

Hands Off Rosa Luxemburg

by LEON TROTSKY

(Continued from last issue)
When Lenin, going back into the past, wrote in October 1919 ("Greetings to the Italian, French and German Communists"), "... In the moment of the seizure of power and the creation of the Soviet Republic, Bolshevism remained alone in the field, it had drawn to itself the best of the tendencies closest to it in socialist thought." I repeat, when Lenin wrote this, he unquestionably had in mind also the tendencies of Rosa Luxemburg, whose closest adherents, e. g., Markhlevsky, Djerjinsky and others, were working in the ranks of the Bolsheviks.

Lenin understood Rosa Luxemburg's mistakes more profoundly than Stalin; but it was not accidentally that Lenin once quoted the old couplet in relation to Luxemburg.

Behold the eagles swoop and
neath the barnyard fowl fly,
But barnyard fowl with outspread
wings will never soar amid the
clouds in the sky.

Precisely the case! Precisely the point! For this very reason Stalin should proceed with caution before expending his vicious mediocrity when the matter touch figures of such stature as Rosa Luxemburg.

In the article "In relation to the History of the Question of the Dictatorship," Lenin (October 1920) touching upon questions of the Soviet State and the dictatorship of the proletariat, already posed by the 1905 Revolution, wrote, "Such outstanding representatives of the revolutionary proletariat and of the unfalsified Marxism as Rosa Luxemburg evaluated immediately the significance of the practical experience and came forward at meetings and in the press with critical analyses of it." On the contrary, "people, of the type of future Kautskys," evinced an utter incapacity to understand the significance of this experience." In a few lines, Lenin fully pays the tribute of recognition to the historical significance of Rosa Luxemburg's struggle against Kautsky, the struggle, which Lenin himself had been far from immediately evaluating at its true worth. If to Stalin, the ally of Chiang Kai-Shek, and the comrade in arms of Purcell, the theoretician of "the worker-peasant party," of "the democratic dictatorship" of "Non-antagonizing the bourgeoisie," etc.—if to him Rosa Luxemburg is the representative of Centrism, to Lenin she is the representative of "unfalsified Marxism." What this designation meant coming as it does from Lenin's pen is clear to any one who is even slightly acquainted with Lenin.

THE BANNER OF THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION

I take the occasion to point out here that in the notes to Lenin's works there is among others the following said about Rosa Luxemburg: "During the florescence of the Bernstein revisionism and later of ministerialism (Millerand), Luxemburg carried on against this tendency a decisive fight, taking her position in the Left wing of the German party." In 1907 she participated as a delegate of the S. D. of Poland and Lithuania in the London Congress of R. S. D. L. P., supporting the Bolshevik faction on all basic questions of the Russian revolution. From 1907, Luxemburg gave herself over entirely to work in Germany, taking a Left-radical position and carrying on a fight against the Center and the Right wing. Her participation in the January 1919 insurrection has made her name the banner of the proletarian revolution."

Of course, the author of these notes will in all probability on the morrow confess his sins and announce that in Lenin's epoch he wrote in a benighted condition, and that he reached complete enlightenment only in the epoch of Stalin. At the present moment announcements of sycophancy, idleness and buffoonery—are made daily in the Moscow press. But they do not change the nature of things, "What's once set down in black and white, no ax will hack nor all your might." Yes, Rosa Luxemburg has become the banner of the proletarian revolution!

How and where, however, did Stalin suddenly busy himself—at so belated a time—with the revision of the old Bolshevik valuation of Rosa Luxemburg? As was the case with all his preceding theoretical abortions so with this latest one, and the most scandalous, the origin lies in the logic of his struggle against the theory of Permanent Revolution. In his "historical" article, Stalin once again allots the chief place to this theory. There is not a single new word in what he says. I have long ago answered all his arguments in my book "The Permanent Revolution". From the historical viewpoint the question will be sufficiently clarified, I trust, in the second volume of "The History of the Russian Revolution" (The October Revolution), not on the press. In the present case the question of the Permanent Revolution concerns us only insofar as Stalin links it up with Rosa Luxemburg's name. We shall presently see how the hapless theoretician has contrived to set up for himself a murderous trap.

