

The Communist Party of Germany

IN No. 229 of the Moscow *Pravda*, Karl Radek, the Bolshevik envoy to Germany, gives interesting information about the disorganization of the German Social-Democracy during the war and about the revolutionary elements which formed about the end of last year—the Spartacus party.

Radek points out that even before the war German Marxism "divided into two groups: the so-called centre, led by Kautsky, Hilferding, Ekstein, Haaze and Ledebour; and the so-called left radicals, led by Knief, Rosa Luxemburg, Pannecuk, Talheimer, Westmeier and Zetkin."

However, the line which divided the centre and the left of the German Social-Democracy before the war was not clear to the other sections of the Internationale. Many were of the opinion that there really were no serious differences on principles between the centre and the left. Many comrades thought that the left are going too far in their attacks on the centre.

But then the war broke out and "the majority of the German Social-Democracy openly deserted to German Imperialism, covering up the attack of German Imperialism by the slogan of national defense. Nine tenths of the parliamentary representatives of the so-called centre were among the traitors. A handful remained formally true to the old principles, but in reality they did not oppose Imperialism, defending their policy by the necessity of saving the unity of the party, although unity with betrayers of Socialism is nothing else than treason. The German Social-Democracy failed, and with it failed the centre, whose political leader, deputy Haaze, read on the 4th of August the famous declaration in the Reichstag about the defense of the fatherland. And the ideological leader of the centre, Kautsky, in his first message to the workers after this collapse of German Socialism found only words of justification for what had happened and urged unity.

"Precisely at this time it became clear that the work of the left radicals and their struggle against the decayed Kautskianism was not in vain, although

before the war they could not convince the labor masses of the menace of Imperialism and of the necessity of revolutionary struggle. But they have created a group of workers who at the moment of the most distressing disappointment clearly saw ahead of them the road of the struggle, understood the causes of the collapse and knew the way out of it. Already at the end of August, 1914, the Berlin left radicals as well as the Bremen and Hamburg groups had become active.

"Liebknecht's vote against war credits on November 21, 1914, was the first open call addressed to the masses. The workers hardly moved, and the centre party tried to suppress every movement, claiming that it was premature and pointing out the danger of a split. Liebknecht's action was taken by the centre as a slap directed at it. The centre tried to compromise Liebknecht in the eyes of the masses, describing him as a selfish man who wants to be in the limelight. But the masses of workers understood the significance of the act of November 21 and began to close their ranks around Karl Liebknecht. The Bremen group carried on in the *Bremen Burger Zeitung* not only a militant policy with regard to current events, but interpreted the theoretical bankruptcy of the Internationale and other events, in spite of the opposition of the centre and the strict censorship. The small *Licht Strahlen* carried on a persistent struggle for revolutionary Marxism.

"The German disconnected groups found a centre abroad in the *Berner Tagewacht* which gets all the news of the German movement. In May, 1915, Liebknecht's group managed to publish *The International*, whose appearance marked the end of the first period of the Communist Party of Germany.

"The Zimmerwald conference, however, shows that it was easier to plan correct theoretical tactics than to actually carry them out. The masses were awakening, but did not yet act, and the centrist were therefore, still dominant. The delegation of the "International" group at the Zimmerwald conference, in

spite of their criticism of the centrists, at the final vote acted together with them.

"The arrest of Liebknecht, who was opposed to this indecisive policy, who demanded relentless separation from the centrists, increased the influence of the right part of the Communists, who, being opposed to a separation from the centrists, could not give a clear slogan for a split in the German Social-Democracy.

"But in spite of its tactical mistakes the group "International" in all open acts functioned as the most resolute factor. This group was at the head of the labor masses as soon as food riots, strikes and political demonstrations began. And during this struggle this group fell under the influence of the consistent propaganda of the Bremen *Arbeiter Politik*.

"Nevertheless, the desire not to break with the Independents still won in the group "International," although in the secret letters to its organizations the group speaks of the unity with the pacifist centrists as a temporary necessity, in view of the fact that the group existed illegally, while the centrists had some legal standing. The participation of the Spartacus group in the Independent party forced out the radical elements united around the *Arbeiter Politik*."

