

A Great Little Pamphlet

By Arne Swabeck.

WHEN Lenin died the world stopped for a moment." Thus begins the third chapter of the new pamphlet "Lenin, Liebknecht, Luxemburg," by Max Shachtman, published by the Young Workers' League. A great little pamphlet.

The role of Lenin and his two great followers, whose names are now on the lips of millions of workers, is briefly pictured in the pamphlet. It is a short historic sketch of some of the important incidents of imperialist developments and the epoch of imperialism, when the period of preparation of the working class for the revolution is ended and gave place to the period of direct onslaught against capitalism.

The description of Lenin's role is of necessity brief and deals mainly with some of his activities before the November revolution, in leading the conscious working class movement toward the formation of the revolutionary world party. Yet it is sufficient to establish throughout the pamphlet the truth contained in the introduction by Robt. Minor:

"Among the three working class heroes pictured here Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg, it should not be forgotten, of course, that Vladimir Ilyich Lenin was the leader of leaders, the creative mind whose leadership was necessary to the full greatness of others. So this is in fact the story of Lenin and of two of his great disciples who, like him, were martyred to the cause of the working class."

FROM his birth, at a time when his father was in prison, convicted for high treason against the German empire through the revolutionary upheavals in Germany, during the latter part and immediately after the world war, Liebknecht, pictured by Shachtman, is essentially the leader of the revolutionary youth, the tireless, heroic fighter against German imperialism, the idol of the war weary German workers.

Organizing, under fearful obstacles, the international opposition to the treasonable social democratic party. It is a description of Liebknecht fighting, suffering and jailed, but ever alert ever carrying the banner of mass revolt; in speeches, at mass demonstrations and in the German reichstag.

In the historic session of December 2nd, 1914 when war credits were voted by this body, supported by the social democrats, Liebknecht, in exposing the imperialist war aims, made the following declaration as described in the pamphlet:

"The class struggle alone is the salvation of the proletariat, and we hope that we will carry on very soon the class struggle in open international intercourse with the proletariat of all countries, even with those with whom we are at war. In this international struggle rests not only hope for the democratization, for political and economic emancipation of the working class, but also the one hope for the mass of the people concerned even during the war. . . . Away with the hypocrisy of the civil truce. . . . Forward to the class struggle! Forward to the international class struggle for the emancipation of the working class and against war!"

Then further on in the same chapter we read about the foulest deed ever perpetrated by white guard hoodlums.

"Liebknecht is seated in an automobile. A very brave trooper strikes him twice on the back of his head with a revolver. Karl sinks down into his seat, half unconscious. The auto is driven swiftly to a wooded section of the city. They stop. Karl is ordered out of the motor car. Still dizzy from the blows he has received he is ordered to walk along with the offi-

cers. For a few steps he is allowed to walk, then, on the pretext that he has attempted to flee, he is shot in cold blood. The honorable Captain von Pflugk-Hartung fires the first shot. The officers then busy themselves trying to eliminate all traces of the murder."

"Karl Liebknecht is dead. . . ."

And yet—"Liebknecht lives in the Young Communist International! The inheritor of the traditions of the former Socialist Youth International is gathering the revolutionary forces of the revolutionary youth of the world."

THE chapter on Rosa Luxemburg clearly brings out her great role in the Polish, and German pre-war socialist movement and her activities during the war and the immediately following upheavals in Germany, and her fight against Marxian corruption. Broadside after broadside she fired into Bernstein's revisionism as stated in the following words:

"Bitterly did she scourge the social democratic traitors; scornfully she lashed to tatters their false arguments of national defense and skillfully she exposed the imperialist roots of the war."

From one battle to another she marched forward in her tireless activities to organize the Communist Party. The size of this task is indicated by the following statement:

"The young Communist Party was too loosely organized. Despite the pleas of Karl and Rosa that revolutionary parliamentarism was necessary, the first congress of the party rejected participation in parliamentary elections. Their healthy reaction to the opportunism of the so-

cial democrats was driving the young, inexperienced Communist Party toward sectarian ideas. The masses were not awakened to the struggle. The masses were tired of war and were under the illusion of having secured 'peace'; they were lulled by the social democratic phrases about socialization which never materialized."

This little pamphlet does not overlook the many mistakes made by Rosa Luxemburg, and yet gives no comfort to Paul Levi and other renegades who seek to capitalize her errors. The answer to this has been best summarized by Lenin as quoted in the pamphlet:

"An eagle may descend lower than a chicken, but the chicken can never rise like an eagle. Rosa Luxemburg was mistaken on the question of independence of Poland; she was mistaken in 1903 in her estimate of the Mensheviks; she was mistaken in her theory of the accumulation of capital; she was mistaken in defending the union of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks in 1914 along with Plekhanov, Vandervelde, Kautsky and others; she was mistaken in her prison writings in 1918 (on coming out of prison, however, at the end of 1918, she corrected a large number of these mistakes herself.) But notwithstanding all her mistakes she was and remains an eagle; and not only will her memory be highly esteemed by the Communists of all the world, but her biography and the complete collection of her writings will be useful for the instruction of many generations of Communists in all countries. As for the German social democrats after the 4th of August, 1914—"a foul corpse" is the appellation which Rosa Luxemburg gave them, and with which their names will go down in the history of the international labor movement. But in the back yard of the labor movement, among the manure piles, chickens like Paul Levi, Scheide-

mann, Kautsky and all that fraternity, will be especially enraptured by the mistakes of the great Communist."

WE mentioned before that the chapter on Lenin is of necessity brief as the colossal work of this great leader could not be treated adequately in the few pages of a pamphlet. It does, however, bring out the brilliant polemics against the serious deviations in the earlier socialist movement, polemics which as a matter of fact are much more than the word implies, we should rather say a revealing of the decisive hand of the leader surely and unhesitatingly guiding the young movement developing within the socialist parties to full maturity to complete the task of its role materializing in the greatest monument to Lenin's work, the organization of the world proletarian party, the Communist International.

Lenin's leadership is recognized in the brief notes first in his struggle against the "Economists," secondly against the so-called legal Marxists led by Peter Struve who landed in the camp of Baron Wrangel, one of the last of the counter-revolutionaries; thirdly in his piercing analysis of the collapse of the second international and other instances.

The pamphlet pictures Lenin in his most important role, building from actual life, watching the young movement carefully guiding it in its growth, giving definite direction as described in the following words: during the historical session of the first Petrograd Soviet:

"And there also, as he looked down from the balcony on the sessions of the Petrograd Soviet, he saw coming to life the prophetic vision of Marx in 1850, who saw the workers' state as the councils of workers, and Lenin observed in this soviet the reflection of the future Soviet state, the only working class authority during the revolution."



Bootlegger: "Kookoo, you and I are pillars of society. Together we help to take up the slack and make it possible for the business world to carry on in spite of increasing difficulties. Co-operation is the word."