After recapitulating the controversy between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks on the question of the moving forces in the Russian revolution and after masterfully compressing a series of mistakes into a few lines, which I am compelled to leave without an examination, Stalin indites, "What was the attitude of the Left German social democrats, Parvus and Rosa Luxemburg to these controversies? They concocted a utopian and a semi-Menshevik scheme of the Permanent Revolution. . . . Subsequently this semi-Menshevik scheme was caught up by Trotsky (partly by Martov) and turned into a weapon of strug-

Reply to the Slandering of a Revolutionist

gle against Leninism. . . . Such is the unexpected history of the origin of the theory of the Permanent Revolution, in accordance with the latest historical researches of Stalin. But, alas, the investigator forgot to consult his own previous learned works. In 1925 this same Stalin had already expressed himself on this question in his polemic against Rak-dek. Here is what he wrote then, "It is not true that the theory of the Permanent Revolution . . . was put forward in 1905 by Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky. As a matter of fact this theory was put forward by Parvus and Trotsky." This assertion may be consulted on page 185, "Questions of Leninism", Russian edition, 1925. Let us hope that it obtains in all foreign editions.

LUXEMBURG AND THE PERMANENT REVOLUTION

So, in 1925, Stalin pronounced Rosa Luxemburg not guilty in the commission of such a cardinal sin as participating in the creation of the theory of the Permanent Revolution. "As a matter of fact, this theory was put forward by Parvus and Trotsky" in 1905, we are informed by the identical Stalin that it was precisely, "Parvus and Rosa Luxemburg . . . who concocted the utopian and semi-Menshevik scheme of the Permanent Revolution". As for Trotsky he was innocent of creating the theory, it was only "caught up" by him, and at the same time by . . . Martov! ! ! Once again Stalin is caught with the goods. Perhaps he writes on questions of which he can make neither head nor tail. Or is he consciously shuffling marked cards in playing with the basic questions of Marxism? It is incorrect to pose this question as an alternative. As a matter of fact, both the one and the other obtain here. The Stalinist falsifications are conscious in so far as they are dictated at each given moment by entirely concrete personal interests. At the same time they are semi-conscious, in so far as his congenial ignorance place no impediments whatsoever to his theoretical propensities.

But facts remain facts. In his war against "the Trotskyist contraband", Stalin has fallen foul of a new personal enemy, Rosa Luxemburg! He did not pause for a moment before lying about her and vilifying her; and moreover before proceeding to put into circulation his stallion's doses of vulgarity and disloy-

alty, he did not even take the bother of verifying what he himself had said on the same subject five years before.

The new variant of the history of the ideas of the Permanent Revolution was indicated first of all by an urge to provide a dish more spicy than all those preceding. It is needless to explain that Martov was dragged in by the hair for the sake of the greater piquancy of theoretical and historical cookery. Martov's attitude to the theory and practice of the Permanent Revolution was one of unalterable antagonism, and in the old days he stressed more than once that Trotsky's views on Revolution were rejected equally by the Bolsheviks as well as the Mensheviks. But it is not worth while to pause over this.

What is truly fatal is that there is not a single major question of international proletarian revolution, on which Stalin has failed to express two directly contradictory opinions. We all know that in April 1924, he conclusively demonstrated in "The Questions of Leninism" the impossibility of building socialism in one country. In autumn, in a new edition of the book, he substituted in its place a proof (i. e., a bald proclamation) that the proletariat "can and must" build socialism in one country. The entire remainder of the text was left unchanged. On the question of the worker-peasant party, of the Brest-Litovsk negotiations, the leadership of the October Revolution, on the national question, etc., etc., Stalin contrived to put forward, for a period of a few years, sometimes of a few months, opinions that were mutually exclusive. It would be incorrect to place the blame in everything on a poor memory. The matter reaches deeper here. Stalin completely lacks any method of scientific thinking, he has no criteria of principles. He approaches every question as if that question were born only today and stood apart from all other questions. Stalin contributes his judgments entirely depending upon whatever personal interest of his is uppermost and most urgent today. The contradictions that convict him are the direct vengeance for his vulgar empiricism. Rosa Luxemburg does not appear to him in the perspective of the German, Polish and international workers movement of the last half-century. No, she is to him each time a new, and, besides, an isolated figure, regarding whom he is compelled in every new situation to ask himself anew, "Who goes there Friend of foe?" Unerring instinct has this time whispered to the theoretician of socialism in one country

that the shade of Rosa Luxemburg is irreconcilably inimical to him. But this does not hinder the great shade from remaining the banner of the international proletarian revolution.

