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Our Martyrs

Liebknecht and Luxemburg

On January 15th 1919, the leaders of the revolutionary German working class, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, were murdered in the streets of Berlin. The ruling class of Germany, fearing these two heroic and dauntless fighters, their ability to mobilize the proletariat for the proletarian dictatorship and socialism, called upon the lackeys of the capitalist class, the social democrats, Noske, Schiedeman, Ebert, to stem the revolutionary tide, to murder its outstanding leaders and fighters. The official social democracy carried out these instructions; murdered Liebknecht and Luxemburg, destroyed the Spartacus movement. For the time being it saved Germany—for wage slavery and exploitation. Luxemburg and Liebknecht remain the symbol of proletarian struggle for emancipation; the German and international social democracy continue as the active henchmen of capitalism.

Both Rosa and Karl had, long before 1919, fought the treacherous policies of the social democracy within the official movement. Luxemburg took up the struggle against both the revisionism and opportunism of Bernstein, David, Legien, and Noske, and the academic centrism of Karl Kautsky. Previous to this she had been active in the Polish movement where she fought tooth and nail against the nationalist position of the leaders. Closely in contact with the Russian social democracy she followed the revolution of 1905 with the greatest interest. She recognized the importance of the leading role of the proletariat in the democratic revolution. She wrote a brochure in which she drew some lessons on mass political strikes, trade unions, relations between trade unions and for the German party and international working class from the Russian events.

Luxemburg not only popularized the writings of Marx, especially on economics but wrote a theoretical work which attempts to apply the economic laws discovered by Marx to the stage of the imperialist capitalism ("Accumulation of Capital"). Her knowledge and treatment of Marxism, not as a dogma but a revolutionary method of penetrating, knowing and transforming social reality, made Rosa one of the few original thinkers the revolutionary movement has produced since Marx and Engels. She actively participated in all phases of the social-democratic movement, women's work, practical politics, theoretical discussions, anti-militarist and youth work.

It was in the latter two fields that she worked arm in arm with Karl Liebknecht. Both stressed the importance of work within the armed forces—a proposal which sounded the beginning of the pacifist and ultra-legalistic social democratic leaders. Karl and Rosa fought for the organization of special youth leagues which would attract young workers and students to the socialist movement, educate them in Marxism, struggle against capitalist militarism. Liebknecht in "Militarism and Anti-Militarism" analyzed the class nature of present day militarism showing its two-fold character: against the enemy capitalist nation and colonial peoples; to suppress the working class at home. Luxemburg exposed the sham and hypocrisy of the proposals for disarmament and pacifism under capitalism, and castigated them as "pacifist utopias". The activity of Rosa and Karl prepared them for the war period role.

The coming of the World War, which like all deep social crises sharply the questions of class struggle, found social democratic opportunism develop logically into social chauvinism, social imperialism. The policy of class collaboration during peace time led to support of the bourgeoisie during the war. On the other hand, the advocacy of class struggle, a relentless fight against the capitalist class during "peace" time, found Liebknecht and Luxemburg during as prior to the war in the vanguard of the proletariat struggling against the capitalist conflagration and for proletarian revolution.

Luxemburg and Liebknecht aided by such fighters as Jogiches, Mehring, Levine, organized the Spartacus Bund, unfurled the banner of revolutionary Marxism and proclaimed the struggle against the war, the social democrats, the mainstay of capitalism, and for socialism, Karl hurled the defiant voice of the militant working class in the Reichstag when voting against war credits; in the Kaiser's army he agitated the soldiers for socialism; in the streets of Berlin at the height of the war in May 1916, he echoed the class interests of the German proletariat. For these actions Liebknecht was arrested and thrown into jail.

Luxemburg had also been incarcerated by the Kaiser's government; the other Spartacans were issuing illegal literature and conducting other forms of propaganda under the able leadership of Leo Jogiches. Rosa, while in prison, wrote her now famous brochure on "The Crises in the German Social Democracy"

explaining in a scientific manner the reasons for the degeneration of the official social democratic movement, for its war position and the road the Marxists should take.

When the Russian workers overthrew capitalism and established a proletarian dictatorship, Liebknecht and Luxemburg unhesitatingly supported the Bolshevik Revolution. Rosa, while criticizing some of the policies of the Bolsheviks, stressed (in contrast to Kautsky) that they were in the main conditioned on factors independent of their (the Bolsheviks) will and on that bases were justified.

