

foundation of objective historical necessity. We then take flight into the mist of pre-Marxist systems and schools which sought to deduce socialism from the mere injustice and badness of the present-day world and from the mere revolutionary determination of the working class". (2).

Her principal literary work, conceived as part of her struggle against Reformism, was designed to demonstrate an objective limit to capitalist development, and was at the same time a critique of the Marxian theory of accumulation. (3).

In her opinion, Marx had merely raised the question of accumulation of the total capital, but left it unanswered. (2). His Capital appeared to her "incomplete", a "torso"; it contained "gaps" which were to be filled in. Marx had "represented the process of capital accumulation in a society consisting merely of capitalists and workers"; (3) in his system he "passed over foreign trade" (3) so that it is "just as necessary as at the same time it is impossible, in his system to realize surplus value (4) outside the two existing social classes". In Marx, the accumulation of capital "has become involved in a vicious circle"; his work contains "glaring contradictions", which she set about to overcome. (R. Luxemburg, Antikritik.)

She herself based the necessity of capitalist collapse on "the dialectical contradiction that capitalist accumulation requires for its movement to be surrounded by non-capitalist areas...and can continue only so long as it is provided with such a milieu." (R. Luxemburg, Die Akkumulation des Kapitals.)

She looked for the difficulties of accumulation in the sphere of circulation, in the question of turnover and that of the realization of surplus value, while to Marx these difficulties are already present in the sphere of production, since to him accumulation is a question of capital expansion (Kapitalverwertung). The production of surplus value, not its realization, is to him the real problem. It appeared to Rosa Luxemburg, however, that a

(2) R. Luxemburg: Was die Epigonen aus der Marxschen Theorie gemacht haben (Antikritik). Leipzig, 1921. (Written in prison, 1916). As in the first part of this article, we refrain from giving exact references regarding the quotations (volume, page number, etc.), since we translate almost exclusively from German texts.

(3) R. Luxemburg: Die Accumulation des Kapitals, Berlin, 1913.

(4) Realization of surplus value: conversion of the produced commodity into money, completed sale, conversion to new capital.

part of the surplus value could not be disposed of in a capitalism such as that represented by Marx; its conversion into new capital was possible only by way of foreign trade with non-capitalist countries. Here is the way she put the matter:

"The process of accumulation tends everywhere to set in the place of natural economy simple commodity economy, in the place of simple commodity economy the capitalist economy, to bring capitalist production as the one and exclusive mode of production to absolutely dominance in all countries and branches of industry. Once the final result is attained--tho this remains merely a theoretical construction--accumulation becomes an impossibility. The realization and capitalization of surplus value is transformed into an insoluble task....The impossibility of accumulation means, capitalistically, the impossibility of further unfoldment of the productive forces and thus the objective historical necessity of the decline of capitalism." (R. Luxemburg, Die Akkumulation des Kapitals.)

These reflections of Rosa Luxemburg's were not new; all that was original about them was the foundation she gave them. She attempted to demonstrate their correctness by reference to Marx's scheme of reproduction in the second volume of Capital. According to Marx, capital must accumulate. A definite relation must exist between the different branches of production, in order that the capitalists may find on the market the means of production, the workers and the means of consumption for reproduction. This relation, which is not controlled by human beings, asserts itself blindly by way of the market. Marx reduced it to two comprehensive departments: the production of means of production, and the production of means of consumption. The exchange between the two departments he illustrated by arbitrarily chosen figures. On the basis of this Marxian schema, accumulation proceeds apparently without disturbances. The exchange between the two departments goes on smoothly.

"If we take the schema literally," says Rosa Luxemburg, "it would appear as if capitalist production exclusively realized its total surplus value and employed the capitalized surplus value for its own needs. If capitalist production, however, is itself exclusively the purchaser of its surplus product, no limit to accumulation is discoverable....Under the Marxian presuppositions, the schema permits of no other interpretation than limitless production for the sake of production." (R. Luxemburg, Die Akkumulation des Kapitals.)

But that, says Rosa Luxemburg, can after all not be the "purpose" of accumulation. Such a production as that suggested by the schema is "from the capitalist standpoint quite senseless." "The Marxian diagram of accumulation gives no answer to the question: for whom the expanded production really takes place.... To be sure, in the course of accumulation, the workers' consumption mounts, as does that of the capitalists; still, the personal consumption of the capitalists comes under the heading of simple reproduction, and for whom do the capitalists produce when they do not consume the entire surplus value, but voluntarily "practice abstinence", i.e. accumulate?... Still less can the purpose of uninterrupted capital accumulation be the maintenance of an ever greater army of workers, since the consumption of the workers is capitalistically a consequence of accumulation, but never its purpose and its presupposition.... If the Marxian schema of expanded reproduction were to conform to reality, it would indicate the end of capitalist production," (R. Luxemburg: Die Akkumulation des Kapitals.)

