

Eaton

entransen 1992

Leist (Holland) April 20th 1950.
Regentesselaan 8

Dear Comrade Eaton

It was a great pleasure to receive your letter of 2 April from Cologne. I understand the reason. That you choose Rosa Luxembury as the object of your study is certainly the best choice among all the outstanding figures of the former socialist movement. Not in the sense that the present time with its depression period should look back longingly to the great personalities of the past, to venerate and recollect them: when I, ever again, see such articles ^{in memory of them} in the left-wing press my impression is always: you ^{workers of today} should look forward, not backward; the great tasks are lying in the future, not in the past. And no generation really learns from the past ones; each has to find out its own task and method. But once a young man has to study the past, because with his knowledge he has to give advice and teaching, then a personality who embodies the greatest aspirations of its time is the best object to study, just because then its limitations, its dependence on the ~~entirety~~ ^{entirety} of the class, its resulting own weaknesses come more clearly to the front; you are obliged then to go deeper into the causes that brought about failure and downfall of an apparently powerful movement. Seen as a part of the greatness, ~~and~~ decline and fall of the German Socialist and working class movement the study of Rosa Luxembury's life and fight may get a more universal significance for the socialists of today all over the world.

You have drawn up a respectable literature list, more (especially biographies) than I ever have seen. Where you should be able to find the things with asterisk I do not know. Among modern (left, not party-) socialists ^{in Germany} I am solely acquainted and in correspondence with Alfred Weiland, Berlin W 30, Habsturgerstr 8; perhaps he could inform you on papers and sources. When I lived in Berlin

1906-08 I rather often met with ^{Rosa} ~~her~~ at Kautsky's ^{home} (without, however, coming into closer contact with her than with the other comrades. It was only at the morning of the great ^{Berlin} franchise-demonstration (in the Tiergarten) when we ^(contributors to the Neue Zeit) assembled in the house of Kautsky to await there the (secret) ~~place~~ place of the demonstration, and we began to discuss about "what thereafter"; that ~~the~~ appeared the cleft in socialist ^{theorists'} (opinion, that afterwards widened ever more: against Kautsky, Hilferding, Eckstein, Wurm & others ^{were the only ones who} ever Rosa and myself ^{stood} for increasing mass-actions against State Power. Many years afterwards, when I lived in Bremen, there came a dissension ^{with her} about the Radek affair (Radek was expelled out of the Polish party because he attacked the absolute rulership of its leaders, and then was impeached falsely with simple theft), where the Bremen party branch defended him. So I have made many experiences about her party work and its significance, but entered very little into her personal relations. Her exceptional character consisted in the combination of a tender and kind heart, and a knife-sharp intellect, and an indomitable courage. Well-known is what Bebel once said of her: she is the only man in our Party.

What you write on the English working class corresponds to my impressions and has more weight because you know them from personal companionship. Now that England has declined from its former paramount state the bourgeoisie tries to lay the burden on the workers, while at the same time the large class of rich parasites, formerly easily maintained by a rich bourgeoisie, now ^{forms} ~~forms~~ an additional burden for the working class. Since it stands against bourgeoisie, Labour Party, and Trade Union bureaucracy together trying to keep them down, big wild strikes against them all seems to be the only possible way of resistance. But we can't talk more about these things when you will be here. We will be highly enjoyed when on your return home you will visit us in Zeisl, between 1 and 4 May. I suppose you remember the way to come here (easiest from Utrecht autobus to Zeisl, B or D, exit at "Oranje-Nassau-Platz"; then our house is very near by) Perhaps you can indicate your arrival more precisely before.

Yours very truly
And Pannekoek

The address of Beverstedt Kautsky (I suppose he is in Germany) was promised me by the editors of "De Waer", but I did not yet receive it.

Wageningen March 23rd 1955
(Holland)

Englaan 7

Dear Comrade Eton

I do not know what precisely Borkenau in his book wrote about Rosa and Pradek. So I can only tell here what I remember on what was their strife about 1913. It was a difference within the Polish Soc. Party; since I could not read these Polish papers and was not very interested in them it is rather vague and from hearsay what I know. Rosa and her friend Tyseka and some others formed the council of the party, ~~which they~~ ^{which they} directed ~~in~~ rather dictatorially - what was in concordance with the secret and conspirative methods necessary under ~~the~~ ^{the} Czarist rule. Pradek, as a younger generation, made opposition to it, ^{tried} - as he said - to bring more democracy into it: ^(as an enemy of their power) Then to annihilate him ^{(he was put under} charge of having ^{was} ~~stealt~~ ^{stolen} money and ^{excluded} from the party (against the party rules, as he said, which allowed exclusion ^{of a member} only by a party congress). In all these years he had also worked in the German S.P.; he was a very able author, the best versed in international politics, whose ^{excellent} articles on imperialism, especially German imperialism, were highly valued in the leftist press, such as the Bremer Bürgerzeitung and the Leipziger Volkszeitung. Of course he was hated by the rightist ^{wing} people, the reformists, as also by the ruling bureaucrats of the Party, for which he felt only disdain. In a quarrel over a local paper (the financial difficulties of which ~~we~~ ^{re} used by the Party Council to remove its radical editor) he firmly opposed the President, Ebert, who was furious on the ^{lack of respect} ~~insult~~ of that impertinent little Jew. When then after his exclusion from the Polish party he went to Berlin ~~to~~ ^{and applied for membership of} ~~the~~ ^{the} German S.P., ~~his~~ ^{his} admission was refused. Then he went to Bremen, where the local branch did not recognize his Polish exclusion as being ^{legitimate} ~~legitimate~~ ^{rightful}, and admitted him as a ^{party} member. On the next party congress where the matter was dealt with, all the hatred against him, from the reformist wing and from the president, broke forward and the Bremen section was ordered to remove his name from the list of members. The remarkable and uncommon thing at this party congress was