The German revolution of 1918 released Luxemburg and Liebknecht from prison. The Spartacus Bund, which had been part of the Independent Social Democratic Party (the Centrist party of Kautsky, Hilferding, etc.) withdrew and on December 31, 1919 founded the Communist Party of German (Spartacus Bund). The questions of armed insurrection, barricade fighting, the proletarian dictatorship and socialism, in a word, precisely those matters which put horror and fear in the hearts of the capitalists and their labor lieutenants, were illuminated with a lucidity which only a brilliant Marxist like Rosa Luxemburg could use. Not fearing to struggle against the stream though only a handful, Rosa and her Spartacan comrades, with faith in the working masses, intransigent in their Marxist principles, with a heroic will to struggle for socialism, launched the organization which will lead the German proletariat to power.

The German Communist Party was founded at a time when street fighting took place in Berlin. In a few days, on January 15th, 1919, Luxemburg and Liebknecht were arrested and shamefully murdered by the social democratic henchmen of the German bourgeoisie. A short time later, Leo Jogiches was brutally killed while in prison. The traitorous social democracy established "order" in Germany. But "order", "peace", "stabilization", cannot be permanently established under capitalism. The class struggle leads inevitably to revolution as shown by Germany today.

The Left Opposition considers itself the rightful inheritors of the traditions of Liebknecht and Luxemburg. Rosa more than once was at logger-heads with Lenin and the Bolsheviks. She undoubtedly made mistakes. But in spite of this she remains one of the few Marxist leaders of our times. Her works are almost unknown to the American comrades; most of her critics have never studied them. It is the task of the Left Opposition to publish and make known the writings of Luxemburg so that we will not only be able to judge wherein she erred, but learn a great deal from one of the most brilliant Marxist teachers.

—JOSEPH CARTER.

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Capitalist Politicians Favor Russian Credits; Stalinists Mark Time

The flat proposal for trade with the Soviet Union made by Mr. Rainey, Democratic leader of the House of Representatives, in a speech delivered over the radio for the National Broadcasting Company last Monday, brings one more prominent capitalist politician into the column of those who have already advanced the idea before. In this programmatic speech, widely reproduced in the press, which is intended as a semi-official indictment of the Hoover régime and as the plan of action of the Democratic House majority for "solving the crisis", Rainey advocates large-scale trade with the Soviet Union which, he adds, constitutes one of the world's largest untapped markets at the present time, and particularly necessary for the United States with the present state of its industry.

Distant indications of the trend of capitalist opinion are contained in a speech delivered in the house by another Democratic politician, William Sirovich, who recently returned from a visit to the Soviet Union, but also the diplomatic recognition of the country by the United States as a solid preliminary to such trade.

It is clear that the thoroughly bewildered American bourgeoisie, rendered desperate by the deepening of the crisis and the growing discontentment of the working class, and somewhat flabbergasted by the fact that all the nostrums hitherto invoked by the bourgeois statesmen and economists for the solution of the difficulties have failed, is even beginning to orient itself—at least in certain quarters—towards the Bolshevik devil in the hope of finding some way out.

That trade with the Soviet Union, no matter how large a scale, will not solve the convulsive contradictions inherent in the capitalist system, is of course incontestable. For the bourgeoisie,

Japanese-American Conflict

The Recent Manchurian Incident as a Factor in World Politics

Outstanding in last week's news is the diplomatic incident around the American consul, Culver B. Chamberlin, in Manchuria. Many versions of the story have appeared in the press. There are already "official" Japanese versions and "official" American versions. Developments are not moving with the speed characteristic of such incidents. It is true. The cloud-burst following Sarajevo was much more prompt. But that is not at all sufficient reason to interpret the slowness of procedure in the vulgar and watered manner of the Stalinists, who attribute it solely to the imperialists' anxiety not to spoil the solid (?) front against the Soviet Union. For the Stalinists, the internal contradictions of imperialism constitute just one more hollow phrase with which to adorn a "thesis" or a manifesto, nothing more.

Every serious observer, every serious

revolutionist could not help but see the growing dissatisfaction of the Western capitalist brigades with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. In a world economic crisis like the present, gripping industry as tightly as it does, every scrap of market is the subject of the greatest avarice and envy for every one of the robber states. All the more so, when it concerns so promising and so valuable a market as China. It would be rank stupidity to assume for even a minute, that the United States, Great Britain and the others would so readily cede such a treasure to the Nipponese. On the contrary, a revolutionist, a disciple of Lenin cannot doubt at all that conflicts of a high order among the imperialist powers are bound to result. The tempo in which these conflicts are sharpened and the forms that they take on are controlled by other factors in the world situation, with which we shall deal

further on.