But the frictionless exchange relation between the two great departments of production, their equilibrium, is in the Marxian schema simply impossible, according to Rosa Luxemburg.

"The assumption of a rising organic composition of capital (9) would show that the maintenance of the necessary quantitative proportion is precluded; that is, the impossibility of long-continued accumulation is demonstrable schematically in purely quantitative terms. An exchange between the two departments is impossible, there remains an unsaleable surplus in the department of consumption goods, an over-production of surplus value which can be realized only in non-capitalist countries." (Die Akkumulation des Kapitals.)

With this theory Rosa Luxemburg explained also the imperialistic necessities of the capitalist countries.

This theory of Rosa Luxemburg's stands in direct contradiction to Lenin's view of the matter, as may be seen from all his works dealing with economics. In complete

(9) Organic composition of capital: the relation between the capital invested in means of production (constant capital) and that invested in wages (variable capital). The expression of the increasing productivity of labor under capitalism is the growth of the organic composition of capital, the more rapid increase of the constant as against the variable capital.

accord with Marx, he looked for the contradictions which pointed to the historical limitations of capitalism, not like Rosa Luxemburg in the sphere of circulation, but in that of production. Lenin took his stand uncritically and unreservedly on the Marxian economic theories, because he regarded them as incapable of being supplemented. In his own theoretical works he confined himself to employing the Marxian doctrines in investigating the development of capitalism in general and of Russian capitalism in particular. There is a special, though still untranslated work of Lenin's against Rosa Luxemburg's theory of accumulation, but it merely repeats the viewpoint which he has set down in all his other works on the subject and which we have merely to become acquainted with here in order completely to grasp the full force of the contradiction between the two conceptions.

In his writings against the Narodniki, (10) Lenin had already anticipated many of his arguments against Rosa Luxemburg's conception. The Narodniki asserted that the domestic capitalist market was insufficient for the unfolding of capitalist economy and moreover that it continually diminished with the accompanying impoverishment of the masses. Like Rosa Luxemburg later, they also could not grant that the capitalist surplus value could be realized without foreign markets. According to Lenin, however, the question of the realization of surplus value has nothing to do with this problem; "the lugging in of foreign trade does not solve the problem, but merely shifts it." (Lenin: The Development of Capitalism in Russia, 1899.)

To him the necessity of the foreign market for a capitalist country is "not at all explained by the laws of the realization of the social product (and of surplus value in particular), but by the fact that capitalism arises only as the result of a highly developed commodity circulation which goes beyond the boundaries of the State". (Lenin: The Development of Capitalism in Russia.) The disposal of the product on the foreign market explains nothing, "but itself demands an explanation, that

(10) Narodniki (populists) is the name given to the "social revolutionists" and popular socialists in contradistinction to Marxists. Mostly intellectuals who "went to the people" for the purpose of safeguarding their interests by way of reform.-- They could not bring themselves to believe in a capitalist development for Russia, on the ground that the main condition to this end was the development of a foreign market, which was not present because Russia had come upon the capitalist scene too late.

is, the finding out of his equivalent....When one speaks of the 'difficulties' of realization," says Lenin, "one must also realize that these 'difficulties' are not only possible but also unavoidable, and in fact with regard to all parts of the capitalist product and not to the surplus value alone. The difficulties of this sort, which originate in the unproportional distribution of the different branches of production, arise constantly not only in connection with the realization of surplus value, but also in connection with the realization of the variable and constant capital; not only in connection with the realization of the product in the form of consumption goods, but also in the form of means of production." (Lenin: The Development of Capitalism in Russia.)

"As we know", writes Lenin in his 'Characterization of Economic Romanticism, 1899', "the law of capitalist production consists in the fact that the constant capital increases faster than the variable; that is, an ever greater part of the newly formed capital flows to that department of social production which turns out means of production. Consequently, this department must unconditionally grow more rapidly than the one which turns out means of consumption. Consequently, the means of consumption come to occupy a less and less prominent part in the total mass of capitalist production. And that is in full harmony with the historical mission of capitalism and its specific social structure: the former consists, that is, in the development of the productive forces of society; the latter precludes the utilization thereof by the mass of the population."