LUXEMBURG AND THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Rosa Luxemburg criticized very severely and fundamentally, incorrectly the policies of the Bolsheviks in 1918 from her prison cell. But even in this, her most erroneous work, her eagle's wings are to be seen. Here is her general evaluation of the October overturn, "Everything that the party had the power to perform in the sphere of valor, of forceful action, of revolutionary foresightedness and consequentism—all that was fully carried out by Lenin, Trotsky and the party comrades. All the revolutionary honor and the capacity for action, which the social democracy of the West so lacked, were demonstrated by the Bolsheviks. Their October insurrection was not only the true salvation of the Russian Revolution but it also saved the honor of international socialism." Can this perchance be the voice of Centrism?

In the succeeding pages, Luxemburg subjects to severe criticism the policies of the Bolsheviks in the agrarian sphere, their slogan of national self-determination, and their rejection of formal democracy. In this criticism we might add, directed equally against Lenin and Trotsky, she makes no distinction whatever between their views; and Rosa Luxemburg knew how to read, understand, and seize upon shades. It did not even fall into her head, for instance, to accuse me of the fact that by being in solidarity with Lenin on the agrarian question, I had changed my views on the peasantry. And moreover she knew these views very well since I had developed them in detail in 1909 in her Polish Journal . . . Rosa Luxemburg ends her criticism with the demand, "In the policy of the Bolsheviks the essential must be distinguished from the unessential, the fundamental she considers to be the force of the action of the masses, the will to socialism." "In this relation," she writes, "Lenin and Trotsky with their friends were the first who have set an example to the world proletariat. Even now they remain the only ones who can exclaim with Huss, This, I have dared!"

Yes, Stalin has sufficient cause to hate Rosa Luxemburg. But all the more imperious therefore becomes our duty to shield Rosa's memory from Stalin's calumny that has been caught by the hired functionaries of both hemispheres, and to pass on this truly beautiful, heroic and tragic image to the young generations of the proletariat in all its grandeur and inspirational force.
Prinkipo, June 28, 1932

The Black Hordes of Fascism at the Gates of Power

(Continued from page 1)

the Central Executive Committee of the C. P. G. has condemned the Berliand-Brandenburg united front action of June 20. The whole theory of "social Fascism" with all its disastrous appendages is to remain intact. The "red united front" under the leadership of the Communist party" is to remain the line.

Nothing can be more fatal, nothing can be more tragic than this thoughtless and irresponsible action of the German Stalinists. At a time when the deadly enemy is at the doorstep, the Stalinist bureaucrats persist in their headless and giddy ultimatum game. They simply refuse to tear the mask off the treacherous social democracy at this, the most propitious moment. They are throwing away the opportunity of uniting the Communist vanguard with the social democratic workers in one common front which the workers all want and for the sake of which they will break with the treacherous leaders who want to sabotage it. The criminal, headless German Stalinists must be stopped!

Where is the Communist International? What has the Stalinist faction in control of the C. I. and of the Soviet Union to say in this hour of desperation? Stalin and his faction are maintaining a dastardly silence, a silence which condones the criminal policy of the German leadership. We stigmatize this unheard-of, cowardly, silence on the part of Stalin as an act of treachery.

The Stalinist leadership has allowed the working class of Germany to pass from one defeat to another in the last year alone. Emergency decree has followed emergency decree. The workers have received wage-cut upon wage-cut, unemployment has swelled to fantastic proportions and unemployment insurance has been stripped to the bone, the banks have crashed, the workers' rights have been trampled under foot, the press (even the *Vorwaerter's*) suppressed, Von Papen

LESSONS OF THE BONUS MARCH

(Continued from page 1)

failure the vets and they have paid a heavy price.

The tactic of passive resistance which the vets pursued finally exhausted the little patience of the capitalist class. The armed forces of the government were called into play. First, the police proved unreliable—1200 of the 1400 cops were themselves ex-servicemen! The sailors who were summoned next, notified their masters that they were "sea fighters", and did not enlist to fight on land. The marines gave a similar answer.

The newspapers, hungry for sensational stories, spread the story far and wide in all its gory details. No item of the gruesome butchery was spared. The New York Evening Journal reporter said that he saw a vet who was lying prone, face to the ground, stabbed in the back by a bayonet! No one can be mistaken about the job that was done in Washington by Hoover's orders.

