch verachtet".(67)

There were two other important reasons for Tucholsky's silence. He might have continued the fight if the majority of his compatriots had been tyrannised by a minority; but this was not the case. The elections of March 1933 seemed to indicate that a majority of the German people supported the Hitler-Hugenberg coalition. In 1929 Tucholsky had claimed that the Nationalist right were not the only or the true representatives of Germany(68), and many of his fellow-exiles still distinguished between the wicked National Socialists on the one hand and the misled, but basically good German people on the other. This theory Tucholsky now rejected:

„Die These Heinrich Manns und auch Tollers ist falsch. Hitler ist Deutschland".(69)

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(67) Letter to Hasenclever, 20/4/33, Briefe, p.256.

(68) Cf. Heimat, in Dt. Dt., p.231.

(69) Letter to Hasenclever, 5/1/34, Briefe, p.275.

Even those Germans unenthusiastic about Hitler were opposed, in Tucholsky's opinion, to his violent methods rather than to his basic doctrine.(70)

The second reason for Tucholsky's continued silence lay in the lack of impact of the exile press, and the errors of judgment made by its editors. If the opposition within Germany had been unable to prevent Hitler's rise to power, a few newspapers produced by exiles for exiles would not bring him down. The oppositional Käseblätter had, he believed, other weaknesses. Their contributors had learned nothing from defeat: instead of analysing where they had gone wrong, Jews, Socialists and Communists alike insisted that they had not been to blame.(71) Another problem was sectarianism. Tucholsky regretted that the Weltbühne had not merged with another periodical, Der Aufruf, in order to create a common platform and comparative financial security.(72) He saw such behaviour as characteristic of emigrants, especially German ones; those involved were spending more time fighting each other than in uniting against the Nazi enemy.(73) The same intellectual coteries were making the same mistakes, and not attracting any young anti-Fascists to join them.(74) In the circumstances Tucholsky considered there was no point in supporting the emigrants' campaign:

„Mein Leben ist mir zu kostbar, mich unter einen  
Apfelbaum zu stellen und ihn zu bitten,  
Birnen zu produzieren".(75)

Although Tucholsky entertained no naive hope of influencing his compatriots, he determined on personal resistance to Hitler's

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(70) Letter to Hasenclever, 4/3/33, *ibid.*, p.248.

(71) Letter to Arnold Zweig, 15/12/35, *ibid.*, p.336.

(72) Letter to Pol, 20/4/33, *ibid.*, p.227.

(73) Letter to Hasenclever, 4/3/33, *ibid.*, p.246.

(74) Letter to Hasenclever, 11/4/33, *ibid.*, p.251.

(75) Letter to Zweig, 15/12/35, *ibid.*, p.337.

Germany. In his Swedish exile he boycotted all German products and avoided contact with anyone whom he suspected of Nazi sympathies. In the latter case he went too far:

„Ich lehne.. jeden ohne Ausnahme radikal ab,  
der das bejaht, der dort mitmacht, ja,  
schon den, der dort leben kann".(76)

Many of those still living in Germany had no alternative, and others were resisting the Nazis as strongly as they dared. Nevertheless, an economic and diplomatic boycott of Nazi Germany, if carried out on an international scale, would certainly have damaged Hitler's cause more seriously than the emigrant press. But the Russians remained anxious for trade with the Nazis, and the British government courted Hitler in order to obtain an agreement on the size of their respective fleets. Tucholsky's consistency had much less effect than the opportunism of these foreign governments.

Tucholsky's assessment of future developments in Germany and Europe was affected not only by depression but also by lack of contact with his native land. Even after 1933 he did not recognise the revolutionary aspect of National Socialism: the use of terror for the sake of terror, which was institutionalised in the SA, the SS and the concentration camps. As Poor has pointed out(77), Tucholsky also failed to appreciate that Hitler's strength lay in his hypnotic appeal to the masses, which in turn depended on the frequent ritualistic invocation of "enemies" to be overcome.

On other issues Tucholsky's judgment was partially correct. He recognised that Hitler would retain power, and that the other European states would tolerate his domestic tyranny, as long as he did

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(76) Letter to Hasenclever, 7/10/34, *ibid.*, p.288.

(77) Poor, *op.cit.*, p.211.

not interfere directly in their affairs. War was inevitable, in view of the expansionist policy of the National Socialists, and the capital investment of the arms manufacturers. The Western powers would remain passive, and the conflict would be a local affair in the east, which Germany would probably win. In fairness to Tucholsky, nothing in the conduct of Britain and France until the spring of 1939 suggested that they would resist Hitler, so the miscalculation of their eventual intentions was understandable.

A final political theme which played an important part in Tucholsky's correspondence in exile was that of the German Jews. Though born into a prosperous Jewish family, Tucholsky had never been interested in orthodox Judaism. He had left the faith in 1911, out of

9 "a youthful loathing of the unctuous rabbi  
and an instinctive recognition of the cowardice  
of Jewish society".(78)

This was a theme which recurred in several letters after 1933. He seldom wrote about the Jewish question in general and had nothing to say about the Zionist movement.(79) He owed his loyalty to a humanitarian progressive group which included Jews and Gentiles, as did that of their opponents.

Gradually Tucholsky was compelled to admit that, even if anti-Semitism was unimportant to him personally, it mattered greatly in Germany as a whole. The Jews provided the German right with a perfect scape-goat to divert public attention from its own responsibility for the outbreak of war, its prolongation and the eventual defeat. This propaganda was so successful that as early as 1920 in some parts of the country there was no discussion of whether the Jews were to be murdered

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(78) Letter to Zweig, 15/12/35, Briefe, p.333.

(79) Letter to Hans Reichmann, 4/5/29, ibid., p.205.

but only of how the massacre was to be carried out.(80) The Nationalist case was "Volksverdummung schlimmster Art"(81) and Tucholsky countered it by alleging that even if the right-wing view were accepted and the Jews had played such a destructive role, this was really an indictment of the more numerous Germans for failing to stop them. Yet as late as 1931 Tucholsky still found it impossible to take the anti-Semites seriously. Their gospel reeked of the provincial Stammtisch and ignored the real weaknesses of their opponents:

„Die meisten Antisemiten sagen viel mehr über sich selber aus als über ihren Gegner, den sie nicht kennen".(82)

Tucholsky's opinions demonstrated considerable common sense, but they won him few friends among anti-Semites or Jews. The former attacked him as a typical Jew, a rootless cosmopolitan whose writings were designed to undermine the fabric of German society. In fact most of the Weltbühne's leading contributors and a large proportion of its readers were Jews, and the German right often assumed that an allusion to the writer's religion represented a complete refutation of his views. However frequently Tucholsky might assert that anti-Semitism left him unmoved, he could not avoid stimulating it by his own journalistic activity.

Many of Tucholsky's fellow-Jews were almost as hostile to his activities as the anti-Semites. Recognising the prejudice against them which existed in German society, Jewish businessmen proclaimed themselves good Nationalists. This attempt to curry favour roused

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(80) Das leere Schloß, WB 19/2/20, GW I, p.601.

(81) Hepp hepp hurra! Welt am Montag, 14/2/21, *ibid.*, p.789.

(82) Sigilla Veri, WB 29/9/31, GW III, p.951.



Tucholsky's disapproval; reversing the Nationalist slogan, he asserted:

„Es ist nicht wahr, daß die Deutschen verjudet sind. Die deutschen Juden sind verbocht".(83)

Such conservatism was personified by Wendriner.

In the last months of Tucholsky's life, his hostility to the Jews in Germany increased. He was amazed at the naive optimism which led the vast majority not to emigrate, because they hoped to protect their financial interests. He believed that they would eventually be expelled in any case, and meanwhile the ill-treatment which resulted from their undignified conduct was well deserved. (84) The climax of his attacks on the German Jews came in a letter to one of them, the exiled novelist, Arnold Zweig. Unlike the latter, Tucholsky did not regard them as members of an army which had lost a battle but not a war. They had never been an army. Victories such as political emancipation had been granted to them by the French Revolution, not won by their own efforts.(85) Even in the 20th century, they continued to accept life in a cultural if not a physical ghetto; to compensate for their social inferiority, they were ready to concentrate on achieving success in business. In short, they were cowards, lacking any natural desire for freedom.(86)

This was a bitter Abrechnung, and it is not surprising that Tucholsky's fiercest critics have included Jews such as Gershom Scholem(87) and Walter Laqueur.(88) The creation of Wendriner as a target has been

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(83) Letter to Zweig, 15/12/35, Briefe, p.334.

(84) Letter to Pol, 7/4/33, *ibid.*, p.226.

(85) Letter of 15/12/35, *ibid.*, p.334.

(86) *ibid.*, p.335.

(87) Cf. Scholem at the World Jewish Congress of 1966, quoted by Poor, *op.cit.*, p.218.

(88) Laqueur, *op.cit.*, pp.45-47.

attacked as contributing to anti-Semitism. No doubt Tucholsky opposed in Wendriner the businessman rather than the Jew(89), and his selection of a Jewish milieu stemmed largely from his greater familiarity with it. Nevertheless, a writer as concerned with the effect of his work as Tucholsky was, must be judged by his actions rather than his intentions, and in this light his tactics appear misguided. Although he was not to know that Hitler would take power, he was aware of how seriously his fellow-Jews were disliked, and he should have avoided the slightest risk of providing ammunition for their opponents. To this extent Tucholsky's Jewish critics are justified; the Wendriner feuilletons might conceivably have assisted the propaganda of the Nationalists.

However, it should be pointed out in Tucholsky's defence that in practice it is most unlikely that the figure of Wendriner did stimulate anti-Semitism. As Tucholsky constantly complained, his work had little direct impact. Few Nationalists read the Weltbühne, and it is difficult to imagine anyone being converted to the anti-Semitic cause merely through a witty monologue such as Herr Wendriner betrügt seine Frau.(90) The Jewish cause was harmed far more by the machinations of men like Wendriner than by Tucholsky, who criticised them. Scholem and Laqueur would do well to recognise the truth of Tucholsky's remark about Germany:

„Im übrigen gilt ja hier derjenige, der auf den Schmutz hinweist, für viel gefährlicher als der, der den Schmutz macht".(91)

The despairing polemic of the letter to Zweig has also been used against Tucholsky. It was subsequently published by the SS news-

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(89) Poor, op.cit., p.219.

(90) WB 6/10/25, GW II, pp.235-7.

(91) Letter to Ihering, 1922 or 1923, Briefe, p.130.

paper Das schwarze Korps, as an example of masochistic jüdischer Selbsthaß. Tucholsky's disillusionment with his fellow-Jews certainly led him into exaggerations which have been pointed out by Poor.(92) Yet to establish his reaction as motivated entirely by Selbsthaß is an over-simplification. It was his Haßliebe that was responsible. He had hoped for much from the German people, and been disappointed, and his experience with the Jews was similar. He did not "expect more of Jews"(93), but simply demanded certain standards of conduct from himself and others, Jews and Gentiles alike. Tucholsky grew bitter only when those whom he had trusted, whether Social Democrats, Communists or Jews, failed to live up to these standards.

For several reasons it is difficult to evaluate Tucholsky's attitude to the German Jews. His journalistic work on the subject was limited in scope, and he favoured satirical articles rather than direct polemic. Secondly, anti-Semitism has become an emotive issue, as a result of Hitler's notorious Endlösung. Critics of Tucholsky have therefore tended to attack him with the benefit of a hindsight which he could not possess; they also attribute to his work a greater effect than it in fact enjoyed. The target of the Wendriner feuilletons may have been unwisely chosen, but neither directly nor indirectly did they lead to Auschwitz. Thirdly, a non-Jew finds it difficult to comment in detail on the specific religious and racial consciousness of the group, and the influence of unspoken childhood assumptions on the adult Tucholsky. In a general survey of Tucholsky's political development, it is only possible to allude to the complexity of the issues involved in Tucholsky's comments on his fellow-Jews.

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(92) Cf. Poor, op.cit., p.223.

(93) Poor, op.cit., p.214.

Poor has described the letter to Zweig as one of the last acts in Tucholsky's long drama of despair.(94) It certainly was his last political act. The dispiriting effect of solitude was taking its toll of a sick and impoverished man. Disillusionment with events in Germany and recognition that the progressive cause was lost contributed to the feeling that life was not worth living. In a final moving letter to his former wife, Mary, Tucholsky admitted that he no longer felt any relationship to the outside world:

"Der Grund zu kämpfen, die Brücke,  
das innere Glied, die raison d'être fehlt".(95)

Shortly after writing these words, Tucholsky took poison; he died two days later, on December 21st, 1935.

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(94) Poor, op.cit., p.233.

(95) Letter of 19/12/35, Briefe, p.502.

## CHAPTER 7

The criticism made by Tucholsky of Republican and Social Democratic Realpolitiker has been a recurrent feature of this study. It is now necessary to examine his reasons for taking such an uncompromising stand against experienced politicians, and the extent to which his attacks were justified.

Several explanations for Tucholsky's attitude have been given, but they appear unsatisfactory. It is not sufficient to assume, as Doerfel does, that Tucholsky's negative criticism was based on the over-simplifications of an intellectual who could not come to terms with the need for moderation and compromise in a pluralist democracy.<sup>(1)</sup> This view implies that Tucholsky lacked any grasp of the necessities of practical politics. Such an opinion appears unjustified, since Tucholsky possessed a greater awareness of long-term possibilities and dangers for the Republic than many parliamentarians. The view of Doerfel is opposed by the majority of Tucholsky-critics, who consider that the politicians were discredited by their failure to stabilise the Republican form of government and by their final abject defeat at the hands of the Nazis. However, the question should be asked whether, in the concrete historical situation, Ebert, Noske and Stresemann could have acted other than they did. The differing careers of these three leading Weimar politicians will therefore be studied. But before this detailed investigation, Tucholsky's definition of the differing stand-points of intellectual and Realpolitiker should be examined.

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(1) Cf. Doerfel, op.cit., p.141: "Politik in einer durch Reparationslasten und innere Unruhen schwer belasteten Republik war für Tucholsky primär eine Frage des Mutes. Die komplizierte Maschinerie einer demokratischen Partei im Zeitalter der pluralistischen Industriegesellschaft war ihm fremd..."

Tucholsky revealed in the article Macchiavelli that his suspicions of Realpolitiker stemmed from two distinct considerations. The first was one of principle and temperament; his nature made him instinctively distrust those who sought to exclude idealism from political affairs. He declared:

„Wer kuhhandelt, ist kein Priester der Wahrheit".(2)

At first this claim might seem irrelevant, since pragmatists such as Ebert, Noske and Stresemann did not aspire to this lofty, prophetic role; they believed that day-to-day problems could best be solved by concentrating on the matter in hand rather than by lifting their eyes to the stars. Tucholsky attacked this view in Wir Negativen; even if the essence of an ideal was that it could not be realised in practice, it retained its value as a long-term goal and a spur to immediate activity:

„Wir wissen wohl, daß man Ideale nicht verwirklichen kann, aber wir wissen auch, daß nichts auf der Welt ohne die Flamme des Ideals geschehen ist, geändert ist, gewirkt wurde. Und... wir glauben nicht, daß die Flamme des Ideals nur dekorativ am Sternenhimmel zu leuchten hat, sondern sie muß hienieden brennen..."(3)

To strive towards the ideal in political life provided lasting perspectives, a yard-stick by which to measure the progress already made. However, during the tribulations of Weimar democracy, Tucholsky's idealism was generally called upon to demonstrate how far the achievements of the various political leaders fell short of the ideal.

Had Tucholsky's criticism of pragmatists been based entirely on this issue of principle, both the "realist" and the "idealist" viewpoints would have been valid in their separate spheres. However, Tucholsky made another attack on the compromising and bargaining of party bureaucrats: not only was such activity morally questionable, but it usually

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(2) WB 17/10/18, GW I, p.308.

(3) *ibid.*, p.375.

proved unsuccessful in practice. The SPD of President Ebert contained a high proportion of pragmatists, or, as Tucholsky described them in March 1919:

„Leute, bar jedes Verständnisses für den Willen,  
der über die Tagesinteressen hinausheben will".(4)

Six years later Tucholsky recognised that his prophecy of SPD failure had been justified, and he compared the party's record to that of a Judas without even the thirty pieces of silver.(5) Tucholsky's attitude to the Weimar SPD and to its leader Ebert, is central to the assessment of his political acumen.

#### FRIEDRICH EBERT

Since 1891 the Social Democrats had accepted the Marxist theory of the workers' revolution which was to lead to a temporary dictatorship of the proletariat and eventually to the classless society. Yet when that revolution took place, the SPD leaders collaborated with their former conservative opponents in order to restrain the workers. This paradox may best be explained by a brief analysis of political trends within the Wilhelminian SPD.

The German Social Democrats represented the largest and most respected party within the Second International. Their very success led to misguided complacency, to the belief that socialism could be introduced through an electoral triumph which appeared to be inevitable. As long as Germany continued to be ruled by Bismarck's Constitution, the undemocratic restrictions placed on the party kept alive its revolutionary traditions, at least in the realm of theory. But in terms of practical policy, the SPD was gradually becoming a radical, democratic party rather than a revolutionary, socialist one.

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(4) *ibid.*, p.376.

(5) Zwei Sozialdemokratien, Die Menschheit, 3/4/25, GW II, p.84.

This growing conservatism was reinforced by the trade union and party bureaucrats who were paid to deal with day-to-day organisational problems rather than to speculate on the prospects for revolutionary change. Indeed, Eduard Bernstein and the revisionist right-wing of the party even strove to have the traditional revolutionary theory abandoned altogether. The left, led by Rosa Luxemburg, drew a different conclusion from the contradiction between the party's doctrines and its policies: they demanded that the SPD's actions should correspond to its Marxist principles. The political and ideological leaders of the Social Democrats, August Bebel and Karl Kautsky, rejected the proposals of both Bernstein and Luxemburg, since either course would have destroyed the unity of the party. However, the inconsistency between theory and practice continued to undermine the SPD, and was to become more dangerous during the war.

A similar contradiction existed in the SPD's attitude to foreign policy. The doctrine of proletarian internationalism had made great advances during the SPD's proscription in the 1880's, and in the decade before 1914 the SPD took part in several anti-war demonstrations organised by the Second International. However, another tradition was gaining ground within the party: it stressed the Prussian virtues of unconditional obedience to the leadership and patriotic loyalty.(6) In August 1914 the two attitudes came into conflict when the Social Democrats debated whether to support war credits, and it was Ebert's unwillingness to leave the fatherland in the lurch which triumphed over the opposition to German aggression of Liebknecht and Haase. It should be added that Ebert and his trade union colleagues were also anxious to protect their organisations against possible reprisals by the government. This combination of patriotism and "Organisationsdenken" was characteristic of the future President.

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(6) The party of "Kaiser Bebel" was nicknamed "die königlich-preußische Sozialdemokratie".



The decision of the SPD Reichstagsfraktion to vote for war credits provided the basis of Tucholsky's first opposition to Ebert. Though at the time he probably agreed with the SPD leader, U Tucholsky became a pacifist on account of his experiences during the war. In an article commemorating the tenth anniversary of the outbreak of war, he denounced Ebert and his colleagues:

„Manche hatten eine Seele, alle hatten ein Mitgliedsbuch, und Charakter hatte am 4. August 1914 keiner".(7)

In his opinion this conduct represented a betrayal of socialist principles, and it appeared to contrast unfavourably with that of the Russian Bolsheviks, who had consistently followed the path of revolutionary virtue.(8) This view of Tucholsky was not entirely fair, since the roles played by the two parties had also been influenced by objective differences of situation. Had the SPD opposed the war in August 1914, they would have risked being misunderstood by the majority of their own supporters, who believed that Germany had to be defended against the threat of invasion from the east. Lenin, the leader of a small conspiratorial sect from his exile in Zürich, did not have the same problem of winning and maintaining public support. On this issue Tucholsky was therefore guilty of some over-simplification.

After 1914 the Social Democrats increasingly assumed the role of loyal supporters of the German war effort. They were willing to postpone the campaign for the long-overdue social reforms until victory had been won. The hope of a reward for good conduct proved illusory, and as the German military situation deteriorated, rank and file Social Democrats in the army and the munitions factories grew weary of the bloodshed and deprivations. Left-wingers in the party stimulated this change of attitude.

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(7) Der Geist von 1914, WB 7/8/24, GW I, p.1202.

(8) Gegen den Strom, WB 13/4/26, GW II, p.409.

Karl Liebknecht was expelled from the SPD, and Haase left with several colleagues to form the Independent Social Democratic Party in 1917. Opposition spread within the mother party itself, especially after the unsuccessful strikes of January 1918. Nevertheless, in October 1918 the SPD, by virtue of its revolutionary tradition, was the only party which retained any influence over the radically-minded masses.

The decision to join Prince Max's government, taken by Ebert against the advice of many of his colleagues, reflected his patriotism, his readiness to accept unpleasant responsibility and his fundamental conservatism and fear of revolution. Even in November he persuaded Scheidemann and Bauer to remain in the coalition until their presence risked compromising his party in the impending struggle. Though he placed the SPD at the head of the demonstrating workers on November 8th, Ebert remained anxious to forestall violence and to deflect demands for change into constitutional channels. This explained his insistence on early elections to the National Assembly, and his opposition to the Räte, which in his opinion were symptomatic of the anarchism of the Russian Revolution.

Tucholsky's judgment of Ebert was in general highly critical. It is true that he paid tribute to the late President's honesty when it was under attack from the Deutschnationalen:

„Der Präsident war ein sauberer Mensch. .  
Selbst sein schärfster politischer Gegner  
darf ihm nicht nachsagen, daß er sich bei  
irgendeiner Gelegenheit bereichert hätte". (9)

He recognised that there was, in a positive sense, no comparison between Ebert and his inconsistent and extravagant predecessor, though in view of his low opinion of Wilhelm II, such a comment might be interpreted as damning with faint praise. (10) But Ebert's political record, and in

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(9) Frau Ebert, WB 17/3/25, GW II, p.65.

(10) Jener, WB 9/10/24, GW I, p.1247.

particular his role during the revolution, seemed to represent a succession of defeats. Tucholsky believed that the SPD leader was an unimaginative party hack, who had missed the opportunity for social reform and that he was therefore to blame for the gradual triumph of the old order which had followed. In the course of a polemic against Ebert's former press secretary, Robert Breuer, Tucholsky expounded in January 1926 his own mature view of the revolution:

„Es ist ja nicht wahr, wenn gesagt wird,  
der 9. November konnte keine Entscheidung  
bringen. Er hat eine gebracht. Den  
vollständigen Sieg der deutschen Reaktion.  
Und das ist Eberts Schuld, von der ihn  
niemand reinwaschen kann".(11)

The claim by Tucholsky that democratic ideals did not take root in Weimar Germany, which instead remained a society of hierarchy and privilege, is not in dispute. Even Ebert's sympathetic biographer, Besson, admits that his subject's career was a story of failure.(12) But if Tucholsky's criticism is to be accepted, it must be demonstrated that Ebert had some freedom of action during the Revolution, that decisions which prevented the desirable reform of society sprang from personal errors of judgment and were not forced on Ebert by the exigencies of the situation. On this subject the experts disagree. In the 1950's and early 1960's, such scholars as Erdmann(13) and Besson(14) recognised the injustice done to Ebert by the conservative Weimar historians, who had generally remained true to the monarchy, and had denounced all participants in the Revolution as Novemberverbrecher.

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(11) Die Ebert-Legende, WB 12/1/26, GW II, p.322.

(12) Waldemar Besson: Friedrich Ebert, Verdienst und Grenze, Göttingen, Musterschmidt, 1970, p.9.

(13) Cf. K-D Erdmann: Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte, 3, 1955, p.7.

(14) On p.74 of his Ebert biography, Besson does reject Ebert's oversimplified alternative of parliamentary democracy or Bolshevism, but six pages later he accepts by implication that Ebert and Noske had no choice but to send the old Imperial officers against the revolutionary workers.

The new school of thought admired Ebert for his brave but unavailing labours for the Republic, and accepted his conclusion that he had been confronted by a choice between parliamentary democracy and Bolshevist terrorism, and that, to safeguard the former, his alliance with the representatives of the old regime had been a disagreeable necessity. There appeared to be a serious threat of political and economic chaos, which might have led to Allied military intervention. As a result, no real social change had been possible in 1918, and Ebert deserved respect for accepting the inevitable.(15) Ebert's government, after all, achieved several long-sought goals, including the proclamation of the eight-hour working day, the establishment of unemployment insurance, the right of workers to return to their previous jobs after demobilisation, the setting-up of joint union-management committees for wage negotiations and the extension of the franchise in equal and secret ballot to all Germans aged 21 and over. Erdmann and Besson praised these successes, and assumed that no more could have been expected of Ebert. Such was the prevailing view among historians when Klaus-Peter Schulz in his monograph criticised Tucholsky for failing to recognise Ebert's greatness, and it may well explain Schulz's evident suspicion that Tucholsky's radicalism had got the better of his objectivity.(16)

At first the acceptance of Ebert's case rather than Tucholsky's may seem justified. The only contemporary party which in 1926 was attacking Ebert for not going far enough with his reforms was the KPD, which identified itself with his Spartacist opponents. Was Tucholsky a more reliable commentator? His views on the Revolution changed radically, from hostility to the Spartacists in 1918-1919 to apparent endorsement of their actions in

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(15) Cf. Gerhard Schulz, Revolutionen und Friedensschlüsse, Munich, DTV, 1965, p.151.

