

VOICES OF REVOLT



**KARL  
LIEBKNECHT**

INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS

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SPEECHES OF  
KARL LIEBKNECHT

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VOLUME IV



*SPEECHES OF*  
KARL  
LIEBKNECHT

*WITH A*  
*BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH*



NEW YORK

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INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS



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**KARL LIEBKNECHT**

3

## INTRODUCTION

THE best-known and most popular labor leader in Germany in the last few decades was Karl Liebknecht. No other leader has enjoyed anything like the enthusiastic affection which was his among the masses. Even so critical an observer as Karl Kautsky is obliged to admit: "No monarch ever met with such an enthusiastic reception on the part of the masses as did Liebknecht when he arrived at the Anhalter Bahnhof on his return from prison."

Thousands accompanied him from the railroad station to the Soviet Embassy, tens of thousands were about him when, in the stormy days of December, 1918, and January, 1919, he delivered his fiery speeches, hundreds of thousands followed the coffin in which his murdered body was brought to the Friedrichshain Cemetery, and millions of workers' hearts repeat the name of Liebknecht, and thus it will ever be, as long as human hearts continue to beat.

Even to-day, almost ten years after his death, no political meeting can take place in Germany in which one does not hear the name "Karl Liebknecht," no workers' demonstration is held in which

one does not hear the song: "*Karl Liebknecht haben wir's geschworen. . .*"<sup>1</sup>

But the name Karl Liebknecht is not famous and beloved only in Germany, but is pronounced with the greatest veneration all over the world.

In the cruel factories of the Chinese industrial districts, in the coal-mines of the United States, among the workers of the North of Europe, and in the mines of Cape Town, there burns in letters of flame the great name, "Brother Liebknecht," which was coined by Henri Barbusse in his wonderful novel, *Le Feu* ("Under Fire").

What is the cause of the mighty magic exercised by the name of Liebknecht upon such great masses after the lapse of ten years? Hans Schuhmann, of Dresden, attempts in his book, *Karl Liebknecht*, to explain its immense suggestive power in part by referring to Liebknecht's great oratorical gifts. Unquestionably Karl Liebknecht is second only to Ferdinand Lassalle as the most brilliant and eloquent leader of the German labor movement. His delivery, consisting of short and sharply chiseled sentences, rich in images, and supported by the ardor of a truly internal and profound passion and an impetuous and unbridled temperament, carried with it all listeners, whether friends or enemies. While other orators may content themselves with moving their auditors to the point of voting for a paper resolution, Lieb-

<sup>1</sup>, "We have sworn (allegiance) to Karl Liebknecht. . ."



knecht was followed by many thousands of workers to the barricades after his speeches in the Tiergarten.

But the thing that makes Liebknecht the hero of the labor movement was something more than his great talent as an orator; it was his brave and manly advocacy of the revolutionary ideas he had accepted as correct, and his fidelity to the proletarian revolution for which he paid with his blood and his life. Liebknecht belonged directly to the working masses more than any other German leader. In the decisive days of December, 1918, and January, 1919, Liebknecht was constantly active in the various meetings, participated daily in three or more industrial conferences, and did not only live with the masses, but had become a part of the masses. More than any other leader, Liebknecht, from the first days of his political activity to the time of his death, emphasized the revolutionary tactic in the proletarian class struggle, a tactic which he carried out himself and advocated in his own person.

Karl Liebknecht was *the* revolutionary leader of the German workers.

Even before the war, there was a whole world of difference between Liebknecht and most of the leaders of the Social-Democracy. Things that appeared ridiculous and childish to them, were great and sacred to him: the proletarian Youth Movement, and a specific anti-militaristic agitation in what was then the greatest and most barbarous military na-

tion of the world. It was while standing in the midst of his youthful adherents, who worshiped him as a god, that he was arrested on May 1, 1916, on the Potsdamer Platz; it was for his work in connection with the proletarian Youth Movement and his anti-militaristic propaganda that he suffered his first year and a half of imprisonment in 1909 and 1910.

Very characteristic of Liebknecht are the proud sentences which he spoke before the Supreme Court at Leipzig in 1909:

“It is a far more serious thing to cast oneself, being a lawyer, the head of a family, being a man entirely without property, into the whirlpool of politics and to take up the struggle against the well-armed defenders of our present system. This is far more dangerous than drawing up indictments, and I cannot see how the Chief State Attorney can justify himself in casting on me even the shadow of a suspicion of cowardice. You may destroy my livelihood and that of my children, but nothing can prevent me from continuing to struggle for my political program.”

This is the Karl Liebknecht who was the only Deputy in the German Reichstag who had courage enough, on December 2, 1914, to shout his enthusiastic “No” to the war-intoxicated chauvinists. This is the Karl Liebknecht who, surrounded by a few young men, came out in a public demonstration against the war on the Potsdamer Platz on May 1,

1916, with the slogan: "Down with the Government!" This is the Karl Liebknecht who accepted his condemnation to four years of imprisonment with the cry: "No General has ever worn his uniform with greater pride than the pride with which I shall wear the convict's garb!" This is the Karl Liebknecht who, after the bloody victory of Gustav Noske's men over the Berlin workers, when thousands of posters on the walls of Berlin called for his assassination, when hundreds of murderers were being egged on to put him out of the way, wrote with his assurance of victory:

"Proceed but slowly! We have not fled, we are not beaten. . . .

We are here, and here we remain! And the victory will be ours.

For Spartacus means fire and spirit, Spartacus means soul and heart. . . .

For Spartacus means Socialism and World Revolution!"

If millions of youthful workers to-day consider it their highest goal to be similar to Liebknecht, it is for the reason that Liebknecht is the founder of the Proletarian Youth Movement, and continues to live on as the most courageous, the bravest advocate of the revolutionary class struggle, the hero of the first forceful collisions in Germany to bring about the proletarian revolution. One venerates Marx, reveres Lenin, loves Liebknecht.

Karl Liebknecht left behind him no theoretical writings that have become standard works. His brilliant essays, written while in jail, are known only to a limited circle. Liebknecht is effective through his personality. By his life and by his death, Liebknecht did more to rouse, to awaken, to enhance the revolutionary will than others have done by means of huge volumes of theoretical treatises.

In the presence of this man, this human, in the presence of this hero of his convictions, even opponents and enemies, though filled with hatred, respectfully lower their flags. But it is far more important for us at present to understand Liebknecht as a statesman and as a leader of the workers.

Not only does Karl Radek in his masterful obituary article, but also Karl Kautsky, attempt to estimate Liebknecht on the basis of a comparison with his father. But while Radek ultimately comes to a conclusion which does full justice to Karl Liebknecht, Kautsky's work makes him appear in an unfavorable light as compared with his father, Wilhelm Liebknecht. Kautsky attempts to put the matter so as to give the impression that the vehemence and ardor which were characteristic of Wilhelm Liebknecht also, had been dampened by two well-meaning, paternal friends, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, and that the experiences of the English labor movement had also had their share in transforming the old war-horse into a complacent

Social-Democratic Secretary, while Karl Liebknecht, surrounded by Russian friends and filled with the spirit of the subterranean revolution, was destined to go up in flames and consume himself.

But Kautsky forgets certain essential things. In the first place, these two men, who have otherwise many points of similarity, lived in two entirely different periods. The bourgeois-democratic insurrection of 1848, to which Wilhelm Liebknecht attached himself as an enthusiastic "Soldier of the Revolution," petered out and went to seed; there followed the decades which transformed Germany into a federation of states already containing the beginnings of a large-scale industry, the first boom period of which made possible even for the workers an improvement of their situation, however modest that improvement might be.

Karl Liebknecht was born at a time when the young German industrial state, emerging enriched as a result of the Franco-German War, was beginning to feel its oats and to reach out beyond its geographical boundaries. When Karl Liebknecht entered the political arena, Germany had begun to practice a colonial policy, to build a fleet, to indulge in *Weltpolitik*. The first years of Karl Liebknecht's political activity coincide with the evolution of Germany into an imperialistic state, with the evolution of the Prussian-German militarism into the most powerful military organ of the world. In the

distance the World War is impending; the insurrection of the armored cruiser "Potemkin" in Russia in 1905 means, for Karl Liebknecht and his political friends, the announcement of the approaching proletarian revolution. What Kautsky finds worthy of censure in Karl Liebknecht, namely, his ardent and impetuous insistence on revolutionary tactics in the labor movement, precisely Liebknecht's understanding and his effort to make the proletariat prepared for the most terrible catastrophe which is to supervene—this is Karl Liebknecht's greatest merit. Together with Rosa Luxemburg, Klara Zetkin, Franz Mehring, and Karl Radek, Liebknecht undertakes the task of calling the attention of the German workers to the menacing danger, and of transforming the Social-Democratic Party into a revolutionary workers' party opposed to militarism, war, and imperialism. He scourges the party Executive Committee for its complete breakdown in the Morocco Crisis, which made war appear a matter of the immediate future; he became the most patient, the most persistent accuser of the military clique and those behind it, the Krupps and the like. Liebknecht became the man best hated in Germany by all the military caste; he died as the victim of their wrath in 1919. Together with his little circle of political adherents, Liebknecht came out emphatically in favor of a general strike even in the political struggle, demanded the use of such a strike not only for



achieving a better suffrage law in Prussia, but in general as a means of combat in the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat. The application of the tactics used by him and his group accelerated the collapse of the monarchy in Germany and served as a preparation for the creation of workers' and soldiers' councils.

Together with a few leaders of the German workers' movement, Liebknecht understood from the outset the imperialistic character of the World War, and was the only man who had courage enough to vote against the war credits, and to take up the struggle against the war not only in Parliament, but also illegally. History has justified Liebknecht's opinion of the war and of its outcome. It was not Liebknecht who erred in his judgment of the course of events, as Kautsky would have us believe, but Kautsky himself and all his circle, who transformed their former theory, "the conquest of the political power by the proletariat!" into a theory of close cooperation between bourgeoisie and Social-Democracy.

Liebknecht was the most outspoken opponent of the reformists who were transformed by the war into social-chauvinists, and, in the after-war years, into social-Fascists. How correct was Liebknecht's judgment of Noske in the latter's first opportunist proclivities, is shown by the speech delivered by Liebknecht against Noske and his consorts at the party

congress at Essen, in 1907. The experiences of the post-war period, and particularly the experiences of the Russian Revolution, no doubt introduced many corrections and additions into the political and anti-militarist program of Liebknecht. Surely Liebknecht would have been the first to accept these changes himself, had he had the opportunity to remain alive until the present time. But it is no discredit to Liebknecht in his services to the revolutionary labor movement, to have failed to introduce these changes. The performances of the individual can only be evaluated on the basis of the conditions at the time, and by comparison with the performances of other persons living in the same epoch and under the same conditions. Let this be borne in mind, and we shall behold Liebknecht standing before us a lone, defiant stronghold in the wild tumult of war and chauvinism. We shall see him as a beacon lighting the way for the working class out of the venomous swamp of Reformism and Opportunism—which leads only to destruction—to the proletarian revolution and its promise of ultimate victory.

WILLI MUNZENBERG.

