

Oswald Spengler on the Counterrevolution (1922)

Abstract

Oswald Spengler (1880-1936) was an idiosyncratic conservative and one of the leading opponents of the Weimar Republic. He is best known for his highly popular, two-volume treatise *The Decline of the West* [*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*]. Spengler anticipated a counterrevolution from the very beginning of Kurt Eisner's declaration of the Free Republic of Bavaria [Freistaat Bayern] in Munich on November 7, 1918. Throughout the 1920s, Spengler's public writings presented the Weimar Republic as an ongoing state of defeat. His work became part of the intellectual repertoire that was adopted and put to propagandistic use by the Nazis.

Source

I witnessed the repellent scenes that occurred on November 7, 1918, in Munich, sometimes in close proximity, and I nearly choked from disgust. And then the way in which Kaiser Wilhelm was sent packing, the way that every louse took it upon himself to hurl excrement at the man, the man who worked selflessly and self-sacrificingly for thirty years on behalf of Greater Germany. I know very well that the mob in other countries is dastardly beyond all measure, but does it match ours in its beastliness? [...] I see that the German Revolution is taking the typical course; slow dismantling of the existing order, overthrow, wild radicalism, reversion. What gives us hope today is the certainty that the monarchy will emerge strengthened from this crisis; [...] like France in 1793, we will have to live through this misfortune to the very end; we need a good castigation, the likes of which will make the four years of war seem harmless in comparison, until the time has come for the small group that was called to leadership in 1813 and in 1870 alike: the Prussian nobles and the Prussian civil servants, the thousands of our technicians, apprentices, craftsmen, workers with Prussian instincts; until, above all, the terror also generates such indignation and despair that a dictatorship, something Napoleonic, is generally perceived as the salvation. But then blood must flow, the more the better.

Source: Oswald Spengler, „... bin vor Ekel beinahe erstickt“ – frühe Konturen der Gegenrevolution“, in *Weimar: Ein Lesebuch zur deutschen Geschichte 1918–1933*, edited by Heinrich August Winkler and Alexander Cammann. Munich: C.H. Beck, 1997, pp. 57–58.

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