(16) Cf. K-P Schulz, op.cit., p.67.

1929, in a retrospective article in Deutschland, Deutschland über alles. (17) However, the objection of inconsistency is unconvincing. Though Tucholsky's dislike of the Spartacists was gradually reduced, his attitude to Ebert remained more or less constant, from the distrust of Das Lied vom Kompromiß to the detailed Abrechnung of the winter of 1925-26 and the attack in the Deutschlandbuch.

Until recently it seemed that Tucholsky's criticism of the SPD for its failure to stabilise democracy would find little support among historians. However, research by Kolb and Rürup suggests that his attitude amounted to far more than the outpourings of an impractical idealist. They agree with his fundamental analysis: that the SPD leaders were the victims not of an inescapable historical process but of their own errors. They accept by implication the criticism of Ebert's lack of imagination and of his unpreparedness for extra-parliamentary action. In addition they believe that the fear of exercising power in an unfamiliar situation played as great a role as the party's attachment to democracy in Ebert's wish to leave all decision-making to the Constituent Assembly. (18) This conclusion differs from Tucholsky's only in tone, since he expressed his similar judgment polemically. He considered that the conduct of Ebert during the Revolution had been disastrous for the cause of the democracy and socialism which the SPD leader ostensibly supported:

„Die allereinfachsten Reformen aus Angst versäumen, die simpelsten Notwendigkeiten verkennen, das Sinnfällige nicht tun, seine Rücksicht noch auf die Symbole der alten Herrschaft ausdehnen - das heißt nicht : ein Experiment vermieden haben, das heißt: ein Feigling und ein Verräter an der eigenen Sache sein". (19)

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(17) Schöne Zeiten, in Deutschland, Deutschland über alles, p.35: "Das Blut der Revolutionäre soll nicht umsonst geflossen sein. Sie sind für eine Sache gefallen. Laßt sie keimen".

(18) Kolb, op.cit., pp.35 and 181.

(19) Die Ebert-Legende, GW II, p.322.

Tucholsky's views remain controversial, even with the support of Kolb and Rürup. It is certainly true that Tucholsky concentrated to a great extent on the individual responsibility of Ebert, and did not examine in any detail the particular trends within the party which any SPD leader was likely to personify. The lack of a policy to exploit a revolutionary situation had been inherent in the Erfurt Programme, with its Marxist theory and moderate political practice; not only Ebert, but also Bebel, who had led the party until his death in 1913, was therefore to blame for this omission. In addition, although Ebert became the most important spokesman of a system of parliamentary democracy based on a compromise with the forces of the old order, he also expressed the views of thousands of workers and party functionaries.(20) Insofar as Ebert was the representative of opinions widely held within the SPD, Tucholsky's polemic against him was over-personalised and somewhat exaggerated.

However, the new Chancellor was more than a mere embodiment of the attitudes which prevailed within his party. As an active participant in German politics, he helped to reinforce such attitudes. That Ebert's temperament was essentially conservative and opposed to revolutionary disorder had been evident long before the Spartacist rebellion, through his efforts to prop up the old regime.(21) His decision to retain the specialist bureaucrats in their posts may therefore logically be interpreted, with Tucholsky, as the action of a "geborener Regierungsrat"(22), rather than of a Socialist, reluctantly compelled to compromise with reactionary forces in order to protect the country from Bolshevism. Ebert over-estimated the Spartacist danger through his failure to distinguish between the small band of dedicated revolutionaries with their often criminal following on

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(20) Cf. Rosenberg, Geschichte, p.20.

(21) As late as November 9th 1918, Ebert still hoped for a constitutional monarchy rather than a Republic.

(22) Die Ebert-Legende, GW II, p.322.

the one hand, and on the other the large numbers of his own former supporters, disappointed by his lack of energy and themselves inspired, in Tucholsky's words, by an "energischer demokratischer Wille". (23) Although he had been a middle-class radical rather than a Socialist, Tucholsky had demanded the introduction and stabilisation of democracy in 1918-19, and his distinction denoted a subtler mind than Ebert's:

„Dieser Reformsinn war keineswegs bolschewistisch; er war auch auf Seiten der Arbeiter recht bürgerlich und wäre niemals imstande gewesen, etwa große Sozialisierungen durchzuführen". (24)

It seems probable that a more imaginative statesman, a man less afraid of going down in history as the Kerensky of the German Revolution, might have taken advantage of this spirit to begin the reform of his country's institutions. But Ebert's exaggerated suspicion of the left was equalled by his blind confidence in the Imperial bureaucrats and officers, so that Tucholsky's attacks on him for taking advice only from the right were justified:

„Vom Mittag des 9. November an Angst vor dem Bolschewismus haben; Auswüchse einer Revolution verhindern wollen, die überhaupt noch nicht da war; nach rechts und immer nur nach rechts sehen; mit Hilfe der übelsten Erscheinungen des Militärs eine Heeresmacht wiederaufrichten, die die Pest dieses Landes gewesen ist: das ist Verrat an der Arbeiterklasse und an der Idee der Revolution". (25)

Tucholsky had the right to feel frustrated since his criticism had originally contained no drastic proposals; instead of suggesting that the Social Democratic leader should govern in harmony with the Räte, which were dominated by members of Ebert's own party, he had merely commented:

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(23) *ibid.*, p.321.

(24) Abreißkalender, WB 15/12/25, GW II, p.287. Cf. also Rosenberg: Entstehung, p.223.

(25) GW II, p.287. Kolb strongly supports Tucholsky's view: "Dieselbe Regierung, die den Linksradikalen gegenüber so peinlich auf die Wahrung ihres Prestiges bedacht war, hatte sich gegenüber der OHL mehr als einmal zu Kompromissen und zum Nachgeben bereit gezeigt.." (op.cit. p.239).

„Den großen Verwaltungsapparat konnte man nicht von heute auf morgen reorganisieren. Aber man konnte die allerschlimmsten Säulen des alten Regimes entfernen".(26)

Though Tucholsky continued for some time to object to Ebert's policy on primarily moral grounds(27), the political dangers emanating from the still powerful reactionaries should have been evident to the experienced SPD leader. This argument owed nothing to hindsight: Ebert's Independent colleagues, Haase and Eisner, both foresaw the possibility of conflict between the revolutionary government and the reactionary bureaucracy, and another USPD minister, Barth, pressed for Hindenburg's resignation as a commander-in-chief. Ebert rejected Barth's request and chose to ignore Haase's warnings. He therefore was fully responsible, as Tucholsky pointed out(28), for the subsequent actions of his protégés.

The conduct of the latter provided many examples of anti-Republican activities. The monarchists in the civil service repaid Ebert's generosity, by sabotaging even those mild reforms which he and his colleagues endeavoured to enforce. The proposals for nationalising important industries were held back by the bureaucracy until the government abandoned its plans. Conservative Prussian Landräte ensured that town councils elected by the notorious Dreiklassenwahlrecht remained in power for months after the Revolution.(29) Tucholsky commented with justifiable bitterness in February 1920:

„Die republikanische Regierung ist so gut wie machtlos. Ihr eigener Apparat höhnt sie aus und verkehrt fast alle Maßregeln in ihr Gegenteil".(30)

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(26) Das leere Schloß, WB 19/2/20, GW I, p.599.

(27) Cf. Wir Negativen, *ibid.*, p.375.

(28) Abreißkalender, GW II, p.288.

(29) Cf. Kolb, *op.cit.*, p.269.

(30) Das leere Schloß, WB 19/2/20, p.599.



As for the judiciary, it continued to administer justice in the interests of the monarchists and against the workers. The most striking case of reactionary bias occurred in 1924, when a court in Magdeburg found Ebert himself technically guilty of high treason for his part in the munition workers' strike of January 1918. Such evidence suffices to demonstrate that Ebert was wrong to retain the old bureaucrats, and that his decision made the future stabilisation of democracy in Germany all but impossible.

It is paradoxical that Ebert, the epitome of pragmatism, should have been misled on this issue, because for once his own idealism got the better of his sober, practical nature. In his naive respect for the smooth functioning of the machinery of state, he assumed that the bureaucracy and Officer Corps would continue their "unpolitical" loyalty, even though the form of the state had changed, and that all the "political" decisions would remain in his own hands. (31) The supposedly impractical idealist, Tucholsky, knew better, and his polemical conclusion, borne out by recent scholarship, is convincing:

„Die Männer des November haben nicht erreicht,  
was zu erreichen war: Personalreform an allen  
Gliedern des Staates; Aufhebung des Militarismus;  
demokratische Erziehung der Jugend; und - vor allem -  
die Unterstützung einer neuen geistigen Atmosphäre.  
Sie haben sie zerstört". (32)

As the revolutionary wave subsided, Ebert was elected the first President of the Weimar Republic. His performance in this new role likewise failed to win Tucholsky's support. He had already made up his mind about Ebert's political abilities, and saw no cause to make allowances for the President's new constitutional position above the parties. Ebert

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(31) Cf. Rürup, op.cit., p.124.

(32) Die Ebert-Legende, GW II, p.324.

remained for him a traitor to the socialist cause, who owed his loyalty primarily to the Reichswehr rather than to Marx or to the workers.(33) This judgment was less than fair. When the Socialist parties failed to win a parliamentary majority and the SPD took "eine Kur in der Opposition", Ebert was forced to look elsewhere if the democratic Republic was to have a government at all. Guiding the country through the humiliation of Versailles, through rebellion, political assassinations, unemployment, inflation and separatist threats was an unrewarding and exhausting task, and Ebert's performance in this office was distinguished by devotion to duty and courage in the face of bitter opposition from right and left. The government's failure to stabilise democracy after the Kapp Putsch and the murder of Rathenau could not be blamed on the President. When Tucholsky compared the conduct of Ebert as President with the reign of Louis Philippe, the champion of the "juste milieu"(34), his criticism for once was misplaced; Ebert could hardly be blamed for the misuse of a power which he no longer possessed. Though Doerfel's views on the controversy between Tucholsky and Ebert have been largely rejected in this study, she does make a valuable allusion to Jacobsohn's efforts to restrain Tucholsky from attacking the President. The editor of the Weltbühne forecast correctly that, compared to his successor, who would almost certainly be a Nationalist, Ebert would appear "the lesser evil".(35)

It could be argued in Tucholsky's defence that his criticism was based less on a misunderstanding of Ebert's new constitutional role and more on a conscious refusal to differentiate between the Ebert of 1918, who had power and failed to use it wisely, and President Ebert, whose authority was strictly limited by the Constitution and eroded still further

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(33) Jener, GW I, p.1247.

(34) Kleine Reise 1923, WB 3/1/24, GW I, p.1143.

(35) Doerfel: The Origins of a left Intellectual: Kurt Tucholsky, the Romantic Conservative, Oxford German Studies, Vol.7-8, 1972-4, p.134.

by successive election results. Tucholsky probably reasoned that it was the failure of Ebert the revolutionary to carry through democratic reforms which left the Republic constantly vulnerable and made the task of Ebert the President so difficult.

Tucholsky's attacks on Ebert were regarded by his contemporaries as a sign of extreme left-wing prejudice, and they are certainly somewhat over-personalised. However, they have been vindicated to a considerable extent by recent historical research. The political failure of Ebert is not in dispute, only the question of whether it was inevitable in view of the historical situation, or caused by his own mistakes. Such historians as Kolb and Rürup agree with Tucholsky that the latter was the case. The pragmatism of Ebert was not merely foreign to Tucholsky's nature, but it also created as many problems for his country as it solved. Even Besson, the President's admiring biographer, admits the defects of a purely pragmatic approach and the dangers which resulted for the Republic from Ebert's lack of inspirational appeal:

„Er kann bewahren, aber nicht neuschaffen.  
Er ist der verdienstvolle Platzhalter;  
aber ihm fehlt jedes Charisma, und so  
bekommt es auch die Republik nicht".(36)

Ebert may not have intended to betray the working class, as Tucholsky claimed(37), but in practice he and his party abandoned their revolutionary aims without managing to strengthen parliamentary democracy.

#### GUSTAV NOSKE

The other Social Democrat who rose to national prominence after the November Revolution was Noske, who became Minister for Military Affairs and later Reichswehrminister. Before the war he had been a well-known

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(36) Besson, op.cit., p.82.

(37) Die Ebert-Legende, GW II, p.321.

figure on the revisionist right wing of the SPD. His reputation as the party's military expert and his strong patriotism led to membership of parliamentary delegations to the Front, and to social contacts with high-ranking Imperial officers which were to prove important later. When the mutiny which heralded the Revolution broke out among the sailors of the High Seas Fleet in Kiel, it was Noske's affiliation to the traditionally radical SPD which won him the confidence of the sailors and allowed him to control the rising without bloodshed. When the Independents left Ebert's government in December 1918, he was a natural choice to take over the responsibility for maintaining law and order. It was in this capacity that Noske quickly gained a reputation as the "strong man" of the government. However, Noske did so only at the cost of antagonising many potential SPD supporters, including Tucholsky, who within a year of the Minister's rise of power was to describe him as "eine Katastrophe".(38)

Government in Prussia had traditionally been based on the alliance between the monarchy and the Army Command. When the former was swept away in November 1918 there were many demands that the officers should also be dismissed. Ebert rejected such plans: he regarded the support of the officers as essential to ensure an efficient demobilisation of the conscript army and to protect the new regime against the revolutionary left. It should be kept in mind that the SPD's orientation towards the officers as guarantors of Ruhe und Ordnung existed before Noske himself took over power, though his later conduct demonstrated full agreement with this policy.(39)

The role of Noske in the Revolution has proved almost as controversial as that of Ebert, but on one point historians of the period are unanimous: that Noske was a man of action rather than reflection.(40)

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(38) Neuer Militarismus, WB 2/10/19, GW I, p.485.

(39) Cf. Besson, op.cit., p.80: "Noske war der Ebert am meisten verwandte Sozialdemokrat".

(40) Cf. Golo Mann, Deutsche Geschichte des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts, Frankfurt, Fischer, 1959, p.669.

A clash of temperament with the idealistic intellectual, Tucholsky, was likely, and in view of their differing reactions to the political situation this conflict of opinions became inevitable. The volunteers enlisted by Noske brutally crushed the Spartacist menace, but in the cause of counter-revolution rather than that of the provisional government.(41) Yet the minister protected his officers against the accusations that they had committed atrocities, and he even employed them as the basis of the new Reichswehr. He therefore was attacked by Tucholsky for mishandling the revolutionary situation(42) and for helping to perpetuate militaristic attitudes in Germany.(43)

Noske survives the first of these accusations best. Some force had to be created to protect the government, and for the time being it was logical to rely on the most efficient troops available.(44) There is no agreement among historians on the viability of Tucholsky's counter-proposal of February 1920 that volunteers should have been sought in the ranks of the organised Trade Unions.(45) Such battalions existed, including the Social Democratic Regiment Reichstag. But whether, as Rosenberg claims(46), they could have been relied upon to take up arms against their Socialist brothers under Liebknecht seems doubtful, especially in view of the workers' war-weariness and their wish to return to civilian employment. It could also be argued against Tucholsky that he did not put forward this suggestion until more than a year after the event.

It is nevertheless impossible to excuse Noske from all blame for the behaviour of his troops. Their victims, as Tucholsky pointed

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(41) Besson, op.cit., p.78.

(42) Unser Militär! WB 29/5/19, GW I, p.427.

(43) Prozeß Marloh, WB 18/12/19, ibid., p.546.

(44) Cf. F. L. Carsten, The Reichswehr and Politics, Oxford, Clarendon, 1966, p.23.

(45) Das leere Schloß, GW I, p.599.

(46) Rosenberg, Geschichte, p.60.

out(47), included not merely the Spartacist leaders Liebknecht, Luxemburg and Jogiches and many of their followers, but also numerous civilians who had taken no part in the fighting and whose crime was the possession of a weapon(48), a USPD membership card, or a large street-map of Berlin. The mere possibility of such excesses should have made Noske hesitate about setting his troops loose on the capital.

In fairness to Noske it must nevertheless be admitted that the rebellion could not be tolerated. In view of the massive anti-government demonstrations, it was hardly surprising that he over-estimated the strength of the rebels. Noske's error was not moral but tactical; it did not lie in his willingness to play the bloodhound, as Tucholsky believed(49), but in his inability to recognise the unreliability of his new allies.

Tucholsky correctly assessed Noske's motivation in sending Freikorps to crush the rebel workers. Had the minister reluctantly submitted to necessity, he would have dissociated himself at the first opportunity from soldiers who had indulged in indiscriminate slaughter. A man of foresight would not have built the new Reichswehr on such insecure foundations. Noske's trust in the officers amounted, as Tucholsky realised(50), to the secret respect of a sergeant unexpectedly promoted to commander-in-chief:

„Seine Haltung nach außen hin war würdelos.  
Er warf mit aufgeschnappten Redewendungen  
des Kaisers um sich,... beschimpfte jeden,  
der wagte, das Offizierkorps als unrein anzusprechen -  
dem gehörten aber Verbrecher an - und befand sich  
völlig im Bann des Militärs".(51)

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(47) Das Buch von der deutschen Schande, WB 8/9/21, GW I, p.822.

(48) Noske's Schießerlaß was issued after a false report that Spartacists had massacred sixty policemen in Lichtenberg. All armed men resisting his troops were to be shot.

(49) This was Noske's own image, and it was echoed by Tucholsky in Die lebendigen Toten, (GW I, p.419): "Er ist ein Schädling, denn schlimmer als die exploitierenden Rechten sind ihre Handlanger, schlimmer als der Großbauer ist sein Hund".

(50) Cf. Die baltischen Helden, WB 23/10/19, *ibid.*, p.505.

(51) Kapp-Lüttwitz, WB 25/3/20, *ibid.*, p.616.

The truth of this accusation is demonstrated in Noske's own account of his ministerial career, in which he shows his naive pride at being appointed military governor of Kiel, his indignation at insubordination by the sailors, and his admiration for the officers.(52)

The problem of internal and external security made a temporary alliance between Noske and the generals practically unavoidable. Tucholsky was being unrealistic when he made his generalised attack on "dieser ehemalige Sozialdemokrat" for ignoring "die gute Gelegenheit,... alle Nutznießer des alten Systems auf die Straße zu setzen".(53) Some of Noske's appointees, such as the Prussian Minister of War, General Reinhardt, proved reliable democrats, willing to assist Noske's "Prussian Socialism". There was nothing wrong with a temporary compromise between the army and the SPD, providing that the latter was reconciled to the new state, rather than the state becoming a mere appendage of the army.

Noske must take responsibility for the failure of his plan. It is true that he faced opposition within his party. Some of his colleagues demanded from the outset that Social Democrats should have nothing to do with a force which would perpetuate the traditions of the Kasernenhof, rather than those of socialism or democracy. By preventing SPD supporters from joining up, and thus maintaining the army as a bourgeois preserve, they turned their pessimistic assertion into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Tucholsky avoided this trap by adopting a more moderate position. His aim of a new, democratic army was undeniably a constructive proposal.(54)

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(52) Noske, Von Kiel bis Kapp, Berlin, 1920, pp.27-28.

(53) Militaria, WB 22/1/20? GW I, p.590.

(54) Unser Militär!, GW I, p.347.

He may have been alluding to the Republikanischer Führerbund (55), which, according to Carsten,

"strove to implant a republican and democratic spirit in the Wehrmacht by gathering all leaders and NCO's who honestly accepted the Republic". (56)

Whether this organisation offered a long-term solution preferable to Noske's capitulation to the generals cannot be asserted with certainty, but the minister was at fault for neglecting to encourage the experiment. Soon the Führerbund was dissolved, since when the Versailles restrictions came into force, the generals took care to discharge the Republicans among the officers. Noske's lack of imagination meant the loss of an opportunity to create the loyal, Republican army which Tucholsky supported.

Instead Noske handed the initiative back to the generals. For a short time the latter had been in a difficult position, amid a war-weary populace. However, the officers profited from the discord between the Social Democrats and the revolutionary left. By their brutality, they continually reinforced the ranks of "the enemy within", and provided a constant justification for their own existence.

This strategy was very different from Noske's, and a more subtle politician would have required no warning against his "Truppe für stellungslose Edelmenschen". (57) But Noske was only too willing to be convinced of the value of Prussian traditions. He had first distinguished himself in Parliament with a bellicose speech on the army estimates in 1907, and the lessons of the intervening years were lost on him. Whereas Tucholsky had hoped that the new army would be inspired by a spirit of Republican comradeship, Noske, according to his biographer, Ulrich Czisnik,

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(55) In Der Knochenzerschläger, (Berliner Volkszeitung, 27/2/20), Tucholsky praised the Führerbund and criticised the minister's opposition to it.

(56) Carsten, op.cit., p.72.

(57) Neuer Militarismus, WB 2/10/19, GW I, p.486.



„erwartete von seinen Soldaten kein Engagement aus Überzeugung für die Demokratie, sondern vaterländische Gesinnung". (58)

This formulation explains Noske's difficulties in recruiting troops among the workers: the enlisting of the old officers was at least as much the cause as the effect of the workers' suspicions. Like his colleague Ebert, Noske lacked any reforming zeal, and therefore he deliberately decided to uphold the Wilhelminian traditions.

Tucholsky had two objections to the new Reichswehr. His first point was political: he distrusted the motives of the recruits. He surmised that they were not joining the army out of idealism; social and economic reasons were more important than any opposition to Bolshevism. (59) The officers were "Dilettanten von Beruf" (60) who had learned nothing more useful than how to wear their epaulettes (61), and who had therefore no interest in returning to civilian life. They were also attracted to the army as a career because it provided a lawful outlet for their sadistic impulses. (62) To employ such men as the basis of the new Reichswehr seemed to Tucholsky the height of naiveté, and the Kapp Putsch proved him right.

Tucholsky's second objection to Noske's officers was of a more abstract, moral nature. Having himself experienced the humiliations of a conscripted soldier during the war, he recognised that such treatment

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(58) Ulrich Czisnik: Gustav Noske, ein sozialdemokratischer Staatsmann, Göttingen, Musterschmidt, 1969, p.82: "Auch den Wert einer ungebrochenen Tradition übersah die sozialdemokratische Regierung nicht. So änderte man das militärische Zeremoniell kaum und beließ den Einheiten die alten Truppenfahnen, Traditionsnamen usw".

(59) Zur Erinnerung an den ersten August 1914, GW I, p.357:  
"Man sagt: Verteidigung der Heimat gegen die Bolschewisten und meint: Stellenversorgung".

(60) Offiziere, Freiheit, 16/8/20, *ibid.*, p.722.

(61) Kehrseite, WB 15/7/20, *ibid.*, p.699.

(62) Das Buch von der deutschen Schande, WB 8/9/21, *ibid.*, p.821.

was an essential part of the traditional Prussian militarism. If democracy were to establish itself in Germany, the caste system of the Imperial army had to be destroyed by the enforced retirement of its most prominent exponents. Noske was unable to perceive that the existence of the Officer Corps was incompatible not merely with socialism but with democracy itself. Tucholsky's most effective attack on Noske was made on this issue in December 1919:

„Er (Noske) weiß gar nicht, daß der Militarismus eine geistige Gefahr ist; er weiß nicht, daß hier Mächte am Werk sind, alles schlechte Alte zu konservieren und einer gradezu barbarischen Schicht wieder auf die Beine zu helfen. Er weiß es nicht und hilft mit".(63)

In dealing swiftly and effectively with the immediate and apparently serious threat of the Spartacist Rising, Noske showed his brutal but undeniable strength as a man of action. His blindness towards long-term dangers was, as Tucholsky pointed out, only equalled by that of Wilhelm II.(64) It was for political rather than moral reasons that Tucholsky issued his final and appropriate condemnation of Noske. After the Kapp Putsch, the minister had been transferred to an important administrative post, but Tucholsky wished Noske to leave politics altogether:

„Ich halte es nicht für richtig, diesen Mann noch einmal in eine prominente Stelle zu setzen. Ich sage das nicht, weil er eine Politik getrieben hat, die mir in der Seele widerwärtig war, sondern weil er eine schlechte Politik gemacht hat. Er hat sich blamiert. Alle seine Voraussetzungen sind nicht eingetroffen, alle seine Beurteilungen von Menschen und Dingen waren falsch, alle seine Vorkehrungen sind gegen ihn ausgeschlagen, seine Pläne ins Wasser gefallen, seinen Proklamationen Lügen gestraft. Dieses Unmaß von Kurzsichtigkeit wäre kaum mit dem größten Erfolg zu entschuldigen - bei Erfolglosigkeit ist es nicht zu ertragen".(65)

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(63) Prozeß Marloh, GW I, p.546.

(64) ibid.

(65) Oberpräsident Noske, undated article, consulted in the Tucholsky-Archiv.

Schulz has suggested that Tucholsky's criticism of Noske was justified, but that his attacks on Ebert were unfair.(66) In this survey his conclusion is rejected, along with that of Doerfel, who assumes that Tucholsky opposed the SPD leaders out of a personal inability to adjust to the necessities of democratic political life. He was not simply a born Negativer; on the contrary, he was right to be hostile to both the President and the Reichswehrminister. Noske's compromises with the Officer Corps proved as damaging to the cause of democracy as Ebert's bargain with the bureaucracy and the judiciary. Both men failed to recognise the duplicity of their partners. The idealist Tucholsky saw further than the experienced pragmatists of the SPD. At worst he did not share their blind confidence in their reactionary employees, and at best he sensed the opportunity for a genuine reform of society: a reform which, for fear of Bolshevism, Ebert and Noske postponed indefinitely.