# SPEECHES OF KARL LIEBKNECHT

## THE YOUNG WORKERS AND THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

Karl Liebknecht was the most zealous encourager of the Proletarian Youth Movement and the actual creator of the "Socialist International of Youth." His speech on "Militarism and Anti-Militarism," delivered at the International Congress of Youth in Stuttgart in 1907, became the platform for all the revolutionary Socialist young people's organizations until the foundation of the "Communist International of Youth" in 1919. Liebknecht was one of the most active organizers of the secret Young People's Conference which took place at Jena, at Easter, 1916. This Conference achieved an ideological and organizational breach with the old social-patriotic treatment of youth in Germany, and laid the foundations for the Communist Youth Movement in that country.

The Revolutionary Proletarian Youth Movement is the most splendid life work of Karl Liebknecht. We, therefore, assign most of the space in this necessarily limited volume to the speeches delivered by Liebknecht on the subject of the Youth Movement.

### *The Class Character of the School in the Capitalist State*

**GENTLEMEN!** The class character of the capitalist order of society expresses itself in the system of education, in the inequality of instruction, and the

specific character of the Prussian state and its three-class electoral system finds its expression in the three-class educational system, which lies at the basis of the Prussian system of education, in the holy trinity of public schools, higher schools, and universities.

Gentlemen, there is no doubt that the educational system cannot be separated from the entire social system, for each mode of training not only presupposes that something is to be learned, but that a certain time is available within which it must be learned, and within which the student is economically free; it presupposes the economic conditions that are necessary to enable the student to hold out until he has reached the goal of his education. Furthermore, and least of all in the capitalist order of society, education does not exist for its own sake. Rather, it is a means to an end. Our educational system is dominated by an undisguised militarism and opportunism; we are trained to perform a specific function in the present-day state, and the higher schools—in accordance with a truly Prussian tradition—serve as a training in preparation for the career of higher officials.

Gentlemen, the higher schools are the intermediary link between the *sanctum sanctorum* of science, the universities, and the public schools, in which only a necessary modicum of information is communicated, in order to train suitable tools for

the capitalist order of society. The higher schools are the steps leading up to the temple of the *sanctum*, to the most glorious thoughts conceived by the human spirit.

Gentlemen, the more crassly the contrasts within society express themselves to-day, in an economic sense, and also in regard to political rights, the more crassly these contradictions have made themselves felt precisely in the war, so the people's school also presents the fact of the inequality of education more nakedly in its present situation than ever before. The social defects in the system of popular education are now more apparent than ever. The things which even bourgeois authorities had always considered serious defects in the system of popular education, such as the over-crowding of classes, inadequate premises, a too frequent turnover of teachers, under-nourishment of pupils, child labor, and the excessive fatigue of the children, which prevent them from absorbing even the little that is offered in the people's schools of the present day, have become far worse during the war, and make the fact of the inequality of education far more serious.

Gentlemen, if you will recall that the tendency is to-day far more apparent than ever before to use the people's school as a means of strengthening the position of the ruling classes, of ensnaring the souls of the youthful proletarians with every device of demagogy, in favor of the ruling classes, in favor of

capitalism, in favor of militarism; if one witnesses the hyenas of the battlefield, who now venture to come out on the arena of public instruction more outspokenly than ever before; if one witnesses the piracy that is being practiced against the souls of the proletarians in the public school system on a large scale, in fact, in the whole school system, you will understand how sharp is the feeling, among the proletariat, of the necessity of a revolutionary reform of the entire educational system.

Gentlemen, there is not rain enough in the gentle skies to wash away the sins of the neglect of youth on the part of the bourgeois order of society, and all the attempts to whitewash this society, all the attempts to depict—by emphasizing the favorable aspects—the neglect of youth as being not quite so bad—all these attempts which we are now witnessing, can only signify that you are inclined to keep alive these evils, now that you have once seen how irritating is the revelation of these facts to the public.

As a matter of fact, instead of the fine words that have been pronounced by the bourgeois parties in connection with these motions, which are calculated to give but poor solace to the proletariat, these gentlemen should say frankly: "Are we not keeping the soup-kitchens going?" And are you not capable of understanding what it means to make the approach to higher education dependent on conditions



of the type of those set by you, when you make it seem a special favor, while this approach to higher education is a fundamental human right that is cut off from the great mass of the population, by the capitalistic order of society only, by the capitalistic order of society which here displays in the clearest way its whole noxious character? Do you believe that the mass of the people has not—in this act of the ruling classes—the feeling that it wishes to quote from *Faust* the words: *Es ist so elend betteln zu müssen?*<sup>2</sup> Instead of their right, you give them alms, which can have only the result of breaking the backbones of those who are to receive these alms. No proletarians, except those who have been broken in their inmost spirit, who have been made dependent, who have been deprived of their class consciousness, can thus be best trained by you to be the tools of the capitalist order of society. And the most repulsive phase of the whole matter is the self-complacency with which such worthless proposals—they may not even be called proposals—such pretenses of a new orientation of education are offered to the public. This mess of pottage, which in addition serves as a prop to the prevailing three-class educational system, and is intended to serve as such a prop, will surely not arouse among the masses of the people the impression that the ruling classes mean even to apply such a modicum of social-

<sup>2</sup> It is so wretched to be obliged to beg alms.

mindedness as would be compatible with the capitalist order of society in the nature of the case. Nothing is more outrageous in a class system than the brutal and careless wastage of human mental energy, of latent and awakened mental powers, than this waste of valuable human talent in the treadmill of mechanical labor; this very opposite of human economy, which is the characteristic of the present order of society. Perhaps the profoundest tragedy in the lot of the proletariat is the iron-clad law that children of the proletariat must be chained to ignorance of mind, to hold out their hands like souls in despair, though these souls had been born to the highest heritage, to hold out their hands from the darkness into the light of the mountains.

*Ach, aus dieses Tales Gründen,  
die der kalte Nebel drückt,  
könnt ich doch den Ausweg finden,  
ach, wie fühlt ich mich beglückt!*<sup>3</sup>

But these proposals do not offer an escape. It is in truth a forest of closely packed spirits, like the forest through which Virgil walked with Dante, a forest of the spirits of those who have not sinned and yet have remained unredeemed.

Thus the school, in its total character, is a political means of propaganda in favor of war, an auxiliary for the war economy, a tool for the finances of war.

<sup>3</sup> Could I but find the way out of the bottom of this valley, oppressed, with the cold mist, how happy I should then be!

It is a specific means for the education for war! The militarization of the school, gentlemen, even of the higher school, is regarded even by many bourgeois persons with suspicion. Our present education aims to begin even in the school with training men into war machines, with making the school a training-ground for war, physically and mentally. The object of the physical hardening of youth—which in itself is very praiseworthy—why is it now being pursued so energetically? Simply for the reason that these invigorated youthful bodies will be needed for the moloch of militarism. Therefore even “physical fitness” is being pursued from the war angle; an improvement in public health is proposed in order that human lives may be destroyed!

The official apparatus of propaganda in which the church, art and science, the public school, the university, and, of course, also the higher school, are coöperating side by side with the police and the courts, the censorship and the entire administrative apparatus of the condition of siege, has never been so clear and plain as to-day when it stands in the service of war. And since the censorship forbids speaking of these things to the general public, it is our duty to speak of them here.

No doubt there is a great difference between the instruction in the elementary schools and that in the higher schools. For, while it is the task of the public school to make the younger generation of

proletarians useful as a tool of the capitalist order of society, the task of the higher schools, in the eyes of the ruling classes, is, in the first place, that of training the youth of the ruling classes for the duty of mastery which they must carry out in the present order of society. But this results in a very peculiar synthesis composed of the phraseology of the—as it were—officially approved morality and the capitalist reality, which is its precise opposite. The educational ideal of capitalism is not humanity and idealism, but its very opposite.

I tell you that even the mental liberation of the working class, its liberation from the fetters of mental oppression, can only be the work of the working class itself. And it is our task to shout to the working class of all countries, on this occasion also, the words: "To the work!" Those in the trenches as well as those at home—let them drop their arms and turn against the common enemy who is taking away their light and their air.

*—The speech delivered in the Prussian Diet,  
March 16, 1916.*

## THE NECESSITY OF PROLETARIAN YOUNG PEOPLE'S ORGANIZATIONS

LET me say a few words in favor of this motion. The following objection may be made to the motion: "Why should such an agitation be necessary? There

is no doubt that the struggle against militarism is included in our general struggle against capitalism, and has been carried on for a long time in the most bitter terms, and he who has not become a Socialist outside of the barracks, surely will become a Socialist inside the barracks. Militarism is the best agitator against militarism." But I do not see why we should not provide for this specific mode of agitation among the young proletarians who, furthermore, are already being influenced in this direction, for the very reason that militarism is our worst enemy, and that the struggle against militarism cannot be waged better than by a continuous increase in the number of Socialists among the soldiers. Of course, this cannot be done while they are soldiers. But if they are Socialists before they become soldiers, our cause will be best served. The most important representatives of our parties are convinced that militarism would grow feeble and old before our ideas could achieve victory.

Since we are not in a position—as is the case in other countries—to carry on the agitation in the barracks, our agitation must be transferred to such periods in which it is permitted by the laws. Of course, such a specialized agitation is dangerous in a certain sense; everywhere, we are beset with criminal clauses, but it will be sufficient to advocate our ideas systematically among the proletarian youth, particularly emphasizing the character of

militarism. The Socialist recruits understand how they are to behave when they are soldiers. Militarism represents the highest concentration of the brute force of capitalism, but the army is frequently used also in economic struggles, serving, for instance, as strike-breakers. I know it would involve great danger should we incite the recruits to resistance; this would result in the imposition of sentences amounting to many years of penitentiary and jail. But we must see to it that should there ever be violent collisions between the present state power and the organized proletariat, the state power will no longer feel itself to be as strong as it is now, since it is now certain that the blind obedience of the army will also serve it in carrying out open breaches of the law. I know that our motion has not the same favorable conditions in Germany as in other countries, because we are lacking in one of the links of the chain in our organization, namely, the link of a Social-Democratic Young People's Organization. The object of the motion is to give them initiative in the emphasizing and the systematizing of a particularly important branch of our agitation, the agitation among young people against the chief bulwark of capitalism, which is militarism.

—*From the speech defending the motion in favor of extending the Young People's Movement, delivered at the Congress of the Social-Democratic Party at Barmen, in 1904.*



## THE WORK AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

THE proletarian young people languish under a double yoke. They are the children of the proletarian and have been particularly hard hit under the capitalist system.

The debate has already pointed out a number of the various organizations of young people among our opponents, as well as the corporation fund of one million marks that is included in the Prussian budget for this year. I still wish to point out the Boy Scouts and the Pupils' Rifle Clubs, as well as the Young Defenders (Jugendwehren), although the first were borrowed from perfidious Albion and have now been rechristened "Path-Finders" (Pfadfinder). In the last parade before the Emperor, these childish games at war were, as you know, given official permission to take part in the parade. Even the tomfoolery of sport is being used among the young in order to produce a mood which will estrange them from the great proletarian struggle. In America and England these sporting fads make it very difficult for our comrades to carry on their general work of education and organization. The treacherous element about this mode of combating youth is in the fact that it utilizes the youthful love of freedom in order to lead youth into slavery, in order to make them proletarian slaves according to the will of their op-

pressors. It is, of course, understood that all these convulsive efforts on the part of the Government and the ruling class may be regarded by us as only an honorable certificate of the power of the Proletarian Youth Movement and of the fear with which the ruling classes regard it. But we must utilize the youthful love of adventure and the youthful longing for freedom in our service also. We have no use for stay-at-homes. To be sure, we shall not carry on our work by means of military tomfoolery, by means of war games, such as playing at "Germans and Frenchmen," but we can nevertheless give free play to the love of battle. Let them play, for example, the "Social Democrats and Police," although I suppose it will be difficult to find enough young men to play the part of the policemen.

