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## *Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and the Dilemma of the Non-Revolutionary Proletariat*

### I

THE DISPUTE BETWEEN Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg over "organizational questions" and the RSDRP (the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party) is of considerable interest because it concerns a basic problem which increasingly troubled Marxists at the beginning of the twentieth century: the dilemma of the non-revolutionary proletariat. In 1848 the authors of the *Communist Manifesto* had asked, "In what relation do the Communists stand to the proletarians as a whole?" To this critical question on the nature of the socialist movement Marx never provided an adequate theoretical answer. Partly this lacuna resulted from Marx's lack of a revolutionary vineyard in which to work. As Rosa Luxemburg noted, "The only opportunity that scientific Marxism had to devise tactics in a revolutionary period was Karl Marx in 1848."<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that Marx approved of the

*Note:* The author wishes to thank the Ford Foundation and the University of California Faculty Research Grant Committee for their generous support of the larger study of which this article is a part.

<sup>1</sup>Speech by Rosa Luxemburg on May 16 (3, "Old Style"), 1907, at the Fifth

elitist party model of the Russian Populist group "Young Russia" in the early 1860's<sup>2</sup>—supposedly after he had abandoned his youthful revolutionary impatience of the 1847-1850 period. In 1885, Engels further commented (in a letter to Vera Zasulich) on the Russian scene, "Well, now, if ever Blanquism—the phantasy of overturning an entire society through the action of a small conspiracy—had a certain justification for its existence, that is certainly in Petersburg."<sup>3</sup>

But, aside from these and some other interesting comments on the revolutionary movement in Russia, neither Marx nor Engels elaborated any systematic theory of the relationship of the Party to the proletariat. For neither Marx nor Engels ever realized that the proletariat might fail to adopt the course "History" had ordained. The first statute of the First International asserted that "the emancipation of the working class must be conquered by the working class themselves." But what if the proletariat failed to "emancipate itself?" "What then?" as the old grandfather rhetorically asked in "Peter and the Wolf."

Marx and Engels occasionally grumbled about the non-revolutionary attitude of the English working class which, because of the relatively mature character of British capitalism, should have (since "being" determined "consciousness") been more aware of its exploitation than the Continental proletariat had shown itself to be. For instance, Engels wrote to F. A. Sorge in 1889, "The most repulsive thing here [England] is the bourgeois 'respectability,' which has grown deep into the bones of the workers."<sup>4</sup> But what specific strategy revolutionary socialist leaders, in possession of the truth of "scientific socialism," should undertake if the proletariat unmistakably turned away from "History's" path—this problem Marx bequeathed unresolved to his heirs.

<sup>1</sup>Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party; *Protokoly Piatovo S'ezda RSDRP* (Moscow, 1935), p. 107.

<sup>2</sup>See B. P. Koz'min, *Iz Istorii Revoliutsionnoi Mysli v Rossii. Izbrannye Trudy* (Moscow, 1961), p. 247.

<sup>3</sup>Letter No. 194 (April 23, 1885), in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Correspondence, 1846-1895*. With Explanatory Notes. Trans. by Dona Torr (New York, 1942), p. 437.

<sup>4</sup>Letter No. 207 (December 7, 1889), in *ibid.*, p. 461. See also, in the same edition, letters Nos. 19 (Engels to Marx: September 24, 1852); 116 (Engels to Marx: November 18, 1868); 177 (Engels to Karl Kautsky: September 12, 1882); 188 (Engels to Bebel: August 30, 1883); 210 (Engels to Sorge: April 19, 1890).

## II

This unsolved issue of the proper relationship between Marxist revolutionaries and the proletariat became a matter of bitter controversy in the RSDRP at the turn of the century.<sup>5</sup> Lenin vigorously addressed himself to this "burning question" in a series of articles in *Iskra* ("The Spark")<sup>6</sup> and in two pamphlets, *What Is To Be Done?* (1902) and *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward* (1904).