#### GUSTAV STRESEMANN

The career of Gustav Stresemann shows significant differences from that of Ebert and Noske. During his term as Foreign Minister, from 1923 until his death in 1929, he was the leading figure in Weimar politics. This period was characterised by economic stability and consolidation; the earlier opportunities for democratisation and the threat of a reactionary Putsch were absent, and Tucholsky therefore had no cause to engage in as regular a controversy with Stresemann as he had with Noske.

The criticism by Tucholsky of the SPD leaders owed much of its validity to the fact that they were pledged, at least in name, to the progressive cause, which he himself supported. He could assume that their failure to satisfy him with the democratisation of German society represented also a failure to reach their own target. By contrast, Stresemann was

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(66) Schulz, op.cit., p.80

separated from Tucholsky not merely by a pragmatism similar to Ebert's, but also by a conservative philosophy which Tucholsky neither shared nor fully understood.

The record of Stresemann before he became Foreign Minister was hardly calculated to win Tucholsky's confidence. As leader of the National Liberals during the war, he had pressed for annexations, supported unrestricted submarine warfare and earned from his left-wing opponents the scornful title Ludendorffs junger Mann. Undeterred by the military defeat which showed his attitude to be impractical, he offered his services to Max von Baden's coalition; like Rathenau, he considered his presence on the political stage indispensable to his country's well-being. The self-esteem of such unsuccessful Imperial politicians met with Tucholsky's distaste.(67) He also rejected Stresemann's new party, the Deutsche Volkspartei, as a group of backward-looking middle-class monarchists(68), especially when its leader cooperated with Kapp, only to disclaim all responsibility after his failure.(69)

During the French occupation of the Ruhr Stresemann acted as an unofficial spokesman for the Cuno government's policy of passive resistance, delivering aggressively nationalistic speeches which stirred Tucholsky to humorous contempt.(70) As Chancellor of a Grand Coalition, he was guilty

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(67) Cf. Der Schnellmaler, GW I, p.425.

(68) Schäferliedchen, WB 20/2/19, *ibid.*, p.371.

(69) Cf. Kapp-Lüttwitz, *ibid.*, p.618. Cf. also Henry Ashby Turner, Stresemann and the Politics of the Weimar Republic, Princeton, 1963, pp.65-66, where even a sympathetic biographer admits that "the Putsch was one of the least creditable episodes in Stresemann's career".

(70) Oase, WB 3/5/23, GW I, p.1093, and Repräsentanten, WB 20/7/26, where he describes the Minister as "diesen mittleren Bürger, der durch die Nase nacheinander zum Staatsmord hetzt, den widerlich-korrupten Ruhrkampf nach Kräften unterstützt und heute die abgelegten Zitate des Herrn von Bülow spazierenführt".

of biased handling of the Communists in Saxony and the National Socialists and their separatist allies in Bavaria. Although Communist participation in a coalition in Dresden dominated by the SPD was far less dangerous to the Republic than the anti-Semitic and separatist extremists in Munich, only the former state was punished by a military Reichsexekution.(71) When Stresemann resigned the chancellorship in November 1923 to devote himself to foreign policy, Tucholsky could not be blamed for suspecting him of continued right-wing sympathies.

There were, however, other elements in Stresemann's career which might have led Tucholsky to modify this opinion. It is true that the DVP leader still felt a deep respect for the Hohenzollerns, as was demonstrated when he permitted the former Crown Prince to return to Germany. But in matters of practical politics he had become a Vernunft-republikaner. He believed that, for the time being, parliamentary democracy represented the best form of government for his country, and that a collapse of the Republic could lead only to the equally unpalatable alternatives of a dictatorship of the left or the right. Although Stresemann's ambition should not be underestimated, he showed courage in accepting the chancellorship at the height of the crisis. In this role he was compelled to terminate the unsuccessful policy of passive resistance, thus earning himself the violent hostility of the Nationalists. This decision represented an example of Realpolitik in a positive sense, and paved the way for an improvement in Germany's international position.

Like most of his fellow-countrymen, Stresemann looked on the Versailles Treaty as a national humiliation.(72) He set out to alter

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(71) Cf. Anneliese Thimme: Gustav Stresemann, Hannover, Norddeutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1957, p.59.

(72) Cf. Henry L. Bretton: Stresemann and the Revision of Versailles, Stanford, California, 1953, p.25.

its terms from a weak military and economic position which gave him little scope for bribery or threats.(73) However, he was helped by a change in American foreign policy, which by the mid-1920's had turned towards supporting Germany rather than France. There is no doubt that Stresemann's tenacious, step-by-step diplomacy proved successful. The reparations debt was reduced by the Dawes and Young Plans, which allowed Germany to prosper and to finance her annual repayments out of American investment loans. French suspicions were allayed by the conclusion of the Locarno Security Pact of 1925 which guaranteed France's eastern border. By recognising the loss of Alsace-Lorraine, Stresemann made a second occupation of the Ruhr impossible and prepared for a gradual evacuation of the French troops from the Rhineland. The German membership of the League of Nations and Stresemann's signing of the Briand-Kellogg Pact in Paris demonstrated his interest in the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

Tucholsky might have appeared likely to support such policies. For years he had hoped for the consolidation of the Republic; now Stresemann, by his very presence in successive coalition governments, provided that stability which had been lacking in the early 1920's. Furthermore, since his arrival in Paris Tucholsky had advocated the conciliatory policy towards France which Stresemann was apparently pursuing. Tucholsky's continued reservations sprang from two sources: he distrusted the minister's methods and his inner motivation.

The presence of Stresemann in the government did indeed inspire confidence at home and abroad, but the trust placed in the minister in foreign capitals appeared to Tucholsky dangerously exaggerated.(74)

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(73) At his secret meeting with Briand at Thoiry in 1927, Stresemann did offer German economic aid to stabilise the franc, in exchange for an early referendum on the return of the Saar to Germany, but the French government rejected his plan.

(74) Cf. Der erste Händedruck, WB 9/10/24, in which Tucholsky claimed that Stresemann's membership of the Freemasons should not be interpreted by his French colleagues as a symptom of true Republican internationalism.

As for the domestic continuity afforded by Stresemann, Tucholsky no longer valued this quality highly. In the first place, he felt that it had been bought at the unacceptable price of the minister's compromises with parties from the Social Democrats to the Nationalists:

„Er meielt sich bei jedem an"

he commented.(75) Stresemann's intention was to strengthen the Weimar system by basing it on a synthesis of the best features of the old and the new Germany. For this purpose he was willing to indulge in coalitions with the right or the left, depending on his immediate needs. However, Tucholsky rejected any compromise with the old ideals:

„Neuerdings wird von republikanisch-demokratischer Seite, getreu nach dem Rezept des Meisters Stresemann, versucht, "Brücken zu schlagen". Das macht man so, daß man der Reaktion täglich predigt: Wir sind gar nicht so schlimm, wie ihr glaubt...

Es gibt keine Brücken".(76)

Tucholsky had other reasons for distrusting Stresemann's role in domestic affairs. His record had been that of an alter Unfall(77) and Tucholsky believed that his commitment to a conciliatory policy would be abandoned under pressure. This view was lent additional credibility by occasional bellicose speeches which recalled the minister's former intransigence. It was difficult to know whether his oratorical concessions to the right were a purely tactical device, or whether they reflected his own long-term aims; and in any case they did nothing to increase the respect of his negotiating partners.(78)

By the time that the value of Stresemann's dominance in the Cabinet had been generally recognised as strengthening the Republic, Tucholsky himself had abandoned hope for the Weimar system and had placed

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(75) Mal singen, Leute-!, WB 18/11/24, GW I, p.1284.

(76) Gewehre auf Reisen, WB 16/10/24, *ibid.*, p.1253.

(77) Ein Betrunkener in der Wilhelmstraße, WB 1/1/29, GW III, p.8.

his faith in a second, more radical social revolution. To a critic who looked on politics in terms of polar opposites, Stresemann's tactical finesse and apparent unreliability appeared even more dangerous than the openly reactionary attitude of the Stahlhelm. In the essay Stahlhelm oder Filzhut? of 1927(79), Tucholsky wrote:

„Die große Gefahr für den europäischen Frieden liegt nicht im Stahlhelm. Die wirkliche Gefahr in Deutschland ist der interfraktionelle Stresemann - Typus, den man von den Deutschnationalen bis zur Demokratischen Partei in allen Schattierungen vorfindet. Es ist der lebensstüchtige, verschlagene, grundsatzlose, großfressige und kleimütige Kaufmann, der Organisationshuber, der "Mann des realen Lebens", der gebildete Kaffer, dem es bei aller Liebe zur Republik ein bißchen mulmig um die Brust wird, wenn einer gar zu sehr gegen die Ideale des alten Regimes vorgeht".

This assessment of Stresemann is decidedly harsh, since the minister laboured long and hard for the Republic which his Nationalist opponents, the future allies of Hitler, helped to destroy. Poor is right to blame Tucholsky for being on this occasion

"blinded to the finer distinctions necessary for every-day political life". (80)

Stresemann's concept of détente with the French likewise failed to win the approval of Tucholsky. As long as no significant changes took place within Germany, he regarded conciliatory statements made by Stresemann to Briand or to the League of Nations at Geneva as empty words; the evocation of the "spirit of Locarno" seemed to bear no relation to the practical results of the Treaty:

„Was hier in Paris an Locarno-Schnaps verschenkt wird, ist verschnittenes Zeug... Wo schärfstes Mißtrauen am Platz ist, werden Reden gewechselt, denen nichts, auch nichts in der Innenpolitik der beiden Ländern entspricht. Locarno bleibt Locarno". (81)

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(79) WB 17/5/27, GW II, p.789.

(80) Poor, op.cit., p.161.

(81) Der Fall Röttcher, WB 19/11/27, GW II, p.966.



Such suspicions were based on an issue of principle and on the question of Stresemann's real intentions. By 1927 Tucholsky had no faith in inter-state diplomacy in general, because he looked on all capitalist states as the servant of their ruling classes. They were at the mercy of industrial, agricultural and financial interests. Even if Stresemann's offer of mutual cooperation and his guarantees for European security were sincerely meant, when a crisis came he would be unable to honour them.(82) But Tucholsky was unable to suggest an alternative to the Locarno policy. Vague statements such as

„Es kommt das föderalistische Europa - trotz Genf"(83)

and „Unser Genf liegt in Moskau"(84)

were of little practical value. The policy of Stresemann undoubtedly represented an advance on the desperate Erfüllungspolitik of Wirth and Rathenau or the intransigence of Cuno and Hugenberg. However, the Locarno policy itself was not without its contradictions. Tucholsky had good reasons for suspecting that Stresemann remained a Nationalist at heart, and that his main concern was not with the preservation of peace in Europe, but with German power and prestige.(85) First there was Stresemann's refusal to conclude an "eastern Locarno". The minister had no wish to guarantee Germany's eastern border with Poland and hoped to regain the

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(82) Außen- und Innenpolitik, Die Friedenswarte, July 1926: "Tatsächlich hat kaum einer der Premiers, die im Völkerbund vorsichtige und altschablonierte Reden halten, auch nur die Macht, einen Locarno-Geist, wie man das heute nennt, bei sich zu Hause ernsthaft zu verwirklichen".

(83) Wahnsinn Europa, WB 18/12/28, GW II, p.1349.

(84) Grimms Märchen, WB 4/9/28, *ibid.*, p.1221.

(85) H.L. Poor is wrong to claim that the Brief an einen besseren Herrn (GW II, pp.167-72, in which Tucholsky forecast the expansionist foreign policy leading up to the Second World War) was addressed to Stresemann. Clearly Seeckt was intended. It was the latter who had been appointed to his post five years before by a Social Democrat - President Ebert - and had rebuilt the army. Poor over-states his case, but it is clear from the above quotations from Stahlhelm oder Filzhut? and Der Fall Röttcher that Tucholsky did regard the policy of the Foreign Minister as ultimately aggressive in intent.

Polish Corridor, though by diplomatic rather than military means.

Tucholsky correctly foresaw that such a project would stimulate Polish nationalism and might lead to war.(86)

A more significant reason for Tucholsky to distrust Stresemann's "Europeanism" lay in the minister's attitude to the military on the one hand and the pacifists on the other. Stresemann had done nothing to prevent German re-armament and Tucholsky wondered with good reason if in fact he supported it:

„Natürlich ist Gustav Stresemann nicht einmal ein böartiger Verschwörer, aber ich kann mir nichts dabei denken, wenn man mir erzählt, daß "das Auswärtige Amt geschlossen gegen die Reichswehrpolitik stehe"... Aber sie wird doch gemacht!..."(87)

The clearest evidence in favour of Tucholsky's theory was Stresemann's conduct towards German pacifists. Although in common with his co-signatories at Locarno Stresemann had been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, his attitude to the amateur peace-makers at home was contemptuous. The minister's answer to the accusation that a Schwarze Reichswehr still existed was not to remedy this violation of the Peace Treaty but to encourage the punishment of the journalists involved for betraying military secrets. It was not surprising that Tucholsky claimed:

„Es hagelt... Landesverratsprozesse, und es gehört die ganze Stirn Stresemanns dazu, sich in Wien hinzustellen und bei einem imperialistischen Anschluß den Pazifisten zu markieren."(88)

On this point the judgment of Tucholsky cannot be faulted; he refused to be deflected by Stresemann's poor relations with Seeckt. Their dispute stemmed on the one hand from Seeckt's attempts to conduct a private foreign policy; Stresemann naturally resented this interference.

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(86) Ein Betrunkener in der Wilhelmstraße, GW III, p.9.

(87) GW II, p.966.

(88) *ibid.*

The Prussian aristocrat in turn looked down on the middle-class minister and interpreted his diplomatic finesse as Flaumacherei. (89) However, recent research (90) has shown that the minister believed as strongly as Seeckt in the need for military strength, to back up his negotiating position, and has re-emphasised his aversion to those German pacifists who believed in international reconciliation. In the words of Wheeler-Bennett:

"Stresemann conveniently supplied the diplomatic front behind which Seeckt perfected his military foundation for the Greater Germany of the future". (91)

In general Tucholsky's assessment of the right-wing pragmatist Stresemann lacked the perception which marked his criticism of the SPD Realpolitiker. Admittedly the minister remained a nationalist at heart, as was revealed by his encouragement of re-armament and his prosecutions of German pacifists. The fact that the radical right failed to recognise his continued conservatism provides some token of their prejudice. But Tucholsky cannot be blamed for correctly criticising Stresemann merely because the minister was already under attack with less justification, from the right. (92)

However, the other reasons for Tucholsky's dislike of Stresemann reveal as much about the critic as about his opponent. His attack on the Locarno policy was largely based not on its objective failings but on a Marxist conception of the role of the modern state, and his own alternative suggestions were extremely vague. Still worse was his misjudgment of the

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(89) Hans W. Gatzke: Stresemann and the Re-armament of Germany, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins, 1953, pp.11-14.

(90) *ibid.*, p.109: "There is ample evidence that Stresemann was a nationalist and remained one until the end of his life".

(91) John W. Wheeler-Bennett: The Nemesis of Power, London, Macmillan, 1954, p.107.

(92) Cf. the censorious tone of Doerfel, *op.cit.*, p.132: "Auch hier war es ihm entweder nicht bewußt oder gleichgültig, daß er die Melodie der nationalistischen Rechten aufgegriffen hatte, die seit Jahren eine bösertige Hetzkampagne gegen den deutschen Außenminister führte".

respective dangers to democratic progress which emanated from Stresemann on the one hand and the extreme right on the other. The minister had not given clear support to the Republic until 1923, when Tucholsky himself was beginning to give up hope for it; and by the time commentators had recognised the role played by Stresemann in stabilising parliamentary democracy, Tucholsky believed:

„Diese Republik ist nicht die meine“.(93)

Tucholsky's opinion that Stresemann remained a nationalist at heart was correct, and it was hardly surprising that he had little sympathy for such views. But his distrust of the pragmatic, conservative Foreign Minister was definitely exaggerated.

German people. He understood nationalism as an attitude of mind which was the main quality of the Prussian spirit: the attitude which, in his opinion, had strangled social progress and men's spiritual development. He believed that militarism was rejected in favour of the civilian, democratic virtues of peace and peaceful change. Tucholsky's programme for social reform was evident in his political. Since the Republic's establishment, the constitution of the Republic and the German people had been a subject of his work as journalist. The German people had

## CHAPTER 8

One subject predominated in Tucholsky's polemic between 1919 and 1932: the attack on the military and militarism. The former topic requires little clarification; in the Weimar Republic it comprised the official Reichswehr and various right-wing volunteer forces. The term "militarism" has been defined adequately by Wolfgang Sauer, who sees it as involving two factors. The first he describes as the one-sided dependence of the day-to-day policy of a state on military considerations, or the existence of an outright military dictatorship. His second, broader definition alludes to a sociological factor: the predominance of the military and "militärische Strukturformen" in the social order.(1)

Tucholsky would have concurred with this second definition. However, he went on to deduce that such social predominance could not have existed without the willing consent of the majority of the German people. He understood militarism as an attitude of mind. It was the main quality of the Prussian spirit: the authoritarian values which in his opinion had strangled social progress and hindered men's spiritual development. He believed that militarism should be rejected in favour of the civilian, democratic virtues of freedom and peaceful change. Tucholsky's progressive idealism was also evident in his pacifism. Though Tucholsky's targets changed with the evolution of the Republic and its armed forces, his anti-militarism and pacifism were as pronounced in the early 1930's as in his first major work after the Revolution: the Militaria-series.

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(1) Cf. Sauer's chapter on the armed forces in Karl-Dietrich Bracher, Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik, Ring-Verlag, Villingen, 1960, p.238.

These controversial articles appeared at a time when public opinion about the military was more volatile than it had been for many years. Throughout the nation the army had been held in high regard since the days of Frederick the Great. In spite of the defeat of 1918, many Germans, particularly those who had not been involved in the fighting, still regarded its officers as "heroic and noble".(2) Any attacks on this exaggerated respect for the army were likely to meet bitter resistance from the supporters of the old system. When Tucholsky wrote Offizier und Mann in January 1919, he must have suspected that it would lead to vilification, court actions and the "undying hatred of the military establishment".(3)

Tucholsky risked such unpleasantness because the potential rewards of publishing at this time were great. A substantial minority of Germans had spent four years in uniform, and had in the process lost their respect for their officers. Although the conscripts did not generally hold important positions, their opposition to their commanders and to a continuation of the war proved the catalyst in the overthrow of the established order in November 1918. Tucholsky's articles were symptomatic of this widespread anti-militarist feeling. As he was writing in the poem Helm ab!(4) of a Prussian army helmet lying "auf wohlverdientem Mist", officers were having their epaulettes torn off by demonstrators and the Rätekongreß was passing the Hamburg Points, which included demands that the Soldatenräte should be responsible for the reliability of units and the maintenance of discipline, for soldiers to elect their own leaders and for the speedy abolition of the old army and the formation of a Volkswehr.(5)

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(2) Poor, op.cit., p.95.

(3) *ibid.*, p.98.

(4) WB 28/11/18, GW I, pp.319-20.

(5) For the Points in full, cf. Carsten, op.cit., p.18

The wave of anti-militarism not only stimulated Tucholsky to produce his polemic, but also provided its justification. As long as the thousands of former soldiers had the degradation and torment at the hands of the officers fresh in their minds, they were likely to support their self-appointed spokesman, when he demanded that such outrages should not happen again:

„Wie soll je eine Besserung kommen,  
wenn wir es jetzt nicht sagen?  
Jetzt... denn später, wenn das neue Heer  
wiederaufgebaut ist, wäre es überflüssig,  
noch einmal die Sünden des alten Regimes  
aufzublättern. Und es muß den Deutschen  
eingehämmert werden, daß das niemals  
wiederkommen darf".(6)

In addition, Tucholsky could point to positive goals for the new German armed forces. They were to be characterised neither by slovenly inefficiency nor by the spirit of the "notorious Prussian NCO" but by "Sachlichkeit", and the role of the officers was to be that of a "befehlender Kamerad".(7) These suggestions entailed a vast reduction in the privileges of the officers. To justify his proposals, Tucholsky had to demonstrate the total moral and political bankruptcy of his opponents, and in Militaria he set out to do this.

Tucholsky's experience of military service behind the front lines provided the background for a violent attack on the officers. During the war they had possessed almost unlimited power over their subordinates and the citizens of the occupied territories, and they had abused that power in the pursuit of immediate self-interest. After an initial denunciation of their former god-like status, he reviewed their conduct and found that they lacked any consciousness that their additional rights imposed corresponding obligations. Corruption and greed was the

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(6) Wir Negativen, GW I, p.373.

(7) Unser Militär, *ibid.*, p.347.

theme of the article Verpflegung, which described how misappropriated food found its way profitably on to the black market.(8) Another case of corruption was described by the NCO in a military hospital, where the food needed to keep the wounded alive was consumed by those nominally responsible for their well-being.(9) The exploitation of the local population in so-called Requisitionen was a logical extension of such behaviour, since the robbery of the "enemy" must have seemed a meritorious action to men accustomed to despoiling their own subordinates.

In view of the ill-feeling stirred up by these activities, some officers at least should have opposed this palpable abuse of privilege, if only for the reason that no sufferers were likely to accept this treatment indefinitely. The more intelligent of the officers, those in responsible positions at Headquarters, did recognise that the morale of the men was being undermined, but they preferred to blame the growing distrust on Bolshevik agitators rather than on their own conduct. Instead of dealing with the causes of the men's disaffection, they mounted a propaganda offensive, the so-called vaterländischer Unterricht, to persuade the men that

„Das sei eine herrliche deutsche Weltordnung,  
die dem einen alle Mühe und dem andern allen  
Lohn zuwies".(10)

Tucholsky was disgusted by these activities. He felt that there could be no dialogue or compromise with the officers; in spite of his efforts to achieve objectivity, the indignation of the Old Testament prophet was evident in his polemic. His reply to the charge of needlessly

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(8) WB 23/1/19, GW I, p.332.

(9) Zur Erinnerung an den ersten August 1914, WB 14/8/19, ibid., pp.353-4.

(10) Vaterländischer Unterricht, WB 13/2/19, ibid., p.340.



recalling the misdeeds of the past was that of the moralist:

„...Warum noch einmal das Alte aufrühren?  
Weil wir aus der Lüge heraus wollen...  
Wir alle wissen, daß unser Heer, daß unser  
Volk im Kriege moralisch nicht intakt  
geblieben ist, nicht sauber bleiben konnte.."(11)

Since Tucholsky's moral disapproval was apparent in the strictures against the officers, the attack by Doerfel (12) on his judgment as "oberflächlich moralisierend" has some justification. Although such articles as Zur Erinnerung an den ersten August 1914 (13) did examine the social background of the officers, Tucholsky made no serious attempt to understand their point of view. His own argument, that neither social origins nor military training had provided a corrective to their elitist ethos might seem a mitigating circumstance, revealing them as not merely the representatives but also the victims of Prussian tradition. In the heat of the moment, such considerations of fairness must have appeared of secondary importance.

Tucholsky declared that:

„Der deutsche Offizier hat in sittlicher Beziehung  
im Kriege versagt. Der Geist des deutschen  
Offizierkorps war schlecht".(14)

His right-wing contemporaries at once made the obvious reply: that Tucholsky was over-generalising from individual cases. He lent indirect support to this reproach by admitting that he was concerned not with the punishment of Feldwebel Nowotnik, Leutnant Peters and Hauptmann Dörbritz, but with the spirit of the officers as a class.(15)

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(11) Verpflegung, ibid., p.334.

(12) Doerfel, op.cit., p.117.

(13) GW I, p.348.

(14) ibid.

(15) Unser Militär, ibid., p.345.

It could also be argued that the number of occasions on which Tucholsky alluded to the issue revealed his own disquiet. His biographer Schulz remarks:

„Wer tatsächlich nicht verallgemeinert,  
braucht nicht so oft hervorzuheben,  
er tue es nicht".(16)

However, a simpler explanation for Tucholsky's frequent reference to this criticism is that he sensed its importance, since it represented the instinctive response of many readers.

The first part of Tucholsky's answer to the charge of generalisation was made indirectly. If his allegations had been unfair, they would have received support only from other left-wingers. The function of the quotations in Zur Erinnerung an den ersten August was to underline Tucholsky's credibility. If a Feldwebel in a field hospital felt moved to write a book entitled Anklage der Gepeinigten(17), if the conservative-minded poet Richard Dehmel judged harshly the men of his own class(18), Tucholsky's judgment no longer appeared arbitrary and personal. He admitted that there had been exceptions, officers who had performed their duties conscientiously.(19) However, this display of impartiality was followed by a further series of generalisations, which reduced the concession to a matter of form.

The direct efforts of Tucholsky to escape from the accusation "Man darf nicht verallgemeinern" were less convincing. The distinction between the officers as individuals and as members of a group:

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(16) Schulz, op.cit., p.73.

(17) Zur Erinnerung, ibid., pp.353-54.

(18) ibid., pp.354-56.

(19) Offizier und Mann, ibid., p.329: „Es gab selbstverständlich viele Ausnahmen - betrachtet wird hier der Geist, der das deutsche Offizierkorps beherrscht hat, und der war schlecht".