Perhaps the ruling classes will have to abandon their hopes of depriving us of the adherence of the young people, in spite of all their methods: We may be oppressed, but we cannot be forced. In fact, we cannot even be oppressed. The youth movement would never have been so generally approved and encouraged in the party and in the unions if it had not been persecuted. It has, therefore, really been encouraged by the infamous tactics of its persecutors. The ruling classes will live to learn that all their aspirations and hopes have come to grief. We shall shout to them: *e pur si muove*. "It is still moving, in spite of everything," we mean, the proletarian

youth: the youth of the proletariat will come off the victor over all its enemies, and will furnish the hosts who will later continue the struggles now being waged by their elders.

—*From the speech delivered at the Congress of the Social-Democratic Party at Jena, in 1911.*

## THE PROLETARIAN YOUTH MOVEMENT AND ANTI-MILITARISM

IN the course of years, organizations have been founded by parties of the most different stamp, calculated particularly to deal with young people, for instance, by the Zentrum Party, the National Liberal Party, and others. And the fact that the school, according to my political conviction, is being exploited, together with other national institutions, in order to impress the young people with certain definite political convictions which are hostile to the interests of the proletariat, and the additional fact that it is altogether necessary to educate the proletariat at the earliest possible period of their lives, have led the Social-Democracy to pay particular attention to the urgent necessity of establishing young people's organizations. This was done later, much later in Germany than in the other nations. In 1904, the first attempt in this direction was made,

on a purely trade-union basis, on the basis of the economic struggle.

The young people's organizations are intended for the purpose of preparing an intellectual attitude. This is their right! This is my right! Why should I not engage in this work, for I am convinced that the preparation for an intelligent attitude may, under certain circumstances, lead to revolutionary events. Moreover, what can be done against the dissemination of enlightenment? No power on earth can prevent it, no special law can prevent it. Knowledge is power! Nobody can prevent knowledge from being circulated, and there results the fact that I am actually not engaged in any activity that can be prevented. The only thing dangerous about my work is the prospects to which I call attention. The spreading of the knowledge I have in view is a danger to the barbarities of our present conditions, but this prospect is not an enterprise of high treason. It is not my fault that enlightenment concerning the nature of our order of society may bring about dangerous frames of mind! The fault lies with the present order of society. There exists an excellent means of obviating the dangers which threaten you. You have only to see to it that the present army system is replaced with a system corresponding to our age of civilization, that the army be not used against the domestic enemy, that military armaments in general be decreased, that maltreatments of soldiers be

abandoned; in short, that all the things which make our militarism a disgrace to civilization be abolished. Under these circumstances, my work of enlightenment would fall of its own weight and lose its strength. . . . The accusation against me almost makes a truth of Lassalle's scornful remark to the effect that the dissemination of reason is already an act of high treason. Such in reality is the state of affairs.

This trial of mine is in every sense of the word a trial with an ulterior motive, a trial directed only against my opinions, against my ideals and aspirations, and emanating from the desires of my political opponents. Every action undertaken by me consisted only in the dissemination of reason, and is, therefore, as such, obviously quite legal! The hopes and aspirations which I attach to this activity—whatever be their nature—can never make it illegal.

There is no doubt that I am quite certain that all of my anti-militaristic activity is extremely unpleasant to many circles. I knew that I should be making very powerful enemies by my actions, and I have carried them out with the full knowledge that I was invoking a host of armed foes against me. This is a far more dangerous activity than drawing up indictments, and I do not know where the Chief State Attorney finds his right to stamp me with even the shadow of a suspicion that I am a coward. Mr.

Chief State Attorney, I am not a coward! I shall stand by my deeds! I have never been a coward, and I consider it unworthy of a Social-Democrat to even answer a charge of cowardice; but now let me see what is the condition in this Court!

I have repeatedly emphasized—even outside of these premises—that this trial is a veritable God-send. For is it not a gift from Heaven to be permitted to answer a charge, a charge formulated in such manner as to enable me to expound here to all the world my anti-militaristic view? This is, indeed, a thing for which I cannot be grateful enough; I regret only that I am not opposing a well-devised accusation! . . . If the Chief State Attorney accuses me of fighting militarism to the knife, I am bound by certain experiences to be somewhat in doubt whether the Chief State Attorney does not intend his words to be taken literally. I must count on the possibility that the Chief State Attorney imagines I intended to attack militarism with knives and all other possible instruments. This would be a splendid historical counterpart to the famous revolutionary beer-mug in Lassalle's trial for high treason. Now, my actual words were: *Si vis pacem, para bellum*; I meant war against militarism! And this is adduced in proof of my intentions to use violence! Indeed, even in "arming" against militarism, I am doing so in order to secure peace, not war! It is difficult to evaluate this accusation from

a legal standpoint, since it is completely an act of government intrigue, not an act of justice. For, a document which aimed at the substituting of peace for war, at securing a pacific solution of questions of war-policy, which comes out in open opposition to armed militarism, to that instrument of society whose object and essence is violence, this document—by an ingenious distortion of fact—is declared to represent an attempt at violence! Far from it! This accusation is a defense of violence against attempts to eliminate violence. Such is the true state of affairs. . . . My object is to transfer the decision concerning war and peace from the dark recesses of cabinets and the dark intrigues of diplomats to the light of publicity. These gentlemen are particularly annoyed by this intention. I wish the decision concerning war to be subject to the will of the entire people. I know that this is considered a serious encroachment, and that one might prefer to leave professional diplomacy to carry on its work in this field. It is nevertheless the duty of every man of civilized tendencies to aim at an alteration of this condition, in order that the people who bear the burdens of war may also decide on the resort to war. So much for my article and for the indictment.

The Chief State Attorney has permitted himself to introduce my person into the matter, and to attack my character. The Chief State Attorney has moved that I be sentenced to two years of imprison-

ment, if I am not mistaken—I was not listening at the moment—and perhaps also to deprive me of privileges of citizenship. He has accused me of dishonorable motives. Gentlemen, dishonorable motives—you may believe me, I have none. It is possible—very well, let it be. I cannot make you believe otherwise. But what I think of my motives, I am fully aware. My honor is my own, and if all fifteen of you are of the opinion that I have been guilty of dishonorable motives, and if you deny me the rights of citizenship: this will not touch me essentially. Your act will rebound from me and will influence my honor as little as a breath influences a polished mirror! But I should like to deny particularly the Chief State Attorney's right—after the occurrences in this trial—even to discuss the question of my honor! As a matter of fact, this trial will have every result that could be desired. Regardless of the outcome—and, no doubt, you may destroy my life and that of my children. This is quite possible, but the families of political workers are often a sacrifice in the political struggle. The service of the political struggle is a hard service, quite like military service; and as the soldier who goes to war is prepared for the bullet that lays him low, so also the Social-Democrat when he proceeds to the battle-field of politics; he may be dragged away at any moment. Many a man is left by the way-side. For every man overboard, another will



step into the breach. You may cry: Man overboard! And yet, you are carrying on a splendid propaganda for my anti-militarist ideas.

—*From the speech delivered in his defense before the Imperial Supreme Court, October 10, 1917. The Court condemned Liebknecht to 1½ years of imprisonment in a fortress for his book, "Militarism and Anti-Militarism."*

## ANTI-MILITARISM

Liebknecht's attitude on the question of militarism and anti-militarism has been a subject of dispute, a dispute which was opened first by the reformist Social-Democrats, who considered his demand for a specific anti-militarist propoganda as consisting of anarcho-syndicalist aberrations, and was continued by the ultra-revolutionary November Socialists (1918), who considered themselves as "Leftists," and who regarded his views on anti-militarism as pacifistic and petty bourgeois. In his demands of a specific anti-militarist education, particularly among young people in the old Social-Democratic Party, Liebknecht was carrying out an excellent Marxist revolutionary policy. And Liebknecht was the first man who gained from the experiences of the war to the extent that he demanded not only the disarming of the bourgeois militarism, but also the arming of the proletariat and the use of its weapons against the bourgeoisie, as, for instance, in his great speech in the Prussian Diet, on March 16, 1916, which ended with the words: "Lower your arms and turn against the common enemy who deprives you of light and air!"

THE hour of conscription has come. Soon will come the order of mobilization, and the best resources of young men which have been nurtured among the German people must make up their bundles and desert their parents, their brothers and sisters, their friends and fellow-workers, often even their wives and children. I say, *must*, for there is no delay, no resistance possible; prison walls threaten him who resists. "The Fatherland calls! A wretch is he who will not voluntarily consecrate himself to its service!" This is what we hear in the schools, from the pulpits, and from all our respectable and "reputable" books and newspapers.

Hitherto you have been free men, you young proletarians, in so far as the capitalist disorder admits of liberty for proletarians. But even the lash of hunger is a symbol of freedom when compared with the oppression, the slavery, to which you will be reduced by the bloody arms of iron militarism. Slavery! And not only that, but you will now be handed over to the tender mercies of every officer and every non-commissioned officer of the German army; you must now obey every whim of your superiors in silence and without contradiction, with the promptness of machines, by day and by night, even though you be ordered to carry out the most senseless and immoral things, even culpable acts. But, "no army is possible without the most rigid discipline, and though the service of the Fatherland

be hard, a wretch is he who will not readily accept this service." These are words heard wherever patriotism is held dear.

Hitherto you might choose your domicile and your living quarters; all this is now a thing of the past—most of you will be dragged from your homes, sent forth like immigrants, will be crowded in barracks, and assigned to chambers like a herd of cattle to its stalls. Hitherto you had liberty of movement outside of working hours. Militarism will yield you not so much as a single free step. Eating, drinking, sleeping, going out, everything will be under discipline, regulation, control.

And you will be provided with gay and shining uniforms and led through the streets to the sounds of songs and military bands. Your new garment will be declared to be the most honorable distinction; you will be inoculated with pride against the enemy; this pride it is which must guide you over all the dangers, the shame and the distress of the barracks.

But are you children, are you savages, to be made to forget your primal right to human dignity by the use of tinsel and gay adornments? Is it not an insult to attribute such character to you?

Yet we are told the Fatherland must be defended, and for the sake of this great goal we must close our eyes and grit our teeth!

We must defend our Fatherland? Think of our heroic acts in China, of the battles in the African

colonies, of the Moroccan trade which came very near involving Germany in a world war and in spreading murder and incendiarism over Europe. What had this to do with defending the Fatherland? The megalomaniac policy of imperialism and colonies may, indeed, redound to the interests of big capital; but for the Fatherland, for the proletariat, it means only new burdens.

However this may be, you will now proceed to the barracks.

In the barracks you will be told: "You are not to serve only in the struggle against the foreign foe, but also in the struggle against the domestic foe!"