In *What Is To Be Done?*, the organizational "Bible" of Communist Parties throughout the world today, the future Bolshevik leader demanded a strictly disciplined and centralized body of professional Marxist revolutionaries who would devote not their "spare evenings" but their entire existence to the revolution. They would bring "class consciousness" to the Russian proletariat "from without." This organization of Russian Social Democrats should, Lenin asserted, maintain rigid secrecy and specialization of functions. Democracy could have no place in such an organization. Lenin disdained democracy as irrelevant and even harmful and proposed in its place revolutionary "comradeship."<sup>7</sup>

Lenin's insistence on his theory of party organization forced the historic split at the Second (Brussels-London, 1903) Congress of the RSDRP over the issue of the definition of Party membership. Those delegates who became known as "Mensheviks" (because they became a minority in the later vote on the composition of the Party organs) supported Martov's proposal for a flexible ("soft") definition of Party membership vs. Lenin's narrow ("hard") conception. Martov's definition stated that a Party member should be one "who recognizes the Party's program and supports it by material means *and by regular personal assistance under the direction of one of the party organizations.*" Lenin's proposal for Party membership read that a Party member should be one "who accepts the Party's program and supports

<sup>5</sup> For a perceptive analysis of this critical period in the development of the RSDRP, see Donald W. Treadgold, *Lenin and His Rivals. The Struggle for Russia's Future, 1898-1906* (New York, 1955), especially Chapters 5, 8 and 9.

<sup>6</sup> Lenin, "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement" (first published in *Iskra* ["The Spark"], No. 1, December 1, 1900), in his *Collected Works*, IV, 366-371, and "Where to Begin?" (first published in *Iskra*, No. 4, May, 1901), *Collected Works*, V, 13-24. All references to this English edition of Lenin's works (Moscow, 1960-) [based on the fourth Russian edition, but revised in accordance with the fifth Russian edition] will be cited as *Collected Works*, with the appropriate volume and page number.

<sup>7</sup> See Lenin, *Collected Works*, V, especially pp. 480-482.

the Party both financially *and by personal participation in one of its organizations.*"<sup>8</sup> This Second Congress first adopted the Martov formulation of Party membership, but Lenin—due to the premature (*les absents ont toujours tort*) departure of the five Jewish Bund delegates and two other "Economist" delegates—gained control of the Party's Central Committee and its theoretical organ *Iskra*. (Subsequently, the Third Party Congress of the RSDRP, meeting without the Mensheviks in London in 1905, changed the definition of Party membership from the formulation of Martov to that of Lenin.)

Due to the defection of Plekhanov to the Mensheviks, Lenin soon lost control of the Central Committee and the editorial board of *Iskra* (which with its fifty-second number [November, 1903] became the "new" *Iskra* under Menshevik control). Despite this setback, the creator of the Bolshevik faction in the RSDRP continued to defend his views on the proper relationship between the Party and the working class. In *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward* (written in the early months of 1904 and published in May of the same year) Lenin examined the controversies over Party organization which the Second Congress of the RSDRP had debated. Much of this work by Lenin is not relevant to the present investigation. But Sections I ("Paragraph One of the Rules") and Q ("The New *Iskra*. Opportunism and Questions of Organization") are particularly valuable for Lenin's comments on "Jacobinism" and "Social Democracy" and for his discussion of the relative revolutionary reliability of the workers and the intellectuals in the RSDRP and related topics. In *One Step Forward* Lenin struck back bluntly at his Menshevik critics, particularly Martov. He welcomed the Menshevik accusation that he was a "Jacobin" and asserted:

A Jacobin who wholly identifies himself with the *organization* of the proletariat—a proletariat *conscious* of its class interests—is a *revolutionary Social-Democrat*. A Girondist who sighs after professors and high-school students, who is afraid of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and who yearns for the absolute value of democratic demands is an *opportunist*.<sup>9</sup>

The fear of "Blanquism" by the Mensheviks, said Lenin, only revealed "the timidity of the bourgeois intellectual" and an opportunism similar

<sup>8</sup> Martov's definition of party membership is found in *Vtoroi S"ezd RSDRP. Iiul'-Avgust 1903 goda. Protokoly* (Moscow, 1959), p. 425. For Lenin's definition, see his *Collected Works*, VI, 476-478. The passages that diverge in the formulations of Martov and Lenin have been italicized by the present author.

<sup>9</sup> Lenin, *Collected Works*, VI, 383.

to that of Bernstein. The Social Democratic Party, Lenin argued, "as the vanguard of the working class must not be confused with the entire class."

Lenin condemned the *Edelanarchismus* ("aristocratic anarchism") of the intellectuals in the RSDRP and contrasted unfavorably this "vagueness, diffusiveness, elusiveness" to the orderly discipline the proletariat acquired in its "factory schooling." (Trotsky in his attack on Lenin had stated, "The barrack regime cannot be the regime of our party, just as the factory cannot be its model.") Martov's definition of Party membership, Lenin contended, "serves the interest of the *bourgeois intellectuals*, who fight shy of proletarian discipline and organization."