Nothing is to Lenin "more senseless than to deduce from this contradiction between production and consumption that Marx had contested the possibilities of realizing surplus value in capitalist society, or had explained crises as resulting from insufficient consumption.... The different branches of industry which serve each other as a "market" do not develop uniformly, they overtake each other and the more developed industry seeks foreign markets. This circumstance does not by any means indicate that it is impossible for the capitalist nation to realize surplus value.... It merely points to the unproportionality in the development of the various industries. With a different distribution of the national capital, the same quantity of products could be realized within the country." (Lenin: The Development of Capitalism in Russia.)

So far as Lenin was concerned, Marx with his scheme of reproduction had "completely cleared up the process of the realization of the product in general and of surplus value in particular, and revealed that there was

no justification whatever for lugging the foreign market into the question." (Lenin: The Development of Capitalism in Russia.) Capitalism's susceptibility to crisis and its expansionist tendencies are explained for Lenin by the lack of uniformity in the development of the various branches of industry. It is from the monopolist character of capitalism that he derives the constant colonial expansion and the imperialistic partition of the world. By means of capital export and the control over sources of raw materials, the bourgeoisie of the leading capitalist countries derives enormous extra profits. The imperialist expansion, in his view, does not serve so much for the realization of surplus value as for increasing the mass of profits. (Cf. Lenin: Imperialism as the last phase in the Development of Capitalism, 1915).

There is no doubt that Lenin's conception is much closer to the Marxian than is Rosa Luxemburg's. It is true that the latter was quite correct in recognizing in the Marxian theory of accumulation the law of collapse of capitalism; she overlooked, however, the Marxian basis for this view and produced her own theory of realization, which Lenin correctly rejected as unmarxist and false. It is interesting to note in this connection, however, that in the bibliography appended to his biography of Marx, Lenin referred to the "analysis of the (Luxemburgian) false interpretation of the Marxist theory by Otto Bauer". (Lenin: Bibliography of Marxism. In the Collected Works.)

Now Bauer's critique of Rosa Luxemburg's theory of accumulation (O. Bauer: Die Akkumulation des Kapitals. Neue Zeit, 1913) had rightly been denoted by the latter in her Anticritique, as a "disgrace for the official Marxism"; for Bauer repeated in his attacks nothing but the revisionist conception that capitalism is without objective limits. To his mind, "capitalism is conceivable even without expansion".... It is "not on the mechanical impossibility of realizing surplus value" that capitalism will go down, he says, but "on the indignation to which it drives the masses of the people.... It will receive its death blow from the constantly growing working class, schooled, united and organized thru the mechanism of capitalist production itself." (O. Bauer: Die Akkumulation des Kapitals.)

By means of a modified schema of reproduction which avoided many of the defects deplored by Rosa Luxemburg in that of Marx, Bauer endeavored to furnish proof that even on the assumption of a rising organic composition of capital, a frictionless exchange between the two departments in the schema of capitalist reproduction was still possible. Rosa Luxemburg demonstrated to him, however, that even in his modified schema an unsaleable

surplus remains over in the department of consumption, and that in order to be realized it compels to the conquest of new markets. To this, Bauer had nothing more to say. And nevertheless Lenin referred to him as the "analyst of Rosa Luxemburg's false theory."

Not only did Bauer's argument leave Rosa Luxemburg unscathed; there is also the fact that the conclusions which he drew from his schema, indicating unlimited accumulation (independently of the question of the exchange relation between the two departments), could be demonstrated with reference to this same schema as wholly unfounded. Henryk Grossman proved that if Bauer's schema were expanded to cover a longer period of time, the result was not Bauer's frictionless unfoldment of capitalism, but the collapse of capital expansion. The struggle against Rosa Luxemburg's theory of collapse had led merely to a new one. (H.Grossman: Das Akkumulations- und Zusammenbruchsgesetz des kapitalistischen Systems, 1929.)

The dispute between Luxemburg and Bauer, which found Lenin's sympathies on the side of the latter, was a dispute over nothing, and again it is not without interest to note that the senselessness of the whole discussion was not observed by Lenin. This discussion turned on the impossibility or possibility of a frictionless exchange relation between the two departments of the Marxian reproduction schema, on which depended the full realization of surplus value. In the Marxian system, the schema was thought of merely as an aid to theoretical analysis and was not conceived as having any objective basis in reality. Henryk Grossmann, in his convincing reconstruction of the plan of Marx's Capital (H.Grossmann: Die Aenderung des Aufbauplans des Marxschen Kapitals. Archiv f.d. Geschichte d. Sozialismus u.d. Arbeiterbewegung, 1929.) as well as in other works, has revealed the real meaning of the reproduction schema and thus set the discussion with reference to Marx's theory of accumulation on a new and more fruitful basis. The entire criticism directed at Marx by Luxemburg on the basis of this schema was posited on the assumption that the reproduction schema had an objective basis.