"Die Behauptung, die deutschen Offiziere taugten nichts, ist falsch, wenn man die einzelnen Personen Mann für Mann betrachtet; sie ist richtig, wenn man sie ansieht, soweit sie Offiziere sind".(20)

was too fine a point for the readers of the original polemic to appreciate. Although Tucholsky demonstrated the reprehensible conduct of individual officers, his attacks on the whole class were both unfair and tactically unwise. Even the former Stabsoffizier, whose more objective criticism of the Imperial army had also been published in the Weltbühne, was driven to attack Tucholsky's exaggeration(21), and less fair-minded officers were provided with an excuse to discount his comments altogether.

In supporting the Staff Officer against Tucholsky, this study comes to the same conclusion as H.L.Poor, who is probably the most reliable of critics on this issue of the military. Poor also alludes correctly to the indiscriminate nature of the polemic.(22) Tucholsky had defined the ethos of the Officer Corps as a distillation of the individual attitudes of its members. Before such an assessment could be made, it was necessary to demonstrate the similarity of upbringing and outlook of the group. Tucholsky attempted to do this by asserting that they were almost all Prussian Junker who lacked knowledge of the world outside the barracks.(23) This argument was false. Most of the front-line officers who stemmed from the nobility fell as early as the autumn of 1914 at the Marne.(24) It was their replacements, called in at short notice and with no experience of responsibility, who provided the real models for Tucholsky's criticism.

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(20) Die Erdolchten, WB 30/3/22, GW I, p.926.

(21) Cf. Poor, op.cit., pp.98-99.

(22) *ibid.*, p.98.

(23) Zur Erinnerung, GW I, p.348.

(24) Rosenberg: Entstehung, p.85.

Perhaps such men did look up to the regular lieutenant as an ideal, but they were not members of a homogeneous Junker caste.

Tucholsky believed that a polemicist must occasionally be unfair in the interests of the ideal of justice.(25) He hated the military, and the later history of the Reichswehr and the paramilitary forces justified his mistrust. However, it must be admitted that his early polemic against the military was over-generalised and on occasion inaccurate.

Nevertheless, when Schulz attacks Tucholsky's criticism of the military, he is himself guilty of over-simplification. He sees Tucholsky as a blind doctrinaire, first advocating a new army without any traditional discipline, and later substituting for this absurdity the rejection of any officers, and, by extension, of any army at all.

Schulz's argument is based on a misunderstanding. Tucholsky rejected not the principle of discipline and subordination but its abuse in practice. He recognised as clearly as any other former soldier the need for an officer to rely on the unquestioning obedience of his men while in action, and described discipline as "dienstlich absolut notwendig".(26) He began to criticise the officers only when they exploited their power to secure privileges while off duty.

After denouncing the old officers Tucholsky naturally could foresee no place for them in the armed forces of the Republic. Their successors should personify the new spirit of Sachlichkeit, and the recipe for progress was simple:

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(25) Politische Satire, WB 9/10/19, GW I, p.492.

(26) Offizier und Mann, GW I, p.329.

"Das neue Heer sei die Schule  
des freien Mannes, eine lebende  
Einheit von Offizieren und Mannschaften". (27)

This approach under-estimated the difficulty of training new officers to meet the internal dangers, but it promised greater success than the restorative policy of Reichswehrminister Noske.

When Tucholsky is accused of fanaticism in his struggle against the military, it is not the optimistic plan of Unser Militär which is attacked, but the more intransigent attitude adopted later in Der Offizier der Zukunft. Tucholsky was reviewing a book by Arno Voigt, a fellow-contributor to the Weltbühne on military affairs, who had argued:

"Der deutsche Offizier der Zukunft soll  
ein geistiger Mensch sein".

a constructive suggestion similar to that of Unser Militär. However, Tucholsky had temporarily abandoned this position, and he greeted the demand for officers with "menschlichen Qualitäten" by asking "Wozu?" (28) and answering "Zum Mord". This uncompromising pacifism foreshadowed many of Tucholsky's articles in which war was equated with murder. More significantly, the denunciation of the former officers for their lack of Geist and the new assertion that the words geistiger Offizier represented a contradiction in terms, led to the conclusion that what Germany needed was no officers at all.

When Schulz describes this position as "der Pazifismus schlechthin am Ende seines Lateins" (29), he bases his argument on the need for an army for national defence. Unfortunately he has failed to

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(27) Unser Militär, *ibid.*, p.347.

(28) Der Offizier der Zukunft, WB 5/6/19, *ibid.*, p.430.

(29) Schulz, *op.cit.*, p.74.

understand Tucholsky's position. The latter knew that Prussia had for centuries been a state existing for the benefit of its army rather than vice versa. In 1914 he had seen a war of aggression disguised as self-defence against Russian invasion and French revanchism. Der Offizier der Zukunft provided the first hint of his later conviction that as long as armies existed, governments would find a pretext to set them against one another for national self-aggrandizement.

Schulz's error lies mainly in his disregard for the historical context in which Tucholsky was writing. He assumes that the doctrinaire attitude of Der Offizier der Zukunft is typical of Tucholsky's anti-militarism, whereas in 1919 it represented an extreme view-point, adopted in response to Noske's partiality for the traditionalist officers in the new Reichswehr. When Tucholsky's positive proposals were rejected and the opportunity for reform was missed, it was natural for him to assume that an army with such insecure foundations was worse than no army at all. However, there is no other evidence that Tucholsky had as yet abandoned hope for his original, constructive plan to influence the new army. On the contrary, as late as the aftermath of the Kapp Putsch he demanded not the disbandment of the unreliable Reichswehr, but its democratic reorganisation, and the promotion of such idealists as Hauptmann von Wrochem.(30) Schulz concludes that Tucholsky's reasoning is "feuilletonistisch und nicht genügend durchdacht"(31); this quotation is untrue when applied to Tucholsky, but an apt description

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(30) Cf. the article Eine Ausnahme, Berliner Volkszeitung, 21/4/20, GW I, p.626: "Mit solchen Leuten, mit solchen Charakteren müßte eine neue, eine andere Reichswehr aufgebaut werden!"

(31) Schulz, op.cit., p.74: He himself makes a serious logical error in asserting that, had Tucholsky lived in the 1950's, he might easily have supported German rearmament. This is an assumption for which not a scintilla of evidence is, or indeed can be produced:

"Lassen wir dahingestellt, ob Tucholsky heute, lebte er noch, an seinem bedingungslosen Pazifismus und seiner ebenso bedingungslosen Antipathie gegen alles Militärisch-Soldatische festhielte - daß er es nicht täte, ist zumindest nicht unwahrscheinlich..."(ibid., p.75)

of his own argument.

The officers were the most important target in Tucholsky's post-war struggle against militarism, but he did not forget their commanders, Hindenburg and Ludendorff. The two men personified the Prussian tradition, and Tucholsky opposed them as "die besten Vertreter des schlechtesten Systems".(32) Both men had to be removed from their pedestal of public approval if militarism were to be overcome in Germany.

The ambitious Ludendorff appeared to Tucholsky the more dangerous of the two generals; his judgment was confirmed by the part played by the former dictator in the Kapp Putsch. Tucholsky's suspicions of Ludendorff were also based on personal dislike; after observing his testimony to the Reichstag Committee of Inquiry, Tucholsky stressed the general's "Gefühlskälte" and "unerschütterliche, unfassbare, sich selbst unbewußte Roheit".(33) This ill-feeling even led Tucholsky to criticise the quality of Ludendorff's generalship, the one aspect of his opponent's career which he was least qualified to judge.(34) He disapproved strongly, but with greater justification, of Ludendorff's conduct in the last days of the war, when he had issued conflicting orders to the army and the peace negotiators, and then had fled to Sweden to escape possible retribution at the hands of his troops. On this point Tucholsky praised Hindenburg, who had stayed at his post during the crisis.(35)

In spite of the loss of the war, many conservative Germans

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(32) Zwei Mann in Zivil, WB 27/11/19, GW I, p.532.

(33) *ibid.*, p.529.

(34) Schuldbuch, WB 28/8/19, *ibid.*, p.468. Cf. Rosenberg who sees Ludendorff as an excellent general, however grievous his errors in the political field. (Entstehung, pp.77-78.)

(35) Zwei Mann in Zivil, *ibid.*, p.532.

still regarded the generals with undiminished admiration, as "Deutschlands Helden aus großer Zeit".(36) Tucholsky had one final argument to convince such traditionalists. The conduct of modern, automated war, he claimed, had little in common with that of previous ages, when generals rode into battle at the head of their troops and inspired them by personal example. Tucholsky reminded his readers that in the 20th century generals directed operations by telephone from well behind the lines. The old clichés about heroism were no longer relevant. At best, Hindenburg and Ludendorff had displayed the organisational talent of Verwaltungsbeamte, while the meanest of their subordinates were the real heroes.(37)

In spite of the efforts of Tucholsky, the German public's love of its military leaders triumphed over the call for retribution of November 1918. The Reichstag Committee of Inquiry into the causes of the defeat was dominated by Hindenburg's proclamation that the army had been stabbed in the back by the revolution at home. Tucholsky was acute enough to realise that the majority of Germans supported the "old world" rather than the new one.(38)

It was characteristic of this early stage in Tucholsky's career that he attacked in Hindenburg and Ludendorff the symbol of military power rather than its substance. The latter was personified by Wilhelm Groener, Ludendorff's successor as Chief of Staff. Groener had compelled the abdication of Wilhelm II by informing him that he had lost the confidence of the army, and on the night of November 9th he

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(36) *ibid.*, p.531.

(37) *ibid.*: "Der Landser war ein Held und der arme Kompagnieführer war einer, der im Dreck stak und seine Leute herausriß".

(38) *ibid.*, p.530.



had offered support to Ebert's government. These actions were part of Groener's strategy to keep the Officer Corps intact. Ultimately he and his disciple, Seeckt, hoped to secure the independence of the army from parliamentary control, and they made concessions to the new state only as a temporary measure to counter anti-militarist feeling.(39)

Since the conscripted army melted away on its return from the front line, Groener's principal instrument of power was the Freikorps, which sprang up all over Germany under the banner of the "restoration of law and order". The money to finance their activities came mainly from "eine gerissen politisierende Industrie" as Tucholsky and other opponents of the military were well aware.(40) The pay-masters made a sound investment. The "White Guards" protected the political and economic status quo against the revolutionaries, but they despised Ebert's government as much as its "Bolshevist" opponents. Tucholsky correctly maintained that the recruits were uninterested in politics; they sought well-paid employment and adventure.(41) The Freikorps fostered not the new democracy but the spirit of the Kasernenhof; in response to orders and in accordance with their own sadistic impulses they treated their compatriots "schlimmer als die Neger".(42)

In March 1919 Noske decided to employ the volunteer units as the basis of the provisional Reichswehr. Tucholsky recognised that this move was a mistake: the Free Corps units were fighting for injustice as well as against it, and should be immediately dissolved.(43)

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(39) Cf. Carsten, op.cit., p.397.

(40) Das Buch von der deutschen Schande, GW I, p.821. Cf. also Robert G. L. Waite: Vanguard of Nazism, the Free Corps Movement, Harvard 1952, p.194 "There was nothing particularly mysterious about the sources of their financial support. The Landbund sponsored them. Heavy industry also made generous contributions".

(41) Tucholsky described them as: "eine gärende, immer kampflustige, versorgungsbestrebte Masse unbefriedigter junger Leute: aktive Offiziere, Studenten, aus der Bahn geschlagene Beamte, Abenteurer und Schieber". (GW I, p.821.

(42) *ibid.*

(43) Preußische Studenten, GW I, p.409.

This did not occur, and the military restrictions in the Versailles Treaty furthered Groener's plan for a compact, efficient army operating as a state within the state. Tucholsky reacted to the deteriorating situation with demands for Noske's dismissal:

„Haben Sie nicht einen andern Reichswehr-minister? Dieser hier ist uns drei Nummer zu groß". (44)

The new Reichswehr and the Freikorps embodied and reinforced the "geistige Militarisierung" which Tucholsky found morally as well as politically offensive. The spirit of militarism appeared to Tucholsky as the opposite of the desired new Kultur. (45) His most detailed definition of the concept was made in the article Gebler: militarism comprised the over-emphasis on rank at the expense of personal worth, the demand for unquestioning obedience, the readiness to hide behind the group to avoid responsibility and retribution, and finally a pathological brutality. (46) Yet the government made no attempt to counter the anti-Republican propaganda of the military.

The conduct of the Freikorps enlisted to fight in the Baltic states gave rise to more immediate disquiet. They had been promised land by the Latvian government, and were far more interested in such considerations of personal advantage than in making fine distinctions between Socialists, Bolsheviks, Jews and other hostile elements. In October 1919 the Allies, tiring of their interventionist policy against

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(44) Henny Noske, WB 4/9/19, GW III, p. 334.

(45) Militaria, WB 22/1/20, GW I, p. 591.

(46) WB 7/1/21, *ibid.*, p. 855: "Dieser Ungeist sagt: Du bist nichts; dein Rang ist alles! Dieser Ungeist sagt: Untertanen haben zu gehorchen - Hände an die Hosennaht! Dieser Ungeist sagt: Wozu du selber zu feige bist, das tu nur, aber tu es im Namen einer Vielheit, im Namen einer Macht. Es ist so süß, seinen Nebermenschen fühlen zu lassen, daß man ihn treten und einsperren darf...".

Communist Russia, and suspicious of the Free Corps as agents of German nationalism, called a halt to the anti-Bolshevist crusade and demanded that the volunteers be disbanded in accordance with the disarmament clauses of the Peace Treaty. As Tucholsky realised, the concentrations of troops on Germany's eastern frontier represented a serious threat; there was an obvious contradiction between their oft-proclaimed devotion to the national interest, and the damage inflicted on the country by their activities.

Noske discovered that it was easier to arm the volunteers than it was to persuade them to return to civilian life. The only result of his half-hearted efforts to disband the Baltikumer was to turn their dislike of the government into hatred, since it appeared bent on destroying their livelihood. In this conviction they were strengthened by their own leaders, who enjoyed the experience of absolute power, and by the Berlin army commander, General Lüttwitz. Certain of his support, the Ehrhardt Brigade ignored the belated order for their dissolution and marched on the capital.

Noske's hopes of taming the Reichswehr had rested on the assumption that it would resist rebellion from the right as well as the left. In March 1920 his generals proved such optimism misguided. Only his adjutant, von Gilsa, and General Reinhardt favoured armed resistance to Ehrhardt; the remainder, led by Seeckt, decided to wait and see which side would prevail.(47) Most of the troops followed

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(47) Cf. Gordon Craig: The Politics of the Prussian Army, Oxford, Clarendon, 1955, p.378: "Seeckt had no intention of becoming involved personally in Lüttwitz's hazardous adventure, or at least not until he knew that it was going to succeed... He had been as insubordinate as Lüttwitz, even if in a somewhat different way".

Seeckt in benevolent neutrality towards the rebels:

„Die Soldaten fuhren in ihren Lastautos durch die Stadt und waren treu. Wem.. davon stand nichts in den Kriegsartikeln. Aber treu waren sie, mit jener stumpfsinnigen Treue, die um ihrer selbst willen da ist, ohne sich um den Herrn zu kümmern, dem zu dienen ist".(48)

It was not the regular soldiers who frustrated the conspirators' plans to set up a right-wing dictatorship, but the workers whose general strike allowed Ebert to return to Berlin in triumph. However, the widespread anti-militarist feeling in the wake of the coup was permitted to evaporate. Indeed, the long-overdue resignation of Noske made the situation worse, since control of the army passed to Seeckt. In spite of his protestations of loyalty to the Constitution, Seeckt was a convinced Prussian monarchist. His military expertise, conservatism and strong personality won the support of his fellow-officers. He aimed to create a strong army, organised on traditional lines as a reliable instrument of its commander. Eventually Seeckt hoped for political power, though for the time being he preferred to remain in the background. His manoeuvring was satirised by Tucholsky in the poem Marke: Essig.(49)

Seeckt's efforts were assisted by the new Defence Minister, Otto Geßler, who contented himself with the role of parliamentary spokesman of the Chef der Heeresleitung. In this capacity Geßler drew most of the attacks from the left. Tucholsky was scornful of the civilian for allowing himself to be dominated by the military(50) and opposed his readiness to put the interests of his department above those of the Republic as a whole.(51) When Geßler and Seeckt produced

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(48) Kapp-Lüttwitz, GW I, p.618.

(49) Freiheit, 5/12/20, ibid., pp.772-73.

(50) Der kleine Geßler und der große Grosz, Freiheit, 24/10/20, ibid., pp.751-52.

(51) Geßler, ibid., p.857.

the Wehrgesetz of 1921, Tucholsky was justifiably suspicious of this attempt to preserve the spirit of Sedan. The army had no reason to preserve ideals at all; but if any Spezialehre had to be invoked, it was not that of Prussia. As for Seeckt's claim that the new army should be "unpolitical", this was impossible. The personifications of the Sedan spirit were bound to be hostile to the Republican government. Even if the Reichswehr miraculously lived up to Seeckt's principle of neutrality, Tucholsky rightly claimed that the attentisme of March 1920 represented an inadequate concession to the Republic:

„Unsre Wehrmacht... hat nicht,  
wie Geßler sie will, "unpolitisch" -  
sie hat republikanisch zu sein". (52)

Until the end of 1922 Tucholsky continued his efforts to cajole successive governments into reforming the army; he warned of its attachment to the imperial ideals and of its unreliability:

„Über die Notwendigkeit einer Reichswehr  
läßt sich streiten - über die Beschaffenheit  
dieser Reichswehr gibt es nur eine Meinung -  
sie muß geändert werden". (53)

Occasionally the energy with which his own campaign was being pursued misled Tucholsky into believing that real progress had been made. In his optimistic mood he felt that he was preaching not merely to a few converted anti-militarists, and to the officers in the Defence Ministry who scanned the columns of the Weltbühne in search of "libel of the Reichswehr", but also to large numbers of intelligent readers willing to be convinced by his arguments. He declared that the age of militarism was past; "ein großer Teil anständig gesinnter Deutscher rückt von diesem Ungeist.. ab". (54) Agitation for constructive reform

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(52) Die zufällige Republik, WB 13/7/22, GW I, p.995.

(53) Die Reichswehr, WB 23/3/22, *ibid.*, p.908.

(54) Die Erdolchten, WB 30/3/22, *ibid.*, p.934.

and this occasional wish-fulfilment alternated with warnings of a successful right-wing coup if no action was taken. (55)

After the murder of Rathenau in June 1922, Republican leaders appeared set on resolute action, and in spite of previous disappointments Tucholsky offered them his support. The first of his demands went to the heart of the problem:

„Umwandlung der Reichswehr in eine Volksmiliz.  
Entfernung aller überflüssigen und gegen-  
revolutionären Generale und Offiziere". (56)

The "people's militia" had been traditional SPD policy since the days of Engels; its establishment would have been a difficult task, but after three years of bitter experience with the Reichswehr, the Republican leaders should have been sufficiently concerned to undertake some such reform. Tucholsky was also correct in warning yet again of the danger from the counter-revolutionary Verbände. (57)

All Tucholsky's attacks on militarism as a social evil, and on its specific manifestations, the army and the Free Corps, were ignored by politicians who underestimated the threat to democracy. After a despairing silence in 1923, Tucholsky's attitude to the military changed. The democratic reformer of Unser Militär had existed uneasily for four years alongside the doctrinaire pacifist of Der Offizier der Zukunft, who had wished not to democratise the army but to abolish it. In 1924 the second view-point was to gain the ascendancy.

#### Tucholsky's Pacifism.

The writers and intellectuals of Germany had generally shared the enthusiasm which greeted the outbreak of war in 1914.

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(55) Was wäre, wenn.. WB 22/6/22, *ibid.*, p.975-80.

(56) Die zufällige Republik, *ibid.*, p.997.

(57) Verfassungstag, *Freiheit*, 13/8/22, *ibid.*, p.1033.

The pacifist organisations, whether they drew support from the SPD or middle-class groups, had little influence, and in any case were soon forbidden by the authorities. However, the course of the war itself proved the best propaganda for the pacifist cause. (58) The official Durchhalteparole still found spokesmen in Traub, Hochstetter and Rudolf Herzog, but the most gifted of the younger writers, such as Toller, Brecht, Ossietzky and Tucholsky himself, opposed the war. In 1919 Tucholsky became a member of the Pacifist Movement; he spoke in the Nie-wieder-Krieg demonstrations and wrote articles in August 1920 and 1922 to remind readers of the anniversary of the declaration of war, and of the horrors which had followed.

Tucholsky became a pacifist out of moral rather than political conviction. His attack on war was based on its negation of humane values. It seemed absurd that what in one district was called murder and punished by imprisonment or execution, should in another area be not merely permissible but obligatory, as long as the victim was one of "the enemy". (59) The commandment "Thou shalt not kill" had an absolute value and could not be hedged about with conditions. Tucholsky detested the casuistry of the field chaplains for whom the sixth commandment read "Du mußt töten!" (60) The duty of enlightened Germans was not to join the army and try to influence its development, but to support the fight for peace led by the Pacifists. This radical pacifist message (61) contrasted with Tucholsky's regular warnings to the government that the Reichswehr should be reformed. The two contra-

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(58) Cf. Richard Barkeley, Die deutsche Friedensbewegung, Hamburg, Hammerich and Lesser, 1948, p.28.

(59) Von großen Requisitionen, WB 30/1/19, GW I, p.336.

(60) Das Felderlebnis, WB 17/8/22, *ibid.*, p.1036.

(61) Cf. Krieg dem Kriege, *ibid.*, pp.432-33, and Die Flecke, BVZ, 21/12/19, *ibid.*, pp.547-48.

dictory positions illustrated respectively the pessimistic doctrinaire and the optimistic reformer in Tucholsky; but during the early years of the Republic, the latter was more prominent.

Tucholsky recognised that war was not only wrong in principle, but disastrous in practice, both for its participants, the common soldiers, and for the bulk of the civilian population. (62) The soldiers had been drilled until their spirit was almost destroyed, cheated and humiliated by their superiors, and sent to face barbed wire, poison gas, machine guns and tanks. Tucholsky also remembered the deprivations of their dependents, struggling against poverty and inadequate rations. This picture was far removed from the official legends which described the war as the beginning of a glorious new era.

The experience of the war had demonstrated to Tucholsky the powerlessness of the individual when confronted by a hostile group such as the officers. He had therefore aligned himself with the Aktivisten, and later the USPD, without sharing all the aims of either group. However, he owed more lasting loyalty to the Pacifist Movement, of which he remained a member until the early 1930's. His association with the Movement began in 1919 when he joined the Friedensbund der Kriegsteilnehmer, set up by Hiller and Ossietzky. Tucholsky agreed with the latter that his compatriots should be reminded of the suffering of 1914-18 as a deterrent for the future. (63) However, by December 1919 the public mood had changed from uncertainty about the causes of defeat to a vindictive hostility towards the pacifists for undermining the national will to win. A demonstration against the Dolchstoßlegende, in which Tucholsky was one of the main speakers, was broken up by a

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(62) Cf. the Militaria series, Olle Kamellen, WB 6/2/19, GW I, pp.365-66.

(63) Cf. Tucholsky's poem Nach fünf Jahren, WB 7/8/19, *ibid.*, p.459 and Koplin, *op.cit.*, p.41.



gang of soldiers. Thereafter most Germans remained wedded to militarist traditions.

As it became clear that organised pacifism faced an uphill struggle, Tucholsky felt the need to clarify his own views on the causes of modern war. His shorter articles in 1919 and 1920 had been designed to stir his readers' emotions against war, but he now recognised that reasoned argument was necessary also. He had put himself at the disposal of the German state in 1915 and served it loyally, though without enthusiasm. When he joined the Pacifist Movement in 1919 he was forced to consider if it would not have been better to refuse service, even at the cost of imprisonment. Tucholsky's new answer was that of the radical pacifist:

„Lehre? Nie wieder Krieg. Mittel? -  
Den Heeresdienst auch dann zu verweigern,  
wenn ihn ein Gesetz vorschreibt. Beginn  
des Kampfes gegen den Kampf?- Heute". (64)

Tucholsky's opposition to war service was an assertion of the right of the individual. At this stage in his career he agreed with Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster, the editor of Die Menschheit, who saw Prussian militarism as the main cause of the World War. (65) Tucholsky did not adopt an anti-capitalist stance until August 1922, and even then he mentioned only briefly the economic causes of war:

„Dieser Krieg war die natürliche Folge  
des kapitalistischen Weltsystems". (66)

He still pictured the state as a faceless collectivity, and criticised "die lächerliche Überspannung der Staatsidee" (67), but made no deduction about the interests which it represented.

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(64) Rausch, Suff und Katzenjammer, Freiheit, 3/8/20, GW I, p.714.

(65) Cf. Barkeley, op.cit., p.98.

(66) Vor acht Jahren, Freiheit, 1/8/22, GW I, p.1016.

(67) ibid.

1923 marked another turning-point in the relations between the Republic and its armed forces. Tucholsky had long been aware of the Reichswehr's function in domestic politics, as an expensive, elitist force, covertly and sometimes even openly disloyal to Republican governments. Supporters of the Reichswehr had maintained that Germany needed an army to protect her against foreign aggression.(68) In January 1923, however, the Reichswehr proved unable to prevent the French invasion of the Ruhr and the national humiliation which followed. The one positive value which the army might have possessed was thereby shown to be illusory.