In his *One Step Forward* Lenin repeatedly upheld "centralism" and attacked Martov's support of "autonomism." The opportunists (Martov and the other Mensheviks), Lenin contended, "strive to proceed from the bottom upward, and, therefore, whenever possible and as far as possible uphold autonomism and 'democracy,' carried (by the overzealous) to the point of anarchism." Revolutionary Social Democracy should, on the contrary, "strive to proceed from the top downward, and uphold an extension of the rights and powers of the center in relation to the parts."<sup>10</sup>

### III

Rosa Luxemburg—through Warski and Jogiches, two of her closest political and personal associates who had been present at the Second Congress of the RSDRP—had carefully followed these debates between Lenin and Martov over the proper relationship between a Marxist party and the Russian proletariat. In an article "Organizational Questions of Russian Social Democracy," written in 1904 and published simultaneously in Karl Kautsky's journal *Die Neue Zeit* and in the "new" *Iskra* in the summer of the same year, Luxemburg strongly attacked Lenin's *One Step Forward* for its "ultra-centralism" and its denial of the "creative role" of the proletarian masses in the socialist movement.<sup>11</sup> She firmly supported the Martov (Menshevik) theory

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 396-397; see also *ibid.*, pp. 405-406, n.

<sup>11</sup> Rosa Luxemburg's article appeared in the "new" *Iskra*, No. 69 (July, 1904), as "Organizatsionnye voprosy russkoi sotsialdemokratii." The German version of her article, "Organisationsfragen der russischen Sozialdemokratie," appeared in *Die Neue Zeit*, XXII. Jahrgang, 2. Band, No. 42 (July 13, 1904), 484-492, and No. 43 (July 20, 1904), 529-535. This article, translated as "Leninism or Marx-

of Party structure, and she charged that Lenin was guilty of "subjectivism," a trait that she saw as endemic to Russian socialist thought (e.g., among the Populists) due to the guilt complex and *déclassé* status of the intelligentsia in Russia. By "subjectivism" she meant that Lenin placed too much reliance on the "subjective" (will) factor as embodied in a revolutionary *élite*.

Rosa Luxemburg argued that the last decade of the Russian revolutionary movement had demonstrated that the most fruitful work was "in each case the spontaneous product of the unbounded movement itself," not the predetermined, mechanically-executed "inventions of any specific leaders or 'leading organization'." This concept of the "spontaneous" nature of the revolutionary process was a key theme in her speeches and writings (e.g., in her 1906 analysis of the "mass strike" and the Russian revolution).<sup>12</sup> Her vigorous support of proletarian "spontaneity" was in sharp contrast to Lenin's violent distrust of it.

Lenin misused the term "discipline," Luxemburg believed. He relied excessively on the "control function" of the Central Committee. Instead, Rosa Luxemburg insisted that Social Democracy should depend on the "self-discipline" and the "self-activation" of the masses. Lenin wanted consciousness and organizational authority to flow "from the top down"; she wanted it to rise "from the bottom upward." Luxemburg concluded her article with this affirmation: "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'."

This 1904 article revealed Luxemburg's obsessive distrust of organization and bureaucracy as inherently conservative. This was a theme to which she returned many times throughout her political career.<sup>13</sup>

ism?", may be conveniently found (along with an excellent introduction by Bertram D. Wolfe) in Rosa Luxemburg, "*The Russian Revolution*" and "*Leninism or Marxism?*" (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1961), pp. 81-108.

<sup>12</sup> See Rosa Luxemburg, *Massenstreik, Partei und Gewerkschaften* [Hamburg, 1906], in her *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften*, I (Berlin, 1955), 155-257.

<sup>13</sup> One year later, in 1905, Rosa Luxemburg published a Polish article attacking the Catholic Church as the protector of the rich, as an organization dominated by a conservative bureaucracy—the clergy—which had lost all interest in the poor (the original concern of the Christian Church). See Rosa Luxemburg [Luxemburg], *Eglise et Socialisme*. Trans. by Lucienne Rey from the Polish (Paris, 1937). At the end of the last section of her study of the "mass strike" Luxemburg expressed her distrust of the conservatism of the local German trade

In her 1904 article she argued that Lenin's organizational *élite* would, after the manner of Blanqui, become isolated from the masses and that it would pursue only rigid and predetermined tactics which would fail to consider the spontaneous creativity of the revolutionary masses. In reality, Rosa Luxemburg was quite wrong. For Lenin was infinitely flexible in his tactics (e.g., the sudden reversals of the Bolsheviks in their attitude toward the soviets in the summer of 1917, or the Brest-Litovsk policy of a "breathing spell," or the institution of the "strategic retreat" of the NEP in 1921). He was, in fact, far more supple in his strategy and tactics than she was. As can be seen from her manuscript on the Bolshevik Revolution, she remained inflexible and intransigent on the peasant and nationality questions to the very end of her life.<sup>14</sup>

