

The Negro Struggle

By ALBERT PARKER

The aircraft workers at Vultee (organized into Local 683 of the United Auto Workers Union, CIO) deserve double thanks from the workers of this country.

First of all they struck a blow which showed that it is not only desirable but possible to win higher wages and better working conditions in the war industries, even under a heavy barrage of attacks from the employers, their stooges and the government.

Secondly, they have taken another action which will be greeted with enthusiasm by the workers, especially those Negro workers who are almost 100% barred from many important industries such as aircraft.

Here is how it happened. At the dance celebrating the victorious strike, two Negro members were asked to leave by people acting as floor managers and making the request on their own initiative.

When the members of the union learned about it, there was a discussion of this action on the floor of a regular local meeting, resulting in the adoption of the following resolution:

"WHEREAS: At a public dance given by the Vultee unit of Local 683, two Negro union brothers and their guests were asked to leave, and

WHEREAS: This action is in direct contradiction to the national CIO policy of no discrimination because of race, color, creed, nationality or political affiliation, and

WHEREAS: The success of our drive to organize the aircraft industry depends upon the broadest possible public support, and

WHEREAS: The Negro people, who helped on our picket line with donations of food and money in our recent successful strike, are part of that public, and

WHEREAS: We recognize that discrimination of any kind is the weapon used by the employer and his organizations to split and divide us in our struggle for a higher standard of living, therefore be it

RESOLVED: That we apologize to the Negro people for this action, and that we give our complete assurance that this action will not be repeated, and be it further

RESOLVED: That this Local 683 of the United Auto Workers, CIO, do all in its power to break down the anti-labor, racial discrimination policy in the aircraft and national defense industries, recognizing that our national defense must rest on the maintenance of our democratic principles, foremost among which is the right of every citizen to an opportunity to earn his livelihood without discrimination."

Another instance of gains in the field of labor against racial suspicion and division is to be seen in what happened in another CIO union, Local 486, of the Midland Steel plant in Cleveland.

Here in a union where 90% of the membership are white workers, Joseph Jackson, a Negro and former vice president, has been elected president. As one commentator in the area, Ted Cox, put it:

"They (the members) wanted the best leadership available in the shop. So, when President Mack Cheek resigned, they looked around. They didn't give a damn what color or what religious or political opinions that leadership might have. They wanted ability.

"It happened that Joe Jackson, who is colored, had that ability. So now Joe is president of one of the biggest, most militant and most successful local unions in the Cleveland CIO."

Here, therefore, are two good examples of how trade unions, militant and democratically controlled by the rank-and-file, are educating white workers to the necessity for complete equality.

Much Still to be Done

The editorial page of the latest issue of The Chicago Defender features a cartoon by Jay Jackson, entitled "Back Of It All." It shows a factory entitled "National Defense Work" bearing a sign "Help Wanted." In front of it stands a Negro worker in overalls, labeled "Negro Labor," and he is held up, prevented from entering it, by a huge hand extended in front of him, barring his entrance. This hand is labeled "A.F.L."

The point of the cartoon is quite evidently that Negro labor could get jobs in the war industries if it were not for the AFL, which is "back of it all."

Does such a cartoon help the struggle to open the doors of industry to colored workers? We think not.

Who owns and controls and runs the factories? The unions—or the bosses? To ask the question is to answer it. It is the bosses of course, and it is they and their managers who do the hiring. Who benefits from division of the races, who really profits from it, the unions or the bosses? The bosses, of course, because they can play one race against the other.

Plenty of factories in the war industries are not organized at all. How many of these hire Negroes any more than the factories that are organized?

It is incorrect and misleading to say that the main responsibility for discrimination in hiring in the war industries lies at the door of the AFL. To do so serves only to whitewash the role of bosses who are really responsible.

We do not seek in any way to minimize or excuse or cover up the stupid, reactionary and vicious part played by some union leaders in the AFL. We denounce them and we carry on a fight against their harmful policies.

After all, what is "back of it all" even in the case of AFL officials guilty of Jim Crow practices? Isn't it the training they received from the capitalist system? Isn't it the prejudices they inherited from the "respectable" captains of industry whom so many of them try to imitate?