By contrast, the dangers to Germany represented by the Reichswehr and the para-military forces were only too real. In September 1923 an anti-Republican rebellion by the Schwarze Reichswehr was frustrated at Küstrin. With the connivance of his superiors, the leader of the coup, Oberleutnant Schulz, had organised the Fememorde, or executions without trial of alleged traitors in the Free Corps. Details of the murders were made public two years later by Carl Mertens, in the Weltbühne.(69) Tucholsky followed the matter-of-fact narration by Mertens with two poems: one called for the punishment of the murderers, the other sympathised with the young and misguided victims.(70)

The unreliability of the Reichswehr in 1923 was as striking as that of the Verbände. The Bavarian army group, led by Lossow, supported Kahr's reactionary regime in Munich, and even Seeckt hardly justified the government's trust. When President Ebert asked him which side the army would take in the dispute with Bavaria, he replied arrogantly:

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(68) Cf. Schulz, op.cit., p.74.

(69) Cf. Mertens' articles on 18/8/25, 8/9/25, 15/9/25, 6/10/25, 13/10/25, 20/10/25.

(70) Cf. Gut Mord! WB 16/3/25, GW II, p.377 and Der Kopf im Walde, GW III, p.301.

„Die Reichswehr steht hinter mir“.

Seeckt's opposition to the Verbände stemmed from their insubordination and clumsiness; he feared that they might interfere with his own bid for supreme power.(71) Though Seeckt refrained from open revolt, he did not endear himself to the Republican leaders, or to Tucholsky.

The lesson of 1923 was that neither the Reichswehr nor its commander could be trusted. The officers were reactionaries almost to a man, and could neither be persuaded to serve the Republic loyally nor be dismissed. Seeckt would not permit such reorganisation, and the crisis had demonstrated his strength. It was too late to reform the army; the only tactic left to Tucholsky was to oppose all government expenditure on the Reichswehr, and to reiterate his objections to war service.

Tucholsky returned to his pacifist agitation on taking up residence in Paris in 1924. It was natural for a German living among his country's traditional enemies to reflect on past and future Franco-German relations. The French capital had positive attractions. Tucholsky was delighted to discover that the officers of the recently victorious French army ranked low in public esteem

"parce que ces gens-là ne sont pas très instruits".(72)

Tucholsky was not blind to the fact that the French military budget was as inflated as that of the Reichswehr, but he contrasted the average Frenchman's attitude to the army with that of the German and concluded that the French were arming only in self-defence:

„Frankreich hat Angst. Man hat sie angegriffen  
und sie haben den Krieg im Lande gehabt; sie kennen  
den Krieg".(73)

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(71) In general, Seeckt supported the Verbände. When the pacifist Quidde attacked the illegal organisations in a letter to Chancellor Marx in January 1924, Seeckt threatened Quidde with prosecution for treason. (Cf. Barkedey, op.cit., pp.77-8).

(72) Ein deutscher Reichswehrminister, Menschheit, 5/6/25, GW II, p.142.

(73) ibid., p.140.

The evidence of French anti-militarism encouraged Tucholsky. Further stimulus to his campaign was provided by the inevitable daily reminders that in an age of conscripted armies, he and his new neighbours might have been obliged to kill one another a few years before.(74) He visited Verdun, scene of a battle of attrition in 1916 which cost both nations half a million casualties. Tucholsky's report from Verdun(75) marked the transition from abstract awareness of suffering to empathic experience of it in the casualty-room:

„An den Wänden kleben die Schreie;  
hier wurde zusammengeflochten und unwickelt,  
hier verröchelte, erstickte, verbrüllte  
und kreperte, was oben zugrunde gerichtet war".(76)

At Verdun Tucholsky recognised the destructive power of modern technology. This increased his desire to prevent any repetition of the fighting. He felt with some justice that the attitude of his compatriots had since 1914 changed only for the worse. Ten years before they had been inspired by boastful expansionism and duped by their newspapers. By 1925 their hostility to France had been reinforced by the desire to avenge the defeat of 1918, and the humiliation of Versailles. Although Tucholsky could not know the full extent of Seeckt's secret re-armament of Germany, his instinct about the intentions of the General Staff did not play him false:

„Wir gehen nicht den Weg des Friedens..  
Die Kinder unsrer bekanntesten Männer  
haben alle Aussicht, unbekannte Soldaten  
zu werden.. Wir stehen da, wo wir im Jahre  
1900 gestanden haben: zwischen zwei Kriegen".(77)

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(74) Vision, WB 7/8/24, GW I, p.1202.

(75) Vor Verdun, WB 7/8/24, *ibid.*, p.1304.

(76) *ibid.*, p.1210.

(77) Zwischen zwei Kriegen, WB 10/2/25, GW II, pp.42-43.

Like so many of Tucholsky's prophecies, these words proved correct: fourteen years after 1925, just as after 1900, war broke out.

Tucholsky's clairvoyance extended to the German policy which led up to that war. His Brief an einen besseren Herrn(78) was addressed to Seeckt. Tucholsky recognised with reluctant respect the general's achievement in turning the army into an obedient tool in his own fight for power, and admitted his triumph over Republican politicians. He then analysed Seeckt's long-term strategy. The aggressive eastern policy which Tucholsky described certainly figured in Seeckt's plans; the Prussian aristocrat despised the Slav peoples and had plotted for years with the Soviet government to strengthen his army for a confrontation with France's eastern allies. This remarkable prophecy deserves quotation as an exact forecast of Hitler's strategy in 1938-9:

„Also zunächst wird alles klappen.  
Sie können den Anschluß Österreichs  
erreichen, der für sie unerlässlich ist...  
Die Tschechoslowakei wird nicht so leicht  
zu fangen sein. Aber das ist auch gar nicht  
nötig. Dieser Staat, durchsetzt von Leuten,  
die keine Tschechen sind, noch geschüttelt  
von Nationalitätskämpfen, wenn auch bemerkenswert  
gut geführt, stellt für Sie, der Sie nicht anders  
als militärisch denken können, keine erhebliche  
Gefahr dar...

Bleibt Polen. Sie kalkulieren so:  
Die Polen sind für den Anfang zu überrennen.  
Dazu ist nötig, daß Sie sich mit Rußland  
verständigen.."(79)

Tucholsky also warned of the likely consequences of this policy: the creation of an anti-German coalition similar to that of the First World War.

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(78) WB 24/3/25, *ibid.*, pp.67-72.

(79) *ibid.*, p.69.

The accuracy of Tucholsky's vision was the more remarkable since it was made during the short era of international understanding in the mid-1920's. The efforts of Stresemann and Briand to ease tension between their two countries seemed to be successful, as was indicated by the conclusion of the Locarno Pact. However, Tucholsky remained sceptical of Stresemann's attachment to revision of the Versailles Treaty by peaceful means alone.(80) In any case, Tucholsky considered that future wars could not be prevented by negotiations between the two Foreign Ministers, since they owed their positions to the support of the bourgeoisie. A renewal of hostilities would one day seem in the interests of German industry, and then the achievements of Stresemann and Briand would prove an inadequate safeguard against conflict.

Tucholsky's strategy to prevent war was based on international understanding not between statesmen but between the working classes of each country. He therefore greeted with enthusiasm such demonstrations of proletarian solidarity as the visit to Paris by German working-class children, who had been warmly welcomed by their temporary foster-parents. Tucholsky hoped that the experience of French hospitality might turn the children into "bad soldiers", and therefore, in his opinion, good human beings.(81)

On the other hand, Tucholsky remained sceptical about the efficacy of the Social Democratic recipe for Franco-German understanding, which consisted in periodic visits to Paris by their expert on foreign policy, Rudolf Breitscheid, to reassure French colleagues of the

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(80) Cf. Chapter 7.

(81) Deutsche Kinder in Paris, WB 7/4/25, GW II, pp.87-90. The exchange was organised by the Communist auxiliary Internationale Arbeiter-Hilfe.

German government's pacific intentions.(82) Tucholsky recognised that such journeys had little effect on public opinion on either bank of the Rhine. Worse still, they served as a palliative; once the party's Socialist honour had been satisfied, its members felt free to support national defence, by voting with only a token protest(83) for the inflated military budget.

Tucholsky's battle against militarism was altogether more militant. While successive German Finance Ministers struggled to balance the budget, vast sums continued to be squandered on the army. Since the war, Tucholsky had opposed the level of military expenditure.(84) In common with many fellow-pacifists(85), he recognised that most members were unable to understand the budget for which they were voting.(86) By 1926 Tucholsky objected not merely to the details but to the principle of military expenditure. The army would not deter Germany's neighbours from making war, since its much stronger Imperial predecessor had failed to do so. On the contrary, its very existence provided French militarists with a justification for their activity, and at home it reinforced the Prussian spirit. Against generals who made no concession to the pacifists, Tucholsky felt it reasonable to echo the slogan of the Wilhelminian SPD:

„Dieser Reichswehr keinen Mann und keinen Groschen!"

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(82) Zwei Sozialdemokratien, Menschheit, 3/4/25, *ibid.*, p.85.

(83) They indicated their reservations in a procedural motion, certain to be rejected, which would have forbidden payment of the salary of the Reichswehrminister. Cf. Ein deutscher Reichswehrminister, Menschheit, 5/6/25, *ibid.*, p.142.

(84) Cf. Zehn Prozent, Freiheit, 6/10/20, GW I, p.740.

(85) Cf. Walter Kreiser's attacks on concealed expenditure in the military budget, which led to the trial of Ossietzky as responsible editor of the Weltbühne.

(86) Keinen Mann und keinen Groschen-!, Das andere Deutschland, 1/5/26, GW II, p.428.

Tucholsky's proposals corresponded closely to the plans of the left-wing opposition within the SPD, a group led by Paul Levi, which was growing in strength, and was to obtain for its uncompromising anti-militarist stance a third of the votes at the 1929 SPD Congress. (87) It is possible that Tucholsky wished to strengthen this opposition group, whose attitude was already clearly defined by 1926, and to induce the Social Democratic establishment to make concessions to the pacifist stand-point. However, his attacks on the party at this time (88) suggest that neither wing of the SPD appeared to offer him any hope of a change of policy. The similarity of view between Tucholsky and the SPD left is therefore probably coincidental.

The Social Democratic leaders were no longer capable of such opposition to the principle of militarism. They felt it necessary to accept the Reichswehr as part of their plans to bolster up the institutions of the Republic. Their attitude was summed up by the SPD MP, Eggerstedt, who attempted to demonstrate that they had always supported national defence, and only disapproved of the excesses of the Wilhelminian system. (89) In this spirit Scheidemann took up in Parliament in December 1926 the denunciations of the Schwarze Reichswehr by the pacifists Lehmann-Rüßbuldt, Mertens and Kreiser. The former Chancellor was as concerned to embarrass his Communist rivals by revealing the complicity of Seeckt and the Red Army as to strike a blow against the military. The SPD success in

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(87) For the text of the left-wing resolution, cf. Charlotte Beradt: Paul Levi, ein demokratischer Sozialist in der Weimarer Republik, Frankfurt, Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1969, p.137.

(88) Cf. Feldfrüchte, WB 21/9/26, GW II, pp.508-9.

(89) Wehrmacht und Sozialdemokratie, Das andere Deutschland, 10/4/26, DDR-Ausgabe, Vol.4, pp.371-75.



bringing down Marx's government was shown to be merely a matter of form when they tolerated the new administration, even though it still contained the offending Geßler. The consistently anti-militarist Tucholsky felt that Scheidemann had little right to attack his former friends.(90).

A similar conflict of opinion between Tucholsky and the Social Democrats was evident in his criticism of the Reichsbanner. The organisation had been formed as a Republican counterpart to the right-wing Verbände, and Tucholsky admitted that it had done useful work against reactionaries in the provinces.(91) But, like Ossietzky two years before(92), Tucholsky had serious reservations about the activities of the Reichsbanner, since it lacked clear, positive ideals. Its aim, to protect the Republic, was too vague, since apart from a tiny minority of Prussian traditionalists, even conservative public figures now accepted the Republican form of government. Such empty Republicanism meant little to Tucholsky; since he had come to reject the Weimar system, it is hardly surprising that he could muster little enthusiasm for its defenders, the Reichsbanner.

Indeed the organisation's aims appeared to Tucholsky dangerous. He did not share the optimism of the Reichsbanner leader, Otto Hörsing, that it would prove a force for peace: instead, Tucholsky believed that its members would support the war effort, as the previous generation of Social Democrats had done.

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(90) Opposition! Opposition!, WB 8/2/27, GW II, p.722.

(91) Der Sieg des republikanischen Gedankens, WB 14/9/26, *ibid.*, pp.497-98.

(92) Cf. Ossietzky: Schutz der Republik - die große Mode, in Das Tage-Buch, 13/9/24, published in Rechenschaft, pp.36-8.

Tucholsky's view of the Reichsbanner was distorted by his lack of confidence in the Republic. When democracy was in danger after Papen's dismissal of the Prussian government of Braun and Severing in July 1932, the rank and file of the organisation clamoured for resistance to the dictatorial coup. But Tucholsky's suspicions of the Reichsbanner were ultimately justified by the pusillanimity of the SPD leaders, who sacrificed the last opportunity to fight Fascism in favour of a fruitless appeal to the Reichsgericht.

The most ludicrous example of the SPD's efforts to oppose the military but support "die Wehrhaftigkeit des deutschen Volkes" came in 1928. The Versailles Treaty permitted Germany to construct two pocket battleships, a concession of which her governments had been unable to take advantage due to the unfavourable economic situation. While the middle-class parties wished Panzerkreuzer A to be built at once, the SPD advocated that the money should be used instead to provide school meals; they fought a successful election campaign with the slogan "Kinderspeisung statt Panzerkreuzer" (93). However, their leader, the new Chancellor Müller, was persuaded in the interests of unity in the coalition to order the construction of the battleship. Torn between its traditional anti-militarism and its loyalty to Republican compromise, the SPD found itself in a plight which appeared to Tucholsky to call for satire rather than polemic:

„Erst haben sie alle Nein gesagt,  
dann haben sie alle Ja gesagt -  
jetzt ist das Ding bewilligt.  
Die Reichswehr treibt nun Wassersport,  
und kriegt für unser Geld hinfort  
einen Torfkahn zugebilligt". (94)

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(93) Helmut Heiber: Die Republik von Weimar, Munich, DTV, 1972, p.194.

(94) Schiffstaufe, WB 28/8/28, GW II, p.1210.

The gulf which separated Tucholsky's uncompromising pacifism from the "Ja, aber" attitude of the SPD was illustrated by the name which Tucholsky suggested for the new vessel: "The Battleship Potemkin".

The traditionally pacifist Social Democrats proved unwilling to carry out any of Tucholsky's anti-militarist proposals; only the left-wing opposition supported his conclusions, and they had little influence over the cautious Parteivorstand. If the weakness of the SPD was its over-emphasis on party unity, the Pacifist Movement suffered from the opposite failing. Its effectiveness was greatly reduced by internal controversy and fragmentation. Hiller and Küster quarrelled successively with Foerster, Quidde and each other(95), while a visit to Paris by Karl Kraus was distinguished by an attack on Tucholsky for the Kriegsanleihegedicht, and by Kraus's dislike of Jacobsohn.(96) Such conflicts made the organisation appear ridiculous.

Tucholsky's gradual left-ward development was reflected in the changing type of pacifism which he favoured. In the early 1920's he greeted any demonstration of Franco-German understanding as a step in the right direction, and he wrote enthusiastically of the visit to Berlin in June 1922 by Victor Basch, chairman of the French League for Human Rights.(97) By 1925 Tucholsky had recognised the economic interests which caused capitalist states to go to war, and he no longer believed that goodwill visits by foreign pacifists could make a significant contribution to international understanding.(98)

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(95) Cf. Barkeley, op.cit., p.102.

(96) Tucholsky's letter to Jacobsohn, 9/3/25, Briefe, pp.100-01.

(97) Der Herr in der Loge, WB 22/6/22, GW III, p.1336.

(98) Deutsche Woche in Paris, WB 9/2/26, GW II, pp.345-49.

The young generation was unimpressed by such "pseudo-pacifist occasions", Tucholsky wrote(99); instead its members were flocking to the military. Only an energetic anti-militarist campaign had any prospect of gaining their support.

Tucholsky himself was neither complacent nor quarrelsome, but his convictions marked him out as an adherent of one school of pacifist thought and an opponent of others. He criticised sectors of the Movement for allowing themselves to be forced on to the defensive.(100) Tucholsky's own tactics were aggressive enough. He reiterated still more forcefully his recommendation that the call-up be refused:

„...daß also zunächst einmal die seelische Zwangsvorstellung auszurotten ist, die den Menschen glauben macht, er müsse, müsse, müsse traben, wenn es bläst. Man muß gar nicht. Denn dies ist eine simple, eine primitive, eine einfach-große Wahrheit: Man kann nämlich auch zu Hause bleiben".(101)

Even if the individual was forced to join the army, he should make use of the right

„sich im Kriege zu drücken, wo immer man nur kann".(102)

and not allow himself to kill or be killed for the benefit of the capitalist state. These tactics were typical of the Bund revolutionärer Pazifisten, to which Tucholsky belonged, along with Hiller and Küster.(103) Now that Tucholsky regarded the conscientious objectors

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(99) *ibid.*, p.348.

(100) Vorwärts-!, WB 5/1/26, *ibid.*, p.313.

(101) Über wirkungsvollen Pazifismus, WB 11/10/27, *ibid.*, p.910.

(102) *ibid.*, p.912.

(103) Küster was the editor of the radical pacifist journal Das andere Deutschland, to which Tucholsky contributed regularly in the late 1920's.

as the real heroes of the war, he was driven to state not merely that war was murder, but that its participants were professional murderers.(104)

Another aspect of Tucholsky's pacifism in the late 1920's was that, unlike such liberal pacifists as Quidde, he had no confidence in the machinery for arbitration provided by the League of Nations. The value of the League, he declared(105), lay only in representing a forum where Briand and Stresemann could sound out each other's intentions. However, as long as the absolute sovereignty of individual capitalist nation-states existed, Geneva was "a farce".(106)

Tucholsky's Marxist view of the state as an instrument of oppression employed by the ruling class had evolved by 1924. Since he looked on the state in negative terms, it is unfair for Doerfel to criticise the absence of a "positiver Staatsbegriff" in his writings.(107) She is on surer ground in attacking his inability to provide an alternative source of allegiance. When Tucholsky talked of his duty to a "Vaterland Europa"(108), his meaning must remain to some extent a matter of conjecture. However, it is certain that he did not envisage merely a Free Trade Area, or a perpetuation of the system of "anarchisch lebende kapitalistische Staaten" of his own day.(109)

Tucholsky saw the true frontiers for mankind as lying not between the "lächerliche Grenzpfähle" but between exploiters and exploited.(110) Insofar as he did define what he meant by a

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(104) Der bewachte Kriegsschauplatz, WB 4/8/31, GW III, p.905.

(105) Deutschenspiegel, WB 17/7/28, GW II, p.1179.

(106) Schnipsel, WB 29/3/32, GW III, p.1038.

(107) Doerfel, op.cit., p.111.

(108) Die großen Familien, WB 27/3/28, GW II, p.1086.

(109) Grimms Märchen, WB 4/9/28, ibid., p.1223.

(110) Und wer spricht für euch-?, Das andere Deutschland, 22/10/27, ibid., p.923.

united Europe, his hopes for progress were based on the Russian model. In his enthusiasm for the Soviet Union, Tucholsky even drew a distinction between the Reichswehr soldier who fought for the existing unjust German state, and his counterpart in the Red Army, who took up arms "on behalf of an idea".(111) This was nonsense: the campaign of the Red Army in Poland and the Baltic during the early 1920's had shown it to be as much a tool of Russian imperialism as the Reichswehr was of German. Yet Tucholsky's mistake was a pardonable one. Since Foerster's trust in the Western Allies had been proved illusory by Clémenceau and Poincaré, and the Germany of Hindenburg gave pacifists no comfort, radical anti-militarists such as Tucholsky and Hiller naturally looked to the USSR as the only model still apparently intact.

Tucholsky's trust in the Soviet Union led him into contradiction, and he was more confident about the reasons for rejecting the existing nation-states than about what was to replace them. Though he did not set out to be a political philosopher, such an omission weakens his argument. However, Tucholsky was entitled to claim that his suspicions of diplomacy between capitalist states, as a road to war rather than peace, were vindicated. In common with other radical pacifists, such as Ossietzky, Kreiser and Jacob, he criticised the German government for preaching peace abroad while secretly re-arming at home. Even though the civilian government had no immediate aggressive intentions, Tucholsky was right to conclude that the very existence of such a destructive military apparatus meant that it would eventually be used:

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(111) Wo waren sie im Kriege, Herr-? WB 30/3/26, *ibid.*, p.392.

„Jedenfalls lebt kein vollsinniger Kaufmann auf dieser Erde, der Milliarden und Milliarden in ein Geschäft hineinsteckt, das er niemals auszunutzen gedenkt. Das tut aber der Militarismus. Und es gibt so eine Art Naturgesetz: was man jahrelang mit dem Aufwand der äußersten Geldeinlagen vorbereitet, das muß sich eines Tages von selbst auslösen.“ (112)

The re-armament of Germany in defiance of international law placed her pacifists in a difficult position. If they knew that the Versailles Treaty had been broken, they had an obligation, not only to the truth but also to the tax-payer, to publish their findings in the hope of discouraging their military. But this proceeding was likely to be exploited by the foreign press and the French armaments lobby as an excuse for building up their own arsenal. Great care was required in the choice of one's informants; there must be no question of betraying secrets for personal gain, and other conditions had to be met:

„Wer stellt das Ansinnen an mich?  
Sind es pazifistische Freunde?  
Was werden diese pazifistischen Freunde  
mit meinem Material tun? Nützen sie damit  
unserer Bewegung? Besteht Gefahr, daß  
dieses Material so verarbeitet wird, daß  
seine fälschliche Ausnutzung durch fremde  
Nationalisten in gewissem Maße verhindert  
wird?“ (113)

Tucholsky continued that if the German military machine could be weakened, her generals would be forced to think twice about using it, and war might be averted or at least postponed. In these circumstances he believed publication both justified and necessary:

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(112) Gesunder Pazifismus, Das andere Deutschland, 31/3/28, GW II, p.1190.

(113) Über den sogenannten "Landesverrat", Das andere Deutschland, 11/9/26, *ibid.*, p.495.

„Dieser Landesverrat kann eine Notwendigkeit sein, um etwas Großes und Wichtiges abzuwehren: den Landfriedensbruch in Europa".(114)

There was another consideration likely to deter a German pacifist from communicating military secrets: the threat of being taken to court by representatives of the Reichswehrministerium. This summons entailed an appearance before the Reichsgericht, whose harsh sentences against left-wingers were well known, on a charge of Landesverrat. Such was the fate of Ossietzky and Kreiser. An article by the latter in the Weltbühne (115) had made public the construction and testing facilities provided by the Soviet government for the German air force. This case, like many others(116) was treated by the Reichsgericht as an opportunity to punish its political opponents. Not only were Kreiser's allegations true, but they had been common knowledge for a year, since an SPD deputy, Krüger, had questioned the Reichswehrminister in 1928. Nothing had been betrayed by Kreiser and Ossietzky to the French authorities, since the latter already knew all the facts. Kreiser was within his rights in informing the German people about the ingenious and underhand book-keeping which characterised the military budget. As Tucholsky wrote:

„Nicht die Enthüllung hat geschadet-  
die Tatsachen haben geschadet".(117)

Ossietzky was nevertheless sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment. In view of such precedents, Tucholsky's reluctance to return to Germany and continue the struggle was not surprising.

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(114) Die großen Familien, WB 27/3/28, *ibid.*, p.1085.

(115) Windiges aus der deutschen Luftfahrt, WB 12/3/29.

(116) Cf. the case of Küster and Jacob, described by Tucholsky in Die großen Familien.

(117) Für Carl von Ossietzky, General-Quittung, WB 17/5/32, GW III, p.1057.



In any case, by 1932 Tucholsky was convinced that further resistance to the military would be pointless. In spite of all his efforts for thirteen years to discredit the army, his premonitions of 1919 had proved correct: the German people had ignored his warnings and prophecies of disaster. After Hitler's accession to power, Tucholsky gave up the struggle:

„Man muß die Lage so sehen, wie sie ist:  
unsere Sache hat verloren. Dann hat man als  
anständiger Mann abzutreten".(118)

Tucholsky's long battle against the military and war therefore ended in defeat. Yet the failure of Tucholsky's endeavours should not disguise the coherence of his development or the prescience of his warnings. In the early months of 1919 he took the opportunity offered by the Revolution and strove for a reform of the army which might allow the emergence of a democratic spirit. Tucholsky was particularly concerned to remove the old officers, who had been morally discredited during the war. Due to the conservatism of Noske and the terms of the Versailles Treaty, this moderate recommendation was not implemented. For a time Tucholsky's response was inconsistent. Occasionally he adopted an unconditionally pacifist attitude and demanded complete German disarmament, but until 1924 his general strategy was to call for democratic reform and the creation of a people's militia to replace the Reichswehr.

