

12/25/16 + War

2/23/17 - 1st - 2nd - 3rd - 4th - 5th - 6th - 7th - 8th - 9th - 10th - 11th - 12th

Griffin's note on the German revolution of 1918

NOTES ON CHAPTER 5 -- WORLD WAR I, AND REVOLUTIONS OF 1917, 1919

The trauma of the outbreak of WWI very nearly led RL to suicide.

The energizing principle of revolution at once replaced that with the need for immediate anti-war work. Two distinctions within the revolutionary movement appeared as rapidly as the antiwar work itself. Thus, RL

-- and very nearly all anti-war Marxists -- were so anxious to end the slaughter that they had the antiwar work center around "the struggle for peace". Lenin, on the other hand -- and he was the only one among the Bolsheviks to issue that slogan -- felt that it should all be centered around "turn the imperialist war into a civil war."

The other distinctive point between RL and VIL -- the war made it impossible to know each other's views -- was that RL felt that since the corruption seeped into even the SD ranks, the imperative was to undergo "a ruthless self-criticism", a thorough purification which would reconnect the SD with the revolutionary Marx.

Lenin, on the other hand, far from being concerned with any purification of the SD was so thoroughly finished with it as to make no distinction whatever between the imperialists and the SD lackeys. On the contrary, the way he wished to reconnect with Marx, was to reorganize his own philosophic foundations by digging into the Hegelian dialectic from which Marx arose. The Marx RL held in her hands as she worked out her anti-war thesis was The Class Struggles in France.

stress placed on the fact that the revolution to class war cannot be achieved "within national boundaries" ... The revolution that will here find not its end, but its organizational beginning, is no short-lived one. The present generation is like the Jews who were led by Moses through the wilderness. Not only must it conquer a new world, it must go down to make way for those who will be better able to cope with its problems." (Locker, p. 193)



The book that VII held in his hand as he grappled with Hegel's Science of Logic was Marx's Capital, and the stress was on the categories in the Doctrine of the Notion ~~H-T-T~~ -- and the breakdown <sup>sylogistic</sup>

of any separation between objective and subjective, so that a single dialectic <sup>of subject = both to term and to concept</sup> determined both, <sup>which led him to conclude that not a</sup> single Marxist understood Capital because it was impossible to understand without the S of L. And because that was so, what Lenin was singling <sup>the out</sup> out in the self-determination of the Idea as well as the self-determination of nations, was a new beginning that would first determine the end and would be inseparable from <sup>it</sup>.

<sup>the</sup> When, ~~the following year~~, RL's The Crisis in the SD, signed "Junius" reached Lenin -- he did not know it was RL -- he <sup>at the same time</sup> praised it highly as the first principled anti-war statement out of Germany, but also criticized it, not ~~just~~ <sup>just</sup> for its opposition to self-determination of nations, but for its <sup>failure</sup> failure to relate opportunism <sup>to</sup> directly to ~~chauvinism~~ <sup>chauvinism</sup> chauvinism even though the author was so great and clearly using the words "capitulation", "collapse", "treachery of official leaders". The question he seemed to be asking was how can one criticize "the center" without opening attacking ~~Kautskyism?~~ <sup>the main reason for opposing RL's position that</sup> ~~Kautskyism?~~ <sup>national wars are no longer possible in the</sup> ~~era~~ <sup>era</sup> "national wars are no longer possible in the ~~era~~ <sup>era</sup> (era) of this unbridled imperialism" is that that ignores "the national movements" against imperialism": in a word, his new beginning, <sup>the</sup> the dialectic of every phenomenon to be transformed into its opposite which he considered "the basic proposition of Marx's dialectic."

*Beckham in order with*



Bettis, p. 481  
RL: (Sept. 16, 1913)

If they think we are going to lift the weapons of murder against our friends and other brethren, then we shall shout 'We will not do it.' " It was this phrase which became the basis of the public prosecutor's charge against RL (para. 110, 111 of Criminal Code). First trial took place in Frankfurt, Feb. 20, 1914. She

*managed to appeal but just when she was to embark with CZ to 1st Int. Women's Anti-War Cong, to be held in Hlder Feb. 1915, she was incarcerated. Released in near 1915, but re-arrested 7/1916 & still incarcerated she remains NW 1918 Rev. freed her.*

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and inspiring  
Into the dark dungeon came a most brilliant/light -- the Feb. 1917 revolution in Russia. Such an historic achievement, so great an overturn of the Tsarist regime, so magnificent a first revolution of the bloodshed of the imperialist war, so lighted up RL's life. As she put it in April (Briefe an Freunde, p. 157, to Marta Rosenbaum: "Of course the marvels in Russia are like a new lease in life for me. They're a saving grace for all of us. I only fear that you all do not appreciate them enough, do not recognize sufficiently that it is our own cause which is winning here. It must and will have a salutary effect on the whole world, it must radiate outwards into the whole of Europe: I am absolutely certain that it will bring a new epoch and that the war cannot last long.