The conference of the Spartacus group which was held in the middle of October last decided to separate from the Independents and to unite all left Socialist organizations into a Communist party, the Spartacus party.

"The German Communists began their existence as a united party. They had a sufficient number of leaders comprehending theoretically the world situation and they had a sufficient number of splendid and advanced workers who had become hardened in the illegal struggle of four years."

"In the Communist party of Germany we salute an organization with which the Russian Communists are bound by common aims, common views and by the decision to help one another. From the ranks of this Communist party will in the future come the leaders of the German labor state."

The Left Wing in the American Socialist Party

By Nicholas I. Hourwich

THE great epoch through which we are passing; an epoch of the breaking up and destruction of everything old, old foundations and forms of life, old conceptions and principles; has not spared the old Socialist parties.

The war and the consequent revolutionary events have proved to be that acid test at which the former "unity" of the Socialist parties has been broken, and those social elements and groups which so recently were observed to live peacefully and in "solidarity" under one Socialistic roof, under the guise of a common Socialist name, are found to be now in different, and at times, opposing camps.

On one hand, to the left Socialist camp have gone those real revolutionary elements which during the long years of preliminary "peaceful" activity have not lost their proletarian banners, for whom the great principles and slogans, which know no compromises or reconciliations in the struggle of the working class for the ultimate emancipation, have not changed into a decorative adjutant without any sense or practical significance. On the other hand, to the right, were found those traitors to Socialism who have gone over to serve the bourgeoisie, who for the pottage of imaginary fleeting successes and gains sold out the birth-right of the ultimate aspirations and aims of the working class, who concluded "a civil peace" with the bourgeoisie thereby declaring war against the working class. . . .

This process of internal decomposition which inevitably leads, and in many cases has already brought about an open split, touched all Socialist parties without exception. In Russia and Germany, for instance, the elements thus split, elements which had hitherto

"united" in the social democratic parties, stand now arrayed against each other on opposite sides of the barricades, arms in hands,—one part defending the revolutionary gains already obtained by the proletariat and clearing, as it were, the road to further victories over world Imperialism; while the others function in the inglorious and shameless role of the defenders of Imperialism and the bourgeoisie.

And, precisely the fact, that in the two countries where the revolution is in action, where the proleta-

riat have dealt an especially strong blow at the domination of the bourgeoisie,—the split between the "left" and the "right" phalanxes of the at one time united Socialist parties has reached the stage of open war,—is deeply significant. This fact destroys the fetish that a "united" Socialist Party was the all important necessity and on the contrary proves that such an "unlawful union" of elements fundamentally different in an "united" party is the chief weakness of the Socialist movement and is a continual burden on the revolutionary wing of the party. The split in the Socialist parties of Russia and Germany, did not weaken, but on the contrary, strengthened the left wing and made it capable of revolutionary actions. The same applies to the other Socialist parties.

The war has dealt the first mighty blow at the structure of the Second International. Now before the social builders and architects of the future lies the hard, but nevertheless inevitable, task of completing the process of destruction and building upon the ruins the firmer and more stable structure of the Third International.

The same task lies before the American Socialist Party, and as the first step towards the realization of this task I heartily greet the creation within its ranks the bearer of the revolutionary message—the left wing of the party.

The timely creation of this wing and its successful growth will be the guarantee that at the proper moment the party will be enabled to reach the accomplishment of the task imposed upon it by history and will not be tied hand and foot by the old, rust-eaten opportunism or the collaboration of elements which are no longer Socialist.

To Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg

By Maximilian Cohen

*They slew you in their beastly rage,
Because you dared the struggle wage
With tyrants and with traitors too—
The traitors feared and so they slew.
Deluded knaves! Your lifeless tongues
More potent now in martyr songs
Will trumpet forth the truth until,
The very earth will rock and thrill
And thrones and states will crash and fall—
And labor triumphs over all.*

* * *

*So comrades sleep—your work is done;
Sleep on! The battle will be won.*