

# Prospects of the Proletarian Dictatorship

By Richard Hansen

**M**ANY people honestly believe that the German Revolution received a decisive reverse when the City Hall of Berlin, the Post and Wireless offices and a number of other public buildings were recaptured by the bourgeoisie a week ago.

The martyr deaths of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were heralded by the capitalist press and celebrated by Capitalism the world over as the end of Bolshevism in Germany.

And the moderate Socialists are becoming loud with their pity and morals and wise advice. "Didn't we warn you"—they lament—"that the Proletarian Dictatorship won't work in Germany. . . Didn't we prove that it is a purely Russian affair and very harmful at that . . . Didn't we insist that Bolshevism is no good in a developed country . . . and that every nation has to make its revolution in its own peculiar way, that . . ." and so on! This "peculiar" way being, of course, the same old uniform and very unpeculiar way of compromise and opportunism for all the countries on earth.

The bourgeoisie and the moderate Socialists are leaving nothing undone in order to keep down and if possible kill the revolutionary spirit of the working class. They are and always have been unanimous in postponing the revolution; always ready to declare it off; always alert to the folly and crime and prematurity of the outbreaks.

So they were after the Paris Commune of 1871; so after the great Russian Revolution of 1905. And so they are now.

The Bolsheviks—according to them—have been nothing but outrageous trouble makers and disrupters of the peaceful and orderly process of the Russian Revolution during the last two years. Up to the present moment the Proletarian Dictatorship is being denounced and fought against as well in liberal and reactionary capitalist press as in moderate Socialist and Anarchist publications and from their platforms.

The Spartacans (German Bolsheviks) were treated in the same way as their Russian comrades. Instead of understanding, they were faced with misrepresentation and instead of support in their struggle against Capitalism they are denounced by all shades of moderate Socialists and Anarchists.

The German Bolsheviks have to face much greater odds, than their comrades in Russia.

First,—they did not have any elaborate organization of their own, having split away only recently from the old party, which turned traitor to the cause of the working class and Socialism. Consequently, they

did not have at their disposal developed means of agitation and propaganda. They found themselves unprepared and poorly equipped when the great storm burst forth. They were, comparatively, just small groups in a number of great industrial centers like Berlin, Bremen, Leipzig, Stuttgart and Hamburg, with only half a dozen nationally known leaders (beside Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg there are Clara Zetkin, Franz Mehring and a few others), all of whom were either in jail or under indictment. They did not have either press or funds.

Second,—their opponents—the German Mensheviks of the Scheidemann, Ebert and Kautsky type—were equipped with a huge modern party machine, having a hundred daily and weekly newspapers and magazines, an army of trained public speakers, organizers and writers. For four years they have enjoyed all the privileges and support, that a modern capitalist state could furnish to its faithful servants. They had also the support of the leaders of the reactionary union (the squad of German Gomperses).

Third—the German capitalists had profited by the lesson of the Russian Revolution. They armed themselves; they were quick in putting in the field regiments of "well-bred" white guards. They did everything in order to prevent the arming of the working class. The German Bourgeoisie did not insist even on having a coalition Cabinet, but intrusted all the power of state to the hands of a purely "Socialist" government. They were not disgusted at being governed by Socialists, provided that these were not Socialists at all, but flesh and bone of the bourgeoisie itself, faithfully performing the counter-revolutionary job for the bourgeoisie. Neither did they want to postpone the Constituent Assembly . . .

Having all this in mind we will not wonder at the "failure" of Bolshevism and Proletarian Dictatorship in Germany. On the contrary, we have reason to be amazed at the splendid growth, of the great progress that Bolshevism has made in the late dominion of the Hohenzollerns. We can but observe with gratification the mighty headway that the idea of Proletarian Dictatorship made in Germany during the brief space of two months.

The present situation in Germany is very much like that of Russia after the suppression of the first Bolshevik outbreak in Petrograd, July 16, 1917.

The capitalists and traitor Socialists became awfully busy at that time in Russia, conducting an efficient election campaign to an improvised Assembly—the

Moscow Conference. So they are now in Germany, preparing for a real Constituent Assembly of the bourgeoisie.

It is interesting to note, that the Assembly is going to meet in Weimar—a small country town of about 30,000 inhabitants. The German bourgeoisie is not going to take chances. The place must be safe enough. Weimar is safe, it can be flooded with white guards to keep the working men of the town at a safe distance from the meeting hall of the Imperial Constituent Assembly! The dangers of prompt dissolution, as it took place in a great city like Petrograd, and as it could happen in Berlin or Hamburg—are greatly diminished.

The capitalists are so much pleased with the Weimar affair, that they even dream of choosing for their spokesman the well known junker Herr Nauman in place of the traitor Socialist Ebert.