*P684 Nette*

*Spent time in Frankfurt, Germany, created the events in Feb. & spread them as much as possible under the circumstances. The Sissener letter is what Berlin published for a wide circle. L. Rosenbaum*



Whatever the arguments are about whether the Feb. revolution held "historic primacy" over the October, because the first was spontaneous and the other Bolshevik-planned, there is no greater calumny against the RR and RL's appreciation of it -- and by it I mean Nov. 7, not just March -- than the Mensheviks have perpetrated against RL's legacy and misinterpretation of her critique of the RR. Her critique was open enough and some were justified (to this we'll turn later), and a great deal were not. But of one thing there is absolutely no doubt, and that is that the critique was always subordinated to the praise and acceptance of Nov. 7.

"The party of Lenin was thus the only one in Russia which grasped the true interest of the revolution in that first period. It was the element that drove the revolution forward, and, thus it was the only party which really carried on a socialist policy."

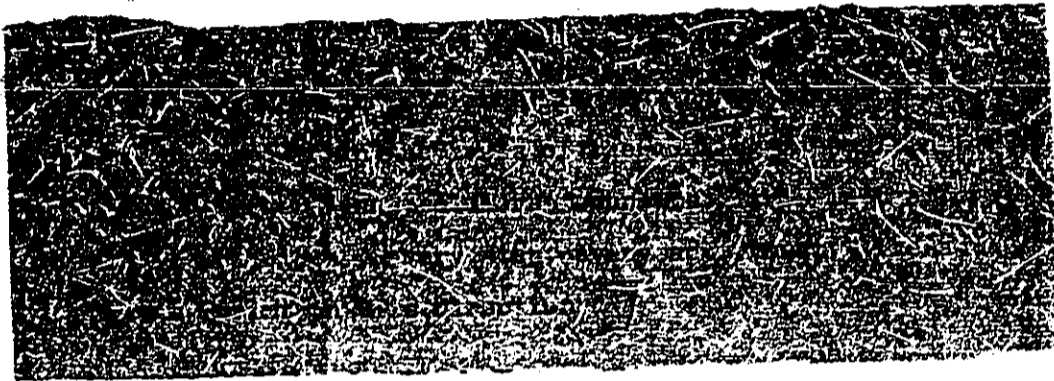
"The RR is the mightiest event of the World War... the mighty sweep of the revolution in Russia, the profound result which has transformed all class relationships, raised all social and economic problems..."

P. 368 "The fate of the revolution in Russia depended fully upon international events. That the Bolsheviks have based their policies entirely on the world proletarian revolution is the <sup>clearest</sup> proof of their political shortsightedness and <sup>firmness of</sup> principle, and the bold scope of their policies."

... the Bolshevik tendency performed the historic service of having proclaimed from the very beginning, and having followed with iron consistency, those tactics which alone could save democracy and drive the revolution ahead. All power exclusively in the hands of the worker and peasant masses, in the hands of the soviets--this was indeed the only way out of the difficulty into which the revolution had gotten; this was the sword stroke with which they cut the Gordian knot, freed the revolution from a narrow blind alley and opened up for it an untrammelled path into free and open fields.

Lenin and Trotsky and their friends were the first those who went ahead as an example to the proletariat of the world; they are still the only ones up to now <sup>who remain</sup> with human <sup>(I have dared)</sup>.

This is the essential and enduring in Bolshevik policy. In this sense there is the immortal historical service of having marched at the head of the international proletariat to the conquest of political power and the practical placing of the problem of the realization of socialism, and of having advanced unflinchingly the settlement of the score between capital and labor in the entire world. In Russia the problem could only be posed. It could not be solved in Russia. And in this sense, the future everywhere belongs to Bolshevism.



Now then, what she did criticize, and what ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ was seen as even truer in our day than hers was any attempt at the single party state, any abridgement of freedom, whether of the press or the individual or associations. However, even there it was by no means either right-wing or an anarchist critique. When she spoke up: "Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party -- however numerous they may be -- is no freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently ..." the stress was not only the fact that this must be done under all circumstances even when the fledgling state was threatened with counter-revolution, but a warning to them that they "must not make a virtue out of necessity." ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Or take the question of dictatorship of the proletariat. She was absolutely and firmly for it. "Yes, dictatorship! But this dictatorship consists in manner of applying democracy, not in its elimination ..." She was anxious to stress that the RR, "a first proletarian revolution of transition, world-historical in significance and destined to react on all capitalist countries" ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ <sup>did not take place,</sup> she wrote Luise Kautsky, "because statistics show the economic development of Russia to be too backward as your clever husband had worked out..." Her central point was



that it must be supported, extended by the world proletariat, the German especially: "In Russia the problem could only be posed, could not be solved." In a word, it was the first step in the world revolution and can be saved as the RR only if it becomes the world revolution. Even the one point where the SD seems to have been supported, -- "It is a well known and indisputable fact that without a free and untrammelled press, without the unlimited right of association and assemblage, the rule of the broad masses of the people is entirely unthinkable." -- which was a critique of the dismissal of the Constituent Assembly, was a few months later in her own revolution, declared to be "a bourgeois assembly", "a counter-revolutionary stronghold" against the genuine democracy contained in her slogan "All power to the workers', soldiers' and peasants' councils." (look up)

As for her opposition to the question of self-determination of nations, warning that it would lead to the "disintegration" of Russia, ~~our age can see how~~ utterly wrong she was better than her age:

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 P378-9 "The formula of the right of the various nationalities of the Russian Empire to determine their fate independently 'even to the point of the right of governmental separation from Russia; was proclaimed again with doctrinaire obstinacy as a special battle cry of Lenin and his comrades during their opposition against Milukovist, and then Karsenskyan imperialism. It constituted the axis of their inner policy after the October Revolution also..."