Who is the domestic foe? You shall shoot at father and mother, brother and sister, if so commanded!

For the Fatherland? You shall be assigned to service as strike-breakers.

For the Fatherland?

Your eyes may then open, if they have not opened before.

What manner of Fatherland is it that does not embrace the whole people, that tears you from your dear ones and makes you the foes of your friends, that proclaims war against the working class, that feels its own identity with the employing class, with every form of reaction? . . .

The internal foe means your fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters and friends, in other words, the en-

tire proletariat, and every element not ready to go through thick and thin with the prevailing reaction. The internal foe means yourself—to-day—and you will again be the internal foe on your demobilization. You yourselves! You yourselves, who have been called upon to fight this internal foe, to fight yourselves!

The proletarians are degraded into “watch-dogs of capitalism,” of their enemy, when they are mobilized against the internal foe. Their pay, small though it may be, is a Judas reward. Are not the friends of the proletariat right in making this declaration?

Once you have recognized this, you are also prepared to understand the cause for the terrible pressure, the drill, the iron discipline, which is calculated to inspire the proletariat with fear and terror into serving capital and the reaction, its worst enemies.

Therefore, this slavery and spiritual bondage, therefore, this suppression of opinions, this splendid show and tinsel, so that the proletariat, clad in its gay uniforms, may forget itself and its people and willingly carry out the demand of capital and the reaction, its own enemies. The maltreatments of soldiers and the systematic use of a double yardstick by military law and military justice are to be explained only by the fact that our army is not a people's army, not an army of the German people, but an army of capital, an army of reaction. . . .

Militarism is the destructive angel of civilization. Militarism barbarizes civilization and, by sucking the life-blood of the people, devours all the resources that might be used for true progress. Militarism is the quintessence, the sum total of true hatred of mankind, the brutal executioner and the bloody iron bulwark of capitalism.

Accept this understanding, proletarians who will be called to arms, and not only will all the attempts made in the barracks to turn you away from the great cause of the struggle of proletarian emancipation be rendered fruitless, but the enthusiasm of your conviction, of your ideal, will be kindled with a higher and brighter flame. You will emerge from the army of capitalism into the ranks of the proletarian army as warriors who have been doubly steeled.

*—From the speech delivered at the General Assembly of the Union of Young Workers of Germany, held at Mannheim, August 26, 1906.*

### THE NECESSITY OF A SPECIFIC ANTI-MILITARIST AGITATION

At the International Congress of 1900, held in Paris, it was decided—after a report by Comrade Rosa Luxemburg—to adjure the members of all

parties to take up a particularly energetic struggle against militarism. This decision was adopted unanimously, in other words, also by the votes of the German delegates.

But how is this decision now being carried out? In this year of the Morocco conflict, of a 1,200,000,000 marks budget, in this year of January 21, etc., it is perhaps less necessary than ever to explain that militarism is not identical with armed power, with the standing army only, but that it is rather—disregarding for the moment its international significance—an extremely complicated and far-reaching phenomenon embracing every possible domain of our economic, social and political life. It is just as little necessary to emphasize that militarism is the most important of the brutal instruments of violence by which the dominant class of capitalist society aims to hold up the organic evolution of events, and to turn aside this evolution in a certain sense and in a certain compass, to the disadvantage of democracy, and against the will of the majority of the people.

Our struggle against this complicated and dangerous phenomenon will, of course, also be complicated and dangerous. I do not conceal this from myself, nor build up any illusions for myself. Of course, our class state is quite sensitive on the subject of militarism. This sensitiveness varies with the evil conscience of the ruling class as regards the pro-

letariat, and with its fear lest it lose its privileged position. It is of no avail to indulge in general platitudes. The necessary agitation is too difficult, too peculiar, too complicated to enable it to be carried on effectively as a portion of our general educational work. There is required a special plan, a special mobility, a special activity. We, therefore, need a specific agitation, and in order that this agitation may be carried on with success, it must be conducted by a special central authority.

You are well aware to what extent our fraternal parties, particularly in France and Belgium, have taken up the anti-militarist propaganda, and what has been their success; in Germany we still lag far behind in this matter, and have done practically nothing toward carrying out the Paris decision.

*(Liebknecht now motivates his motion, after which he continues:)*

Yesterday you resolved to appoint an educational committee, which is to serve as a general staff in the conduct of a struggle against the ignorance of the masses, the enemy we hate most. I now adjure you to appoint also this anti-militarist committee, to be used as a general staff against militarism, *i.e.*, against a powerful bulwark of capitalism, which may continue to resist us for long after the time we have put down the ignorance of the great masses; against militarism, by means of which capitalism aims to ensconce itself against a democratic evolution, and



which is brutalizing and barbarizing our people in the worst manner, etc. . . .

Bebel's objections are not valid, for the parliamentary struggle against this enemy will not be sufficient. We must not fail to understand that militarism is a concomitant of capitalism, and that there is no particular mode of combating militarism other than the combat with capitalism. But we must also not fail to understand that the nature of the capitalist militarism is capable of many transformations. Just as we adapt our propaganda in many ways to the conditions of those who are not clad in the uniform of soldiers, we have also a right to engage in a specific agitation against militarism.

*—From the speech delivered at the Congress of the Social-Democratic Party at Mannheim, in 1906, in favor of a specific anti-militarist agitation.*

## MILITARISM AS A WEAPON AGAINST THE INTERNAL FOE

THE Minister of War spoke a few days ago of a connection between the army and the people, a connection he wished to see maintained. . . . I also intend to speak now of a specific type of connection between the army and the people, namely, the relation in which the army serves as the hammer and

the people as the anvil. This is the most serious section of the serious chapter of militarism in its work against the people.

Our motion deals in the first place with the relation of the army to strike-breaking. The army has often enough intervened in strikes, its soldiers have been commanded to do strike service. You will particularly recall the occurrence which took place—if I am not mistaken—at Torgau, in 1896, and in which General von Liebert, a member of the Reichstag, played a prominent part. If I remember correctly, it was a bakers' strike, in connection with which General von Liebert had made an assignment of military forces. At the time, General von Liebert declared that this strike was comparable with a conflagration or with a water famine. The military repeatedly intervened, particularly in strikes of transport workers, in these cases replacing the striking workers with their own forces. I shall not dwell on this subject in detail; one of my party comrades will take care of this phase of the matter. I wish here only to point out, in addition, those irresponsible excesses on the part of the military authorities that were resorted to, for instance, at Nürnberg, at the strike of 1906, when the soldiers who were being dismissed to the reserves were asked to engage in strike-breaking work.

I shall place my principal emphasis on the use of the army as a tool of force in the economic and

political struggle for holding down and subjecting the people, particularly the working class. . . . The Minister of War has answered him in rather full detail, but he has not found a word with which to reply to the attacks on the use of the Guard against the inner foe. It is the more necessary that we again enter into this subject thoroughly.

Please do not think that you will now hear the blood-thirsty imaginings of some revolutionary of the pitchfork type; I am going to present to you only the *Weltanschauung* of German-Prussian militarism. We are enabled to draw on a great number of speeches and testimonials, of disturbing words, and threats, which have only to be enumerated to enable one to understand the full seriousness of this extremely dangerous phase of militarism.

Gentlemen, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army (the Emperor) said, in May, 1889, to the well-known delegation of mine-workers: "As soon as the slightest resistance is offered, I shall have them all shot down."

In the memoirs of Prince Hohenlohe, we read under date of December 12, 1889: "The Commander-in-Chief declared that if the Social-Democrats should attain a majority in the Berlin City Hall, the Social-Democrats would proceed to plunder the citizens." This would matter very little to him, the Commander-in-Chief, for he would have embrasures cut in the walls of the Palace and watch

the plundering; he could afford to wait for the citizens to ask for aid.

On November 23, 1891, on the occasion of the taking of the oath by the troops at Potsdam, the following words occur in the official text of the Emperor's speech:

“You have sworn to be faithful to me, *i.e.*, you are now my soldiers; you have devoted yourselves body and soul to me. You have now only one enemy, namely, my enemy. In view of the Socialist intrigues of the present day, it may indeed occur that I shall command you to shoot down your own relatives, your brothers, even your parents, but even in such case you must carry out my command without a murmur.”

Gentlemen, note this: without a murmur! This is the one enemy of whom the Commander-in-Chief here speaks; the internal foe is Socialism, as is clear from the text and from the context. In other words, this speech does not for a moment mention the external enemy; it mentions only one enemy, namely, the domestic enemy: the Social-Democracy.

Gentlemen, in voting against our motion, you will dissipate and destroy a legend, namely, the legend of the patriotic mission of the knight in shining armor. Your attitude on our motion shows that it is your desire, as well as the desire of the military

administration, to have further increases of our army serve the purpose of making use of the so-called people's army against the people itself as an instrument of violence, to secure the operation of the people in their struggle for political liberty and economic well-being. I shall quote an old dictum to the Minister of War: *socialismum expellas furca, tamen usque recurret*, "Socialism may be driven out by lance and spear, but it will return again and again." The internal foe to be combated by you is no longer outside the army; he is inside the army itself. Thus all the attempts to ward off this internal foe by militaristic means will be in vain; and we confidently look forward to the time—which is no longer very distant—when even your strongest weapon, even the weapon of militarism, will be shattered by the resistance of a people in insurrection, as blades of straw crumble against a stone wall.

—*From a speech delivered in the German Reichstag, June 20, 1913.*

## MILITARISM AND ANTI-MILITARISM

THE army is by far the most effective weapon of the state, but it is only a means to an end, even though it frequently displays the tendency to become an end in itself. Its compass and its form are governed, therefore, in accordance with the purpose of

serving, in moments of external or internal political tension, as a suitable weapon.

Militarism is not a specifically capitalistic phenomenon. In capitalist society it occurs in the following forms: as a land militarism (the army), as a sea militarism (the navy), and as a colonial imperialism. It is to be regretted that the resolution of the International Congress does not give sufficient attention to the matter of militarism, or to that of navalism, and that the Congress—furthermore—has also completely ignored the rôle played by militarism in domestic politics. It was obviously only under the influence of this mode of thought that our English friends emphasized the statement that in England there is no such thing as militarism; yet, they completely forget that it is precisely England that has developed navalism and colonial militarism to a point of perfection which almost outvies the continental militarism.

Of course, these various forms of militarism do not develop everywhere, nor do they develop uniformly in all places, for the simple reason that not all countries have the conditions—or, at least, uniform conditions—for the development of each of these specific forms. . . .

The capitalist expansions which we recognize as a natural law of capitalist society force the individual capitalist states into an increasingly sharp competition with each other. The earth is already

becoming too small. The competitors are encroaching close upon each other; they already stand breast opposed to breast, eye to eye, and all armed to the teeth. The fundamental law of capitalism is not: *both you and I*; but: *you or I*.

In addition, there is the part played by militarism as an instrument of force in the hands of the ruling classes in the domestic political struggle.