But, says Grossmann, (Die Wert-Preis-Transformation bei Marx und das Krisenproblem. Zeitschrift fur Sozialforschung, 1932.) "the schema, in itself, lays no claim to presenting a picture of concrete capitalist reality. It is only a link in the Marxian process of approximation, one which forms with other simplifying assumptions, on which the schema is grounded, and with the later modifications by which the matter is made progressively more concrete an inseparable whole. Thus any one of these three parts without the two others becomes completely

meaningless for the recognition of the truth, and can have no further significance than a preliminary stage of knowledge, the first step in the process of approaching concrete reality (Annaherungsverfahren)".

The Marxian schema deals with the exchange values, but in reality the commodities are not exchanged at their values but at production prices. "In a reproduction schema built on values, different rates of profit must arise in each department of the schema. There is in reality, however, a tendency for the different rates of profit to be equalized to average rates, a circumstance which is already embraced in the concept of production prices. So that if one wants to take the schema as a basis for criticising or granting the possibility of realizing surplus value, it would first have to be transformed into a price schema." (H.Grossmann: Die Wert-Preis-Transformation.)

Even if Rosa Luxemburg had been successful in demonstrating that in the Marxian schema the full turnover of the commodities is impossible, that with each year an increasing superfluity of means of consumption must arise, what would she have proved? "Merely the circumstance that the 'indisposable remainder' in the consumption department arises within the schema of value, that is, on the presupposition that the commodities are exchanged at their values". (H.Grossmann: Die Wert-Preis-Transformation.) But this presupposition does not exist in reality. The schema of value on which Luxemburg's analysis is based has different rates of profit in the various branches of production, and these rates are not equated to average rates, since the schema takes no account of competition. What do Luxemburg's conclusions amount to then as regards reality, when they are derived from a schema having no objective validity?

"Since competition gives rise to the transformation of values into production prices and thereby the redistribution of the surplus value among the branches of industry (in the schema), whereby there necessarily occurs also a change in the previous proportionality relation of the spheres of the schema, it is quite possible and even probable that a 'consumption balance' in the value schema subsequently vanishes in the production-price schema and, inversely, an original equilibrium of the value schema is subsequently transformed in the production-price schema into a disproportionality." (H.Grossmann: Die Wert-Preis-Transformation.)

The theoretical confusion of Rosa Luxemburg is best illustrated in the fact that on the one hand she sees in the average rate of profit the governing factor which "actually treats each individual capital only as part of

the total social capital, accords it profit as a part of the surplus value to which it is entitled in accordance with its magnitude without regard to the quantity which it has actually won," (R. Luxemburg: Die Akkumulation des Kapitals.) and that she nevertheless examines the question as to whether a complete exchange is possible; and that on the basis of a schema which knows no average rate of profit. If one takes into account this average rate of profit, Rosa Luxemburg's disproportionality argument loses all value, since one department sells above and the other under value and on the basis of the production price the undisposable part of the surplus value may vanish.

Marx's law of accumulation is identical with that of the fall of the rate of profit. The fall of the rate of profit can be compensated by the growth of the mass of profit for only a limited time, due to the continuous compulsion to accumulation. It is not from an excess of surplus value incapable of being realized that capitalism goes under according to Marx, but from lack of surplus value. Rosa Luxemburg completely overlooked the consequences of the fall of the rate of profit; and for this reason, she also had to raise the question, meaningless from the Marxian standpoint, as to the 'purpose' of accumulation.

"It is said", she writes, "that capitalism will go under because of the fall of the rate of profit.... This comfort is unfortunately quite dissipated by a single sentence from Marx, namely, the statement that for large capitals the fall of the rate of profit is counterbalanced by mass of profit. The decline of capitalism from the fall of the rate of profit is therefore still a good way off, somewhat like the time required for the sun's extinction". (R. Luxemburg: Antikritik). She failed to see that while Marx had, to be sure, set forth such a fact, he had also at the same time suggested its limit, and that the fall of the rate of profit results in the fall of the mass of profit; in fact, that the former gives expression to what is at first, ^{the} relative, and then the absolute fall of the actual mass of profit, in relation to capital's needs for accumulation.