After his arrival in Paris, Tucholsky developed into a radical pacifist. He rightly feared that the state of Hindenburg and Seeckt was planning a war of revenge against France. In order to prevent this catastrophe, Tucholsky advised his compatriots to refuse

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(118) Letter to Hasenclever, 11/4/33, Briefe, p.251.

military service: the capitalist German state had no right to compel them to kill or be killed for the sake of industrial profits. However, Tucholsky's alternative concept of loyalty to a "united Europe" was somewhat vague, and his trust in the superior morality of the "Fatherland of the Workers", the USSR, proved ill-founded. Tucholsky was faced in the early 1930's by a German High Command at its strongest and most confident since 1918, and simultaneously found himself without a positive ideal for which to continue the struggle. His warnings and prophecies had been ignored. Tucholsky was left only the melancholy pleasure of gradually seeing them fulfilled, as Hitler elevated still further the social prestige of the army, so that he could rely on its obedience in the war which Tucholsky had foreseen. His countrymen supported the army and the militarism which it embodied. It was not Tucholsky's advice, but only the experience of a second holocaust which led them to question the value of the Reichswehr.

## CHAPTER 9

Tucholsky's campaign against traditionalist German institutions which had retained their influence after the November Revolution led him to attack not merely the army but also the legal and educational systems and the press. He also opposed a conservative social group: the Bürgertum.

### The legal system and judiciary.

In a review of Tucholsky's Gesammelte Werke, Kurt Hiller declared:

„Diese Justizkritik reicht aus,  
ihn unsterblich zu machen". (1)

When allowance is made for the exaggeration of a former colleague, this assessment contains a measure of truth: the judiciary provided Tucholsky with a target second in importance only to the military. The law had been his chosen field of study early in his career, when he had planned to become a defence counsel.

Tucholsky's approach to the theme of Justiz was characteristically idealistic. His initial concern was not with the law as a man-made construction for the protection of society, or with the persons of its administrators, but with the abstract principle of right and wrong, which it was the function of the law to interpret:

„Ein Volk, bei dem das Recht,  
das objektive Recht, soweit es  
Menschen zu finden wissen,  
nicht obenan steht, fängt an zu faulen". (2)

It might therefore be claimed that Tucholsky was bound to criticise the legal standards which applied in Germany, since they automatically fell short of this ideal.

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(1) Hiller, letter to Mary Tucholsky, in „Deutsches Literaturarchiv", Marbach.

(2) Militärbilanz, WB 22/4/20, GW I, p.633.

The performance of the Weimar judiciary justifies Tucholsky's view, rather than that of the Social Democratic Realpolitiker. For a few weeks after the November Revolution, the latter had had the power to reform the legal system and begin the change of personnel necessary to bring the judiciary into line with the principles of democracy. They failed to do so because they themselves believed in an ideal as illusory as Tucholsky's own concept of "das objektive Recht".

"Man" glaubte" plötzlich an eine Unabhängigkeit des Richters, die man jahrzehntelang als trügerischen Schein... gekennzeichnet hatte". (3)

Faithful to the abstract ideal of the separation of powers, Ebert and his colleagues confirmed the former judges and prosecutors in their posts, and reaffirmed that their appointments were for life. This over-optimism on the part of alleged pragmatists contrasted unfavourably with Tucholsky's later, more practical view:

"Eine deutsche Justizreform ohne die gesetzliche Aufhebung der Unabsetzbarkeit der Richter ist undenkbar". (4)

The SPD leaders might have come to a different decision if they had reflected on the background common to most members of the legal profession. They had owed their appointment to the Wilhelminian Empire and were unlikely to transfer their loyalty overnight to the Republic. A far more probable outcome was for them to retain their positions and seek to undermine the democratic order from within. They had been recruited from the prosperous middle and upper classes who alone could finance the lengthy training period. In addition, the long road to promotion provided ample opportunity for the exclusion of untypically progressive students, so that the traditional spirit

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(3) Heinrich Hannover and Elisabeth Hannover-Drück: Politische Justiz, 1918-33, Frankfurt, Fischer, 1966, p.23.

(4) Deutsche Richter, WB 26/4/27, GW II, p.772.

of the profession could be preserved for future generations. A final barrier to change was that judges were co-opted by their fellows, and as Tucholsky knew:

„Die Gruppe wählt sich hinzu,  
wer sich dem Gruppengeist anpaßt -  
immer adäquate, niemals heterogene  
Elemente". (5)

Most members of the profession were afflicted by the prejudices of their narrow middle-class group and had neither understanding nor interest for the problems of workers summoned before them. The result was unconscious but brutal Gesinnungsjustiz: the sentencing of men not for their actions but for their opinions. This reactionary bias explains and justifies Tucholsky's polemic.

The class prejudice of the Weimar judiciary was reflected in the draconian sentences imposed on the workers who had taken part in the Spartacist Rising. Other workers were imprisoned for hauling down the former Imperial flag, and even for obeying the government's call to resist Kapp and his rebels. (6) On the other hand, right-wing offenders could count on leniency. Those soldiers brought to trial for crimes committed during the pacification of Berlin were dealt with by special military courts, and tried by juries which included their comrades. (7) This system was responsible for the trifling sentences imposed on the murderers of the Spartacist leaders, and it was also used in the hope of suppressing the truth about the Marloh massacre.

However, the full extent of this politische Justiz was revealed to Tucholsky by the research of Professor E. J. Gumbel, whose

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(5) ibid., p.775.

(6) Gegen die Arbeiter? Allemaal!, WB 5/12/21, GW I, p.868.

(7) Die lebendigen Toten, ibid., p.417.

book Zwei Jahre politischer Mord he reviewed in September 1921. (8)  
Gumbel had examined murders committed by extremists of the left and right, and compared the average sentence imposed on those found guilty. As Tucholsky explained:

„Für 314 Morde von rechts 31 Jahre 3 Monate  
Freiheitsstrafe sowie eine lebenslängliche  
Festungshaft.  
Für 13 Morde von links 8 Todesurteile, 176  
Jahre 10 Monate Freiheitsstrafe.  
Das ist alles Mögliche. Justiz ist das nicht.  
Ganz klar wird das, wenn wir das Schicksal  
der beiden Umsturzversuche: Kapps und der  
Münchener Kommunisten vergleichen, zweier  
Versuche, die sich juristisch in nichts  
unterscheiden:  
Die Kommunisten haben für ihren Hochverrat  
519 Jahre 9 Monate Freiheitsstrafe erhalten.  
Eine Todesstrafe hat man vollstreckt.  
Die Kapp-Leute sind frei ausgegangen". (9)

In view of this documentary evidence, Tucholsky's loss of confidence in the German judiciary's handling of political cases was understandable.

Although public opinion at first took little notice of Gumbel's findings, it could not indefinitely ignore the lenient treatment of Nationalists who murdered prominent Socialist and Republican statesmen. After Rathenau's assassination in June 1922, the government established a Staatsgerichtshof, since the existing courts could not be trusted. The new institution was intended to protect the state against the threat of rebellion from the right, but Tucholsky recognised that it would become yet another weapon against the left. (10) Though all the judges were appointed by the President, and only three were drawn from the reactionary Reichsgericht, Ebert

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(8) Das Buch von der deutschen Schande, *ibid.*, pp.818-24.

(9) *ibid.*, p.823.

(10) Der trockene Putsch, Freiheit, 16/7/22, *ibid.*, p.1002.

permitted a conservative majority in the new body.(11) As a result no attempt was made by the Staatsgerichtshof to unmask the conspirators in Munich who had financed the campaign of the Organisation Consul, and after public indignation had died down, the attackers of Harden received the more traditional generous treatment. Taken in its historical context of class prejudice and arbitrary sentences, the comment of Tucholsky was justified:

"Reißt dieser Justiz die falsche Binde  
herunter! Wir haben keine Justiz mehr".(12)

In the later years of the Republic, other groups fell victim to this politische Justiz, but its essentially reactionary principle remained unchanged. German pacifists discovered that it was not the defiance of the Versailles Treaty by the army which constituted a serious offence, but the betrayal of the guilty secret to the public. As the final court of appeal in cases of alleged Landesverrat, the Reichsgericht could permit itself ridiculous sentences, knowing that they could not be overturned. The cases of Bullerjahn, Küster and Jacob and Ossietzky proved the correctness of Tucholsky's assertion that the court was not a branch of the law but of the Army Ministry.(13)

In the opinion of the courts, nationalist militarism was a virtue and internationalism a vice, which, especially in conjunction with membership of the working class, merited severe punishment. This was the background to the vast difference between the treatment of the Nazis and that of the Communists. However, Tucholsky was less

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(11) Cf. Hannover, op.cit., p.116.

(12) Prozeß Harden, GW I, p.1078.

(13) Frage und Antwort, WB 22/3/26, GW II, p.746.

critical of this example of judicial prejudice than might have been expected: it did not come to light until the early 1930's, when his interest in political affairs was fast giving way to despairing fatalism.

The Communists were not the only minority which fell victim to judicial bias. Artists and writers found that sympathy with the left was an expensive attitude. George Grosz, already fined in 1921 for libelling the Reichswehr(14), was accused of blasphemy in 1928 for his drawing of the crucifixion, in which Christ was depicted as a soldier wearing a gas-mask. Grosz's anti-militarism and his implied criticism of the Church for giving its blessing to war(15) earned him a heavy fine from his first judges. Though this sentence was later reversed by the Landgericht III Berlin, chaired by the "demokratisch.gesinnte Richter Siegert"(16), this exceptional decision in favour of a progressive intellectual does not refute Tucholsky's general criticism. The Reichsgericht made up for this unaccustomed liberality by quashing the acquittal. It was therefore reasonable for Tucholsky to conclude that neither the workers nor their supporters could expect a fair trial.

A third group which found it impossible to obtain justice in German courts were foreigners, who faced a barrier of nationalistic ignorance. The word of a Polish immigrant such as Josef Jakubowski had little weight when compared to the self-contradictory testimony of a German family. By the time the court had reluctantly overturned the previous judgment, an innocent man had been executed. The violent

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(14) Dada-Prozeß, WB 18/4/21, GW I, pp.800-04.

(15) Die Begründung, WB 19/3/29, GW III, pp.53-54.

(16) Cf. Hannover, op.cit., pp.250-01.



language with which Tucholsky reacted to this Justizmord(17) was symptomatic of the contempt with which he had come to regard the judiciary and all its works.

The research of Gumbel and Hannover therefore vindicates Tucholsky's attacks on the Weimar judiciary. Their treatment of offenders from the middle and upper classes was in stark contrast to the heavy sentences inflicted on those who did not conform to their narrow values. Tucholsky responded by claiming that, though the judges still possessed political power, they had forfeited all moral authority. The sentences which they imposed

„sind ausschließlich als Kampfmomente  
im Streit der Klassengegensätze zu werten.  
Das deutsche Volk hat in seiner überwiegenden  
Mehrheit, soweit es politisch aufgeklärt ist,  
kein Vertrauen mehr zu dieser politischen  
Justiz, und sie verdient auch keins". (18)

The remedies which Tucholsky proposed for this situation have been the subject of some controversy. He believed that German law was being administered in the interest of the ruling classes. Their representatives would not voluntarily renounce their positions of power, and there was no prospect of achieving change by parliamentary means. The Bürgerblock governments were uninterested in reform, and past experience had demonstrated that when the SPD formed part of a Grand Coalition, even a well-intentioned deputy like Gustav Radbruch was powerless to make fundamental changes. The time for alterations of detail was past, and there was only one approach to reform which promised success:

„den antidemokratischen, hohnlachenden,  
für die Idee der Gerechtigkeit bewußt  
ungerechten Klassenkampf". (19)

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(17) Jakubowski, WB 16/10/28, GW II, p.1270.

(18) *ibid.*, p.772.

(19) GW II, p.779.

This was a call for the workers to seize power and occupy the machinery of state. Tucholsky has been criticised for the ostensibly faulty logic of this demand(20): if the judges' outlook was conditioned by the values of their class, proletarian judges would produce sentences biased very differently from those of the Reichsgerichtsräte, but equally one-sided. However, this argument misses Tucholsky's point. "Neutral" administration of the law in the interest of society as a whole seemed impossible in class-ridden Weimar Germany. The preparation of a successful proletarian revolution might allow the economically weakest class to escape from its under-privileged position before the law. This was what Tucholsky meant by the assertion that the class struggle was unjust for the sake of an ideal of justice.

The onus is on any critic of Tucholsky's Marxist stance to demonstrate a more promising approach to law reform. Doerfel attempts this by pointing to the contribution to the theory of criminal law reform made by the progressive legal expert, Ernst Fraenkel.(21) But Fraenkel's reflections, however sympathetically presented(22), have two weaknesses. He offered no immediate practical advice to the workers. Both of the alternative courses which he suggested realistically promised blood, sweat and tears in the present, but neither indicated a method by which this could be avoided in future. Tucholsky's revolutionary solution was more extreme, but in this respect at least it was also more constructive. Secondly, Fraenkel himself must have been aware that the

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(20) Doerfel, op.cit., p.184.

(21) Fraenkel, Klassenjustiz, Leipzig, 1927, quoted by Doerfel, op.cit. p.181.

(22) "Nach Ansicht des seit Jahren für die Gewerkschaft arbeitenden Juristen ging es für die Arbeiterschaft darum, sich klar zu werden, ob sie sich unter Hinnahme harter Urteile für eine möglichst enge Bindung des Richters an das Gesetz entscheiden wollte, oder ob sie vor allem eine möglichst gerechte Gesellschaftsordnung anstreben wollte, die aber keinen Schutz vor Willkürakten der Gegenwart bot", (ibid.)

piecemeal reform of the Weimar judiciary was a labour of Sisyphus. The weakness of the progressive forces among the legal profession has since been well documented. (23) The Republikanischer Richterbund, which laboured from 1922 to strengthen the democratic ideal in the profession, had less than 400 members, thirty times fewer than the membership of the traditionalist Deutscher Richterbund and Preußischer Richterverein. Although its journal Die Justiz contained frequent contributions from Fraenkel, Radbruch, Gumbel and other eminent jurists, it never achieved the practical importance of its more conservative rivals. Tucholsky himself did not ignore such liberal endeavours, but he regarded them as half-hearted and refused to over-estimate their importance:

„Es hat immer eine Minorität von anständigen Juristen gegeben, die gegen die Untaten ihrer Kollegen, gegen die offenkundigen Mängel des Systems, gegen ein größenwahnsinnig gewordenes Strafrecht gekämpft haben. Aber mit welch braven Mitteln! Ich glaube nicht an eine Evolution im Strafrecht". (24)

It is hardly fair to hold up Fraenkel's proposals as "a good example of the concrete ideas on the Socialist side" and contrast them with the "radical but totally impractical demands of many left-wing intellectuals". (25) Fraenkel's plans had no more hope of realisation than Tucholsky's own. Doerfel also gives insufficient weight to the fact that, although Tucholsky saw the class struggle as representing the most promising comprehensive approach to law reform, he suggested smaller-scale improvements which had a better chance of implementation than the abstract speculations of Fraenkel. More detailed coverage by the press of court proceedings might have a deterrent effect on the

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(23) Hannover, op.cit., p.14.

(24) ibid., p.782.

(25) Doerfel, op.cit., p.182.

worst judicial excesses, by ensuring greater public awareness of miscarriages of justice. The accused should be informed of his rights, including that of remaining silent: this advice could best be given by sympathetic Republican lawyers, as the conservative prosecutor was unlikely to give such assistance voluntarily. Tucholsky also proposed that judges should be liable to be dismissed for misconduct. Although all of these suggestions took second place to Tucholsky's advocacy of proletarian revolution, they did represent an attempt to achieve reform in the short term. In addition, the first two proposals at least could be put into effect by Republican reporters and lawyers, and did not depend on the approval of the judiciary itself.

The remainder of Tucholsky's criticism of the judiciary was intended not as constructive advice for reform, but as a means of discrediting the entire social group. He considered that they misunderstood their function. They believed that their duty was to punish crimes, whereas Tucholsky thought that their main responsibility should lie in the protection of the community against anti-social elements. If this could only be achieved by the temporary removal of such individuals from society by imprisonment, Tucholsky was ready to accept such a remedy:

„Es ist keine Rede davon, unter O-Bruder-Mensch  
Geschrei dem Rechtsbrecher die Füße zu küssen.  
Es gibt unter den Berufsverbrechern böse Jungens,  
wirklich niedrige Charaktere, deren seelische Anlagen  
gesellschaftsschädlich sind und es auch bleiben.  
Man sichere die Gesellschaft vor ihnen - niemand  
aber vermesse sich, sie aus Rache zu quälen". (26)

Such a view was not mere impractical idealism; but it was far removed from the authoritarian ethos of the courts, and from the belief that every acquittal represented an unfortunate defeat for the state prosecutor.

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(26) Das schwarze Kreuz auf grünem Grunde, WB 21/4/31, GW III,  
p. 837.

Tucholsky's disapproval of the biased sentencing policy has been noted. He disapproved also of the gratuitously arrogant tone adopted by judges and prosecution towards working-class witnesses or defendants. The latter dared not protest for fear of being additionally charged with contempt of court, and their experienced counsel generally remained silent, because to contradict the judge was likely to result in a still heavier sentence for his clients. The only hope for the defendant lay in confessing his crime: this saved the court's time by obviating the need to prove guilt, improved the judge's temper and inclined him towards leniency. There was no legal basis for this procedure, or for the judges' habit of examining the past life of the accused in search of clues which might justify the attribution of the crime to him. A dissolute private life might be highly dangerous for a man charged with murder.(27) Other examples of the court's incomprehension of how the majority of their compatriots lived included the arbitrary apportioning of prison sentences by men who had never seen the inside of a jail.(28) Tucholsky was therefore justified in attacking the tone of court proceedings, as evidence of lack of understanding, arrogance to inferiors and exaggerated respect for authority.

But even as his polemic against the judiciary was at its height, Tucholsky recognised that it would prove fruitless. It was easy enough to advocate a revolutionary overthrow of the existing legal system, but difficult to imagine the divided forces of the Weimar left carrying out such an enterprise successfully. As for Tucholsky's attacks on the typical attitude of the judges, he was preaching only to converted left-wing readers. The judges themselves were unlikely

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(27) Wie benehme ich mich als Mörder-?, WB 6/3/28, GW II, p.1070.

(28) Haben Sie schon mal...?, WB 17/8/26, *ibid.*, p.478.

to read Die Weltbühne, and even if they did, they dismissed his polemic as the over-generalisations of a ignorant outsider.

Tucholsky's detailed criticism of the faults in trial procedure amounted partly to the issue of principle noted by Franz Josef Degenhardt:

„Für Tucholsky war Art und Weise der Durchführung von Strafverfahren Indikator für das Funktionieren des Staates in seinem Vorgehen gegen den einzelnen". (29)

But the transfer of emphasis from radical suggestions for legal reform and the proposing of revolutionary remedies, to the narrower target of the conduct of trials, demonstrated also Tucholsky's willingness to concentrate on achieving the minor improvements which he had previously scorned.

With this change in spirit, an element came to the fore in Tucholsky's writings, which had been prominent early in his career, but which had been temporarily pushed into the background: his sympathy for the suffering of the individual. In the early 1920's his concern for the Bavarian revolutionaries in Niederschönenfeld prison had been reflected in criticism of governor and warders, and in public appeals for financial and material assistance to the prisoners, irrespective of their party affiliation or public importance. (30) Personal sympathy for the individual worker at the mercy of the court was still a major theme in the poem Prolet vor Gericht of 1925. Some six thousand workers, like the hero of this poem, had succumbed in the unequal struggle with police spies, prosecutor, judge and warders. Here the accent shifts to the hope of revolutionary change:

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(29) Cf. Degenhardt's preface to the selection of Tucholsky's articles, Politische Justiz, (Reinbek, Rororo, 1970, p.9)

(30) The prisoners included the dramatist Toller, the anarchist poet Mühsam, and Eisner's former secretary, Felix Fechenbach. Cf. Gib ihm Saures - er kann sich nicht wehren!, WB 21/11/21, GW I, pp.861-2, and Weihnachtsbitte, WB 15/12/21, *ibid.*, p.877.

„Es kommt der Tag, da wir uns rächen:  
Da werden wir die Richter sein!“ (31)

However, as Tucholsky's hopes began to fade, he returned to the theme of individual suffering and strove to mitigate the evil which he could not cure. He renewed his appeal for the financial support of prisoners and their dependents, recommending a donation to the Communist Rote Hilfe. (32) An underestimated aspect of his later writings was his insight into the conditions of prison existence:

„Was dem Mann in der Freiheit als eine  
Lappalie erscheint, ist im Gefängnis  
von eminenter Wichtigkeit für die Seelen-  
verfassung der Gefangenen. Die Folge  
davon ist, daß jedes Erlebnis, jede  
Sinnenreaktion, tausendmal stärker,  
daß jedes Vorkommnis tausendmal größeren  
Eindruck hervorruft, als es das im freien  
Leben zu tun pflegt, wo es sofort wieder  
von anderen verdrängt wird“. (33)

Among the factors of prison life which seemed most objectionable was enforced sexual abstinence. The law might deprive prisoners of their freedom of movement, but further restrictions were uncalled-for. More important than legalistic considerations was Tucholsky's understanding that enforced abstinence subjected the prisoners to unnecessary physical and mental torture. Another practice which stirred his disapproval was that convicts were compelled to attend religious ceremonies and pay at least lip-service to Christian doctrines. The threat to punish those who refused to take part amounted to a moral blackmail, which he rejected:

„Es ist eine Dreistigkeit und eine Unverfrorenheit,  
in Strafgefangenen Objekte zu religiösen Experimenten  
zu sehen“. (34)

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(31) WB 2/6/25, GW II, p.135.

(32) Im Gefängnis begreift man, WB 15/12/31, GW III, p.975.

(33) Der Rechtsstaat, WB 12/7/27, GW II, p.824.

(34) Das schwarze Kreuz auf grünem Grunde, WB 21/4/41, GW III, p.837.

The relationship between jailer and prisoner was important in Tucholsky's later writings. He saw them as the opposite poles of the eternal human conflict between oppressor and oppressed. Whatever the prisoners has done to deserve their sentences, Tucholsky considered that they had not forfeited the elementary right to be treated as human beings. The efforts of the authorities to break the convicts' resistance were psychologically indefensible, for the refusal to cooperate with the fixed order of the institution represented the prisoners' last reserve of human dignity. The authorities had no right to sit in moral judgment over their charges, to talk glibly of the deterrent effects of strict confinement, or to justify harsh treatment as a means towards rehabilitation(35); Tucholsky believed that they themselves were enjoying a legal outlet for their sadistic impulses, and that they were often as vicious by nature as the criminals.

„Man sollte aber vor allem einmal Menschen aus dem Strafvollzug ausrodern, die ihrerseits Verbrecher an Seelen sind, dumpfe Rohlinge, Caligula-Naturen und Pharisäer, die jener Christus gezeißelt hat, dessen Namen sie mißbrauchen. Denn nie empfindet ein normaler Mensch so viel Lust im Bett wie jene an ihrem Schreibtisch. Fluch ihnen".(36)

Tucholsky's criticism of the German legal system stemmed originally from idealism. It provided a yardstick by which the country's moral standards could be measured.

„Was not tut, ist, daß das Rechtsbewußtsein des Volkes wieder erwacht".(37)

he declared in January 1920. But those SPD Realpolitiker who considered his approach impractical were the last men entitled to attack him. They

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(35) *ibid.*, p.838.

(36) GW III, p.840.

(37) Militaria, WB 22/1/20, GW I, p.591.



had been given the one real opportunity to make basic changes in the legal system in November 1918, but had instead taken the line of least resistance by confirming the conservative judges and prosecutors in their posts. Any miscarriages of justice could therefore be traced back to the SPD's misplaced belief in the independence of the judiciary. The latter was indeed independent of political control, but not of social prejudice. Their origins and training contributed to a narrow, middle-class outlook, which combined respect for authority with contempt for those lower down the social ladder. This attitude was visible in their conduct of trials, and in the sentences inflicted on working-class defendants, which contrasted with the treatment of Nationalists guilty of similar crimes. Tucholsky's strictures against the courts for this bias were well deserved.

The policy which Tucholsky proposed involved immediate and long-term strategy. His short-term suggestions generally could be implemented without regard to the attitude of the conservative majority within the profession, and therefore possessed some practical value. But a large proportion of his writings on the judiciary was designed not to persuade its members to change their ways, or to encourage public safeguards: he aimed at prevention rather than cure. The reactionary judges ought to be removed from office, and since no Republican government had the will or the strength to achieve this, the task devolved on the class-conscious proletariat. The omission of 1918 could only be remedied by a revolution.

To advocate such an extreme solution involved Tucholsky in problems of logic and practicality. A judiciary drawn from the representatives of the workers was likely to be as biased as the existing reactionary one. But by now Tucholsky believed that the workers had suffered enough and had the right to punish their oppressors. His

remedy, though extreme, seemed the only way to combat an intolerable system. Those who advocated tinkering with that system and waiting for the position of the workers to improve in the next generation were guilty of complacency on two counts: their willingness to compromise in the hope of future reform, and their over-optimistic estimate of their own influence in numbers and in seniority within the profession. Only an outright confrontation with the established order held out any hope of progress.