In these struggles, the ruling classes can still attain important results by using the instruments of force of the police and gendarmerie, which in a certain sense, are special troops to oppose the domestic foe. But in the long run, even here the more brutal and powerful instrument of the army cannot be dispensed with. We learn this even from the Scandinavian countries, from Switzerland, from Holland, Belgium, even from Canada. Even Great Britain, a country in which our comrades have hitherto felt themselves so secure, has more than the Mene Tekel of the Chartist uprisings; Belfast is a striking example of the international character of militarism, and we shall see later the consequences of this militarism. The army of a universal military service, used as an instrument against the internal foe, is subject, however, to a very special internal dialectics. It pretends to be the people in arms, as opposed to the same people which does not possess arms. The proletarian in his colored uniform is expected to shoot at father, mother, brother, at his factory com-

rades of yesterday and to-morrow, and the proletariat is expected to pay the cost of these weapons to be used in fighting the proletariat, not only with its blood and its conscience, but also with its own money.

The class character of the army must now be evident even to the most stupid. This is an almost desperate situation for militarism, which seeks to save the day for itself by an extremely ingenious system. . . .

The crack troops, with their particular privileges of prestige and equipment, represent a particularly reliable weapon against the internal foe, within the entire army, which is also intended as a general weapon against the internal foe. The internationally best-known example of such a body of troops are the Cossacks, but even the Cossacks have begun to become unreliable, for the Revolution cannot, in the long run, either be intimidated or bought off. Or, it can be bought off only by the introduction of Socialism! But all these things can be ultimately of no avail. In spite of obstacles, the proletarian will recognize instinctively the truth of Virgil's sentence—in its application to militarism—*sic vos non vobis* ("To be your burdens, not your advantages").

But militarism is not only the army in its various forms; it runs far afield, it extends into the bourgeois world, embracing our entire public life, elevat-



ing an enormous and delicate apparatus for the purpose of opposing the natural laws of evolution by an autocratic and sovereign exertion of force in the interest of capitalism and the prevailing authority, remolding human society after its own image, and according to its own weal. . . .

From all this it is apparent that militarism, particularly in the great western European nations, will speak the decisive word in all serious questions of politics and the public life, that it is at this moment the final regulator of the Social-Democratic—of the proletarian—policy. Just as the Government always formulates its policy in accordance with its expected effect on the Social-Democrats, so the Social-Democratic policy is in the last analysis determined by the reaction to its tactics on the part of militarism, the most powerful prop of the capitalist oligarchy. Thus, the anti-militarist propaganda is the most necessary supplement, as it were, in order to complete the proletarian policy.

From the above, it is apparent how militarism must necessarily be undermined and finally destroyed by its internal dialectics. What are the consequences to be inferred by us? Shall we lay our hands in our laps, confident of the maturing of these dialectics? Such fatalism would not only be equivalent to the abandonment of all political struggle in general, but would also amount to a crude parody of the doctrines of the materialist concep-

tion of history. Capitalism, also, will die by its internal dialectic, and yet no man is fool enough to decide that the proletariat must henceforth merely keep open its mouth and wait for the roast pigeons of the state of the future to fly in for consumption. No, comrades, we must never forget that we are ourselves a part of this internal dialectic, and by no means the most insignificant part. The class-consciousness of the proletariat is a factor in evolution, of the utmost moment, particularly with regard to the question of militarism. To advance the formation of this class consciousness, including that of international solidarity—in short, to educate the proletariat, means nothing more or less than precisely to accelerate the internal dialectic of militarism itself. This conception is not a paradox, for instance, the paradox of assigning, to the educational struggle, the rôle of an arbitrary influencing of the proletarian class struggle. On the contrary, even the agitators, the propagandists of the proletarian class consciousness, are the necessary products of the economic evolution of the class struggle, and with their propagandist activity are essential factors in this internal dialectic. The preparedness and the enthusiasm of the proletarian are also factors of might—and very powerful factors, too—and, therefore, factors in the internal dialectic. We call, therefore, not for fatalism, but for organizational work

and for permeating the proletariat with revolutionary enthusiasm.

—*From the speech, "Militarism and Anti-Militarism," delivered at the Fourth Socialist Young People's Conference, at Stuttgart, in 1907.*

### CLASS JUSTICE

GENTLEMEN, you are conceiving the word "class justice," in a particularly personal manner, in a manner in which I did not intend it to be understood! Gentlemen, those who are subject to our influence have been so trained socially—gentlemen, let me speak out, or, at least remember that your laughter proves nothing, and, no doubt, you have heard the old proverb. I can tell you this, gentlemen: these circles have been so trained in a social understanding, that they do not ascribe the various events that arouse their disapproval—and it is this which we have preached to them daily, in connection with all the phenomena of public life—to malice, to evil qualities, to a low morality or individuality of certain persons, but they attempt, in every phenomenon which is unfavorable or noxious to them, to behold a social phenomenon, a phenomenon arising from the nature of our order of class society. Gentlemen, in preaching this point of view daily with

regard to all things, and in turning our arms always against the system—as a consequence—and not against persons; against the bases of our order of society, which is an order of class society, and not against the moral or human qualities of individual persons active in this class or that—in this activity, gentlemen, we never told the classes we represent to use the word “class justice” in such a narrow and short-sighted manner.

What do we mean by the word “class justice”? These words point directly to the basis of our social conception, they point to the classes as such. We do not speak of a twisting of the law, we speak of class justice. What does this mean? A form of justice which arises from the opposition between the classes, and which, therefore, is the result of a social phenomenon. And, the fact that we have every right to point to such a phenomenon, the phenomenon that out of the social chaos of our present day, which is recognized and deplored not only by our party but also by other circles, but whose true character is indeed understood only by our party, it seems to me, and for which only our party is seeking a really radical remedy. The fact that some sort of justice must necessarily arise out of this chaotic condition of our present-day society, a justice which is mutilated by the one-sidedness of the class situation, of the entire situation, of the resulting *Weltanschauung* of the judges, all of whom are se-

lected from certain classes only, this is quite self-evident; this is a consequence of the very nature of our class system, a consequence as necessary as any effect can be that is produced by any cause.

It is, therefore, our duty everywhere and always to cling to the conviction and emphasize the fact that our justice is a class justice, since it can be nothing else at all.

*—From speech delivered in the Prussian Diet, February 6, 1911.*

## AGAINST THE REFORMISTS; AGAINST GUSTAV NOSKE AND THE EXECU- TIVE COMMITTEE OF THE SO- CIAL-DEMOCRATIC PARTY

I AM by no means a friend of hair-splitting distinctions, nor am I of the view that individual words may be subjected to criticism after taking them from their context. But this is not the case in the present instance. Noske's speech was not a random speech that might be delivered in any popular meeting. Noske was speaking as a representative of the Social-Democracy in the Reichstag, and such speeches, which, after all, have a certain authoritative character—must, of course, be measured by very severe criteria. It is my opinion that Noske, in his speech, and to a certain extent Bebel also, was in-

fluenced by the depressing effect of the result of the elections. In fact, all the debates of that period were not up to the standard that should be expected by our party. And Noske was the man who was most taken in by the nationalistic machinations that were resorted to during the elections, and to which we no doubt owe many a defeat. According to his own introductory words, it was Noske's wish to elucidate the aspirations which we "pursued" with regard to militarism, to counteract "indescribably and incomprehensibly false views as to these aspirations." But what are these "indescribably false views"? In his speech, Noske repeatedly and emphatically states that the Social-Democracy is far removed from any idea of demanding the abolition of the army. At the very outset he rejects as an erroneous imputation the idea that we stand for an all-or-nothing attitude on the military question, whereupon he goes on to say: "When did any Social-Democrat ever think of demanding the abolition of the army?" He emphasizes again and again that the Social-Democracy in its demands shows every consideration for the maintenance of the military power of the nation. This constant emphasis on the necessity of a Germany prepared for military action might after all be left to the protagonists of the militaristic organizations. Among other things, Noske demanded a limiting of the military bands; even in this connection he considered it necessary to

assure his hearers that this limitation also should not go so far as to result in any diminution of the preparedness of the army. Furthermore, Noske rejects his adversary's statement that the Social-Democrats are opposed to soldiers altogether. "No Social-Democrat ever thought of asking that the army be abolished!" He goes on to say, "Of course, no single state can think of disarming. But while we recognize that Germany at the present moment cannot possibly think of undertaking the step of disarmament, we must, nevertheless, oppose the present competitive armaments." I am ready to admit that one who will take the necessary pains can infer from these words a correct Social-Democratic doctrine, but the continuous emphasis of the necessity of a strongly armed Germany is the thing that gives Noske's speech its fundamental tone. It is not the logical content of these words that I am attacking, but the "war veteran psychology," which is the fundamental key-note of the speech. The War Minister had quoted a passage from my pamphlet in which I mention the fact that the maltreatments of soldiers are particularly appropriate for use as the basis of a thorough-going criticism of militarism. An interpolation by Bebel—I do not know whether Bebel ever uttered this interpolation, but it is to be found in the stenographic report—disavows this passage of my speech, and yet my statement was one which our Party, if it carries on

any anti-militarist propaganda at all, has advocated in every case. Of course, Noske also came out to oppose this self-evident position. Noske, furthermore, rejected the War Minister's assertion that we wished to disgust the soldiers with their military service and maintained, to refute this view, that three party Congresses had unanimously rejected a motion to carry on propaganda in the barracks. As a matter of fact, no motion to carry on propaganda in the barracks was ever put at any party Congress. Noske's assertion is, therefore, as incorrect as it is unwise. Furthermore, we do, indeed, wish to disgust the proletariat with the barrack ground drills. The essential point, however, is, how and in what sense we wish this. Even the grave accusation by the War Minister to the effect that we would undermine discipline in the army, Noske felt it his duty to deny without qualification. He points out that we demand discipline even in the party. No doubt, but we are glad to find that the discipline of the army is not as good as the discipline of the Social-Democratic Party. In his evaluation of offensive wars, Noske further declared, that we (in other words, the Social-Democratic Party and the War Minister) "are in full agreement." "There is no difference here at all"—he means between Noske and the War Minister. But this excessive use of the notion of a "war of offense" and of the unhappy term "offensive wars" has not been customary in



our ranks hitherto—thank God! The conclusion of Noske's speech is as follows: "We wish Germany to remain as ready to strike as possible!" Thus a Social-Democrat concludes a speech! In no single passage of Noske's speech do we find a mention of the character of the class struggle inherent in the Social-Democratic philosophy. There is no reference to our fighting against militarism as a class instrument used in the interest of the ruling classes. There is not a syllable on international solidarity. It is as if the tasks of Social-Democrats were no longer applicable beyond the German frontiers. The entire speech is a continual emphasis of our patriotism, a flag-waving atrocity. There is lacking all emphasis of our position in principle, and, therefore, this speech has been very appropriately censured.

—*From the speech delivered at the Congress of the Social-Democratic Party, at Essen, in 1907.*

## AGAINST BAUER AND SCHEIDEMANN; IN FAVOR OF THE GENERAL STRIKE

IN 1910, not only the delegates, but the entire party was of the opinion that the achievement of a free, universal suffrage for Prussia was not a mere house of cards, not a secondary issue, but that it remains the most burning, the most urgent, the central

political question in Germany. And our German Party Congresses have accordingly expressed themselves in this sense. Any one who remembers the general feeling at the Prussian Congresses, who knows how vehemently the Prussian suffrage storm was promulgated, who knows how the German, the Prussian Social-Democracy went out into the streets in 1910 at a glorious epoch of the proletarian struggle, and by a single turn of the hand conquered in the streets a victory that had been considered impossible, because it was convinced that it was dealing with a question of life and death, any one who remembers these events will be astonished to hear to-day that the Prussian right of suffrage is really not a matter of such great importance, after all. . . .