It is true that Lenin had found it conceivable that "the rate of profit has a tendency to sink", (Lenin: Karl Marx, in the Collected Works.) and he referred to the fact that "Marx had analyzed this tendency and a number of circumstances by which it was concealed or which operated to counter-act it." (Lenin: Karl Marx) But the full importance of this law in the Marxian system he too failed to grasp clearly; a fact which explains, on the one hand, his acceptance of Bauer's rejoinder to Rosa Luxemburg, and on the other the restriction of his own explanation

of crisis to the disproportional development of the various spheres of production. And, for that matter, it may explain also his contradictory conceptions, by which at one time he believed in an unavoidable end of capitalism, and at another time emphasized that there were absolutely no situations from which capitalism could not find a way out. There is not to be found in his works any convincing economic argument for the end of capitalism, and yet at the same time he has the firmest conviction that the system is unavoidably heading toward its fall. This may be explained by the fact that while he did not believe with Bauer and the Social Democracy in the possibility of the reformist transformation of capitalism to socialism, he nevertheless assumed with them that the overthrow of capitalism was exclusively a question of the development of the revolutionary consciousness of the working class or, more precisely stated, a question of organization and its leadership.

Spontaneity and the Role of Organization

We have previously seen that Rosa Luxemburg correctly emphasized that for Marx the law of accumulation was at the same time the law of collapse of capitalism. Her reasoning was false; the conclusions nevertheless were correct. Tho in her explanation of the law of collapse she diverged completely from Marx, she yet recognized the existence of that law. Lenin's arguments against the Luxemburgian conception were sound, and, so far as they went, completely in harmony with Marx; nevertheless, he evaded the question as to whether capitalism is faced with an objective limit. His own doctrine of crisis is inadequate and inconsistent. His theory, while more correct, did not lead to truly revolutionary conclusions. Rosa Luxemburg's argument, even tho false, still remained revolutionary. For the question is one of emphasizing and demonstrating capitalism's tendency to collapse.

Lenin, who still stood much nearer than Rosa Luxemburg to the Social Democracy, saw the collapse of capitalism more as a conscious political act than as an economic necessity. He failed to see that the question of whether the economic or the political factor predominates with reference to the proletarian revolution is not one of abstract theory but of the concrete situation of the moment. The two factors are in reality inseparable in other than a purely conceptual sense. Lenin had accepted much of Hilferding's speculations regarding capitalist development, which according to the latter tended toward a so-called "general cartell". (R. Hilferding: Das Finanzkapital, 1909). That is to say, it was not only that, as at first, he had to set out from the bourgeois character of the coming Russian revolution and thus consciously adapted himself to its bourgeois manifestations and nec-

essities, but he was also later burdened with the Hilferdingian attitude in relation to the more highly developed capitalist countries, and thus arrived at his over-estimation of the "political side" of the proletarian revolution.

According to Lenin, it was also false to assume (and this held for the international scene) that we are living in the age of the pure proletarian revolution; in fact, to him such a revolution can never be. The true revolution is for him the dialectical conversion of the bourgeois revolution into the proletarian. The demands of the bourgeois revolution which are still on the order of the day can henceforth be actualized only within the framework of the proletarian revolution; but this proletarian revolution is proletarian only in the leadership; it embraces all the oppressed who must become the allies of the proletariat: the peasants, the middle classes, the colonial peoples, oppressed nations, etc. This genuine revolution takes place in the age of imperialism, which, developed by the monopolization of economy, is for Lenin a "parasitical", a "stagnating" capitalism, "the last stage of capitalist development" immediately before the outbreak of the social revolution. (Lenin: Address to the First Congress of the Soviets, 1917). Imperialism leads, in Lenin's conception, "very near to complete socialization of production; it drags, as it were, the capitalist against his will and without his being aware of the fact, into a social order which offers a transition from complete freedom of competition to complete socialization." (Lenin: Imperialism.)