Lenin had no intention of isolating his Bolshevik faction from the Russian masses *à la* Bakunin, Nechaev and Tkachev. His *One Step Forward* was above all an indictment of the ineffectuality of the "circle mentality." He wanted a revolutionary *élite* as did Blanqui, but he also intended to gather around this *élite* a mass movement. In a speech before the Second Congress of the RSDRP he noted that the Party organization should not consist solely of professional revolutionaries. On the contrary, Lenin maintained, "We need the most diversified organizations of every type, rank and shade, from extremely narrow and secret organizations to the very broad, free, *lose Organisationen*." It was this skillful blending of elitism and mass influence that was the product of Lenin's organizational genius. This combination allowed the Bolshevik leader to utilize a fleeting historical moment and to seize power as it "lay in the streets" of Petrograd in 1917.

In her article on "organizational questions" Rosa Luxemburg accused Lenin of abandoning Marx for the Jacobins and Blanqui. She made several important errors in this indictment. She conveniently neglected the fact that Marx in his earlier period had borrowed much from both the Jacobins (terror and "permanent revolution") and Blanqui (the "dictatorship of the proletariat").<sup>15</sup> In addition, her

union bureaucracy; see her *Ausgewählte Reden und Schriften*, I, 250-257. Rosa Luxemburg was seeking to escape what Robert Michels called the "iron law of oligarchy."

<sup>14</sup> See Rosa Luxemburg "The Russian Revolution," in "The Russian Revolution" and "Leninism or Marxism?", Chapter II (Luxemburg's critique of the Bolshevik land policy) and Chapter III (her attack on Lenin's policy of national self-determination).

<sup>15</sup> Many (perhaps a significant majority) of the leading Western students of

inability to distinguish between the Blanquist and the Leninist revolutionary organizational models prevented her from seeing that the Bolshevik leader's elitism was quite different from that of the traditional isolated Russian conspiratorial "circle" (e.g., the "Northern Society" and the "Southern Society" of the Decembrist Uprising, the Petrashevskii Circle in which Dostoevskii was involved, Zaichnevskii's "Young Russia" and the imaginary cells which Nechaev boasted that he controlled).

In her 1904 article on "organizational problems" Rosa Luxemburg admitted that parliamentarism had estranged the leaders of Social Democracy from the proletarian masses in the West, but she argued that Russia's political backwardness (i.e., its lack of a parliament, free speech, a free press, free political parties, etc.) would preclude this type of opportunism in Tsarist Russia—and thus rule out the need for Lenin's type of centralism to prevent it. She admitted that there was Marxist "Revisionism" among the members of the RSDRP. This fact she had already noted in *Social Reform or Revolution?*, a work in which she had pointed out (correctly) the similarities between the views of Bernstein and the "Economism" of Prokopovich<sup>16</sup> (the husband of Madame Kuskova whose *Credo* had stimulated Lenin to issue the "Protest of the Seventeen" from Siberian exile in 1899). But Luxemburg believed that Lenin's rigid centralism would be ineffectual in combating opportunism. Opportunism could only be overcome by the widest application of democracy—a theme to which Rosa Luxemburg returned again in her study of the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>17</sup>

Lenin sought to overcome "Revisionism" by repressing the views of his opponents who, he thought, were inevitably guilty of opportunism since they disagreed with his own interpretation of Marxism. At the Second Congress of the RSDRP he argued for a "state of siege" in the Party against opportunism. And at his Party trial in February,

Marxism believe that Marx in his later years ceased to espouse "terror" and "permanent revolution." They also argue that Marx's view of the nature of the "dictatorship of the proletariat"—always a very vague and ambiguous concept for him—shifted in his later years. This aspect of the fascinating problem of the continuity in Marx's thought is too important and too complex to be discussed within the confines of this short article.

<sup>16</sup> Rosa Luxemburg, *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. III: *Gegen den Reformismus*. Ed. by Paul Frölich (Berlin, 1925), 94.

<sup>17</sup> "The Russian Revolution," Chapters 7 and 8, in "The Russian Revolution" and "Leninism or Marxism?"

