

David Wolff

DEC 11 1979

December 7, 1979

Dear Raya,

I've just finished skimming the 1911 Protokoll--and I think Nettie missed something unbelievably horrible, but I can't go into it until I dictionary check and discuss all with Terry. This will be in the mail with Luxemburg's first review of "Chring--sorry, I meant to say of young Marx-- on Monday or Tuesday. I also checked Gesammelte Werke for references to the "Hunn campaign" in China and the Hottentot women & children, Luxemburg returns to them again and again: the war against the Hereros and Hottentots as the German Vietnam, which they never seriously opposed because they never imagined it might "come home"; the Kaiser's incredible speech to the German marines as representing what she calls "the Hunn evangel"--what we would call Hitlerism, I think. But almost always as asides, in isolated phrases. These are the coherent passages, will send the fragments on request (some are interesting). If you should ~~should~~ need a name for me, "David Wolff" would be fine. Does that sound OK? Perhaps you've already settled on Cunctator? Yours,

Dave  
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"And now let's take a look at the wars which Germany has fought in the meantime. The first was the 'glorious' Chinese war, whose slogan ran: Prisoners will not be taken, etc. Then in 1904 came the even more glorious Herero war. The Hereros are a Negro people who for centuries have clung to their native soil, and made it fertile with their sweat. Their 'crime' lay in this: that they would not spinelessly surrender themselves to the rapacious robber barons of industry, to the white slave owners; that they defended their homeland against foreign invaders. In this war as well, German arms richly covered themselves with--renown. Herr von Trotha issued the well-known general order: every Negro found armed will be shot down--no quarter will be given. The men were shot; women and children by the hundreds were hunted into the burning desert, and the wreath of their parched bones bleaches in the murderous Omaheke--a glory garland of German arms!"

From Unser Kampf um die Macht

Rosa Luxemburg, Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 2  
(Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1972), p. 537

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"Then came the Hunn campaign in China, to which Wilhelm II sent the soldiers with the slogan: Quarter will not be given, prisoners will not be taken. The soldiers were to wreak havoc like the Hunns, so that

15213

for a thousand years no Chinese would dare cast squinting, envious eyes on a German."

From Die weltpolitische Lage

Rosa Luxemburg, Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 3.  
(Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1973), p. 214.

The M-L Inst. footnotes it thus (also vol. 3, p. 214): "On 27 July 1900 in Bremerhaven, Wilhelm II bid the troops of the China expedition farewell with a chauvinistic inflammatory speech, later infamous as the 'Hunn speech', demanding the utmost brutality against the Chinese freedom fighters."

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"Where was the storm of outrage in the Reichstag, when the German military drove the defenseless Herero women and children into the desert, there to perish in madness?"

From Die Bilanz von Zabern

Rosa Luxemburg, Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 3.  
(Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1973), p. 370.

The M-L Inst. footnotes it thus (also vol. 3, p. 370): "In the suppression campaign of 1904-1907 against the Hereros in south-west Africa, the German colonial troops drove the natives into the desert and barred them from coming out for water. General Lothar von Trotha commanded that no prisoners were to be taken and that women and children were to be fired upon, delivering the Hereros to a gruesome death."

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"The 'civilized world' which looked on calmly while this same imperialism devoted tens of thousands of Hereros to the most horrible destruction, and filled the Kalahari desert with the mad cries of those perishing of thirst and the death rattles of the dying; while in Putumayo, in ten years forty thousand human beings were martyred by a gang of European industrial robber barons, and the rest of a people beaten into cripples; while in China an ancient culture was offered up to all the abominations of destruction and anarchy, under the fire-brands and murders of the European soldier-rabble; while Persia helplessly suffocated in the ever-tightening noose of foreign despotism; while in Tripoli the Arabs were bowed to the yoke of capital with fire and sword, their culture and their dwellings alike razed to the ground--this 'civilized world' has only today become aware that the bite of the imperialist beast is fatal, that its breath is infamy."

-3-

From Die Krise der Sozialdemokratie

Rosa Luxemburg, Gesammelte Werke, Vol. 4.  
(Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1974), p. 161.

Cf. Rosa Luxemburg Speaks, p. 326, which unfortunately translates Hereros as "heroes"--also the quotation from the General Staff war history in the letter to Mathilde Wurm, which I translated imprecisely.

15215