Monopoly capitalism has, according to Lenin, already made production ripe for socialization; the only remaining question is to take the control over economy out of the hands of the capitalists and put it in the hands of the State, and then also to regulate distribution according to socialist principles. The whole question of socialism is one of the conquest of political power for the proletarian party, which would then actualize socialism for the workers. Between Lenin and the Social Democracy there were no differences so far as concerned socialist construction and its organizational problems. The only difference had reference to the manner in which control over production was to be acquired: by parliamentary or by revolutionary means. The possession of political power, the control over the complete monopoly, were in both conceptions a sufficient solution of the problem of socialist economy. For this reason also Lenin is not alarmed at the prospect of state capitalism, against the opponents of which he says at the eleventh party congress of the Bolsheviks: "State capitalism is that form of capitalism which we shall be in a position to restrict, to

establish its limits; this capitalism is bound up with the State, and the State--that is the workers, the most advanced part of the workers, the vanguard, is we. And it is we on whom the nature of this state capitalism will depend." (11).

While for Otto Bauer the proletarian revolution depended alone on the attitude of the class-conscious, organized workers, on the political will (which from a single glance at the social-democratic organization, by which its members were completely dominated, practically meant that it depended on Otto Bauer & Company), so here for Lenin the fate of the state capitalism depends on the attitude of the Party, which in turn is determined by the bureaucracy, and the whole of history is again the history of the magnanimity, the selflessness and the gallantry of a group of people who are trained in these virtues by the most supremely virtuous.

But with this position of Lenin's on state capitalism, which for him is determined in accordance with will and not by economic laws, in spite of the fact that the laws of state capitalism are not other than those of monopoly capitalism, Lenin had only remained true to himself, for to him in the last analysis the revolution also depended on the quality of the party and of its leadership. In harmony with Kautsky, for whom the revolutionary consciousness indispensably necessary to the revolution (a consciousness which for Kautsky was ideology and nothing else) could only be brought to the workers from the outside, since the workers were incapable of developing it out of themselves, Lenin also asserted that "the working class, exclusively by its own efforts, is able to develop only trade-union consciousness; that is, it may realize the necessity for combining in unions, to fight against the employers and to strive to compel the government to pass necessary labor legislation, etc. The social doctrine, however, has proceeded from the philosophical, historical and economic theories which originated with educated representatives of the owning classes, the intellectuals." (Lenin: What is To Be Done?) A political consciousness, the necessary presupposition of the socialist victory, the workers, according to Lenin, were incapable of developing. Thus socialism had again ceased to be the "work of the working class," as Marx viewed it;

(11) It is amusing to take a look at this gradation: The State, that is the workers, (first restriction) the most advanced part, (second restriction) the vanguard, (last restriction) that is we; that is, the Bolsheviks, who in their turn are so hierarchized that Lenin would finally be able to say like the great French king: "The State, that is I!"

socialism now depended on the revolutionary ideology of the bourgeoisie; and no doubt the religious "Marxist" J. Middleton Murry is today merely following in the traces of Kautsky and Lenin when he comes to the logical conclusion that the whole of socialism is nothing more than "substantially a movement of converted bourgeois." (Marxism--a symposium--London, 1935.)

Certainly, Lenin stands on Marxist ground when he asserts that the workers are incapable of developing a political consciousness. In his polemic against Arnold Ruge, who so sadly deplored the lack of political consciousness, and was puzzled by this lack because after all such consciousness ought to have been developed by the impoverishment existing at the time, Marx said: "It is false to say that social distress creates political understanding. The truth is rather the reverse: social well-being creates political understanding. Political understanding is an intellectual quality and is given to him who already has, who lives in clover." (K. Marx: On the King of Prussia and Social Reform. Selected Essays.)

But Lenin has no further connection with Marx, and sinks to the level of the bourgeois revolutionist a' la Ruge, when he cannot conceive of a proletarian revolution without this intellect-conscience, when he makes the revolution a matter of the conscious intervention of the "knowing ones", or of the professional revolutionists. Against this Ruge-Lenin conception, Marx said: "The more cultivated and general the political understanding of a people, the more does the proletariat . . . dissipate its energies in irrational, useless and brutally suppressed revolts. Because the proletariat thinks along political lines, it perceives the cause of all evils in the wills of men and all remedies to lie in force and the overthrow of a particular form of the State. . . . Political understanding conceals from it the roots of social distress; distorts its insight into its real aims, deceives its social instinct". (K. Marx: On the King of Prussia.)