At the present time, the United States State Department appears to restrict itself to the invocation of the Nine Power Treaty and the policy of the "Open Door", in its struggle against the Japanese. There has been talk of action along these lines for some time. The Chamberlin affair has merely served as the pretext for giving this line of action the necessary impulse. The State Department is calling upon Great Britain and France to support its side of the conflict. It is doubtful, to say the least, whether France would give its aid; strained relations between the bourgeoisies of the two countries in the past few months confirm us in our doubt. The British are confronted with rising revolutionary activity among the Indian masses and in jockeying for position might be more amenable to American plans, especially due to the temporary decline of American "sympathies" for Indian independence. For the time being, American-Japanese relations are characterized by less active hostility than would normally be expected. Imperialist alignments in days of economic stress like the present are fickle things. But it is only a matter of time for the lines to be drawn.

The community of interests between the working class of the world and the oppressed peoples of the Orient, is the lesson taught by political necessity. Today, this becomes clearer than ever. The imperialist powers are preparing to strike. While centering our attention on the struggle in Germany, we must not forget the danger threatening from the East. The coordination of the aims of the imperialists will undoubtedly be achieved by devious routes.

Clarity on War Danger!

Yes, the Soviet Union is in danger. The capitalist world is desperate. For the present, this danger is most acute on the Western frontier, to be more precise in the menace of Fascism facing the German working class, which is an invaluable ally of the Soviet Union. It is there that the greatest watchfulness is necessary. It is there, that the whole Communist movement is standing a test that will be decisive for the working class and for the oppressed peoples of the entire world for many years to come. But historical development does not proceed along one straight line. Any "incident" is bound to serve as a spark with which to set off the explosive forces inherent in world politics today. That is why all Communists must pay the closest attention to the turns in imperialist policy, that is why they must not underestimate them, distort their importance. The Chamberlin incident and the further progress of Japanese-American relations requires the utmost attention of the workers, not as an incident in itself, but as a factor in the world situation as a whole.

—S. G.

The Impending Danger of Fascism in Germany

At the present moment Germany is going through one of those great historic hours upon which the fate of the German people, the fate of Europe and in an important measure, the fate of all of humanity will depend for decades. If you place a ball on top of a pyramid the slightest impact can cause it to roll down either to the Left or to the Right. That is the situation approaching with every hour in Germany today. There are forces who would like the ball to roll down towards the Right and break the back of the working class. There are forces who would like the ball to remain at the top. That is a utopia. The ball cannot remain at the top of the pyramid. The Communists want the ball to roll down toward the Left and to break the back of capitalism. But it is not enough to want, one must know how. Let us calmly reflect once more: Is the policy carried on at present by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany correct or incorrect?

What does Hitler Want?

The Fascists are growing very rapidly. The Communists are also growing but much more slowly. The growth at the extreme poles shows that the ball cannot maintain itself at the top of the pyramid. The rapid growth of the Fascists signifies the danger that the ball may roll down toward the Right. Therein lies an enormous danger.

Hitler emphasizes that he is against a coup d'état. In order to strangle democracy once and for all, he is willing to achieve power no differently, so to speak, than by the democratic road. Can we seriously believe this?

Of course, if the Fascists could figure out obtaining an absolute majority of the votes at the next elections in a peaceful way, then they would perhaps even prefer this road. In reality, however, this

A Letter to a German Communist Worker on the United Front Against Hitler: - : By Leon Trotsky

road is unthinkable for them. It is stupid to believe that the Nazis would grow uninterrupted, as they do now, for an unlimited period of time. Sooner or later they will drain their social reservoir. Fascism has introduced into its own ranks such dreadful contradictions, that the moment must come in which the flow will cease to replace the ebb. The moment can arrive long before the Fascists will have united about them even half of the votes. They will not be able to halt, for they will have nothing more to expect here. They will be forced to resort to an overthrow.

But even apart from all this, the Fascists are cut off from the democratic road. The immense growth of the political antagonisms in the country, the stark brigades' agitation of the Fascists will inevitably lead to a situation in which the closer the Fascists come to get a majority, the more heated the atmosphere will become and the more extensive, the unfolding of the conflicts and struggles will be. From this perspective, civil war is absolutely inevitable. Consequently the question of the seizure of power by the Fascists will not be decided by vote, but by civil war, which the Fascists are preparing and craving.