In the 1918 critique of the Russian Revolution RL wrote "The Bolsheviks are in part responsible for the fact that the military defeat was transformed into the military collapse and breakdown of the..."

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THE GERMAN REVOLUTION HAS BEGUN

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~  
~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ On Nov. 9 a General Strike in Berlin puts the Kaiser to flight. At once, the counter-revolution begins with the ~~call~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ unified SPD- USPD call for a national assembly. Spartakus on the other hand -- it is the day Rosa was freed from jail -- denounces the call and instead calls for power to the workers' and soldiers' councils. It is also clear at once that ~~even~~ on these daring revolutionary calls by the leadership . the membership is even farther to the left of the ~~the~~ From the very first issue of the Spartakus new paper, Die Rote Fahne, just as from the first issue of their anti-war paper Die Internationale, the beginning of the revolution is tightly related to the need for "excruciatingly thorough denunciation of the indecision and weakness of our own moral fall since Aug. 4." (Locker p. 205 and ~~Locker p. 253~~)  
1915  
~~Special~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ in both cases ~~was~~ RL repeated the same call for "the strictest self-criticism and iron concentration of energy in order to continue the work" now that the revolution has begun. (Locker, p. 253.) This focal point for both the ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ call for rebuilding the International and for starting the revolution, was a way of not ever separating ends from means: ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ (p. 254) "The path of the revolution follows clearly from its ends, its method follows from its task. All power in the hands of the working masses, in the hands of the workers' and soldiers' councils, protection of the work of revolution against its luking enemies -- this is the guiding principle of all measures to be taken by the revolutionary government."

Die Rote Fahne kept up a daily unceasing attack on "the petty-bourgeois illusion" that Kautsky<sup>s</sup> and Hilferding<sup>s</sup> tried to perpetrate with a call for a national assembly: "These profound Marxists have forgotten the ABCs of socialism."

They have forgotten that the bourgeoisie is not a parliamentary body, but a ruling class in possession of all the means of economic and social power."

Spartakus also issued a special pamphlet in those two unflagging months of 1918, which they entitled: "What Does Spartakus Want?" which made it clear that only the ~~the~~ Bund "elimination of all parliaments", "election of workers' councils in all Germany", "abolition of all class discrimination, orders and titles, complete legal and social equality of the sexes", "expropriation of property and takeover of all public transport".

The red thread that runs through all of it is, of course, the abolition of capitalism and the creation of ~~the~~ socialism. There was no middle road. It was either barbarism or socialism. The one thing that distinguished it, however, from ~~the~~ what the Bolsheviks called for and prepared to achieve -- conquest of power -- was instead articulated as follows: "The victory of the Spartacus League is not at the beginning but at the end of the revolution: it is identical with the victory of the great millions -- strong masses of the socialist proletariat."

The climax, however, came not then, i.e. at the beginning of the revolution, but with the founding of the Communist Party. It was the last two weeks of RL's life, and the height of all activities. Listen to her speech at that founding conference: "Great historic movements have been the determining causes of today's ~~the~~ deliberations."

From the very first day of her freedom when she called for all power to the workers to this Founding Congress, she articulated over



The masses must learn how to use power by using it. There is no other way..."

"The workers today will learn in the school of action (Hear! Hear!) Our scripture reads: in the beginning was the deed."

"The lynch campaign that was started against her and the rest of the Spartacus leadership went on unabated for two weeks, but she would not stop her activity at all, much less stop her criticism of the 'demagoguery and clap-trep of 'unity' ."

The last words we have from her lips, as on the one hand we had ~~she~~ witnessed her attempt to persuade the Spartacists not to and on the other hand, follow the masses into battle, were: " The leadership has failed. But the leadership can and must be created anew by the masses and of the masses. The masses are the decisive factor; they are the rock upon which the final victory of the revolution is erected. The masses were abreast of events; they have turned this 'defeat' into one of those historical defeats which are the pride and strength of international socialism. And thus the future victory will blossom from out of this 'defeat.'"

" 'Order reigns in Berlin!' You stupid lackeys! Your 'order' is built on sand. Tomorrow the revolution will rear its head once again, and, to your horror, will proclaim, with trumpets blazing: I was, I am, I will be! "

The date was January 14. The lynch campaign of the Social-Democracy had come to a climax and the Freikorps was its executioner. The very next day, Jan. 15, RL ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ was dragged out of her house, beaten, shot in the head, and her body thrown into the Landwehr Canal. It was May before her body was discovered, so mutilated, it was beyond recognition.