To Ruge's assertion (and Lenin's position) that a revolution without the "political soul" is impossible, Marx answers: "A revolution of political souls organizes a ruling clique in society, in accordance with the limited and doubly-cleft nature of these souls, at the cost of society." (K. Marx: On the King of Prussia.) But Lenin had never aimed at more than a change of mastery over the means of production, since this seemed to him to suffice for socialism. Hence also his over-emphasis on the subjective, political factor,--a circumstance by which he was led to view the organizational work of socialism as a political act. According to Marx there is indeed no socialism without revolution, and this revo-

lution is the political act of the proletariat. But the proletariat "requires this political act only insofar as it has need of the process of destruction and dissolution. Where the organizing activity begins, where its proper aim, its soul emerges, there socialism casts away the political hull." (K. Marx: Selected Essays.)

The bourgeois elements in Lenin's thought, which in the first place make the end of capitalism dependent on certain political presuppositions which are not necessarily present; which, furthermore, fancied that increasing monopolization was identical with the socialization of production (a thing which today it is obvious to anyone is not the case), which made the whole matter of socialism dependent on the taking over of the monopolies by the State and the replacing of an old by a new bureaucracy, and for which the revolution was reduced to a contest between the revolutionists and the bourgeoisie for winning the masses: such a position had necessarily to minimize the revolutionary element of the spontaneous mass movement and its power and clarity of goal in order to be able to magnify correspondingly the individual role and that of socialist consciousness which has become congealed to an ideology.

Lenin cannot, to be sure, deny the element of spontaneity, but for him it is "essentially nothing other than the germinal form of consciousness," (12) which is brought to completion in the organization and only then is truly revolutionary because completely conscious. The spontaneous awakening of the masses does not satisfy him; it does not suffice for socialist victory." The fact that the masses are spontaneously entering the movement," he writes, "does not make the organization of this struggle less necessary. On the contrary, it makes it more necessary." (13)

The mistake inherent in the spontaneity theory, he says is that "it belittles the role of the conscious element and that it "refuses strong individual leadership", which for Lenin is "essential to class success." The weaknesses of organization are to him the weaknesses of the labor movement itself. The struggle must be organized, the organization planned; all depends on that and the correct leadership. This latter must have influence over the masses, and this influence counts more than the masses. Where and how the masses are organized, whether in soviets or in trade unions, is, to him, a matter of indifference. The important thing is that they be led by the Bolsheviks.

(12) Lenin: On Trade Unions; in the Collected Works.
(13) Lenin: What is To Be Done?

Rosa Luxemburg sees these matters in a quite different light. She does not confuse revolutionary consciousness with the intellect-consciousness of the Leninist professional revolutionists, but for her it is the act-consciousness of the masses themselves, growing from the constraint of necessity. The masses act revolutionary because they cannot act otherwise, and because they must act, Marxism to her is not only ideology which crystallizes in the organization, but the living and struggling proletariat which actualizes Marxism not because it wants to, but because it cannot do otherwise. While for Lenin the masses are only the material which the conscious revolutionists work, just as to the street-car motorman the street-car serves only for traveling, in Rosa Luxemburg's writings the conscious revolutionists spring not only from growing insight but more still from the mass in its actual revolutionary activity. It is not only that she rejects on principle the over-emphasis on the role of organization and leadership; she demonstrates from experience that "during the revolution it is extremely difficult for any directing organ of the proletarian movement to foresee and calculate which occasions and factors can lead to explosions and which cannot..... The rigid, mechanical, bureaucratic conception," she says, "cannot conceive of the struggle save as the product of organization at a certain stage of its strength. On the contrary, the living, dialectical explanation makes the organization arise as a product of the struggle." (14)

With reference to the Russian mass-strike movement of 1905 she says: "There was no predetermined plan, no organized action, because the appeals of the parties could scarcely keep in pace with the spontaneous rising of the masses; the leaders had scarcely time to formulate the watchwords of the on-rushing crowd." And generalizing, she continues: "If the situation should lead to mass strikes in Germany, it will almost certainly not be the best organized workers who will develop the greatest capacity for action, but the worst organized or totally unorganized." (14)

"Revolutions", she expressly emphasizes, "cannot be made at command. Nor is this at all the task of the Party. Our duty is only at all times to speak out plainly without fear or trembling; that is, to hold clearly before the masses their tasks in the given historical moment, and to proclaim the political program of action and the slogans which result from the situation. The concern with whether and when the revolutionary mass movement takes up with them must be left

(14) R. Luxemburg: Der Massenstreik, 1906.

confidently to history itself. Even tho socialism may at first appear as a voice crying in the wilderness, it yet provides for itself a moral and political position the fruits of which it later, when the hour of historical fulfillment strikes, garners with compound interest." (R. Luxemburg: Spartakusbriefe, 1917)

Rosa Luxemburg's spontaneity conception has often been denounced, the usual thing been to denominate it as a "catastrophe policy" as directed against the organization of the labor movement itself. She frequently found it necessary to emphasize that her conception was "not pour la désorganisation". (R. Luxemburg: Brief an Kautsky, 1905.) "The Social Democrats", she wrote, are the most enlightened, most class-conscious vanguard of the proletariat. They cannot and dare not wait in a fatalistic fashion, with folded arms, for the advent of the revolutionary situation; wait for that which, in every spontaneous movement, falls from the clouds. On the contrary, they must now, as always, hasten the development of things and endeavor to accelerate events." (R. Luxemburg: Der Massenstreik.)