Can we assume even one minute that Hitler and his advisers do not realize and foresee this? That would mean to consider them blockheads. There is no greater crime in politics than that of hoping for stupidities on the part of a strong enemy. If Hitler cannot help being aware that the road to power leads through gruesome civil war, then that means that his speeches regarding the peaceful democratic road are only a

cloak, that is, a stratagem. In that case it is all the more necessary to keep one's eyes open.

What is Concealed Behind Hitler's Stratagem?

His calculations are altogether simple and obvious: He wants to lull his antagonists with the long-run perspective of the parliamentary growth of the Nazis in order to catch them napping and to deal them a death-blow at the right moment. It is entirely possible that Hitler's courtesies to democratic parliamentarism may, moreover, help to set up some sort of coalition in the immediate future in which the Fascists will obtain the most important posts and employ them in turn for their coup d'état. For it is entirely clear that the coalition, let us assume, between the Center and the Fascists will not be a stage in the "democratic" solution of the question, but a step closer to the coup d'état under conditions most favorable to the Fascists. We must plan according to the shorter perspective.

All this means that even regardless of the desires of the Fascist general staff, the solution can arrive in the course of the next few months, if not weeks. This circumstance is of tremendous importance in elaborating a correct policy. If we allow the Fascists to seize power in two or three months, then the struggle against them next year will be much harder than in this. All revolutionary plans laid out in advance for two, three or five years will prove to be only wretched and disgraceful twaddle, if the working class will allow the Fascists to achieve power in the course of the next two, three or five months. The calculation of time in the polity of rev-

olutionary crises, is just as in war operations, of decisive importance.

Let us take another, more remote example for the clarification of our idea. Hugo Urbahns, who considers himself a "Left Communist", declares the German Party bankrupt, politically done for, and proposes to create a new party. If Urbahns were right, that would mean that the victory of the Fascists is certain. For, in order to create a new party, years are needed (and at that it is not at all proved that the Party of Urbahns would in any sense be better than Thaelmann's Party: When Urbahns was at the head of the Party there were in no way fewer mistakes).

Yes, should the Fascists really conquer power, that would mean not only the physical destruction of the Communist Party, but veritable political bankruptcy for it. An ignominious defeat in a struggle against bands of human rubbish—the many millions of the German proletariat would never forgive the Communist International and its German section. The seizure of power by the Fascists would therefore most probably signify the necessity of creating a new revolutionary party and in all probability also of a new international. That would be a frightful historical catastrophe. But to assume today that all this is unavoidable, only genuine liquidationists are capable of that. That is, those who under the mantle of their hollow phraseology are in actually capable only of capitulating in a cowardly manner in the face of struggle and without a struggle. With this conception we Bolshevik-Leninists who are called Trotskyites by the Stalinists have nothing in common.

We are unflinchingly convinced that the victory over the Fascists is possible not after their coming into power, not after five, ten or twenty years of their

(Continued on page 4)

OPPOSITION LEADER ARRESTED IN ARGENTINA

We are informed by letter of the arrest of comrade Camilo Lopez, the secretary of the Left Opposition in Argentina. The letter from our comrades reads: "Our secretary, Camilo Lopez was arrested and his house raided by the police. They took all his papers and propaganda material. We have been very busy since trying to prevent his being sent to Ushualla, the Siberia of the Argentine. Comrade Lopez has been given twenty days to get ready to go to Ushualla or to be deported to Spain..."

MOONEY CONFERENCE IN BELLEVILLE

On Sunday, January 10, the first session of a united front conference to demand Mooney's release will take place in Belleville, Illinois. This conference has been organized along the lines of Mooney's August 20 appeal by the local comrades in Belleville, cooperating with the St. Louis branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition). Reports of its sessions and activities will appear in forthcoming issues of the Militant. All active workers are urged to give all support to the Belleville conference.

JAPANESE COMMUNIST WINS VOLUNTARILY DEPARTURE TO RUSSIA

Sadaichi Kenmotsu, young Japanese graduate, who has been held in San Francisco two years facing deportation as a Communist, has finally been granted voluntary departure to Russia by the Department of Labor. This ends a persistent contest to prevent Kenmotsu being sent to Japan, where he would have been subject to drastic punishment as a Communist. Proceedings against him were based on his attendance at a meeting at which alleged "subversive" literature was distributed.