This is the reason why—the last elections to the Prussian Diet have destroyed all hopes of any regulation by other means of the Prussian suffrage reform—the call for a general strike arose spontaneously from the masses; from the masses, in spite of all. It really does not matter who it was that spoke the first word in this affair; the important thing is the response he met with. The feeling that this problem must be discussed had spread all over the country. The idea that it is necessary to resort to energetic means till matters should come to a head, dominates the broadest, and certainly not the worst sections of the working class. It is wrong to represent the matter to-day as if those who are crying for

a general strike were revolutionary poseurs. The situation which resulted from the last elections to the Diet actually demanded a thorough discussion of all devices that were still possible and necessary. Not because of the caprice of some accidental condition, but as the result of this general situation, do we now hear the call for the general strike resound. The discussion had to come; it came with the force of a natural law; the fact that it comes at an unhappy time of crisis is no reason for scorning this discussion, which arises from the utmost needs of the proletarian struggle, no reason for discrediting it with such delight, such glee as is being systematically done, and has been systematically done. I must censure Comrades Scheidemann and Bauer for such action. Surely I cannot approve everything that has been said and written on this subject, but how could Comrade Scheidemann, in his speech delivered yesterday, speak in such an unfriendly tone—to put the matter mildly—against the advocates of the general strike! How was it possible for Comrade Scheidemann to deride and decry in every possible manner the enthusiastic supporters of the policy of continuing and expanding the Prussian suffrage struggle, who were the leaders of the discussion? The resolution of the Executive Committee of the party is alleged to have the purpose of stating our adherence to the idea of the general strike. This approval of the general strike was stated at Jena

and at Mannheim. The resolution of the Executive Committee of the party again contains an element that makes it entirely unacceptable, namely, its reference to the necessity of a complete fusion of all the organs of the workers' movement. Such a complete fusion will hardly ever be susceptible of realization. If this were the necessary presupposition for a general strike, no such strike could ever have taken place. Such a formulation amounts to a crippling of the general strike, not to an enhancing of it. Nor can I understand how it was possible in this resolution precisely at this point to emphasize particularly the "masses that are inspired with the ultimate goals of the Social-Democracy and ready for any sacrifice." Such a remark on such an occasion must appear extremely peculiar, since the demand under discussion is not a purely proletarian demand, but rather a democratic demand, which may count on support—in a certain measure—even from non-proletarian elements. These two passages of the Executive Committee's resolution show clearly enough that it is intended to hand-cuff the general strike discussion, not only for the present, but for all time. This intention is perfectly clear from the remarks of Scheidemann. I maintain that Comrade Scheidemann, like other persons who call themselves supporters of the general strike, are servants of the strike only in words, being at heart thoroughly opposed to it. Their polemic is completely at vari-

ance with the idea of the general strike. If all the objections raised by Scheidemann and Bauer are valid, and also the objections of Bernstein, whom I hardly can recognize in his actions of to-day, the general strike becomes an utter absurdity in the evolution of affairs as a whole, a monstrosity, and we have no need to adopt any resolution at all. Our resolution is by no means merely an aggregation of high-sounding phrases. It differs from the resolution of the Executive Committee of the party, in the first place, in the absence of the unfortunate vocabulary chosen by the Executive Committee, and in the second place, in its favorable attitude to the discussion of the general strike. Originating, as it does, from the revolutionary requirements of the masses, from their faith in the permanence of the tactical will of the party, from the desire for such permanence, it announces a ruthless struggle—to culminate in the defeat of the enemy. We welcome the popularity of this idea, since we consider it a guarantee that the general strike will become more and more a living thing. Resolutions alone will not suffice. It is quite wrong for Bauer to say: what is the use of talking of such things? For the general strike will be carried out by us at the right moment. Far from it, in order that the general strike shall be "carried out" in this sense, and not as a random and purposeless strike, it will have to be understood by the masses in advance in all its significance, with

full responsibility. For this reason, we need discussion. The idea must become alive in the masses, and it can come to life only in the living stream of discussion with the masses themselves. Scheidemann's simile, that of the weapons that cannot be put to use, is of no applicability. No one says the general strike is to take place to-day. The opponents of the labor movement know very well that the workers even in times of crises have weapons enough in their hands to help them ward off hostile attacks. But even in a period of distress, as at the present time, we must prepare new weapons for the future, and these weapons must be sharper weapons, for the weapons we have used thus far have been of no avail.

*—From the speech on the general strike, delivered at the Congress of the Social-Democratic Party, at Jena, in 1911.*

## THE DUTY TO THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

BEBEL, in his address, has stated among other things the following: There are situations in the life of parties, as in those of nations, in which they must take up a fight to the bitter end, even at the risk of a defeat. What is our attitude to the Russian Revolution, in which the counter-revolution is at this moment indulging in orgies of cruelty and vicious-

ness without parallel in the world's history? The blood shed by our brothers on the other side of the boundary is shed for us, for the proletariat of all the world, and everything we may have been able to do in our country for our struggling Russian brothers is but a scanty mite with which we purchase our immunity from the blood sacrifices that are being made for us in the East. In spite of all we have been able to do thus far, we are infinitely indebted to our Russian brothers and sisters. There is no doubt that we German Social-Democrats must apply to ourselves also the slogan: Rather be hanged by the hangman of Czarism and its accomplices than be an accomplice to the hangman of Czarism. There must be no doubt on this score either in Germany or in Russia. Bebel also—I know it was rather his gray hairs that spoke yesterday than his ever-young heart—will continue to send this shout with unambiguous clarity in all directions, that it may be heard. The position of the German proletariat on this question is being watched not only by the Governments of Germany and Russia, but also by the entire movement for Russian liberation. Bebel spoke yesterday of the possibility of an intervention. The remarks which I attack deal precisely with this possibility, whose extreme improbability is, of course, quite obvious. We must, therefore, unanimously emphasize that no sacrifice will be too large to be made for our friends in Russia.

Should it be attempted to use the German people as an executioner of Russian liberty, which would be equivalent to a disgrace and a cultural self-destruction on the part of the German people, we should simply have come to the extreme pass, to one of those situations concerning which Bebel yesterday—in the sentence quoted by me above—said: “It shall not be written in the world’s history that the movement for Russian freedom was put down by the German people, which has the largest and most powerful organization of the international proletariat. We must guard ourselves against this mortal sin. It would be a miserable disgrace—for which the devil should take us—if we should not see to it that every effort to stab the Russian Revolution in the back from Germany, should terminate in a thorough defeat even of the Prussian-German reaction.”

*—From the speech delivered at the Congress of the Social-Democratic Party, at Mannheim, in 1906.*

### AGAINST THE IMPERIALIST WAR; GERMANY AND THE WORLD WAR

I STATE the following reason for my vote on today’s measure: This war, which was desired by none of the participating nations, did not break out for the good of the German or of any other people.



It is an imperialist war, a war for capitalist domination of the world market, for the political control of important colonial regions by industrial and financial capital. From the point of view of competitive armaments, it is a preventive war, hatched in the dark of a semi-absolutism and a secret diplomacy by the German and Austrian war parties acting conjointly. It may also be considered a Bonapartist enterprise for the demoralization and the destruction of the rising labor movement. The past few months have shown this with increasing clearness, in spite of a ruthless campaign of misrepresentation.

The German slogan: "Against Czarism!", like the present English and French slogan: "Against Militarism!", pursued the purpose of mobilizing the noblest instincts, the revolutionary traditions and aspirations of the people, in the service of national hatred. Germany, the accomplice of Czarism, and to this day a pattern of political backwardness, has no mission to act as a liberator of nations. The liberation of the Russian people—like that of the German people—must come from within.

This war is not a defensive war for Germany. Its historical character and its progress to this day forbid us to trust a capitalist government when it states the purpose for which it seeks credits to be the defense of the Fatherland. . . .

We must defend a peace without conquests; all our efforts must be bent to this end. Only a simul-

taneous, continuous strengthening of all tendencies aiming at such a peace, in all the belligerent states, can put an end to the bloody massacre before all the participating nations have become exhausted. Only a peace arising from the soil of the international solidarity of the working class and the freedom of nations can be a sure peace. Therefore, the proletariat of all lands has again, to-day, in the war, to perform a joint Socialist labor for peace.

I am voting in favor of the Poor Relief Credits, to the amount asked, which appears to me entirely insufficient. I shall likewise vote in favor of everything that can be done to alleviate the hard lot of our brothers in the field, of the wounded and sick, who have my limitless compassion; here again no amount asked can be too much. But, as a protest against war, against those responsible for it, against the capitalist policy that brought it about, against the capitalist aims which it pursues, against plans for annexation, against the violations of the neutrality of Belgium and Luxemburg, against the military dictatorship, against the social and political irresponsibility of which the Government and the ruling classes are to-day still guilty, I vote against the war credits asked.

*—Text of the proposed declaration which Liebknecht intended to pronounce on December 2, 1914, to explain his refusal to vote the war credits.*

## IMPERIALISM AND WAR

AN essential trait of imperialism, whose chief representative on the European continent is Germany, is the tendency to economic and political expansion, which is productive of sharper and sharper political tensions.

Powerful combinations of German heavy industry have for years been casting covetous glances toward the treasures of the soil and the industrial plants of Belgium and French-Lorraine. Already they own valuable establishments in those regions, whose exploits and development would be made immensely easier for them by annexing these countries to Germany, and thus securing them from French boycotts. The same is true of portions of Russian Poland. Furthermore, the annexation of Belgium and of a portion of the northern French coast is being supported as a blow at the heart of the British rule of the Channel. In this demand for a Central European league of states, the lust for European expansion on the part of German imperialists finds untrammelled expression, and aims to encroach even upon neutrals.

Asia Minor and Syria, the foci of international capitalist competition, are among the most important colonial temptations to the impetuously advancing German financial capital. Here lies the center of

the imperialist opposition between Germany and Russia, behind which the Anglo-Russian opposition subsides for the present. Here also is the basis of operations for a drive on Egypt (the Suez Canal), the corner-stone of the British world-power.

The Balkans have attained peculiar interest in the eyes of a very influential section of German capital, as a bridge to fields of exploitation in Asia. Besides, the increasing intimacy between German and Austrian capital, and the military and political aspirations of the Dual Alliance between Germany and Austria, have bestowed considerable importance on the attitude of Austria in the Balkans, for the official German policy.

In this maturing of future conflicts, the munitions capitalists, with their international relations, who had prospered splendidly under the ægis of the armed peace, and who might expect a golden harvest in war time, without regard to the outcome, and whose principal German establishments are furthermore much interested in Belgian and French-Lorraine establishments—play an important part.

Militarism generates from its own loins additional powerful supporters of war, above all, a clique of military officers, who, particularly in Germany, worked unhindered to produce a military collision, and autocratically established their government within the government.

