

The Revolutionary Age

A Chronicle and Interpretation of Events in Europe.

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The Future Belongs to the People

THE future belongs to the people," declared Liebknecht when he was liberated from prison by the German junkers in a frantic effort to stay the Revolution that a few days later flamed throughout Germany. And today, awakened to the truth of his words by his brutal murder and the savage lynching of Rosa Luxemburg, the proletariat of Germany are moving to action and the ultimate conquest of power that will ensure the future for the people.

Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht have fallen, victims of the desperate savagery of the bourgeois classes, who feel that their power is on the wain. Although they have succeeded in striking down these two valiant fighters, in a physical sense, they have not succeeded in killing their ideas or their words. On the contrary, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg speak with voices that now echo round the world.

"Socialism does not mean the conveying of Parliaments and the enactment of laws; it means the overthrow of the ruling classes by the proletariat," said Rosa Luxemburg on her release from prison which took place about the same time as Liebknecht was freed. They both threw themselves into the struggle and around them centered the revolutionary proletariat, and the fight against majority Socialism, which having acted ever since the outbreak of the war to prevent the revolution, now sought to divert it into the blind alley of bourgeois democracy. They both fell, victims to the rage of the reactionary forces, but in so falling they sealed the fate of the bourgeoisie and its apologist, majority Socialism.

The Constituent Assembly, the instrument of reaction, has proved true to its mission and Germany faces a bourgeois capitalist government, as both Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg foretold. The bourgeoisie and Majority Socialism have triumphed—at the polls. But the proletariat is massing for action. . . . "The future belongs to the people!"

All over Germany the workers are conducting mass strikes, strikes against the bourgeoisie and against the majority Socialists. Already these strikes are taking on the character of mass demonstrations; tomorrow these demonstrations will become mass uprisings—these are the revolutionary movements of the proletariat—and then the ballot-box triumph will become ignominious defeat.

At Bremen, Cruxhaven, Dusseldorf, Hamm, Breslau, Remscheid, throughout the coal-mining regions and the big industrial districts the workers are bringing their economic might to bear, and before this might the proclamations of governments, the ballot-box victories, "the convening of Parliaments and the enactment of laws" are helpless. In revolutions as in peace, or during imperialistic wars the bourgeoisie is helpless once the workers realize their power and decide to use it. The mighty Hindenburg line—which Allied generals pronounced as almost impregnable—crumbled before the will of the proletariat, almost

over night. The unnatural alliance of "Socialists" with the bourgeois imperialists cannot stand before the workers once they see clearly. In the first days of the revolution majority Socialism succeeded in deluding the masses. Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg fearlessly devoted themselves to the task of awakening the proletariat to the real situation. But such a task takes time. In Russia where the bourgeoisie was comparatively weak and unorganized this task took over six months. How well Liebknecht, Mehring, Rosa Luxemburg, Klara Zetkin and the Spartacans generally, succeeded, can be judged from the extent of the fighting in Berlin a few weeks ago and by the number of towns throughout Germany, particularly in the north, where the dictatorship of the proletariat is actually in operation. But those sections of the workers which were not reached by the Spartacus Group while Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were alive, are now rallying to the standard of revolutionary Socialism, awakened to the realities of the situation by their deaths.

The press reports: "Strikes of miners on a great scale have broken out in Germany, extending to nearly every colliery district in Germany. The movement, which originated as a protest against the killing of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, is of a political character, directed against the Ebert-Scheidemann Government. In Upper Silesia fresh strikes have broken out and nearly 150,000 miners are idle. . . . The employees of the famous Deutsche Kaiser mine have issued a declaration that their action is a demonstration against the government. . . . At Remscheid there is a general strike as a protest against the killing of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. In Berlin the electrical workers, the bank clerks, the street car and subway employes, the telephone operators, the waiters, the gas and municipal workers, and various others are on strike with the result that the city is completely tied up. The German proletariat is beginning to move. . . . "The future belongs to the people."