The working class will not soon forget

swept away the Reichstag, the dictatorship was instituted in Prussia—all without a struggle, all without any resistance. The Communist party has simply played the role of a helpless onlooker. It has not given the working class leadership. It has paralyzed by the Stalinist line of policy. The bourgeoisie has been pushing through an unobstructed offensive. The Fascists are primed for power. Germany is to be handed over directly to the butchers of the working class!

The Next Step of Fascism—War Against the U. S. S. R.

But not only Germany. The next step in the bourgeois offensive is war—the international, the imperialist extension of Fascism—imperialist war against the workers' state, against Soviet Russia. The Fascists have gained their following by vague and magnanimous promises. There is no other way out for German capitalism than the bloody rule of Fascism. There is no other way out for Fascism than the adventure of imperialism war against another nation, war in which it will receive unconditional support from the money bags abroad. That nation is and can be none other than the U. S. S. R., the fatherland of the international working class, the fortress of the world revolution!

We are at a turning point in history. The German working class is not yet crushed. The institution of Fascism is, however, a matter of days. The Stalinist leadership has enormously failed in its task. Without the guidance of its revolutionary Communist party, left in the hands of the petrified and putrefying social democracy, the working class of Germany will be lost and with Germany lost, defeat, terrible, bloody defeat stares into the eyes of the Soviet Union and the working class of the world.

Yet, yet, it is not too late. But the fatal moment is almost here. Not a single hour, not a minute is to be lost. Workers, Communists, the destiny of the

capital which this fight has given us must become the special weapon of the Communists to advance the cause of the revolution. We must proceed by raising the class consciousness of the vets by linking up their fight with the fight for general class relief from the crisis at the expense of the capitalist class and its government. The national conference called by the Workers' Ex-servicemen's League for the end of September must work out a program of accomplishing this task. We will support it with all the means at our disposal.

—T. S.

Ferment in the British Party

Open Letter from Comrade Stewart Purkis to Harry Pollitt

Dear Comrade Pollitt,

You have asked a straight question: you have a straight answer. You have asked me how far I go with "The Communist"—the bulletin which contained comrade Trotsky's article "Germany: the Key to the International Situation", and other material by the British Group of the Left Opposition. My answer to you and to my comrades in the British Party is: "I go with it all the way." Not only does this answer inevitably incur expulsion: it also entails misunderstanding, disappointment and condemnation among valued comrades. It is my duty to them and to the Party, that I state clearly why I take any stand with the British Group of the Left Opposition.

Stand—One of Policy

First I wish to say that my reasons are political, not personal. During my five years of Party membership, I have experienced—with few and trifling exceptions—nothing but good will and comradeship in my Party life: the rank and file of the Party are, as a whole, splendid comrades and fellow workers. The leadership of our Party has in it men of outstanding gifts: a writer as acute as R. P. Dutt; an organizer as skilled as Emile Burns; a speaker, tactician and mass leader as able as Harry Pollitt. Such is the quality of the leadership.

This is my estimate of our Party and its leadership. I state it that it may be clear that it is not because of unsatisfactory personal relationships with the rank and file, nor because I underestimate the ability and gifts of its leadership that I line up with the Left Opposition. I support the Left Opposition because I believe that the policy of the British Party and of the Communist International is at fault on those very root issues for which comrades Trotsky, Rakovsky and the many comrades of the Left Opposition have fought and have been expelled.

Reviewing Past of Party

The very facts I have indicated—the gifted leadership of the British party, the comradely and industrious rank and file, the developed objective conditions—all these contrast so vividly with the Party's failure to win the leadership of the British working class, that every Communist has it as his plain duty to ask himself whether the Party is on the correct line. The position in Britain today, after ten years of hard struggle is: (1) **Parliamentary**: 70,000 votes for the defence of the U. S. S. R.; (2) **Industrial**: no roots in factories or trade unions; (3) **Political**: complete failure to make the revolutionary way out plain to the workers. This position repeats itself in the Communist parties throughout the world. These facts have moved me to accept the Left Opposition criticism of the strategy of the Communist International.