The recent white guard victory in Berlin is a Phryic victory. One more like it and they are lost.

All the causes of the Revolution continue at hand. The revolutionary class is in a process of finding itself, of organizing for the final act of seizing power—for the complete and irrevocable destruction of the capitalist state, for the setting up of Proletarian Dictatorship—the only possible way of solving the great question of this decisive period of human history—transition from Capitalism to Socialism—as it was pointed out by Karl Marx and Fr. Engels after the French Revolution of 1848-51 and the Paris Commune of 1871, and as it has been accomplished in practise on a very large scale in Russia with such a glorious success.

The tragic end of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg will only further the Proletarian Revolution instead of interfering with it, as the counter-revolutionists apparently expected. They were just two—most beloved, most conspicuous of a multitudinous army. Their silent lips are calling all the working men of Germany and of all countries of the world to rise up and to make an end of the capitalist regime of blood and starvation. This eloquent and solemn call is irresistible. Their uncompromising spirit, the consistency of their words and deeds will remain as a bright inspiration for millions of men.

The army of Spartacans have grown since these brutal murders took place. They have taken possession of Bremen and Cuxhaven (naval base on North Sea). They are reported to be dangerously strong and active in Berlin and Hamburg.

The world is moving on with an amazing velocity—on toward Bolshevism, toward Proletarian Dictatorship.

## Karl Liebknecht's Words

By John Reed

sent out to Holland, and which was even then being published all over the world, especially by the Allied capitalist press—then calling him "the bravest of the brave." So it was more or less natural that I should ask him whether his attitude of extreme hostility to the War and the Government was still the same.

"There is no other attitude for a Social Democrat to take," he said, with a faint smile of amusement. "As each problem of capitalist aggression arises, it must be met full and squarely. In spite of the prodigious influence brought to bear in all countries of the world upon their peoples, the international working class is still not convinced that this War is their War. As representative of the workers, I voice this sentiment."

"And the chances of world Revolution?"

"To my mind," he answered serenely, "nothing else can come out of the War."

This is practically all of our conversation. Other questions which I asked him, which if he had answered, might have revealed the plans and projects of the movement, or the work then being done, he refused to answer. After all, he did not know me. . . .

Rosa Luxemburg I never knew, but from talks about her with comrades who did. I have come to think of her as one of the great constructive brains of the Left Wing movement in Europe—an intellect

**W**HEN I was in Berlin in December, 1915, I went to see Karl Liebknecht. He had an office in a district Social Democratic headquarters, in the poorer section of the city—on a street, I remember, which looked very like Washington Street in Boston. It was a large, bare room, the walls hung with pictures of Bebel and the elder Liebknecht, and memorials of historic events in the great history of the German Social Democracy.

Liebknecht sat at a table in the middle of the room, the lower half of his face faintly illuminated by a green-shaded lamp. He wore a semi-military coat buttoned up to the neck. There were dark circles under his eyes, but that was all the evidence of fatigue about him. His hand played nervously with a paper-cutter as he talked; his eyes never left mine. His face was dark and full—almost round—with a gentle expression.

The door to the inner hall had been left open. It was empty, except for two or three forlorn-looking women in widows' weeds, who were sitting sadly and motionless on chairs along the wall, waiting for some official of the branch on business connected with death-benefits. . . .

"The war?" I asked, pointing toward them. Liebknecht nodded. "The best of us—" he said slowly, in halting English interlarded with German words.

I had not seen the statement which Liebknecht had

which, like Lenin's in Russia, would have been of incalculable value in the establishment of the new order in Germany, of which Karl Liebknecht was the flaming prophet.

Liebknecht was arrested, and while being taken in an automobile to prison by a group of "armed volunteers," (no doubt aristocratic young officers), was shot "while trying to escape" "when the automobile broke down" crossing the Tiergarten. In other words, he was taken to a quiet spot and simply murdered. Rosa Luxemburg met a more terrible fate. She was beaten to death by a "white-collar mob," and her body thrown into the canal.

It was the bourgeoisie of Berlin, of Germany, of the world—the bankers, business men, officers, "respectable people"—who actually did the killing.

But it was the Ebert-Scheidemann Government, the Kaiser Socialists, so long detested by the Allied capitalist press—who by suppressing the revolt of the German working-class with the aid of the Kaiser's troops, allowed that mob to shoot holes in Karl Liebknecht's back and trample the life out of Rosa Luxemburg. And the Allied capitalist press applauds. . . .

What the capitalist newspaper have to say about it is a matter of comparative indifference to us. We are occupied with a closer and more dangerous enemy in our own ranks—the moderate Socialists, who, to their other crimes against the workers, have now added the crime of murder.