to see Rosa Luxemburg supported by the reformists, hand in glove with the Party-Council and estranged from the left-radical spokesmen who otherwise were her companions. During the war Rosa, as you know, was imprisoned, and Pradek collaborated with the Russian bolsheviks in Switzerland. After the revolution in Germany had broken out November 1918, and some months afterwards Rosa had been murdered, Pradek appeared in Berlin sent by the Russian C.P., i.e. by Lenin, in order to fight ~~strongly~~ the tendencies among German and West European communist groups ^{which} ~~had~~ propagated council organisation against parliamentarism; i.e. to make them obedient to Moscow. From this time (1919-20) is his ^{dictum} ~~thesis~~: the dictatorship of the working class is embodied in the dictatorship of the Comm. Party. In this time I wrote several articles in the German communist press against the ^{basic} ideas of his propaganda.

I suppose that Borkenau's statement does not apply to these last years ^{in which} ~~that~~ he was delegated by Lenin; ^{is the year 1913 meant? (before the 3rd International!)} (his learning on the Bremen S.P. in 1913 was to find support against Rosa, but, as far as I know, had nothing to do with Lenin.

My refutation of Rosa's book on the Accumulation appeared in the Bremer Bürgerzeitung von 29 und 30 Januar 1913. Because no proof was sent to me, the ^{numerical data} ~~computations~~ are full of errors, partly corrected in the issue of the next day. I have lost the two copies which I had preserved; so at this moment I have no means to send you the article. Part of the schemata used may be found in the article "Theoretisches zur Ursache der Krisen" (Neue Zeit von 28 Febr. 1913, 31. Jahrg.), and in another way in my criticism of Henryk Grossmann's book on Akkum. u. Krisentheorie, in the Rätekorrespondenz; but I fear you will not have access to it. (nor have ^I myself at the moment)

I will look for a copy of Lenin as philosopher, and send it to you.

I think it highly interesting that you will publish a theoretical quarterly on socialism. Do you have a sufficient staff of ^{able} editors and collaborators? I am very desirous to hear more details on the plan and the programme of the review, and I hope that circumstances and present conditions will be propitious for your work.

Yours very truly
Ant. Pannekoek

Wageningen (Holland) 20th Jan. '58
England 7

Dear Comrade Eaton. I received your letter of Jan. 6. It is not easy for me to fulfill your wish of giving information on the Pradek-affair. Though we lived in Germany, first near Berlin, since 1909 at Bremen, and sometimes I took part in the discussions I never felt so well informed that I could give a good judgment; we did not take part in all the chat that went among the leading circles; because now I have lost much of my books and pamphlets I cannot check my memory by them. Hence I give you what I remember, only to inform you on my opinions, not to give them as final evidence; so I must be sure that you will not have printed or published in any way what I write for your information.

About 1910 Pradek came to the fore in the German Soc Party by his articles on International Politics printed in a number of ^{socialist} papers (not reformist papers but radical ones). He was the best expert in this field, had read all what was known about Imperialism, and knew everything by heart; he published a book on Imperialism and the German working class. But at the same time he was slovenly and careless, especially in financial matters. So for instance: when he was expelled from the Polish SPD Party he went to Berlin and there was inscribed as member of the German Party. But then he forgot to pay his fees, was stricken out for arrears; and when he had paid this debt he was refused as member because in the mean time the Poles had set up a campaign against him, stating that the SPD could not accept as a member whoever in another SP was expelled for ~~criminal~~ ^{dishonourable} disgracing actions. Then he went to Bremen, where he was highly esteemed for his capacities, and here he was inscribed as member. But the reformist minority in Bremen appealed to the Partei Vorstand in Berlin, and so it became a Parteistags matter.

You ask what I think of the character of his enemy, Tyshka. I never met this man. But his actions can be understood from his position in the world of strife that was (and is) Eastern Europe, where small groups of revolutionaries, without any of the democratic rights of Western Europe, have to fight for socialism. How a party-chief will consider ^{these} the criticism of his actions by a young member?