KARL LIEBKNECHT: Revolutionist

The "Democrats" Murdered Him—And Opened The Road To Hitler

By EUGENE VARLIN

Twenty-two years ago this January 15, the two outstanding revolutionary leaders of the German working class, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, were arrested and murdered by the German Junker officers whom the Social Democratic government had called upon to aid in crushing the socialist revolution. That horrible deed, connived at by the pro-war "socialists," beheaded the revolution and led to the victory of Nazism.

Liebknecht's life is an inspiration to the German proletariat which will rise in the course of this war and avenge him. At the time of his birth, in August 1871, his father, founder of the German socialist movement, was in prison for "high treason." Karl became a lawyer—but one whose first case was the defense of a young socialist, and so it was always.

His immortal fame rests, above all, on his leadership of the struggle against bourgeois militarism. In 1906 he was on trial; the "crime" was a series of lectures on militarism, delivered to the annual conference of the Socialist Youth organizations. When he published the lectures, the book was confiscated, he was arrested and sentenced to 18 months imprisonment.

He was not a pacifist. On the contrary, as a member of the International Bureau of the Socialist Youth he attacked those who proposed refusal to register for military services. In opposition to these pacifists, he called for the struggle against bourgeois militarism within the bourgeois army itself.

When the war broke out, he was a member of the Reichstag. The Social Democratic party's Reichstag group was dominated, as was the party, by trade union bureaucrats; they carried their pacifist opportunism to its logical conclusion, and supported the war. Liebknecht refused to go along, although at the first vote in the Reichstag he abided by party discipline; at the December 2, 1914

assassinated them. The assassins were known; but their trial was a mere farce.

Shortly before Comrade Trotsky's death, he predicted, and events bear it out, that the Prussian drill-sergeant would become the ideal of capitalist America. Liebknecht's "Militarism"—his 1906 lectures—deserves to be read by all workers today, for it is an analysis of bourgeois militarism, as expressed by its Prussian exponents and now imitated everywhere.

Militarism, Liebknecht points out in his book, assumes under capitalism special forms, suited to the uses to which capitalism puts it. Best adapted to capitalist needs is universal military training; Liebknecht predicted its establishment in the United States.

The army of capitalism serves as a "national institution destined for attack"; but it is at the same time also a weapon in the struggle of the bosses against the workers. Not only against the workers at home, but also against the masses abroad. For the wars of capitalism in this epoch, Liebknecht already saw clearly in 1906, originate not in Europe but in the political and commercial expansion of the "civilized nations," whose colonial policies produce two new forms of militarism: "navalism" (militarism on sea) and colonial militarism. The last is becoming increasingly important for the capitalists, Liebknecht proved; it is used to enslave the natives of the "backward" continents.

THE CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE ARMY

The most significant contradiction within capitalist militarism, Liebknecht showed, is that in the struggles of the big capitalist countries against each other, they are compelled to arm the whole

people. Liebknecht foresaw that the Czar would be one of the first to be destroyed by this contradiction.

"In the bourgeois capitalist state," he wrote, "the conscript army, in its function as a weapon against the proletariat, is a crude and terrible contradiction in itself; under the Czar's despotic regime the conscript army is a weapon which must turn itself more and more with crushing power against the despotism of czarism itself."

Another contradiction in capitalist militarism is that, as modern weapons and strategy become more and more complex, they require highly intelligent soldiers. It was an open secret that the German officers, though they found the East-Elbian peasants the most easily commanded soldiers, complained that they could be used only within certain limits because of their low intelligence. These monarchist officers had to confess that the class-conscious Socialist workers made the best soldiers. At the same time, of course, these Socialists were dedicated to destroying the Junker officer class. This contradiction is even more pronounced today than it was in Liebknecht's time; precisely the most intelligent trade-unionists and revolutionists make the best tank-drivers, machine-gunners, aviation mechanics, etc. The Czar will have plenty of company!

The power of life and death which capitalist army officers have over their men tends to be extended to private industry and it is first challenged there by the workers. Industrialists holding army contracts attempt to impose barracks discipline on their workers. That Liebknecht was right in generalizing that this would be

done elsewhere besides Prussia is proved to the hilt by the present attempt to outlaw strikes in war-production plants in the United States.