However, Tucholsky could not conceal from himself indefinitely the comparative weakness of the Weimar left, which made a successful revolution impossible. For this reason the last phase of his campaign was concerned with the mitigation of individual suffering. He had always taken a sympathetic interest in the fate of political prisoners and he now extended his concern to include criminals also. However serious their offences, they deserved to retain their human rights, and their captors should not use them as a convenient outlet for their sadistic impulses. Thus Tucholsky may be said to have begun and ended his career as a progressive liberal critic of the Weimar judiciary, having been forced to renounce his revolutionary Socialist views of the late 1920's as impracticable.

#### The educational system

Another reactionary stronghold which drew Tucholsky's criticism was the educational system. In the nineteenth century the economic structure of Germany had made the academic sphere a middle-class preserve, and since 1848 school and university teachers had been noted for their conservative opinions. In November 1918, like the officers, judges and civil servants, they benefited from Ebert's desire for continuity and his naive trust that they would automatically transfer their loyalty to

the new state. They accepted his invitation to remain at their posts, hoping both for continued remuneration and for the opportunity to influence their pupils and students against the Republic.

At the outset of his post-war campaign Tucholsky on several occasions demanded a democratic reform of education in Germany. His opposition to the existing institutions and their staff was based on a characteristic combination of historical insight and moral disapproval. The Prussian teachers and professors had given judicial, philosophical and theological backing to the Imperial government's annexationist schemes. (38) Since such plans had in the course of the war proved morally questionable and politically impracticable, their sponsors had forfeited the right to educate the young generation. However, those concerned not only retained their positions, but were permitted to restrict the influx of democratically-minded newcomers. The provincial teacher, "der alte Schulrat im alten Kleid" (39), remained a typical product of his caste, incurably nationalistic in his views. Tucholsky recognised the dangers of their reactionary propaganda after the Kapp Putsch and called for their dismissal to save the Republic from overthrow and the country from another war. (40) Due to the SPD's willingness to compromise with the Zentrum, which took a conservative line in educational affairs, democratic reform of the German schools remained an unattainable ideal.

The obstacles to democratisation did not consist solely in the conservatism of the teachers, but also in textbooks which preached to their pupils a message of chauvinism. Such were the Velhagen and

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(38) Preußische Professoren, WB 22/5/19, GW I, p.420.

(39) Die Schule, WB 24/7/19, *ibid.*, pp.451-2.

(40) Kapp-Lüttwitz, WB 25/3/20, *ibid.*, p.621.

Klasing atlases(41), and a geography book, Wührer's Staatenkunde, which contained numerous inaccuracies calculated to inspire its readers with hatred and contempt for the French.(42) However, no reforms of the curriculum took place, and in the late 1920's Tucholsky was still proclaiming that the educational system was "militarised"(43) and the Prussian school "ein Hort der Reaktion".(44) During his career as a revolutionary Socialist, Tucholsky recognised the impossibility of implementing the educational reforms which he had earlier advocated. Teaching had a natural tendency to support the values of the ruling class, and only the overthrow of those rulers could change the ideals of the system:

"Schulreform ohne Gesellschaftsreform  
ist ein Unding".(45)

But by the early 1930's he had resigned himself to failure in this field also. Politicians were apathetic and parents supported the system:

"Die Herren Eltern wünschen aber ihre Kinder  
in den Schützengräben - es sind feine Leute".(46)

The situation at the German universities likewise gave Tucholsky little ground for optimism. Far from being the centres of Germany's intellectual achievements, they were characterised by a low intellectual level and reactionary attitudes. The vast majority of professors and students opposed the Republic, and united in protests against the few liberal Privatdozenten. Though the Heidelberg mathematics professor Gumbel successfully resisted such pressure, many of his less courageous colleagues submitted, to avoid the organised student boycott of their

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(41) Velhagen und Klasing, WB 11/1/27, GW II, p.711.

(42) Verhetzte Kinder - ohnmächtige Republik, WB 9/10/28, *ibid.*, pp.1261-5.

(43) Ein Kind aus meiner Klasse, WB 3/3/25, *ibid.*, p.56.

(44) Eine Akademie, WB 11/5/26, *ibid.*, p.437.

(45) Schulkampf, WB 1/10/29.

(46) Krieg gleich Mord, WB 19/4/32, GW III, p.1046.

lectures which would have had a disastrous effect on their meagre salaries.(47) Tucholsky regretted such cowardice, but admitted that it was understandable; he blamed the Ministry of Education and the university authorities for their failure to protect Republican lecturers. The initiative remained with the Nationalist professors who looked back to the glories of the Empire, or forward to a mystic Third Reich.

The attitude of the students also worried Tucholsky. At first he believed that they lacked ideals and youthful enthusiasm, and were only interested in a well-paid and influential position:

„Der Student von heute ist ein geistiger Kommis".(48)

He soon recognised that they came from prosperous families, and shared their parents' militarist ideal. Many who had seen service as young officers during the war and felt reluctant to return immediately to their studies joined the anti-Republican Freikorps. During the stable middle years of the Republic, they returned to the more traditional Burschenschaft activities of drinking and duelling. But in spite of their temporary abandonment of directly political activity, their hostility to democracy remained unaltered, as Tucholsky noted from the pamphlet Briefe an einen Fuchsmajor.(49) Republican, Socialist and Catholic student groups were on the defensive, and failed to make much impact in the prevailing Nationalist climate. When the economic crisis of 1929-30 intensified the social conflict, the only issue to be solved among the students was the struggle for power between the backward-looking Nationalists of the Hindenburg school, and those disciples of Moeller van der Bruck who longed for the Nazi millenium.

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(47) Briefe an einen Fuchsmajor, WB 31/1/28, GW II, pp.1037-45.

(48) Preußische Studenten, WB 8/5/19, GW I, p.409.

(49) GW II, p.1043.

Tucholsky had already foreseen the danger that the conservative students of the 1920's, with their anachronistic vision of a hierarchical society, would undermine the Republic when they reached positions of authority as civil servants, doctors and judges. In his poem Deutsche Richterergeneration 1940(50), he had alluded prophetically to their racist beliefs, and had forecast the "Rechtsspruch nach Stand und Rang" which was to be provided by Freisler's Volksgeschichtshof. But by the time that the radical right began its advance, Tucholsky had lost interest in educational matters. He made no comment on the striking successes of Schirach's Deutscher Studentenbund at the university elections between 1929 and 1931, but this was the development which confirmed the correctness of his warnings: teachers, professors and students combined against the Republic which had made no serious efforts to win their support. (51)

#### The Press

During the 1920's newspapers provided by far the most important medium of information. The failure of the Republicans to secure sufficient influence over the press was another reason for the lack of resonance of progressive ideas. Tucholsky's response was idealistic. Though he underestimated the problems faced by the Republican press in adjusting to the new political circumstances, he could justifiably claim that the SPD and DDP editors missed the opportunity to advocate reform.

After the Revolution the SPD press faced the same dilemma as the party leaders. Now that the Republic had been proclaimed and the new government was led by Ebert and Scheidemann instead of Bethmann and

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(50) WB 5/5/21, GW I, pp.804-5.

(51) Cf. Karl Dietrich Bracher: Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik, Ring Verlag, Villingen, 1960, p.148.

Hertling, the first thought of Friedrich Stampfer and his colleagues on the staff of Vorwärts was naturally to support the party's ministers through thick and thin. While the political initiative lay with an often hostile mob, the temptation to abandon the judicious advocacy of reforms must have been great. But by accepting the role of a government organ, Vorwärts was compelled to make a case for Ebert's blunders as well as his successes. Stampfer printed the official version of how Liebknecht and Luxemburg met their deaths, a description which turned out to be a farrago of lies designed to exonerate the officers involved.(52) The paper also supported Noske's rehabilitation of the Officer Corps. Most of the party's local organs, as Tucholsky complained, also criticised the opponents of the minister as Jeremiahs. The Kapp Putsch took them by surprise, but did not alter their blind trust in the wisdom of their Parteivorstand.

Tucholsky paid too little attention to the inner-party pressures, often of a financial nature, which led the Social Democratic press to give unquestioning support to Ebert. However, the balance of the argument is in Tucholsky's favour. His record as a prophet was consistently superior to that of Vorwärts. More significantly, his fundamental accusation was justified: that the SPD press had missed the opportunity to enlighten its readers about the guilt of the old regime. The German people, anxiously seeking a scapegoat for the defeat, was permitted to ignore the real culprits: the Emperor and his ministers, and to blame the Republic. Tucholsky was also disappointed that the SPD press provided little scope for young talent. For both editorial and financial reasons, the brilliant Russian Reportagen of Larissa Reißner found no parallel in Germany. (53)

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(52) Cf. Heinrich Hannover and Elisabeth Hannover-Drück; Der Mord an Karl Liebknecht und Rosa Luxemburg, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1967, pp.35-38.

(53) Larissa Reißner, WB 22/2/26, GW II, p.728

Tucholsky's disappointment with the SPD press did not destroy his sense of proportion. Even if Vorwärts was timid, unimaginative and verkalkt, these deficiencies paled in comparison with the technical shortcomings of the Communist Rote Fahne. (54) Even as a KPD sympathiser in 1928, Tucholsky could not bring himself to contribute to it; instead he wrote for the technically superior Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung. None of the left-wing party newspapers therefore provided an adequate platform for Tucholsky's struggle. (55)

The democratic press was equally unsatisfactory to Tucholsky, though for different reasons. Its main failings were a luke-warm attitude to the Republic, and an exaggerated tolerance of its opponents. With the exception of the Berliner Volkszeitung, to which Tucholsky himself was a contributor, the liberal press admired Noske as a strong man, and underestimated the militarist danger almost as badly as Vorwärts. This attitude was a typical example of the "moderation" of the democratic press empires, a quality which Tucholsky loathed. He referred frequently to the preference of liberal editors for compromise rather than polemic. (56)

In this controversy neither Tucholsky nor the DDP was entirely in the right. Tucholsky was correct to deny that any journalist could write with complete objectivity; even the stand-point of the quasi-neutral observer chosen by E.E.Kisch could not produce totally impersonal reporting. But this realisation did not in itself provide retrospective justification for his failure even to aspire to a balanced view. Tucholsky owed his vindication on this score first to tactical and historical

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(54) Journalistischer Nachwuchs, WB 3/1/28, *ibid.*, p.1017.

(55) There is an interesting parallel between Tucholsky and the independent-minded politician, Paul Levi. A former leader of the KPD in 1919-20, and later the leading spokesman of the SPD's left-wing opposition, Levi took refuge from the mediocrity and conformity of the left-wing press in a periodical of limited circulation, his own Sozialistische Politik und Wirtschaft (later Der Klassenkampf).

(56) Cf. Was wäre, wenn.. WB 20/9/27, GW II, pp.883-87.



reasons, and secondly to the fact that the house of Ullstein at least eventually demonstrated that it was less concerned with objectivity than with expediency.

Tucholsky's difference of opinion with the DDP press on tactical issues was caused by his sense of mission. He did not merely wish to present the truth as he saw it, but to influence his readers; the role he sought was not that of a "dienender Redakteur" but of a "herrschender Volkserzieher".(57) The conservative press campaign against the new state seemed to justify aggressive counter-propaganda from the left. Tucholsky had no love for Erzberger or Rathenau, but it was the demagogic right-wing press which incited their murder.(58) Tucholsky might not aspire to be a model of objectivity, but in the land of Helfferich, Hugenberg and Hitler, his polemical exaggeration seems fair and even necessary.

Tucholsky's doubts about the reasons for the compromises of the liberal press were confirmed by the conduct of the Ullsteins in the early 1930's. Their failure to provide an effective antidote to the conservative Lokalanzeiger and the reactionary Hugenberg press had not been due merely to a quest for unattainable objectivity, but also to opportunism. When the political situation changed, they altered their policy radically. Though the Ullsteins were renowned as liberal Jews, they purged their staff in 1932 of Jewish and progressive writers such as Stefan Großmann of Das Tage-Buch and Heinz Pol, Tucholsky's colleague on the Weltbühne. They replaced them with "aryans" and Nazis.(59) Even Georg Bernhard, editor of the Vossische Zeitung, fell victim to the publishers' opportunism.

(57) Sozialisierung der Presse, WB 11/12/19, GW I, p.541.

(58) A verse common in the Nationalist press in 1922 concluded:  
 „Knallt ab den Walther Rathenau,  
 die gottverfluchte Judensau!"

(59) Cf. Kurt Koszyk, Deutsche Presse 1914-45, p.256, and Tucholsky's poem Dreh dich hin, dreh dich her, kleine Wetterfahne!, WB 16/2/32, GW III, pp.1011-12.

The Ullstein case also demonstrated that, as Tucholsky had pointed out, the policy of German newspapers was ultimately decided by the publisher rather than the editor.(60) The editor's role, contrary to popular belief, was restricted to that of a loyal employee. Without being in any sense corrupt, he chose to work in a newspaper with whose attitudes he sympathised:

„Er weiß von vornherein, was er sagen soll  
und was er nicht sagen darf".(61)

Unofficial press censorship embraced not merely sentiments of which the proprietors disapproved, but also any expression of opinion likely to entail financial loss for the concern, whether by encouraging "Müller und Cohn" to cancel their subscriptions(62), or by antagonising the advertisers. The great advantage of the Weltbühne was that such considerations did not apply. Jacobsohn was both publisher and editor, and valued his editorial freedom more highly than monetary rewards. He was invulnerable to complaints against his contributors; the public's only right, he declared, was to give up reading his weekly, and in that case their loss would be greater than his. Tucholsky's loyalty to the Blättchen stemmed largely from this freedom, so rare elsewhere, from proprietorial interference.

In the rest of the German press the "lästiger Dualismus zwischen Geist und Ökonomie in der Zeitung"(63) was so apparent that Tucholsky's critical comments were hardly original. In the months of instability after the Revolution, there was much talk of socialisation, and a controversy arose in the publishers' trade journal, Der Zeitungs-Verlag, about the value of state intervention in the press. Erich Schairer,

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(60) Herausgeber oder Verleger?, WB 14/7/21, GW I, pp.810-13.

(61) *ibid.*, p.811.

(62) An das Publikum, WB 7/7/31, GW III, p.889.

(63) Koszyk, *op.cit.*, p.46.

who initiated the discussion in Die Hilfe, advocated the separation of the news and advertising functions of the press, and proposed a return to the former system where the state had enjoyed an advertising monopoly. Newspapers would then have to rely solely on their income from sales, and consequently only the best would survive.(64) Both diagnosis and remedy were sufficiently radical to impress even Tucholsky.(65) Schairer's comments seemed to him "positive Vorschläge", welcome insofar as they brought the discussion on to a more advanced plane than the platitudinous apologia of the publishers for the status quo. However, the talk of socialisation was not followed by action, and so the abuse of power by proprietors and advertisers continued. Many newspapers hovering on the edge of bankruptcy soon provided fertile ground for a secret take-over by rich industrialists.(66)

The other main feature of Tucholsky's criticism of the press, the enlightenment of his readers about circumstances inside the industry, had therefore a normative as well as an informative function. The public had to be warned against conservative press-lords and industrialists if it were not to be deceived by the anti-Republican propaganda of a Hugenberg. Tucholsky also strove to increase public awareness of the subliminal influence of editorial presentation in such papers, where a skilful use of headlines and differing type-sizes manipulated the opinions of readers off their guard; he wished to train them to read critically. But he was once again faced by the familiar dilemma. Those who read his advice in the Weltbühne generally did not need it, and he had no uncensored access to those who did.

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(64) *ibid.*, p.47.

(65) Sozialisierung der Presse, WB 11/12/19, GW I, p.540.

(66) Sentimentales Lied, WB 13/5/20, GW I, pp.646-7.

Tucholsky's campaign against the German press involved direct and indirect attack. His polemical shafts were aimed directly at those of his colleagues who failed to display adequate enthusiasm for the new order. He deduced that they had widely varying motives for this coolness towards democracy. The provincial Generalanzeiger had always been noted for conservatism, the Social Democratic and Communist press suffered from a lack of imagination among the editorial staff, and the Democratic newspapers were driven into compromising their principles in a misguided or opportunistic search for a non-existent objective stand-point. Tucholsky's indirect assault on the press was also important: he exposed proprietorial interference, craven editors surrendering to their subscribers and advertisers, and tendentious presentation of news. As a result of his activities he hoped that his compatriots would look on the press with appropriate scepticism, but in this field too he was finally disappointed.

#### The Bürgertum

The middle classes have often been the target for criticism by European writers. Satirists have ridiculed their egocentric outlook, their preoccupation with financial success and their lack of culture and taste; the timid conservatism of the German Bürgertum added to its unattractiveness in the eyes of the progressive intellectuals of the Activist Movement.(67) It was therefore only to be expected that Tucholsky, in his dual capacity as a left-wing intellectual and a satirist in search of appropriate targets, should have concerned himself with the Bürgertum.

Tucholsky's articles immediately after the November Revolution abound in references to the middle-class. At that time, he saw it as a

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(67) Cf. Doerfel, op.cit., p.64.

psychological rather than an economic category:

"Der Bürger. Das ist... eine geistige Klassifizierung, man ist Bürger durch Anlage, nicht durch Geburt und am allerwenigsten durch Beruf". (68)

The chief characteristic of the bürgerlich cast of mind was a nostalgic longing for the social order and prosperity of the Empire. Middle-class opinions still held in Germany after the war had originated in the age of Bismarck and Wilhelm II. The Bürger of Tucholsky's day retained his respect for the military, and was hostile to the democratic concepts of equal rights and individual freedom.

Tucholsky adduced several reasons for the middle-class love of the Wilhelminian system. The first was that of apparent self-interest. The division of rewards which gave political and military power to the officers, the Junker and the bureaucrats, and the economic pre-eminence to the middle-classes was hailed as a God-given Ordnung. Those who did not already hold positions of authority consoled themselves, in Tucholsky's opinion, with the prospect of future promotion. As long as the German public submitted to the domination of their Beamtentum, no progress could be made towards equality. Near the end of his career, Tucholsky was compelled to admit that his compatriots' dream was unchanged:

"Das deutsche Ideal: hinter einem Schalter zu sitzen".

The inevitable corollary of this longing was

"Das deutsche Schicksal: vor einem Schalter zu stehen". (69)

This worship of the Beamten seemed a national failing, but Tucholsky believed it to be particularly prevalent among the middle classes from whose ranks most of the officials were recruited. Considerations of self-

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(68) Wir Negativen, GW I, p.372.

(69) Schnipsel, WB 27/5/30, GW III, p.458.

advantage were reinforced by those of apolitical indolence. The rigid social hierarchy assigned every member of society his place, and spared the relatively privileged Bürgertum from the necessity of questioning the system.

Such outdated attitudes were regarded by Tucholsky as highly dangerous. He attacked in particular the belief that the military could do no wrong. However, as long as many Bürger in small provincial towns had relatives in well-paid army positions, the attempt to enlighten them about the sins of the military was bound to prove fruitless. Even when such financial incentives were absent, their affection for the monarchy likewise survived its collapse. When Tucholsky claimed that the Bürgertum would deck their houses with flags to celebrate the return of the Hohenzollerns(70), he was asserting that the middle classes lacked any democratic insight and suffered from an inborn subservience to authority.

Both self-interest and respect for authority were evident in the response of the typical Bürger to the Revolution. The sweeping away of established institutions troubled inveterate Untertanen, who had associated them with the pre-war world in which they had felt at ease. Having ignored the necessity for even mild social and constitutional reform, they were horrified by the spectre of unruly mobs bent on plunder. The Bürgertum understood the Revolution only as a Lohnbewegung, led by fanatics who deserved to be shot. This assessment of the middle-class view was a typical Tucholsky generalisation, but for large sections of the Bürgertum it proved correct. Tucholsky was right to contrast the widespread middle-class relief at Eisner's murder with the idealism of

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(70) Preußische Studenten, WB 8/5/19, GW I, p.410.

the victim:

„Und die Bürger nicken.  
Behaglich nicken sie, zufrieden, daß sie leben,  
und froh, die Störenfriede los zu sein,  
die Störenfriede ihrer Kontokasse". (71)

In defence of their privileges, they continually acquiesced in the use of force, even when it was employed by Nationalist assassins against politicians of their own class such as Erzberger and Rathenau.

Middle-class feelings towards the workers, on the other hand, were a mixture of scorn, hatred and fear: scorn for the different style in which the workers were forced to live by their poverty(72), hatred of organised labour for no longer believing in "die Gottgewolltheit des Unternehmerprofits"(73) and fear that the violence of January 1919 might be repeated. Tucholsky considered that the Bürger instinctively disapproved of the use of force by men in cloth caps rather than military uniforms, and that he rationalised this fear by asserting that the workers were Bolshevik terrorists. Tucholsky pointed out that this belief was misguided, but the middle classes persisted in their opinion that the threat to their position came only from the left.

An exclusive concern with self-interest, exaggerated respect for traditional authority, tacit or open support of anti-democratic Nationalists and hatred of the workers: these were in Tucholsky's opinion the characteristic attitudes of the middle class. But he also singled out one section of that class as being especially prone to pettiness and triviality: the business-men. In commercial dealings their ruthless expertise might be a virtue, but their political attitude was based on

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(71) Eisner, WB 27/2/19, *ibid.*, p.379.

(72) Cf. Die beiden Deutschland, Freiheit, 6/8/22, *ibid.*, p.1028: "Arm" und "schlecht" - das sind für sie (die Bürger) dieselben Begriffe'.

(73) *ibid.*

narrow-minded egotism. They reluctantly accepted the democratic system, but at heart they remained Nationalists. Their readiness to trade with the French and their apparent support for Stresemann's policy of détente stamped them, in Tucholsky's opinion, as even more dangerous to the peace of Europe than the more obvious, and therefore more easily countered threat from the generals or the Junker.

Tucholsky was certain that the business community's moderate facade would not prevent them from giving enthusiastic support to the new war, as they had done in 1914:

„Diese "Unpolitischen" ("Wissen Sie - ich kümmer mich nicht um Politik. Ich will Ordnung und Ruhe, und jeder soll haben, was ihm zukommt und bei mir im Geschäft soll alles klappen".) - grade diese sind Mitläufer, Handlanger und Bejaher der schlimmsten Untaten, wenn sie nur reglementsmäßig geschehen. Und sie geschehen. Wir werden das, zum zweiten Mal, erleben". (74)

Tucholsky was not content with mere polemic against such businessmen; he held them up for public disapproval by creating the figure of Wendriner. (75) His attacks on the business world and Wendriner as its representative mark a turning-point in Tucholsky's writings on the middle class. Wendriner is satirised not merely for his materialistic conservatism, but also for the misuse of his economic power. (76) He is a bourgeois, as well as a Bürger; a capitalist controlling the means of production.

The two definitions of the middle class, first as a psychological, then as an economic category, are consecutive rather

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(74) Mit Rute und Peitsche durch Preußen-Deutschland, WB 23/8/28, GW II, p.858.

(75) Cf. Nittenberg, op.cit., p.116: "Indem er den Typ zeichnete, der auf den ersten Blick zwar sehr sympathisch wirkte, dessen Denken und Handlungen jedoch so viele Mängel aufwiesen, die das Mitfühlen und Identifizieren erschweren und fast unmöglich machten, hoffte Tucholsky seine Leser aufzurütteln und ihnen das Negative dieser Art von Menschen vor Augen zu führen". The assessment of Tucholsky's general intentions is correct, though whether, even at first sight, Wendriner is a "very sympathetic" character is open to doubt.

(76) Cf. GW II, pp.314-7.



than contradictory, and illustrate Tucholsky's development from democratic Activism to Marxism. Attacks on the Bürgertum for its economic exploitation of the workers predominated in Tucholsky's writings in the late 1920's, along with encouragement to the latter to break the capitalist stranglehold by uniting in the class struggle.(77) It had been logical to ask intellectuals to combat an attitude of mind, but only the organised Labour Movement could effectively resist the economic rulers of Germany.

Thus far Tucholsky's attitude to the middle classes has been revealed as total hostility to their conservatism, distrust of democracy and abuse of economic power. When it is recalled that he himself came from a middle-class family, and lived comfortably on the proceeds of his articles for the liberal press, his views may appear to be coloured by the hatred of the apostate. As long as Tucholsky alleged that the Bürger was distinguished only by an attitude of mind, he could by definition claim exemption from his own criticism. A more serious source of ambiguity was provided by his intermittent recognition that the Bürgertum was by no means a homogeneous community. Instead it included such diverse elements as well-educated merchants who took a paternalistic interest in their employees(78), professional groups such as teachers, clerks and their families, and the so-called Schieber, who had made their fortune as army suppliers and speculators during the war. Occasionally Tucholsky did distinguish between those examples of the Bürgertum. In Eindrücke von einer Reise(79), he noted the rivalry between the parvenu, "der Mann im Speck", and the more traditionalist Bürger, who envied his success and strove in vain to emulate it. But

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(77) Cf. GW III, pp.311-2.

(78) Cf. the first two of the three Köpfe, WB 22/1/29, GW III, pp.36-7.

(79) GW I, p.499.

more often Tucholsky used the word Bürger as a general term covering all middle-class groups. This practice led to serious problems of logic, when wholesale denunciations of the middle class alternated with a sympathetic treatment of many of its members, notably the cultured but impoverished among the petty bourgeoisie. (80)

Tucholsky's response to the German military defeat had been complex. Naturally he was relieved that the fighting had at last ceased, but he was concerned about the effect of war and revolution on his country's cultural standards. His early comments on the Bürgertum had a certain ambivalence, because the changes after the Revolution had different effects on the various groups among the Bürgertum. Neither of the personifications of middle-class respectability, der deutsche Michel with his night-cap, or Wendriner, interested only in the latest share quotations, made any significant contribution to national culture, which might have partially redeemed them in Tucholsky's opinion: they aspired only to social attendance at the Männergesangverein or the theatre. Tucholsky's efforts to rouse them from their apolitical and philistine slumbers were half-hearted and of short duration.