Internal political conditions, as a consequence of the sharpness of the national oppositions, and particularly of the class oppositions, had assumed a serious aspect for the ruling classes. In Germany the rapid growth of the Social-Democracy, which threatened their political and their economic holdings, caused them to shout for war as long as a decade ago, war being the only means to annihilate the labor movement.

These machinations, which have counter-parts in other nations also, were advanced in Germany by semi-absolutist conditions of government, which deprived the masses of the power to decide questions of war and peace, and rendered possible in the foreign policy a personal influence modified by no control on the part of the people, and therefore, subject the more to the pressure of the ruling classes.

Secret diplomacy, the policy of the secret treaties, has long been a menace to peace.

Though there is no doubt that many circles of the non-proletarian population had a strong and increasing interest in the maintenance of peace, their resistance to this personal dominion was crippled by their hatred and fear of the proletariat. This threw them into the arms of militarism again and again, for they regard militarism as their dependable protector in the class struggle against the rising revolutionary tide.

*The Political Effect of the Majority Tactics* <sup>4</sup>

It is becoming daily more evident that the majority tactics, far from preventing war in the future, is a direct invitation to war, and its effect on the internal political situation is hardly more pleasing.

Unless all the previous laws of evolution in society are turned topsy-turvy, unless Germany is transformed into a political Utopia, no serious political reformation in the future will be possible—as in the past—except as the result of political and economic struggle. And the prospects of this struggle become the more favorable, the more certain the confidence of the masses in the firmness, in the inflexibility and permanence of the Social-Democracy, and the greater the respect and fear felt by its opponents for its power, its clarity of purpose, its resoluteness. A party whose resistless yielding to mass psychoses, to the national mob of the streets, to ingenious government machinations, to a sheet of paper blackened with printers' ink and announcing a condition of siege, has been made so clear, a party which deserves to be called subversive only in the sense that it subverts its own principles, and whose steadfastness at a great moment of history was so slight that a house of cards might be called a fortress wall by comparison, such a party will lack this

<sup>4</sup> Liebknecht refers to the tactics of the majority of the Social-Democratic Party, which voted in favor of the war credits.—*Translator*.

confidence as well as this respect. This will be the more the case, the greater the number of "Socialistic" larks of springtime that flutter through the inhospitable winter of the imperialistic discontent, and seek to inspire the people with the illusion of the approach of the promised land. To imagine it is possible to pave the way for the proletariat by the use of such "direct action" of the National Liberal type, is equivalent to a renunciation of the rudiments of dialectic materialism.

The art of easily vanquishing us has been well learned by the enemies of the proletariat. The Social-Democracy must reconquer its lost self-respect; it must reconquer it in battle! If it takes up this struggle while the war is still in progress, it may swiftly and thoroughly attain this goal. If it postpones this struggle until after the war, it will find the task far more difficult, because of its much smaller risk.

But it cannot evade the struggle!

—*Fragments of a speech delivered at Neukölln, in January, 1915.*

## THE NECESSITY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY CLASS STRUGGLE

ONE of the most important direct causes of the outbreak of the war—whose fundamental causes

are, of course, based on the conditions of international capital—is to be found in our conditions of semi-absolutism, of secret diplomacy, and of personal rule.

Gentlemen, if the imperialistic aspirations of big capitalism conjure up immense dangers to peace, it is the more necessary for the great masses of the people to control the foreign policy. Such a control is precluded by the present-day constitution and administration of Prussia and Germany. I know that the democratization of the internal policy leaves much to be desired even in other nations, where the democratization of this policy is comparatively advanced; and our friends in England, our friends in France, who are as much our friends to-day as ever, insofar as they are carrying on a Socialist policy, have voiced, and are still voicing, the demand for a consistent democratization of the foreign policy.

Gentlemen, the sacrifices of millions who are being slaughtered in this war are due at bottom to the disfranchisement of the masses of the population in the nations who are participating.

All of us—however great may be the differences of opinion in our inner circles to-day—are in agreement to the effect that the masses of the people did not desire the war in any of the participating nations.

Gentlemen, I welcome the destruction of the illusion that has existed in large sections of the popu-



lation concerning the readiness of the ruling classes and the Government to grant a suffrage reform. Clarity, a clear view, is necessary above all things; the vapor is now dispelled. And this clarity should be preached not only to them—a task not to be neglected—who protect and support the “Fatherland” in their civilian clothes and feel the distress of these days, but also them who stand in the trenches and who hope to read other things in the newspapers they receive from home than news items concerning the transactions of the Budget Commission last Saturday and to-day, transactions which, I am firmly convinced, will make them clench their fists in their pockets and curse them who aroused hopes and illusions within them, deceiving them as to the truth, however, as to the fact that this war is being waged, not for the interests of the great masses of the German people, as to the truth that the masses of the people will remain as disfranchised after the war as they were before the war, unless they seize their rights with their own hands. Gentlemen, the sole salvation of the masses of the people is struggle; this condition has not changed. Not by yielding, not by adaptability, not by flexible concessions, but by struggle, will the people attain its rights. The class struggle alone is the salvation of the proletariat, and we hope that we shall soon once more be waging this class struggle in common and publicly, internationally, together with the pro-

letarians of all other countries, including those now at war with us. In this international class struggle, not only is our sole hope the democratization, the political and economic liberation of the working class, but it is even the sole hope of the masses of the belligerent nations while the war is still in progress, their sole prospect and resource in the struggle for the termination of the awful slaughter of nations, in the struggle for peace in the Socialist sense. Away with the hypocrisy of domestic peace! On to the class struggle! On to the international class struggle for the liberation of the working class, and against war!

—*Speech delivered in the Prussian Diet,  
March 2, 1915.*

## PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP

COMRADES, friends! You know how those few persons that dared express themselves publicly in opposition, were calumniated and menaced in that period of mass hysteria. Not a day passed on which I was not the recipient of the most savage imprecations and insults. Little by little, an increasing section of the population began to recognize the correctness of our position, and now we are lauded and praised. But this merit is, indeed, not our own,

for a considerable number of plain working men remained steadfast from the very outset, in spite of the war mania. It was this section which supported us and this section which deserves all the praise.

What is the nature of this revolution? It is in great part a military insurrection directed specifically against war. It was kindled directly by the fears of the sailors that the Admiralty might continue the war of its own authority after the collapse of the land fronts.

There developed from this the mutinies of the troops stationed in the interior of Germany. The working classes have for a long time been pressing forward stormily. Even bourgeois circles have cooperated within and without the army, but these are very undependable, very suspicious elements. The soldiers must not forget how important is the part played by the workers. The troops at the front were not actively engaged in the revolution.

What is the basis of power of the present revolution? We must first ask, what revolution do we mean? For the present revolution has a number of very different contents and possibilities. It may continue to remain what it has been thus far: a reform movement in favor of peace, a bourgeois movement. Or it may become what it has not been thus far—a proletarian Socialist revolution. The proletariat will, even in the former instance, have to furnish the most important prop, unless the revolution is to

be degraded into a farce. But the proletariat cannot content itself with this bourgeois-revolutionist content. Unless all the achievements that have been made thus far shall again be lost, it must march on to the social revolution: the day of settlement between capital and labor. This turning point of the world's history has arrived.

Has the proletariat the power in its hands today? Workers' and soldiers' councils have been formed, but they are by no means the expression of a fully clear proletarian class consciousness. Their members include officers, many of them of noble birth. The workers' councils include members of the ruling classes; this is disgraceful. Only workers and proletarian soldiers, or those men and women who have distinguished themselves by a life of self-sacrifice and struggle for the proletariat, should be elected to the workers' and soldiers' councils. No others must be put into responsible posts at this time. This obvious assertion of authority must be made to the ruling classes, who have imposed their will upon the proletariat for so long a time. Only the proletariat itself can liberate itself. . . . The composition of the councils up to this time lays bare the root of the evil, namely, the masses of the workers and soldiers are not yet sufficiently enlightened either politically or socially.

Do the workers' and soldiers' councils at present really hold the political power? Not only the eco-

conomic and social positions of authority, but many of the positions of political authority have continued to remain in the hands of the ruling classes. And what they had lost of these positions they have again succeeded in recovering with the aid of the present Government; the officers have again been restored to their commands, the old bureaucracy has again assumed its functions—under supervision, to be sure, but under a supervision whose effectiveness is necessarily more than dubious, for the supervising proletariat is often circumvented by the wily bourgeois in the turn of a hand.

The social position of authority held by the higher education possessed by the ruling classes was a source of great defect also to our comrades in Russia. Members of the ruling classes are for the present in many cases indispensable as auxiliaries and specialists. They are obliged to put themselves in the service of the Revolution; but to intrust them with power would mean a serious jeopardizing of the Revolution.

Now the Generals are returning from the front to the interior with their huge armies. They deport themselves like Cæsars at the head of their legions, forbid the raising of the red flag, abolish the soldiers' councils, etc. We may expect many acts on their part, possibly even an attempt to bless us once more with the noble Hohenzollern dynasty. If these huge armies were permeated with a revolutionary spirit, they could not be abused in the infamous manner

in which they are now being abused. But the first and foremost duty of the "Socialist" Government is to disseminate this spirit among the troops at the front, a duty this Government has basely neglected, waving the red flags zealously instead, and sowing hatred against "Bolshevism," and thus handing over the masses of the soldiers the more defenselessly to the mortal enemies of the Revolution—the military officers—whom this Government had itself restored to their commands. The ingenious plan that is being pursued is that of flooding Germany with a new counter-revolutionary danger by means of the troops from the front, who, as a result of the armistice conditions and its consequences, are again imbued with chauvinistic spirit. This plan must be opposed ruthlessly, the Generals must at once be eliminated, the authority to give commands abolished, all the armies organized democratically from the bottom up. We are told this is impossible because of the difficulties of demobilization. Far from it! Let us have confidence in the revolutionary self-discipline of the German soldier masses. Once they are fired with the enthusiasm of revolutionary zeal, they will solve with ease practical problems that seem impossible of solution in normal times. Faith can move mountains; where there is a will, there is a way. But, first of all, I ask: Is a proper retirement of the German troops more important than the Revolution? Is it not outright madness to hand over to the mortal

enemies of the Revolution—for the sake of “order” and “peace”—means of power capable of menacing the very existence of the Revolution? However we may regard the question: the restoration of the power of command was an ax-stroke into the heart-wood of the Revolution. It is to this step that we owe chiefly the loss of the achievements of the Revolution of November 8 (1918), for the power which the proletariat swiftly secured on that day has for the most part returned to the hands of the ruling classes.

We may now ask: What is now to be done? What is the duty of the proletariat in this situation?

It cannot be the duty of the proletariat to conclude with the foreign imperialists a peace that is unworthy of them as men, a throttling peace. Such a peace is not only intolerable, but it is a momentary peace only, necessarily productive of new wars. The goal of the proletariat must be a peace of well-being and freedom for all nations, a permanent peace. But such a peace can be based only on the revolutionary will, on the victorious acts of the international proletariat, on the social revolution.