The maltreatment of soldiers, Liebknecht insists, is an integral part of bourgeois militarism. It flows from the need of the capitalists to discipline in their army the working class whose interests are opposed to those of the capitalist class. The power of life and death possessed by the officers further aggravates this situation; the officers tend to use maltreatment instead of persuasion in whipping the men into shape.

THESE CONTRADICTIONS POINT THE WAY OUT

This exposition of Liebknecht's views indicates how he proposed to put an end to bourgeois militarism. Pacifism, disarmament, etc., he viewed as so much nonsense. The fundamental contradiction between the capitalist officer and the armed worker-soldier would inevitably lead to an explosion from within. It was the task of the revolutionary party to fight for the interests of the worker-soldiers and to organize them to secure redress of their grievances. Out of this struggle—as much part of the class struggle as is the fight in the factories for workers' rights, and in the epoch of militarism even more important—would come, Liebknecht was sure, the socialist society of the future.

Liebknecht and Luxemburg made the mistake, I have said, of not beginning to build the revolutionary party in time to lead the revolutionary wave. Two generations have paid dearly for that mistake. But our generation will learn, has already profited, from both their mistakes and their great contributions.

They Tell Vile Falsehoods About German Workers

The war propaganda of British and American imperialism attempts to picture the German masses as "hypnotized" followers of Hitler.

It is a deliberate lie. It was with the connivance and consent of the capitalists of the world that Hitler came to power in 1933. They preferred Hitler to the only other real alternative—the socialist revolution in Germany.

That revolution was almost achieved in 1918, when the German workers and the returning soldiers overthrew the Kaiser. It was with the help of a French-British-American threat of armed intervention—just as they intervened in Russia—that the German "democrats" smashed the revolution.

The German workers have shown in their whole history that Nazism is utterly alien to them. They have given to the world a shining firmament of revolutionary figures: Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, Franz Mehring, Clara Zetkin. These, and not Hitler, typify the German masses.

Thirteen million socialists and communists—the backbone of the German people—voted against Hitler in the last election that was permitted. And that election only dimly reflected—no election under capitalism really reflects—the anti-fascist sentiment of the German people.

The German workers need help in overthrowing Hitler. But that help is not carried by American bombing planes. Not freedom but a bloody military dictatorship will be brought to Germany by the victorious imperialist armies of "democracy."

The decisive help that we can give to the German workers so that they can overthrow Hitler is to demonstrate to them that we, too, are struggling against our oppressors. That we, too, are fighting for a Workers Government,

Our Red Rosa, The German Workers Called Her

By ANTOINETTE F. KONIKOW

Physically she was small, slender, a neglected hip disease in childhood left her with a limp. On her arrival to address large gatherings, committees meeting her for the first time would become crestfallen: How could such a frail being make an impression on the speaker's platform! But once she faced the crowd, she seemed to grow in stature; her resonant powerful voice, her flaming oratory roused audiences to wild enthusiasm. Our Red Rosa, the German workers called her with proud tenderness.

Rosa Luxemburg was a magnificent speaker and combined this with a rare ability of presenting the ideas of socialism in a simple and graphic language. She was not only a student but a theoretician of Marxism, the author of many pamphlets and books, among them, "The Accumulation of Capital," in which she expanded and modified Marx's exposition of this subject in volume II of *Das Kapital*. (The controversy over her interpretation still continues and I leave it to theoreticians to evaluate its merits.) But Rosa was no cabinet theoretician. Her writings as her speeches were intimately bound up with action.

She possessed the rarest of gifts—the ability to understand and even sense in advance the vital periods, problems, and strategy of the workers' movement. It was precisely this that brought her into sharp conflict throughout her life with the self-satisfied and degenerating leadership of old German Social Democracy.

Rosa Luxemburg was born in Czarist Poland, and began to participate in illegal revolutionary circles from a very early age. At 18 she was forced to flee Poland in order to escape arrest. I met her at Zurich where she studied economics and philosophy. She was so mature, serious and self-assured that my friends and myself considered her our senior, but in reality she was several years younger than we were.

Returning to Poland she worked to counteract the reactionary nationalist movement which had grown strong, by organizing the workers on a principled Marxist basis. Lenin criticized her opposing the demand for self-determination, in particular for Poland. Her influence in organizing a powerful and strongly centralized party in Poland was enormous. On more than one occasion she sided with Lenin against the Mensheviks within the Russian movement.