This role of the organization she regards as possible and therefore welcome and a matter of course, while Lenin regards it as absolutely necessary and makes the whole revolution dependent on the fulfillment of this necessity. This difference regarding the significance of organization for the revolution involves also two different conceptions regarding form and content of the organization itself. According to Lenin, "the only serious principle of organization for our movement is the most absolute secrecy, the strictest selection of members (15), the forming of professional revolutionists. Once these qualities are present, something more still is assured than 'democracy', namely, complete comradely confidence among the revolutionists. And this 'more' is for us unconditionally necessary, for with us...there can be no question of replacing it by democratic control. It is a great mistake to believe that the impossibility of a real democratic control makes the members of the revolutionary organization uncontrollable. They have no time to think of puppet-like forms of democracy, but they feel their

(15) This "principle" was dropped by Lenin whenever such a course appeared opportune. Thus he once threw away the 50,000 revolutionary workers of the German Communist Labor Party (K.A.P.D.) in order not to be deprived of the five million votes of the reformist Independent Socialist Party (U.S.P.D.) of Germany.

responsibility very keenly." (16)

By means of the rules of organization (which, so long as they were democratic, meant nothing) Lenin wanted to "forge a more or less sharp weapon against opportunism. The deeper the source of opportunism lies, the sharper must be this weapon. (17) This weapon was "centralism", the strictest discipline in the Party, the complete subordination of all activity to the instructions of the central committee. Of course, Rosa Luxemburg was admirably capable of tracing this "night-watchman spirit" (18) of Lenin's to the special situation of the Russian intellectuals; but "it is false to think," (she writes against Lenin) "that the still impracticable majority rule of the workers within their party-organization may be replaced by a sole-mastery on the part of the central authority of the party, and that the lacking public control on the part of the working masses over the acts and omissions of the party organs would be just as well replaced by the inverted control of a central committee over the activity of the revolutionary workers." (18) And even tho the self-leadership of the workers should lead to blunders and false steps, Rosa Luxemburg is nevertheless ready to take all this into the bargain, for she is convinced that "even mistakes which a truly revolutionary labor movement commits are, in historical perspective, immeasurably more fruitful and valuable than the infallibility of the very best 'central committee' ". (18)

The differences between Luxemburg and Lenin which we have here pointed out have in part already been more or less surpassed by history. Many of the things which gave substance to this dispute are of no moment today. Nevertheless, the essential factor in their debates, whether the revolution depends on the organized labor movement or on the spontaneous movement of the workers, is of the most pressing significance. But here also history has already decided in favor of Rosa Luxemburg. Leninism is buried under the ruins of the Third International. A new labor movement which has no concern with the social-democratic remains which were still recognizable in Lenin and Luxemburg, nor yet has any

(16) Lenin: What Is To Be Done? - Lenin's idealism comes to light in this formulation as well. Instead of actually and materially assuring control thru organizing that control within the organization, he replaces it by "something better", by the phrases "comradely confidence" and "feeling of responsibility". Practically, however, this meant: mechanical obedience, order from above, conformity below.

(17) Lenin: One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward; 1904.

(18) R. Luxemburg: Organizational Questions of the Russian Social Democracy. Neue Zeit, 1905.

intention of renouncing the lessons of the past, is arising. To separate itself from the deadly traditional influences of the old labor movement has become its first prerequisite, and here Rosa Luxemburg is as great an aid as Leninism has been a hindrance. This new movement of the workers with its inseparable nucleus of conscious revolutionists can do more with Luxemburg's revolutionary theory, in spite of its many weaknesses, and derive from it more hope, than from the total accomplishment of the Leninist international. And as Rosa Luxemburg once said, in the midst of the World War and the collapse of the Second International, so the present-day revolutionists can say in view of the collapse of the Third International: "But we are not lost, and we shall conquer if we have not unlearned how to learn."

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