1907, Lenin—faced with the accusation of having slandered the Menshevik members of the RSDRP—declared that his intention was “not to correct the mistake of an opponent, but to annihilate him, to wipe him off the earth.”<sup>18</sup> Rosa Luxemburg—despite her urging that Bernstein and the other Revisionists be excluded from the German Social Democratic Party—had a radically different conception of a Marxist Party from that which Lenin held. He conceived of the RSDRP as an army, rigidly disciplined and responding instantaneously to orders “from the top.” In a revealing admission Lenin confessed that he had a “great weakness for military metaphors.”<sup>19</sup> She argued that “The socialist workers’ movement is not only at its point of origin, but always and naturally, a multiplicity of groups and tendencies [*eine Vielheit von Gruppen und Richtungen*].”<sup>20</sup>

Rosa Luxemburg constantly sought to reconcile the various factions in the RSDRP. In a letter to Luise Kautsky in the summer of 1911 she expressed her hope that, if all the contending groups in the RSDRP were forced to attend a joint conference, unity could be achieved.<sup>21</sup> But, shortly after this letter, Rosa became pessimistic about the chances of uniting the feuding *émigre* factions of the RSDRP and wrote to Luise Kautsky:

At this [proposed] conference, naturally, only a handful of fighting cocks *living abroad* would rival in clamoring for the ear and soul of the German trustees [Karl Kautsky, Clara Zetkin and Franz Mehring were trustees of a fund of the RSDRP], and to expect anything of *these* cocks is pure delusion. They are already so involved in quarrels and so embittered, that a general confab will merely give them an opportunity to unburden themselves of their old, oldest and freshest insults, so that oil will merely be poured into the flames. *The only way* to preserve unity is to bring about a general conference with delegates *from Russia*, for the people in Russia all desire peace and unity, and they are the only power that can bring the fighting cocks living abroad to reason.

In contrast to Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin had no desire to reunite the Bolshevik and Menshevik wings of the RSDRP. His entire policy was

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in David Shub, *Lenin. A Biography* (Garden City, New York, 1948), p. 93.

<sup>19</sup> *Collected Works*, VII, 372, n.

<sup>20</sup> “Zum französischen Einigungskongress,” in *Gesammelte Werke*, III, 376. The term *Vielheit* (“multiplicity”) was emphasized by Luxemburg in the original text.

<sup>21</sup> Letter No. 69 (undated: summer, 1911), *Briefe an Karl und Luise Kautsky (1896-1918)*. Edited by Luise Kautsky (Berlin, 1923), p. 160. The next quotation in the text is from *ibid.*, letter No. 70 (undated: mid-August, 1911), pp. 162-163.

based upon the maintenance of this split. In this he had a tremendous advantage over the Mensheviks who, like Luxemburg, "made reunion with the bolsheviks the keystone of their policy."<sup>22</sup> It was *ne sluchaino* ("not an accident," as the Russians say) that Lenin, in the forepiece to his *What Is To Be Done?* cited approvingly Lassalle's dictum that "a party becomes stronger by purging itself."

#### IV

In the fall of 1904, Lenin submitted a rejoinder to Luxemburg's attack to *Die Neue Zeit*. However, Karl Kautsky, the editor of this leading Marxist theoretical organ, refused to publish Lenin's reply since, the German Marxist argued, the journal lacked sufficient space to print such "purely Russian matters." Kautsky, a close personal friend of Rosa Luxemburg at this time (his political rupture with her coming later in 1910), was undoubtedly not entirely candid in making this explanation to the Bolshevik leader. In any case, Lenin's retort to Luxemburg was first published in the Soviet Union in the *Leninskii Sbornik* in 1930, long after both participants in the controversy were dead.

In this *Abwehr* ("Defense")<sup>23</sup> Lenin expressed pleasure that the German comrades were taking an interest in Russian Party literature, but he protested that "the article of Rosa Luxemburg in 'Neue Zeit' acquainted the readers not with my book [*One Step Forward*] but with something else." Lenin denied that he was concerned with a special type of Marxist organization; he asserted that his interest was merely in the elementary organization necessary to any Party organization. This argument was hardly valid since he was, in *One Step Forward*, polemicizing for a Party structure organized specifically "from the top down." Lenin further denied Rosa Luxemburg's assertion that according to his plan "the Central Committee appears as the sole active nucleus of the Party."

Lenin argued that "Comrade Luxemburg" erred in stating that he sought to "glorify the educational influence of the factory."<sup>24</sup> Lenin also declared that it was not he but Axelrod who first mentioned the

<sup>22</sup> Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (New York, 1960), p. 132.