Her Struggle Against Reformism

Through a fictitious marriage she became a German citizen and was thus admitted to the arena of the large German party. From then on we find her dealing blow after blow to the reformist tendency which was gaining sway over the German Social Democracy and the Sec-

ond International. For example, when the French Socialists became jubilant because Millerand had received a high ministerial post, Rosa at once condemned this entry into a bourgeois government. The gist of her criticism was: Socialists can accept executive state positions only if the government itself is in their hands, otherwise they invariably serve as the servants of the bourgeoisie and betray the workers.

In her fight against revisionism she attacked Bernstein, a very prominent and influential party leader in Germany, who argued that Marx had become "outmoded" and that it was possible to evolve into socialism without any revolution by simply relying on progress, the parliament, and the feelings of justice and morality. Revisionism expressed the direct pressure of the middle class upon the workers' movement; pressure which repeats itself periodically, as we can vouch for from our own recent experience. In Germany, capitalism was on the up-grade at the time. The party had several million votes, a vast treasury, many newspapers, scores of parliamentary seats, etc. Party functionaries were well paid, and trade union leaders dominated the party. A feeling of satisfaction combined with a fear of losing their gains began to possess the Social Democratic tops. They argued against revolutionary action because everything seemed to be progressing smoothly. Why rush, why "gamble," when a gradual growth would bring about socialism? In her fight against this Philistine outlook, Rosa had against her almost the entire German leadership.

1905 Becomes the Dividing Line

When the 1905 revolution broke out in Russia, Rosa with great joy followed the tremendous mass movement in her own backward homeland. She grasped at once the importance of the new weapons applied in her Russia, especially the role of the general strike. The German leadership inclined to dismiss the general strike as "general nonsense." But Rosa saw in it revolutionary mass action surging onward without fear of the possibilities of defeat—an expression of the tremendous vitality latent in the masses. During this period she became more and more estranged from the old leadership, and from Karl Kautsky himself who had for a while shared her enthusiasm for the 1905 events in Russia.

The World War of 1914 brought with it the crucial test for all revolutionists. The German party and the Second International revealed the full extent of their degeneration. The leaders betrayed the working class. Kautsky, the theoretical leader of the Second International bid his farewell to Marxism, declaring that internationalism could operate only in peace time and

had to be suspended for the duration of war. Rosa Luxemburg did not waver in her stand. Together with Lenin she had sponsored the resolution against war adapted at the Stuttgart World Congress, the last one before the war. This resolution in veiled phraseology (to elude the German censors), had actually threatened a civil war against the bourgeoisie in every country if war were declared.

At the outbreak of the war Rosa Luxemburg applied the line of this resolution. Addressing the workers in Germany she said: "If you are ordered to shoot down your French brothers refuse to shoot!" She was arrested and imprisoned for the duration of the war. Her fate became henceforth indissolubly linked with that of Liebknecht, her comrade-in-arms, who had proclaimed: "Our main enemy is at home!" and who soon shared Rosa's fate—imprisonment.

Rosa Luxemburg, caged like an eagle, spent her days in a tiny cell from which she could barely glimpse a blue patch of the sky. Her letters from prison reveal an aspect of her character previously known only to her friends. The tenderness of this indomitable fighter is evidenced in these letters. She could not observe without revulsion even the suffering of animals—the overloaded oxen, the tiny, unprotected bird. In her letters she puts down her deep sympathy for all suffering, her craving for peace and beauty, her anger at injustice. She did not, however, let her hands hang. Her magnetic personality and noble nature enabled her to make friends in prison who helped to smuggle out regularly her articles for "The International," the publication of the Spartakus group which she and Liebknecht had formed.

The Famous "Junius" Pamphlet

Her best known work of that period is the Junius pamphlet, circulated throughout Germany. She did not sign her name because that would have disclosed her work in prison. Even Lenin was unaware of the identity of the author, of this remarkable pamphlet, which he greeted with joy as a sign of a new and powerful revolutionary wing developing in Germany. He criticized the pamphlet for its mistakes, but appreciated its power and true revolutionary spirit.