Can the proletariat content itself with merely eliminating the Hohenzollerns? Never! Its goal is the abolition of class rule, of exploitation and oppression, the establishment of Socialism. Our present Government calls itself Socialist. Thus far it has acted only for the preservation of capitalist

private property. The Socialization Commission appointed by this Government, which to this day has not once met, is in all its membership a commission to oppose and retard socialization. And yet we need quick and energetic action, not delay. To be sure, the socialization of society is a long and toilsome process, but the first emphatic steps can be taken at once. The Government should have taken them in the very first days of the Revolution, instead of which it has not yet gone so far as to confiscate the crown lands of the potentates. The large-scale industries have long been mature for expropriation; the Reichstag was already about to nationalize the armament industries in 1913. The military-economic measures of the last four years have shown how swiftly it is possible to introduce serious changes in the economic structure, and yet there was no change, no capitalist disorganization, as a result. The military economy offers technically very useful suggestions in connection with socialization.

There must be no timid hesitation, we must take a firm hand here also. Here also, this will be the best way to overcome all difficulties.

The ruling class is not thinking of giving up its class rule. They can be put down only in the class struggle. And this class struggle will and must pass over the bodies of all governments that do not dare take up the struggle with capitalism, and preach in-



stead to the workers—day by day—peace, order, the wickedness of strikes.

The extermination of capitalism, the establishment of the Socialist order of society, is possible only on an international scale—but, of course, it cannot be carried out at a uniform pace in all countries. The work has begun in Russia, it must be continued in Germany, it will be completed in the Entente powers.

Only the path of social world revolution can lead us out from the terrible dangers, which threaten Germany by reason of the food and raw materials situation. Nor does the German proletariat build its hopes in this connection on Wilsonian promises of mercy, but on the rock of the international proletarian solidarity.

There are two alternatives for liquidating the war—the capitalist-imperialist alternative, and the proletarian-Socialist alternative.

The former will afford for a moment a peace unworthy of men, a peace that will give birth to new wars. The second offers a peace of well-being and permanence. The former will preserve the capitalist order of society; the second will destroy it and liberate the proletariat.

The German working class to-day has the power in its hands, or at least it has the strength to seize and hold this power.

Shall it give up this power; shall it bend the knee

before Wilson; shall it capitulate at the command of hostile imperialists to its mortal enemies within the country, to the German capitalists, in order to be given a hangman's peace? Or shall it not rather—as we demand—oppose with equal ruthlessness the imperialism within the country—in order thus to attain a proletarian Socialist peace!

What proletarians, what Socialists, can find this peace so difficult? The social revolution must come in Germany, and from it must come the social world revolution of the proletariat against world imperialism. This is the only solution also for all the urgent and terrible individual problems which face the German people to-day.

One must grasp the full compass of the capitalist world with its far horizons and perspectives to-day, in order to recognize the folly of all doubts as to the possibility of these goals. Those are the doubts under which is hidden the petty spirit of an opportunist ward politics.

The Navy has done great things in this Revolution, and will do even greater things if it pursues the course it has begun, and refuses to permit itself to be influenced by the lies that are being circulated concerning Bolshevism, etc.! Do not forget how we were persecuted before, and how we turned out to be right in the end. The more enemies we have, the more honor shall we win!

I admit that only enthusiastic zeal can achieve

great results. We need conviction and confidence; we need clearness as to means and ends. Shall we recoil from our task because it is a difficult one? We behold the shining star which indicates our course; the sea is dark, stormy and full of reefs. Shall we give up the goal for this? We shall keep our eyes open and avoid the shoals—and shall steer our course—and shall reach our goal—in spite of everything!

*—From the speech delivered to the Naval  
Committee of 53, November 23, 1918.*

## THE WILL TO REVOLUTION

“REVOLUTIONS cannot be made”—this statement, which we find applied to the entire social revolution, is both true and untrue. “Revolutions” are “made,” like all the rest of the social evolution. But they cannot be stamped out of the ground; they grow out of an organized unfolding of knowledge, feeling, and will, an unfolding which does not descend from Heaven, any more than it arises—on the other hand—with the scientific inevitability of a mechanically superhuman or vegetative automatic phenomenon. Revolution arises in accordance with the laws of human and social psychology, with a—more or less conscious—human activity, *i.e.*, precisely by reason of a given individual and social psychology, and

by general social conditions. In other words, the "make" is a social "make": a mass process, a process within the masses and by the masses; a process achieving itself in the acts of the individuals composing the masses, or representing the masses at the moment. The sentence I have quoted is often misunderstood and abused as a pretext for political inactivity. This does not apply in equal measure to all countries, but it applies particularly to Germany, with its Social-Democratic organization, which serves so excellently for the normal evolution of peaceful times, and is such a stumbling-block in exceptional periods of action. It is quite different in the Latin nations, which are characterized not by the slogan of quietism, but by that of activism.

And let there be no suppression, no elimination of the individual act. A timid fear of the danger of free initiative, of hasty national actions and "aberrations" has no cause for existence in a world-historic event based on a broad foundation of social forces and aspirations. A great social movement can select and put through the social forces available for its purposes only as the result of a complicated dialectic process which remains operative in it for a long time, particularly in periods of catastrophic convulsions. At certain stages of evolution, it will be necessary to put down individualistic flashes in the pan; it was with this in view that the above sentence was coined and repeatedly preached, and

this condition is the only stage in the evolution of the labor movement to which it is applicable. But in a profounder sense, the abomination of individual actions as anarchistic or anarcho-Socialistic, is justified when they are individualistic not only as to appearances, but in their general social significance and effect. Individual acts capable of enhancing or even releasing mass action are not only desirable in the critical eye of the Marxian doctrine of society, but are even demanded by this doctrine.

Mass actions, in the sense of a simultaneous formulation and execution of a decision to act, in all the individuals composing the masses holding the decisive historical position, are an improbability. The first impulse is always given by the individual, or by several individuals; his, or their, initiative is the signal for the others, and their action will drag in that of the others. It is the spark that kindles, even though the true conflagration requires all the masses to be enveloped in the flame.

It is not true that at every historical moment the utmost possible, the utmost measure of utility to the generality proceeds with "the necessity of natural law." Such a statement would display a false understanding of the complicated organic structure of the entire social evolution in all its gamut of possibilities. Cause and effect, the necessity of natural law, no doubt dominate the events of social life, but this conception of cause and effect, this conception

of necessity, includes also very variable, individual powers and actions, capable of being influenced in many directions, as a factor of high importance.

The previous training of the proletariat to subordination of the individual to the general, to the decisions of the whole body, which have been taken with great care, necessarily requires to be supplemented by a free and bold initiative of the individual at the proper moment; by a training to action on one's own responsibility; by a training for fitness at moments when the decisions of the masses are not yet capable of being made, or when there is confusion, to take the proper and necessary step on one's own responsibility—as a sound of alarm for the immediate intervention of the masses, or in the sense of their profounder interests, which may as yet be misunderstood. The working class has had occasion to learn, by reason of a year of bitter experiences, that there are moments at which organizations are not operative, and cannot be operative, in which all the traditional modes for the formal conception and execution of the mass will are inapplicable; it has learned these things too well to forget them, I hope.

—*From an article published in Nos. 1 and 2 "Jugend Internationale," in 1915.*

THE END

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

**Albion:** Perfidious, a frequent mode of referring to England, in France and Germany.

**Barbusse, Henri** (born 1874): Living French radical publicist and novelist; author of *Chains*, two vols., 1925, etc.

**Bauer, Gustav** (born 1870): Living German Socialist leader, who has occupied several ministerial posts since the Revolution of 1918; one of the signers of the Treaty of Versailles.

**Bebel, August** (1840-1913): German Socialist leader, anti-militarist; his autobiography has been published in an English translation; author of *Woman and Socialism*.

**Chartist uprisings; Chartism** ("People's Charter," 1838): demanded universal suffrage, vote by ballot, annual parliaments, a new system of equal electoral districts, the abolition of a property qualification for Parliament, and a salary for members—the early political struggles of English labor.

**E pur si muove** (also, *eppur si muove*): "It moves anyway"; statement attributed to Galileo after his forced renunciation of the Copernican theory.

**Kautsky, Karl** (born 1854): Living German socialist writer; formerly an orthodox Marxian theoretician, now a strong opponent of communism and the Russian Revolution. Author of *Foundations of Christianity*, 1925; *Are the Jews a Race?*, 1926; *Thomas More and His Utopia*, 1927.

**Lassalle, Ferdinand** (1825-1864): One of the founders and leaders of the organized German labor movement; a volume of this series is devoted to selections from his speeches and writings.

**Liebert, Eduard von** (1850-1920): German general; author of several pamphlets attacking the German Social-Democracy.

**Liebknrecht, Wilhelm** (1826-1900): Father of Karl Liebknecht; one of the founders and leaders of the German Social-Democracy. One of the volumes in this series is devoted to his speeches.

**Luxemburg, Rosa:** Socialist leader and theoretician; active in Polish and German Socialist movements, and co-founder with Karl Liebknecht and Franz Mehring of the *Spartacus Bund* in Germany. Murdered with Karl Liebknecht by counter-revolutionaries in Berlin in 1919.

**Mehring, Franz** (1846-1919): German revolutionary socialist, publicist and historian; co-organizer, with Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, of the *Spartacus Bund*; author of *Social Forces in German History*, 1927, and of a history of the German Social-Democratic party, and a life of Karl Marx (in German).

**Morocco Crisis** (1904-1907): As a protest against the terms of the Treaty of April 8, 1904, between England and France, dividing commercial sovereignty in Morocco, William II of Germany paid a personal visit to the city of Tangiers and delivered a speech on the inviolability of Moroccan independence (March 31, 1904); the situation was again sharpened in 1911, when it seemed about to produce war among the three powers.

**Neukölln**: A suburb of Berlin, formerly named Köpenick.

**Noske, Gustav**: Living German Socialist, Minister of War in the Coalition Cabinet during the revolutionary period; notorious for his fiendish suppression of the workers' insurrections in 1919-1920.

**Potemkin**: A Russian armored cruiser of the Black Sea Fleet whose crew seized possession of the ship in the Summer of 1905 as a protest against the intolerable treatment by the officers. This mutiny was a prelude to the October Revolution of 1905.

**Potsdamer Platz**: Square in Berlin from which several important streets radiate.

**Radek, Karl**: Russian Communist leader and publicist, specializing in international affairs. Prior to the Russian Revolution he was active in Polish and German Socialist movements. At present, Dean of Sun-Yat-sen University in Moscow.

**Rathaus**: City Hall.

**Reichsgericht**: Supreme Court of Germany.

**Scheidemann, Philip**: Living German Socialist, Chancellor of Coalition Ministry after the 1918 Revolution, notorious for his part in the putting down of the Spartacus uprising. At present mayor of Kassel.

**Spartacus** (died 71 B.C.): Roman slave who headed an uprising of the slaves against their masters, in the final battle of which he was defeated and killed. *Spartacus Bund*, the name assumed by the Left Socialists of Germany in 1918, who later became part of the Communist Party of Germany.



**Three-Class Election System:** An election system in which the suffrage right was divided into three classes, in accordance with the amount of taxes paid by the voter; this system was introduced in Prussia in 1849 and remained in force (with extensive alterations dating from 1893) until the Revolution of November 9, 1918.

**Torgau:** A town in the Prussian province of Saxony, population (1925), 15,000.

**Zetkin, Clara** (born 1857): Veteran Communist leader in Germany. Formerly editor of women's Socialist publications, and active in the organization of women workers.

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