<sup>23</sup> For the text of Lenin's retort to Luxemburg, see his *Collected Works*, VII, 474-485. The full title of the German version of this article was "Ein Schritt Vorwärts, Zwei Schritte Rückwärts: Eine Abwehr von N. Lenin."

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 476.

term "Jacobinism." The Bolshevik leader contended that Rosa Luxemburg, in her criticism of his *One Step Forward*, had ignored the context of the Second Congress of the RSDRP and thus had "only repeated empty phrases." Luxemburg, he argued, had violated the "Abc" of the Marxist dialectic: "This Abc teaches that there is no abstract truth, that truth is always concrete." Lenin continued, "The supporters of the minority [the Mensheviks], including Comrade Luxemburg, fearfully avoid this analysis [of the Second Congress of the RSDRP]." After a long and involved exposition of the history of the RSDRP from its founding (at Minsk, in 1898) to 1904, Lenin concluded that the reader could now easily see that "Comrade Luxemburg's" objections to centralization in the Russian Social Democratic Party were a "mockery" of the Second Party Congress; they were nothing but a "vulgarization of Marxism, a perversion of the true Marxist dialectics, etc."<sup>25</sup>

In his *Abwehr* Lenin did not deal directly with the content of Luxemburg's critique of his model of Party organization. The passage quoted at the end of the previous paragraph revealed his unwillingness to come to grips with his opponent's arguments. Both Lenin and Luxemburg were revolutionary Marxists. For this reason the Bolshevik leader was unwilling to challenge her as directly as he had Martov. Thus he obscured the central difference between "Leninism" (the belief in an *élite* Marxist Party) and "Luxemburgism" (the conviction that Social Democracy must be fused with the proletariat). Rosa Luxemburg's biographer Paul Frölich has cogently observed that "Lenin's general opinions prior to 1917 reveal unmistakably Blanquist influences and an exaggerated voluntarism . . ."<sup>26</sup> But one may well differ with Frölich's view that Stalin's dictatorship was "an evil caricature of Lenin's organizational principle." For it was Lenin's fanatical insistence on rigidly structuring the RSDRP "from the top down" that provided the necessary theoretical basis for Stalin's own "ultra-centralism."

Rosa Luxemburg's hostility to Lenin's model of Party organization was as prophetic as Trotsky's famous 1904 dictum on "substitutionism."<sup>27</sup> But neither Luxemburg nor Trotsky (in 1904; he changed

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 484.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Frölich, *Rosa Luxemburg. Gedanke und Tat* (Paris, 1938), p. 92. The immediately following quotation of Frölich is also from *ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>27</sup> In "Our Political Tasks" [in Russian] (Geneva, 1904), Trotsky prophesied (quoted in Robert V. Daniels, ed., *A Documentary History of Communism*,

his mind in 1917) realized that Lenin's Party model was the only possible means of achieving a Marxist revolution when faced with a non-revolutionary proletariat (capable only of "trade-union consciousness"). For by the end of the nineteenth century revolutionary Marxism was beginning to look obsolete and irrelevant. It was becoming embarrassingly evident that the proletariat would not "emancipate itself" or behave in the manner predicted by Marx. Lenin proposed a blunt and unambiguous answer to this challenge. Since the proletariat, untutored by a revolutionary group of Marxists, could not arrive at the correct (revolutionary) understanding of Marxism, this truth should be imposed upon the workers "from without."

Rosa Luxemburg's attempted solution to this cardinal problem of proletarian consciousness was an interesting extrapolation from Marx's "incomplete legacy" by one who believed fervently with Engels (and Lenin) that Marx was "above all else a revolutionary." She was firmly convinced that the proletariat would by itself attain revolutionary class-consciousness, that it would not be sidetracked or "corrupted" by the rival claims of nationalism or reformism. The manner in which Luxemburg approached this critical issue of proletarian consciousness shaped her basic approach to politics. She rejected the Leninist proposal (similar to that of the Russian Blanquist Tkachev) of utilizing a revolutionary minority to impose a correct political myth upon the working class. But she could not supply an effective answer—as Lenin did—to this dilemma of the non-revolutionary proletariat, a problem which Marx never envisioned, but one which was of crucial importance for the realization of the "unity of the theory and practice" of the Marxist system.

New York, 1960, p. 31) that, as a result of Lenin's organizational philosophy, "the party organization is substituted for the party, the Central Committee is substituted for the party organization, and finally a 'dictator' is substituted for the Central Committee . . ."