"Junius" reasons for opposing imperialist wars have become classic. They should be studied today, for they apply to World War II just as they did twenty years ago. Rosa explained that the victory of either side—whether Germany or the Allies—would necessarily lead to another world slaughter. Only the masses could tear humanity out of war. Nothing can save the world except Socialism.

She exposed the hypocrisy of the capitalist class, the fraud of patriotism. The ruling class will always make an alliance with the enemy in order to suppress its own working class. The French aristocrats welcomed the English and German armies against the French Jacobins. The German army released the army of Napoleon III so that the Paris Commune could be crushed. The Russian White Guards urged England, France and Germany to help them against the Russia of the Bolsheviks.

She pointed out that, far from weakening the working class, the revolution would strengthen and encourage the masses to defend their country, which becomes their real fatherland only after the revolution. The combined forces of all the monarchies could not subdue the great French Revolution. Nor could Soviet Russia under Lenin and Trotsky be overthrown by all the imperialists.

And when the social patriots sneered that the party could do nothing during war time, she replied: Our task is to issue clear political slogans comprehensible to the workers; a determined consistently revolutionary course of action followed by the party will arouse

assurance, self-confidence, and resolution in the masses; a weak, vacillating course not only undermines the power of the working class but demoralizes and confuses the masses. She cited a passage from a book by General Bernhardt (he was the guiding genius of the German army at that time) disclosing his fear that under certain conditions the army might become a menace to the ruling class.

The Junius pamphlet states that national wars cannot be waged under imperialism. Lenin realized that Junius had the world war in mind, but considered it necessary to correct this statement by explaining that we would support national wars of the colonial peoples for self-determination; such wars are progressive and a blow to imperialism.

Junius called for a German republic to put an end to the war. Lenin pointed out that a parliament constituted of representatives of the bourgeoisie and the middle class could never stop the war. Only the masses—through the Soviets—can assure peace.

Rosa and the Russian Revolution

In prison Rosa received the great news of the Russian Revolution. She burned with indignation over the Brest-Litovsk peace forced by Germany upon the Bolsheviks. She accused the pro-war "socialists" of their responsibility, their degrading submission to the Junkers. The Russian Revolution deeply inspired Rosa. Enemies of the Russian Revolution have tried to construe her criticism of the Russian Bolsheviks as an opposition to the Russian revolution. This is false. It was as one of them that she criticized some of their tactics.

The most vicious lie is that spread by the Stalinists, who have tried to depict her as an enemy of Communism.

The doors of her prison were thrown open by the German workers. It was November 9, 1918—the beginning of the German revolution. Although her long prison term had weakened and exhausted her, Rosa threw herself into the work. She edited the Rote Fahne (Red Banner). Together with Liebknecht she organized the German Communist Party. The Manifesto of the party, in complete agreement with the program advocated by Lenin and Trotsky was written by her.

The degenerated leadership of the Social Democracy took charge of the government in order to crush the revolution. Luxemburg and Liebknecht were hounded. Leaflets demanding their assassination were circulated. Large rewards were offered for their capture. The Spartakus group which had become the German Communist Party had a large following but was not yet strong enough to take power. The situation greatly resembled the July, 1917 days in Russia. The advanced workers were pressing forward to battle, while the leadership realized that it was premature. The bourgeoisie and the Social Democratic leaders did everything in their power to provoke the masses in Berlin to an uprising so as to drown the revolution in blood. Liebknecht and Luxemburg did not stand aside from the masses. On January 15, 1919 they were arrested and immediately assassinated.

These two great revolutionists, two of the most sincere, devoted and fearless leaders of the proletariat were murdered by the bourgeoisie and its "socialist" lackeys. Luxemburg and Liebknecht have become the symbols for courage, militancy and unswerving opposition to imperialist war. The monuments erected in Germany to commemorate these two comrades have been destroyed by Hitler.

But Luxemburg and Liebknecht have more permanent memorials than monuments of stone or iron. Their names are inscribed in flaming red letters in the hearts of the international working class.

LENIN MEMORIAL MEETING

SPEAKER

GRACE CARLSON

Trotskyist Candidate for U. S. Senator from Minnesota. Member National Executive Board of the Workers Defense League

Friday, January 24, 1941
8:30 P.M.

IRVING PLAZA

Irving Place and 15th Street

New York City

AUSPICES: Socialist Workers Party

Admission 25c