Tucholsky recognised both the need to stimulate the democratic spirit and the Republican ideal among the middle class and the near-impossibility of the task, due to the resistance of the majority of the Bürger themselves. However, in early 1919 it seemed that democratic middle-class attitudes might indeed exist, among the teachers, clerks and professional groups where the liberal cause was making its greatest

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(80) Tucholsky concealed this confusion by substituting the word Mittelstand for Bürgertum in this context (cf. Ich habe noch, Berliner Tageblatt, 24/11/19, GW I, p.526), or by using both terms concurrently, as in Das Gesicht der Stadt, Freiheit, 16/11/20, *ibid.*, p.757.

impact. Tucholsky's interest in this group was stimulated by approval of their well-developed cultural tastes. He also sympathised with their economic problems, since their social position was being undermined by inflation.

Tucholsky's ambivalent attitude to this question emerges from the article Dämmerung. (81) Here Tucholsky was concerned with the cultural aspects of the middle-class world. (82) He clearly counted himself as a member of the Bürgertum, using the word Wir and expressing his own discomfort at the post-war degeneration of cultural standards:

„Ich fühle nur dumpf, daß da etwas herankriecht,  
das uns alle zu vernichten droht. Uns: das ist  
unser altes Leben, das sind die grünen Inseln,  
die wir uns im Strom des lächerlich lauten  
Getriebes noch zu bauen verstanden haben - uns:  
das ist unsre alte Welt, an der wir - trotz allem -  
so gehangen haben". (83)

This was Tucholsky's most striking apologia for the pre-war world. His view corresponded to the cultural pessimism of Spengler's Der Untergang des Abendlandes, though similar views were widely held in German intellectual circles in the 1920's. (84) Unlike Spengler, however, Tucholsky could not remain pessimistic for long. Although readily admitting to a fear of the new and the unknown, and to concern about the prospects for culture, he pledged his own support for the progressive cause:

„Was wissen wir von dieser Zeit?  
Wir sind ihre Instrumente, und  
ich glaube, daß der noch ihr  
bestes ist, der sich ihr nicht  
entgegenstemmt". (85)

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(81) WB 11/3/20, GW I, pp.608-11.

(82) Raddatz takes the last sentence of the article "Es dämmt, und wir wissen nicht, was das ist: eine Abenddämmerung oder eine Morgendämmerung". (ibid., p.611) out of context and misreads it as a prophecy of the Kapp Putsch, which broke out a few days later. (Fritz J. Raddatz, Tucholsky, eine Bildbiographie, Munich, Kindler, 1961, pp.61-3.

(83) GW I, p.609.

(84) Tucholsky's only comment on Spengler was the uncomplimentary instruction: "Halts Maul, du Tepp aus Königsberg!" (Spengler, WB 17/6/20).

(85) ibid., p.610.

With these words Tucholsky accepted the need for change, however undesirable its side-effects. His interest in the defenders of cultural standards among the petty bourgeoisie received only cursory expression in his later career. (86) This change of emphasis was mainly due to his recognition in the summer of 1922 that the workers, rather than any section of the middle class, were the most reliable protectors of the Republic and the strongest force for social reform. (87)

By the mid-1920's Tucholsky's attitude to bourgeois art and literature had been transformed. He claimed that to the middle classes in general, art had become a matter of social convention. (88) Tucholsky admitted that musical evenings and literary discussions in drawing-rooms modelled on the 18th century French salons did no direct harm. But Tucholsky felt that they did no good either. Such social occasions represented a waste of time and energy, and diverted public attention from more important problems:

„Das bürgerliche Kunstspiel ist die Ablenkung vom Wesentlichen... Es wird bewußt überschätzt, weil es schön ungefährlich ist, weil kein Zinswucher, keine Ungerechtigkeit des Besitzes an Grund und Boden, keine Agrarreform damit verbunden ist". (89)

As soon as any writer presumed to abandon the field of pure art in favour of political Tendenz, the middle-class enthusiasm for his work vanished; it was no part of the function of bourgeois art to change society. As a committed left-wing intellectual, Tucholsky had always believed otherwise. In the latter stages of his career even the

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(86) Cf. Neujahrsgruß an die Geistigen Deutschlands, WB 5/1/22, ibid., pp.893-4.

(87) Cf. Die beiden Deutschland, Freiheit, 6/8/22, ibid., p.1029: "Unser Deutschland hat in der Hauptsache nur einen Freund, unsere Republik hat fast nur den einen: den Arbeiter".

(88) Interessieren Sie sich für Kunst? Zürcher Studentenzeitung, May 1926, GW II, p.424.

(89) ibid., p.425.

pretensions of the middle classes to cultural interest gave Tucholsky merely another pretext on which to attack them, and he dismissed contemptuously their escapist desire to "flee into a realm of higher harmonies" (90) at a safe distance from the problems of contemporary Germany.

Tucholsky's polemical attacks on the German Bürgertum cannot be regarded as a high point of his work. His choice of target was unoriginal and his treatment of the theme inconsistent. The transition from Activism to Marxism provides an adequate explanation for his re-defining the term Bürger in an economic rather than a psychological context, but the parallel change of attitude with regard to bourgeois art is less acceptable. His fear for the collapse of cultural standards in 1919 was as exaggerated as his rejection of all but committed left-wing literature by 1925: a rejection which did not prevent him from writing artistically successful but escapist works such as Nachher and Schloß Gripsholm. In addition to this inconsistency of terminology and of literary practice, he again tended to over-generalise. Not all of the middle classes were reactionary Nationalists. However, Tucholsky deserves praise for creating the figure of Wendriner, whose personality was calculated to cure his readers of any enthusiasm for the bourgeoisie. The satirist Hauser rather than the polemicist Wrobel was the more convincing critic of the German Bürgertum.

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(90) Cf. the poem Zuckerbrot und Peitsche, WB 9/12/30, GW III, p.628.

## CHAPTER 10

It may seem paradoxical that Tucholsky's political criticism should be regarded as the most important aspect of his work. This study does not deny his contribution to German literature, but to demonstrate his ability in this field, stylistic analysis would be required. It was considered advisable to avoid literary judgments which would at best be superficial, and to concentrate instead on a detailed analysis of Tucholsky's political development.

Tucholsky's political importance stems primarily from the representative quality of his career. In 1913 he joined Jacobsohn's Schaubühne, which under the new title Weltbühne was to become the most influential left-wing weekly in Weimar Germany. He began as a commentator on the Berlin theatre, and, like his mentor, developed into a cultural critic of some standing. He emerged from the war, from Germany's defeat and the November Revolution as an idealistic supporter of the progressive cause and a bitter opponent of the reactionary forces which had previously dominated German society. However, his early idealism was tinged by a certain vagueness and Utopianism which was characteristic of the intellectual Aktivisten, even if Tucholsky was not formally a member of the group.

In the next stage of his career, Tucholsky, in common with Ossietzky and other left-wing writers, recognised that the Republic was in danger from the counter-revolutionary right. He therefore offered the new system critical but constructive support for three years; critical because he recognised its weaknesses and insecure foundations, yet constructive because it appeared to represent a framework for future improvements which he pressed on its governments continually but without success.

However, by the mid-1920's, the administrations of Marx and Luther seemed to be using the Republican form of government to preserve the inequalities and injustice of German society. Along with other writers in the Weltbühne, Tucholsky began asking if the mere facade of democracy was worth preserving, since it only concealed the dictatorship of the prosperous bourgeoisie. His doubts were reinforced by the election of the monarchist, Hindenburg, as President of the Republic. However, he soon recovered from his disappointment and, along with other members of the Deutsche Linke, welcomed the opportunity of fighting against the openly reactionary forces which appeared bent on oppressing the workers and preparing a new European war.

Confronted with this threat, Tucholsky was not alone among left-wing intellectuals in rejecting the loyal parliamentary opposition of the Social Democrats, as amounting not to compromise, but to surrender to an irreconcilable enemy. He adopted an increasingly tolerant attitude towards the KPD and its Marxist ideology, and contributed revolutionary articles to the semi-official Communist press controlled by Münzenberg. However, like most of his colleagues in the Weltbühne, he refused to join the Communist Party itself. When Hitler gained power and Stalin abandoned the KPD to its fate, Tucholsky lost all sympathy for the pseudo-revolutionary left, but he was unable to find an alternative political stand-point, and, like many of Germany's left-wing exiles, he ended his career in a despair which led to suicide.

The analysis of Tucholsky's role as a leading figure on the intellectual left enables a critic to avoid the danger of a

purely monographic approach dealing only with Tucholsky himself and failing to put his work into its social context. Such short works as Raddatz's Bildbiographie and Prescher's brief biography almost inevitably fall into this trap, though the latter does mention such Aktivisten as Heinrich Mann and Flake and discusses the Deutsche Linke.(1) With more space at his disposal, Schulz sketches the political background to Tucholsky's writings in greater detail, but his judgment is occasionally somewhat unsound(2)

Nevertheless, such works rank far above the criticism of Tucholsky by Franz Leschnitzer, Hermann Kesten and Lisa Matthias. Schulz's dogmatic judgments pale into insignificance before those of the Communist Leschnitzer, who talks of Tucholsky's "Gesinnungs-labilität" and attributes his final collapse to the "Ausweglosigkeit seiner Ideologie".(3) Even in retrospect, the party hack cannot comprehend Tucholsky's position as a sympathiser rather than one of the faithful. On the other hand, Kesten even refuses to take Tucholsky's political views seriously. In Kesten's estimation, the campaigner against war and injustice becomes simply a personification of every-day Germany; the intellectual aristocrat is seen as a writer who thinks in the same way as "Hinz oder Kunz".(4) Lisa Matthias, a former mistress of Tucholsky, proves less informative than her literary image as Lottchen might lead readers to expect. Her account of life with Tucholsky(5) rightly counters any tendency towards hero-worship, but suffers from a sensationalism which reveals more about the character of the authoress than about her subject.

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(1) Prescher, book, pp.20-1 and 45-49. Prescher's thesis, written in the mid-1950's, was the first detailed examination of Tucholsky's political career, and most of its conclusions can still be accepted.

(2) Schulz, op.cit., p.67 and pp.73-75.

(3) Leschnitzer, op.cit., p.185 and p.191.

(4) Kesten: Meine Freunde, die Poeten, Frankfurt, Fischer, 1970, p.83.

(5) Lisa Matthias: Ich war Tucholskys Lottchen, Hamburg, Marion von Schröder, 1962.



This thesis has attempted to put Tucholsky's achievements into clearer perspective by frequent reference to similar or contrary opinions in the works of his colleagues. The obvious comparison is with Ossietzky, not only as a journalist whose views developed parallel to Tucholsky's own, but also as a gallant yet naive figure, risking his life for a lost cause. Tucholsky was as skilled a polemicist as Ossietzky, but a realist rather than a heroic martyr. Other comparisons suggest themselves, for example that between Tucholsky and Hiller. The latter, like Tucholsky, came from a middle class Jewish environment; he was an important theorist, with a much greater interest and facility in composing manifestos and organising protest committees than had Tucholsky. Although Tucholsky involved himself in political affairs as a polemicist, satirist and orator, he was never given the opportunity for direct activity which Kurt Eisner accepted in Munich. The latter was for a brief period the most prominent of the left-wing intellectuals, though he paid for this fame with his life. Nevertheless, Tucholsky's works are far more widely read today than those of Ossietzky, Hiller and Eisner.

The renaissance of Tucholsky's work is certainly due in part to the devoted labours of his widow, Mary Tucholsky. However, Tucholsky's writings also have qualities lacking in those of his contemporaries. Most important is the wide range of his artistic expression. He was equally at home in lyric poetry and political verses, in idyll and polemic, in metaphysical speculations and in humorous reflections on the holes in Emmenthaler cheese. Secondly, Tucholsky played a significant role as the Cassandra of Weimar Germany. His ability to analyse underlying trends allowed him, as

a direct consequence of the Treaty of Versailles, to forecast the date of the outbreak of the Second World War, and he later enumerated the diplomatic and military steps which led up to the conflict. In the short term he foresaw that Noske's plan to tame the old officers by giving them responsibility for the new army would bring disaster. Ten years later, he recognised bitterly that the weakness of the Republic would ensure the triumph of its right-wing opponents. In spite of his underestimation of the National Socialists, Tucholsky's overall record as a forecaster of events was remarkably good.

Tucholsky was therefore a representative figure on the intellectual left for two reasons: his development was comparatively typical, and his work has survived the years better than that of his colleagues. The first full-length study of Tucholsky's role as a left-wing intellectual was by H.L.Poor.(6) In spite of various differences of opinion, for example on the subject of Tucholsky's attitude to Marxism, the present writer regards Poor's book as the best available summary of Tucholsky's development. Poor's main virtue as a critic is his detailed knowledge not only of Tucholsky's writings but of German politics in general between 1914 and 1935. He thereby succeeds in placing Tucholsky's work in its historical context.

Two schools of thought exist with regard to the significance of Tucholsky's political work. The former, represented by Prescher, Poor, Raddatz and, with some reservations, Schulz, sees Tucholsky as a progressive humanitarian, who for years bravely resisted the forces of reaction, only to be frustrated when his

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(6) Poor, thesis: Kurt Tucholsky: A leftist intellectual views the Weimar Republic, Comumbia University, New York, 1965, later expanded and published as Tucholsky and the Ordeal of Germany, 1914-35, New York, Scribners, 1968.

criticism was continually ignored by those in power. This positive view of Tucholsky was summed up in the description by his friend and colleague, Erich Kästner:

„Ein kleiner dicker Berliner,  
der eine Katastrophe mit seiner  
Schreibmaschine aufhalten wollte". (7)

The failure to avert disaster from Germany is seen by such critics as the fault not of Tucholsky, but of the governments which rejected his advice.

A second body of criticism, led by Golo Mann and Doerfel, sees Tucholsky's work in a less positive light. Doerfel regards Tucholsky and his colleagues in the Weltbühne as impractical intellectuals. (8) In her opinion they measured Germany's politicians according to an absolute standard, and then blamed them unjustly when they failed to live up to it. There is some truth in the accusation, since Tucholsky's stand-point was undeniably idealistic. However, such a criticism is superficial. It implies that idealistic standards in politics by their very nature represent a weakness, and that only a pragmatic approach is acceptable. As Tucholsky pointed out early in his career (9), ideals cannot be fulfilled in practice, but they do provide a yard-stick by which to assess what has been achieved, and what remains to be done. Tucholsky himself thereby recognised that a balance between idealism and pragmatism was required.

Golo Mann, on the other hand, avoids condemning idealism as such; he attacks Tucholsky on different grounds. Mann examines

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(7) Erich Kästner, in the Nachwort to Grüß nach vorn, Stuttgart and Berlin, Rowohlt, 1947.

(8) Doerfel, op.cit., p.33.

(9) Wir Negativen, GW I, p.376.

Tucholsky's polemic against Germany, but he pays little heed to its underlying causes or the circumstances in which it developed. As may be seen from his unflattering comparison of Tucholsky with Heine, Mann fails to recognise Tucholsky's "love-hate relationship" with his native land:

„Die hellsichtige Bosheit, mit der Kurt Tucholsky die Republik verspottete, alle ihre Lahmheiten und Falschheiten, erinnerte von ferne an Heinrich Heine. Vom Witz und Haß des großen Dichters war ein Stück in ihm, nur leider wenig von seiner Liebe". (10)

Such an assessment takes no account of Tucholsky's restrained, constructive criticism in the early years of the Republic, and concentrates exclusively on the second half of his career, when the Republic had disappointed his expectations. Mann's judgment is therefore at best incomplete.

However, Golo Mann makes another point against Tucholsky and his colleagues. He claims that they struck a double blow against the democratic system: directly, by exposing the shortcomings of the Republic, but also indirectly, since their activities were associated by the Nationalist right with the democracy in which they flourished. (11) Although Mann has misjudged Tucholsky's intentions in attacking the Republic, he might reply that, in any case, these intentions were irrelevant. Did not Tucholsky himself assert that what mattered most was the effect of his work? If that effect was to weaken the progressive cause and to strengthen the right, then Tucholsky did undermine democracy, whatever his intentions.

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(10) Golo Mann, op.cit., p.707.

(11) Mann, ibid.

This criticism would be more logical than the previous objection, since it measures Tucholsky's work by his own standards. However, to claim that Tucholsky had an important effect on the German right is to stretch credibility too far. This section of public opinion was already hostile to all forms of Republican democracy, and such views required no external stimulus. If any propagandists can be blamed for confirming the right-wingers in their ideas, the dubious distinction should go to such conservative theorists as Moeller van der Bruck, or frustrated advocates of empire like Hans Grimm, and not to the staff of the Weltbühne. The charge that the latter helped to undermine democracy is equally unfair, since those responsible were Hugenberg and the Junker camarilla advising the aged Hindenburg. In comparison, any indirect responsibility of Tucholsky and his colleagues for the collapse of democracy is infinitesimal.

The main purpose of this thesis has been to bring research on Tucholsky up to date, a task which has involved the evaluation of previous studies and an assessment of critical controversies. A more original contribution has been the analysis of Tucholsky's attacks on leading Social Democratic politicians such as Ebert and Noske. The SPD leaders contended that they had entered an alliance with the forces of reaction in November 1918 because the only alternative was chaos and Bolshevism. Tucholsky came to disagree violently with this view, and claimed that Ebert and his colleagues had been guided not by the necessity of events but by personal timidity and fear of change.

Previous critics of Tucholsky have adopted one or other of these standpoints, without examining in any detail the historical issues involved. It appears to the present writer that the controversy among historians of the Revolution, begun in the mid-1950's, has still not been resolved. However, those such as Kolb and Rürup who agree with Tucholsky's view of Ebert, seem to have the stronger arguments. For some years before 1918 the SPD had been making concessions to the right, advocating the pursuit of revolution but in practice seeking the gradual reform of German society. When the Revolution did come, in spite of Ebert's efforts to prevent it, the SPD leader saw it not as an opportunity to implement Socialist measures or even to establish and stabilise a new democratic regime, but instead as a threat of anarchy. Tucholsky later admitted that anarchist elements had been active on the extreme left, but he pointed, justifiably, to the enthusiasm for reform among large sections of the populace, an attitude which Ebert had feared and opposed. Noske appears to have missed the opportunity to create a loyal Republican army because of similar distrust of the left and a blind confidence in the traditionalist officers. It would be an exaggeration to assert that recent historians have finally vindicated Tucholsky's opinion of the SPD leaders, but the left-wing polemicist rather than the pragmatic President and Army Minister has the weight of expert opinion on his side.

This thesis also attempts to bring research on Tucholsky up to date by analysing material not available to previous critics. Such material includes Tucholsky's pre-war articles in Vorwärts, which are discussed in Chapter 1. Other articles not included in Tucholsky's Gesammelte Werke are quoted at intervals throughout the thesis.

Another claim to originality may be made for the analysis of Tucholsky's changing attitude to Marxism. Here the technique of examining the development of Tucholsky's political views proves its worth, especially since other critics have been content with the arbitrary selection of quotations which support a preconceived opinion. (12) It is not sufficient to point out, as some critics have done (13), that Tucholsky never joined the KPD: many convinced Marxists have refused to join the Communist Party, preferring like Tucholsky to offer advice from outside. The only way to assess whether or not a public figure such as a journalist is a Marxist is to examine his published work for signs that he accepts or rejects that doctrine.

Between 1925 and 1930 Tucholsky endorsed almost all of the fundamental tenets of Marxist theory. Most important was the support which he gave to the class struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, and his frequent encouragement of the former to unite and carry out a revolution. He hoped that the overthrow of the capitalist state would lead to government by the workers, the expropriation of the exploiters and state ownership of the means of production. Other Marxist theories with which Tucholsky expressed agreement were the necessity for the workers to unite across the frontiers of Europe against their exploiters, and the role of the capitalist state as an instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

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(12) Cf. Poor, *op.cit.*, pp.144-5.

(13) Cf. Schulz, *op.cit.*, p.120.

He also publicly supported such underlying Marxist concepts as the doctrine of materialism and the primacy of the economic factor in society, though his interest in such abstractions was limited. After 1930 he grew more critical of Marxism, partly as a result of reading the works of Freud, and partly on account of the manifest failure of the German working-class movement. He even privately denied that he had ever been a Marxist. Yet such reservations about Marxist theory do not cancel out his earlier support for it.

A survey of Tucholsky's political writings should combine the chronological with the thematic approach. The most important themes selected for analysis have been his campaigns against militarism and war, and against the reactionary bias of the judiciary, the educational system and the press. This aspect of Tucholsky's work earned him the hatred not only of the openly Nationalist right, but also of the Bürgertum, a hatred which Tucholsky reciprocated. These topics have been analysed in detail by other critics(14), and this thesis supplements such work by referring to the conclusions of recent historical works.(15)

The picture of Kurt Tucholsky which emerges from this survey is not as complex as it at first appears. His campaigns, however disparate their individual targets, all provide evidence of a concern for human suffering and hatred of injustice. As an intellectual, writing for a small band of devotees, Tucholsky had the opportunity to express his opinions without fear of editorial censorship. Nevertheless he recognised that such isolation was not "splendid" but sterile and lacking any effect, and he therefore

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(14) Cf. Helga Jänicke: Tucholsky als Gegner des Krieges und des Militarismus, East Berlin, 1951; Friedrich Breitling: Tucholsky und die politische Justiz, Altingen 1967; and Ingeborg Pistohl: Die Gestalt des Bürgers im Werk Tucholskys, Bonn, 1969.

(15) These include the works of Carsten on the Reichswehr and Hannover on the judiciary.



made several efforts to escape from it.

First he allied himself with the Independent Socialists, the party which tried in vain to establish itself in the middle ground between the Majority Socialists, who had introduced the compromise system of Weimar democracy, and the Communists, who were increasingly subject to the tutelage of Moscow. In spite of the uncertainty over policy which characterised the USPD, Tucholsky remained a loyal member until its dissolution in 1922.

The failure of the Independents persuaded Tucholsky that membership of a pressure group rather than a party might provide the better outlet for political commitment. Throughout the 1920's he was active in the German Pacifist Movement. He supported its demand for the abolition of the Reichswehr and for reconciliation with France, on the basis of proletarian solidarity rather than the inter-state diplomacy of Stresemann and Briand. However, the Pacifist Movement, weakened by discord over policy and by personal bickering, lost its influence in the late 1920's, leaving Tucholsky once again without a political home.

Tucholsky's activities as a revolutionary pacifist and Marxist, along with his increasing interest in the down-trodden German workers, led him to seek an alliance with the German Communist Party. If the Pacifist Movement had suffered from a lack of discipline and organisation, the Communists had an excess of these qualities. The bureaucrats of the KPD were only too glad to obey Stalin's decree, and treat intellectual sympathisers outside the party, the so-called fellow-travellers, as enemies. Such sympathisers were accepted only on the party's conditions, and Tucholsky's efforts to mediate were well-meant but hopeless. It

was probably fortunate for Tucholsky that he refused to sacrifice his political integrity on the altar of alleged revolutionary purity. In the crisis of 1932-33 the KPD leaders and their Soviet mentors proved unable either to take power themselves or to prevent the advent of Hitler and the descent of Germany into barbarism.

Three times Tucholsky faced the dilemma of whether to commit himself to supporting a political group; three times he accepted the challenge, though with diminishing enthusiasm, since he never joined a political party after 1922. On each occasion he was disappointed. It is therefore unfair to ask why Tucholsky abandoned the progressive cause in 1932, when it was obviously lost; what is remarkable is that, in spite of successive failures and rebuffs, he kept up the struggle so long and so bravely.

ABBREVIATIONS

AIZ	: <u>Arbeiter Illustrierte Zeitung.</u>
BK	: <u>Tucholsky, Briefe an eine Katholikin,</u> Reinbek, Rowohlt, 1970.
Briefe	: <u>Tucholsky, Ausgewählte Briefe,</u> Reinbek, Rowohlt, 1962.
BT	: <u>Berliner Tageblatt.</u>
BVZ	: <u>Berliner Volkszeitung.</u>
DAD	: <u>Das andere Deutschland.</u>
DDP	: Deutsche Demokratische Partei.
DDR-Ausgabe	: <u>Tucholsky, Werke, Vols. 1-6,</u> East Berlin, Volk und Welt, 1972.
DNVP	: Deutschnationale Volkspartei.
Dt.Dt.	: <u>Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,</u> Berlin, Neuer Deutscher Verlag, 1929.
DVP	: Deutsche Volkspartei.
GW	: <u>Tucholsky, Gesammelte Werke, Vols. 1-3,</u> Reinbek, Rowohlt, 1960.
KPD	: Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands.
NSDAP	: Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei.
SB	: <u>Die Schaubühne.</u>
SPD	: Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands.
USPD	: Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands.
Vorw.	: <u>Vorwärts.</u>
Voss.	: <u>Vossische Zeitung.</u>
WaM	: <u>Welt am Montag.</u>
WB	: <u>Die Weltbühne.</u>

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