But it is not alone in Germany that the workers are awakening. Britain has over 150,000 workers on strike, with the railroad workers threatening to stop work at any moment; while in Ireland, the biggest industrial center in the country, Belfast, is paralyzed; over 100,000 men and women are out, the city is in darkness and clashes between the strikers and the police and military are of daily occurrence. In Italy the situation is admittedly critical; in France mass strikes are looming ahead; in Austria, the press reports that over 150,000 are idle in and around Vienna, while in Rumania the peasants are openly in revolt against the landed classes. . . . If these strikes were solely confined to demands for higher wages or shorter hours the situation would not be remarkable, but even the bourgeois press admits that the underlying causes of the unrest is dissatisfaction with the various governments. There is no doubt that all these strikes are the aftermath of the war and are symbolical of the awakening of the working masses of a realization of the truth of Karl Liebknecht's words, "The future belongs to the people." This in itself is encouraging, but signs are not wanting that the masses are going beyond the words of Liebknecht's phrase, are catching the inference—the inference that if the future belongs to the people, the people must conquer power in order to ensure that they will control what belongs to them.

In 1915 Liebknecht replied to John Reed's query regarding the chances of world Revolution by saying: "To my mind nothing else can come out of the war." He saw clearly then and his vision was not dimmed when he was released from prison. But, unlike many others who foresaw revolution as the result of the war, Liebknecht had a very clear idea of how the revolution would operate. He called for a revolt against the government while the war was at its height, and was sent to prison as a result. Released from prison by the approach of the revolution he had called for, he sounded the call to further action by his words: "The future belongs to the people."

Liebknecht's words were not so much a statement of fact based on the recognition of the trend of events; they were and are a slogan, a call to action to the workers to take over the power and mould the future to their desires.

Bolshevikjabs

WE cull the following from the press:

"When the body of Francis Joseph was carried to the Chapel of the Capuchins in Vienna for interment, the commanding officer of the Life Guards, clad in black and steel, thundered with his mailed fist at the barred gate, asking for the body to be admitted. A monk within, according to the rite, asked in Latin: 'Who is it?' Thereupon the officer answered: 'Franciscus Josephus primus, Austriae Imperator, Rex Hungariae, Bohemiae, Illyriae,' etc.

"I know him not," the monk answered. 'Speak again.' Then another officer said in a low voice: 'Franciscus Josephus, a poor erring wanderer, is seeking rest.' Throwing open the gates the monk replied: 'Bring him in.'" Fake humility.

* * *

After evacuating Petrograd last week the Bolsheviks have now returned, but it is reported that this time they have not unpacked their baggage, as they expect to evacuate again shortly.

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Trotsky is reported to be in flight once more, but we are glad to see that he took enough time to liberate Lenin, who is reported to be conquering all before him in the north. The rest in prison apparently did him a lot of good.

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With Lloyd-George keeping one eye on the strike bulletins and the other on the Sinn Feiners it's no wonder that the Peace Conference is going by the board.

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We think that some kind-hearted person should bring him the recent election returns to relieve his mind and show how solidly the country is behind him.

* * *

The Massachusetts legislature has appropriated \$10,000 in order to find jobs for the discharged soldiers, according to press reports. Why not make the appropriation larger and employ all the soldiers to get jobs for one another? It would be quite in line with our present ways of doing things and at least the soldiers would get something more out of it than the pleasure of advertising how much politicians are interested in them.

* * *

Moscow, January 30.—Lenin has returned to Russia from a two week's vacation in Spain. He was very much surprised to hear that during his absence Trotsky had arrested him.

The news of the two billion roubles printed in the United States by the "Russian Embassy" at Washington and shipped to Siberia was received here with the greatest enthusiasm. Since the Soviet government now owns all property this money will eventually be received in the form of taxes. It is reported that it will be used to redeem the French bonds.

No answer has been returned to the invitation of the Peace Conference to send delegates to Princes Island because the Soviet government realizes that every 10 miles the Allies are forced to retreat in Russia will bring the conference between the Russian delegates and the Allied representatives 10 miles nearer Moscow, and as the Soviet government has spent quite a lot of money in railroad fares when Trotsky and Lenin were gadding about the country and even visiting remote parts of the world, it has decided to wait and put the burden of expense on the Allies.

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It is rumored that Sir Edward Carson is opposed to the establishment of a Soviet in Belfast.

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To the list of our special colored Terrors we have now added the Orange Terror—they are breaking windows in Belfast.

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Arising out of the Peace Conference this interesting query presents itself to us: Does five constitute a dictatorship?