

But to be sure, by this time the Social-Democratic Party had already turned its misguided steps toward parliamentarism, it was fast becoming a bourgeois party, and its fear of mass action was already leading to its surrender to militarism and imperialism. It was the active and passive connivance of the Social-Democratic group of the Reichstag, and through them the connivance of the Social-Democracy as a whole, that made it possible in 1913 for the tremendous bluff of the "Jubilee gift for the Peace Emperor, Wilhelm II" to go across the political stage successfully, that enabled the Government to prepare unhindered the imperialistic war stroke of 1914, with the army bill—the most gigantic increase of the army which up to that time had ever been demanded and granted—and the defense contribution of billions—the first war credit for the intended marauding expedition across the Balkans to Bagdad and other "places in the sun." The Party group in the Reichstag had made it easier for the bourgeois "opposition parties" to nod assent to the army bill, by having itself agreed to the separation of that bill from the general budget. It had given its blessing to the defense contribution and income tax bills as presumptive burdens upon the possessing classes. It had run after the delusive spectre of "modified finance" policies and had skipped the fight against the robust armored fellow called imperialism.

But the sins of commission and omission of the Party faction in the Reichstag had begun to determine the attitude of the entire Party, a few small, criticizing and dicking groups excepted. The Social-Democracy had not collected its forces for a stand against the brazen advance of imperialism greedy for power. Thus it created on the one hand the confident assurance of militarism and imperialism that there was no fear of opposition to their plans on the part of the proletarian masses, and on the other hand a paralyzing dullness in the masses themselves, even a slackening up in the face of danger. In short, the Social-Democracy allowed that atmosphere of war illusion to gather which in the summer of 1914 broke down all the political and moral opposition of the working classes against the crime of the war. Let us not forget that in the attitude of the Social-Democracy at that time, the policy of the "Marxist center" dominated, the policy which Karl Kautsky in our times praises up to the proletariat eagerly as the pre-requisite for its victory. Let us not forget, moreover, that it was this high priest of "pure Marxism" who with his extremely un-Marxian tax theory built the ass's bridge over which the Reichstag faction had proceeded to accepting the defense contribution and income tax measures. Under the given conditions the Social-Democratic

Party Executive would have had to jump over its own shadow, if it desired to brace up and make use of the mass sentiment created by the Frankfort decision for a serious fight against militarism and imperialism. In the events which forced Rosa Luxemburg into prison during the latter half of February, 1914, the disgraceful bankruptcy of the German Social-Democracy on August 4, 1914, had cast its shadow before, but there was foreshadowed in them as well, the loyal, self-sacrificing fight of this inspired pioneer of Socialism against its internal decay.

Hardly had the acceptance of the war credit measure by the Social-Democratic faction in the Reichstag become known, than Rosa Luxemburg together with a few friends raised the flag of rebellion against this treason to the International, to Socialism. Two circumstances prevented this rebellion from at once becoming widely known. The fight was to begin with a protest against the vote in favor of the war credits by the Social-Democratic representatives, which would have to be so managed, however, that it would not be squashed by the tricks and wiles of the state of siege and the censorship. Besides this, and above all, it would certainly have been significant if the protest were from the start issued in the name of a goodly number of familiar Social-Democratic fighters. We therefore tried to put it into such a form that as many as possible of the leading comrades should declare their solidarity with its ideas who had uttered sharp, even absolutely destructive criticism on the policy of August 4th, in the Reichstag faction or within small groups. A consideration which cost much hard thinking, paper, letters, telegrams, and valuable time—and the result of which, despite all that, was nil. Of all the critics of the Social-Democratic majority who had expressed themselves in vigorous speech, only Karl Liebknecht dared, together with Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and me to defy the idol of Party discipline upon whose altars were sacrificed character and convictions.

Rosa Luxemburg had nearly completed the first number of the magazine "Internationale," when she was made to begin her prison sentence on the eve of a trip to Holland which we had intended to take together to prepare the way for the projected International Conference of Socialist Women and in general to bind more strongly the ties of international relations and to encourage the attempts to combine internationally the men and women comrades who were still true to their principles. Now, instead of speeding to the Dutch border with her, I had to visit Rosa in the Barnim Strasse prison. The unexpectedly sudden execution of the sentence had crashed like a thunderbolt into our immediate fighting plans. Nevertheless barely two