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He can only consider it as an attempt to undermine his leading position and in every case an action ^{trying} to break down what he has built up in years of struggle. Hence the critic must be destroyed, by whatever means. The accusation of theft is the most promising way. When I read in your letter the accusations: a book stolen; another book stolen - then I know that this is a political farce. Nobody will be able to convince you ^{in this accusation} that here the desire of penny-honesty as highest morality is acting; clearly it is the desire to destroy the enemy - the ^{enemy} ~~enemy~~ of our great cause. Is this, then, a blame of Tyshka? I remember to have heard that Tyshka ^{should have} ~~said~~ ^{said} when his method was reproached to him: we, the party chiefs, envisage every minute to be arrested by the police, tortured and put to death, and you demand that we shall apply against such people as try to destroy our work all the tidiness of civilized society! I do not know whether he really said so; but it is a logic that entirely does away with questions of personal character.

Now you ask how it was possible that Rosa did consent to these tactics. She had worked together with him in the Polish S.D. for many years; he was, as I often heard say, her most intimate friend and adviser. To understand how in that P.V. a climate developed of condemnation (also moral condemnation) of the fundamental criticism of Radek and his friends, we should be far better acquainted with all details of this development. I consider it as certain that Rosa considered Radek as a scoundrel who must be expelled from the party. This opinion ^{then} was dominant in the entire circle of her friends.

You quote in your letter that Rosa had said she would be much pleased if the German P.V. would take over from the Polish party the Radek case. To understand this you should know the previous history (Vorgeschichte) at Göttingen. G. is a small industrial town in Southern Germany. It was strongly leftist, opposite to the bulk of the surrounding lands (as also Württemberg, to which it belonged) which was all reformist, (I was several times in Göttingen to give lectures or courses) and also the "Landesvorstand" of Württemberg was entirely reformist.

The Göppinger workers founded a separate "Parteiblatt" to propagandize and defend their radical point of view against the reformist majority. Such petty S.D papers were many in Germany; usually they could not sustain themselves, but had to get subsidies from the general funds of the Party. To make its basis more solid, the Göppinger workers had assembled and contributed rather great sums of money, though not sufficient to exist independently. As editor they appointed Thalheimer, who brought his friend Radek with him as second editor. Through Radek's articles and many sappy criticisms of the P.V. and its politics the little paper won influence over the ~~(Lands of Southern)~~ ^(Lands of Southern). When at the close of the year the balance showed a loss this was ^{for its enemies} an excellent means of killing the troublesome paper; Landesvolksland and Parteivorkland played a ^{silent} play of divided roles; the former proposed a combination with the (reformist) Ulm paper under the Ulm editor as a condition of financial support, and when the Göppingers refused, the Berlin P.V. came as "mediator"! Ebert himself came from Berlin to impose his decision; Thalheimer ⁱⁿ full of fright to meet the powerful man, feigned illness, and for the editors Radek took part in the discussions of the Göppingers with Ebert. He defended the Göppinger case so well ~~that~~ ^{that} Ebert in a furious mood over the impertinence of the little Jew ^{who had dared to oppose him} (went back to Berlin, for ever his mortal enemy. Do you understand why Rosa was entirely right when she said they were willing to leave the Radek case to the German P.V.?

[a coward

I think it was on the Parteitag 1913 in Jena that the last act was played. There were, among others, ~~among the~~ delegates of the two Russian parties, who told us that both had written a letter to the Parteitag ~~in~~ in which it was said that Radek was not at all excluded from the Polish Party; the group that had given that verdict of exclusion was not competent, ~~to~~ according to the statute of the Party, to exclude a member; the statute indicated other instances to decide our memberships. We had the feeling that the matter was yet lost for Radek, because in the large majority of the delegates there was a strong hatred against him. It was an uncommon sight, a Parteitag, where Rosa continually was discussing with Ebert as friends.

We were mostly curious how she would wind herself out of the Russian ~~statement~~ ~~declaration~~ that the Polish P.V. had acted illegally. But it came differently. The president Ebert, after saying that now we came to the Radek affair, continued that a number of letters over this case had been received by the Bureau; so he proposed to leave them unread, and stated that the Parleytag assented to it. Afterwards I recognized that if one of us had appealed to the "Geschäftsordnung", a discussion perhaps could be ^{have} enforced. But it went too rapidly.

This can be read exactly from the Protocols, which I have not here

This Parleytag was the most striking introduction to the war that followed soon, the first shattering defeat of socialism. In this war time Radek has written a number of excellent articles (in the Swiss ^{and in the Bolshevik} Press e.g.). When the Bolsheviks had conquered Power Radek was sent by Lenin to Germany, because he was best acquainted with German conditions. In Berlin he was imprisoned by the German government, to protect him against murder (by the same people that had murdered Rose and Liebknecht) and the government tried to avoid every strife with the Russians. From his prison he directed the beginning communist movement of the workers, and strongly defended Lenin's new tactics. In these times I wrote several articles against him, to combat his propaganda (with little result, I fear). Afterwards he seems to have been involved in the many processes by Stalin; but of this time I have no knowledge on his whereabouts.

I am trying as much as possible to follow the socialist history by reading the Socialist Review, the Labor Action (U.S.A.), Funken (German). My time is entirely absorbed by finishing an astronomical work; perhaps I will be able to see it printed. My wife died in March of the last year. I am living here ~~at~~ Wazemingen in the vicinity of my married daughter.

Yours very truly
 Ant. Panunzi

Do you know "Geschlossen haben" Best description of life in Stalin's concentration camps?