At the time of the Left Opposition struggle and the expulsion of comrade Trotsky, I was a new member of the Party. Even then it was difficult for me not to oppose the contention that Trotsky, who had shared the leadership with Lenin, who—in the words of Stalin "had the immediate direction of the practical organization of the uprising" and to whom "the Party was first and foremost indebted for the garrison's prompt going over to the Soviet" could be the "counter-revolutionary" into which Party calumny slowly pictured him. Literature was sparse. The Party's little great men the Arnotts the Ernle Browns, the Murphys, they said their say. One remained unconvinced but ill-equipped and so refrained from voting. With others I worked on in the Party and continued to study the issues raised by the Left Opposition.

The literature has come slowly to hand. On the past issues—Poland, China, Russian industrial and agricultural development, the Anglo-Russian Committee, all the evidence I have se-

cured justifies the Left Opposition and condemns the line of the Communist International. But though the Left Opposition has been correct, it seemed inadvisable to risk expulsion from the Party, even to take part in a fight to win the re-admission to the Communist International of comrades whose past line had been the correct one. Past issues were past. One turned to the work which clamoured to be done at every depot gate and street corner.

The Crucial Issue of Germany

Then hard on the heels of the disturbing attitude of the Communist International towards the Spanish Revolution, came the crucial issue of Germany. Party comrades "in the know" whispered that the Fascists were to take power unchallenged. German industry is so important to the success of the Five Year Plan, that nothing must disturb the relations between German Capitalism and Russian Socialism. The Five Year Plans were to be completed with the help of German industry: whatever the government!

But comrade Trotsky's writing on the German issue, especially "Germany: the Key to the International Situation", the "Letter to a German Comrade" and "What Next?" have vividly shown the position in Europe. They have made it clear that "Who wins in Germany wins in Europe". They have presented the danger of war on the U. S. S. R., not as an annual August shillbilleth, but as a living reality.

In 1930 Trotsky warned the Party that their forecasts of the early collapse of Fascism were not justified. Twelve months ago, Trotsky pointed to the United Front of the Communist and social democratic organizations as the only policy which could ensure the defeat of Fascism, the break-up of social democracy, and successes in the struggle for proletarian power. Today events tardily compel the Party towards Trotsky's line. But time in this struggle is the life and death factor. The line which Trotsky pointed out two years ago, the Party begins to shuffle towards to-day. These delays and weaknesses of both the Communist International and the German leadership threaten disaster to the U. S. S. R. and to the whole working class movement. In the present situation it is to me a clear duty to put comrade Trotsky's writings in the hands of the Party membership, that his leadership may be available to the working class in this hour of need. That is why I support the work of the Left Opposition in issuing the bulletin for circulating in the Party and to militant workers.

When I was expelled from the Railway Clerks Association, the R. C. A. leadership saw and condemned my action as a "breach of rule". Many of my fellow members and my comrades in the Party saw and supported my action as the course which loyalty to the working class demanded.

I know that I may now be condemned by you and by many valued comrades for breaking rules by circulating this material on Germany. But we who do this hold that loyalty to the Party's cause is more important than keeping rules which ban vital discussion in the Party.

In this short letter I cannot set out the Left Opposition case on the major political issue: the case for the policy of International Revolution against National Socialism (even when it wears the guise of "Socialism in one country"), and all the tactical issues which follow from it. I ask every comrade who sees the importance of mastering these issues to write to me for details of the publications of the Left Opposition.

I write this letter to make it clear that my course of action is dictated by political and not personal motives; and that if my acceptance of the Left Opposition position and support for its works entails my expulsion, I shall from without the Party do my utmost—together with my Left Opposition comrades within the Party—to strengthen the Party for its real task: the organization of the working class for the world struggle for world socialism.

With Communist greetings,
STEWART PURKIS.

4, Hogarth Hill, London N. W. 11. July 27th, 1932.

MARXIST CLASSICS

Through an exchange arrangement with a local bookseller we have got a number of copies of the **Communist Manifesto; Socialism, Utopian and Scientific; Wage Labor and Capital; and Value Price and Profit**. In the past we have received requests for this literature. In the course of our propaganda work among workers we frequently find it necessary to begin at rock bottom. This is all the more necessary today because of the terribly low ideological level that obtains in the party ranks under Stalinist leadership.

Unfortunately because of the terms of our exchange arrangement we are unable to offer any discount on this literature. The selling prices in the order in which they are listed above are: 10 cents; 25 cents; 10 cents; 25 cents.

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LEON TROTSKY

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