

# Liebknecht in America - - - by Sam Darcy

(NOTE: The contents of this article are the result of an interview with Comrade Max Bedacht, editor of "The Communist," who knew Liebknecht intimately.)

The years that have intervened between the time that Karl Liebknecht, the heroic leader of the German workers, was murdered and the present time have tended to make him a figure far removed from the struggles of the workers today. Comrade Bedacht, veteran of the revolutionary movement here and abroad, tells of Liebknecht and brings him back to us as a living, vibrant, active revolutionist.

Liebknecht came to America in September 1910 and left in November of the same year. He was in this country for a little less than two months. Immediately after his arrival he went on a twenty-nine day tour during which he addressed thirty-six meetings extending from coast to coast. His tour took place at a time when the socialist party in this country met its first election successes and his work was made more strenuous for that reason. He was personally a man of extraordinary energy, keen wit, and unbounded loyalty to the working class.

It is precisely for this last that he had incurred the enmity of some of the German socialists. He had always attacked the false theory that in time of war we can easily accomplish a revolution without previous careful preparation with that in view. He said that the failure to make such preparations meant that some were building a bridge for the possibility of making a last minute traitorous sell-out. He demanded that the youth be organized as one of the means of such preparation and that extensive anti-militarist activity be carried on. He had served eighteen months in jail for his work along these lines. The front of opposition to his revolutionary position extended from the yellow bureaucrats in the German socialist party to the Kaiser. The hatred that the right wing socialist bureaucracy had of him was greater than we can conceive. It is illustrated however by an incident that took place upon his landing.

## Liebknecht in America



From left to right: Alexander Jonas, a pioneer of socialism in America; Hermann Schlueter, author of "Lincoln, Labor and Slavery," "The Chartist Movement in England," "The International in America," etc.; KARL LIEBKNECHT; Max Bedacht, member of Central Committee of the Workers (Communist) Party and editor of "The Communist."

On the same boat with him came another socialist from Germany whose name was Albert Suedekum, who came here to lecture on better municipal government (the same sort of a topic our American socialist discuss). The reception committee for Liebknecht asked friend Albert to speak at the same meeting with Liebknecht that week. And Albert, in true right wing style answered that he would never speak from the same platform with so extreme a person as

Karl. (Again we see an analogy with the attitude of American socialist leaders). Liebknecht in later years, however, became an increasingly popular figure in the eyes of the German workers while Suedekum and his ilk have sunk into ignominious oblivion.

In 1913 there again began a movement in this country to bring him here. Comrade Bedacht had been corresponding with him up to this time. We reprint below a translation of one of his letters, the picture of the original being reproduced in another column:

Berlin, July 17, 1914.

Dear Comrade Bedacht:

I heard from Comrade Wolffheim that you edit the Vorwaerts now. I am glad of that. I've often wanted to write to you—to you and my other friend over there. You are justified in accusing me of being a bad and negligent letter writer. We have indeed gone thru a bad and stormy time. And in the coming winter it will again get lively, in the struggle for the people's franchise and in the consideration of commercial relations. The general strike was never so popular as now. The idea of its necessity is spreading spontaneously. It is very possible that the idea will get such elementary momentum that it will become irresistible. Naturally we must not provoke anything prematurely. But we must get everything ready for the mobilization.

Foreign affairs are also full of problems. Asiatic Turkey may maintain itself yet for some time—held together by the jealousy of the big powers, by the same imperialist rivalry which up to now, has made it possible to localize the fires in the Balkans. European peace depends anyhow on competitive jealousy and rivalry, and with world peace it is about the same. Long live our age of the most detestable high culture, a la Rinaldini (the European Jesse James, S. D.)

How is San Francisco? I have still many and very vivid memories about what I saw and heard over there. The suggestion of Comrade Liess to come there in 1915 is still being turned over in my mind. It is worth considering.

I would write you more often if I were not overwhelmed with work.

## Brevities

(Continued from page 4.)

on last night by members of the women's bureau of the Illinois Manufacturers' Association at a dinner at the Hotel LaSalle." So runs the report in the Chicago Herald-Examiner. The funniest thing about it is that these female parasites claim that they do it all because they are against any discrimination against women. If men can work over eight hours a day, why not women. We are not weaker than men, they argue. The best cure for these animals would be to put them to work in a textile factory—let us say in Passaic—for one year. We would guarantee that they will have changed quite a bit at the end of that period. Of one thing we can be certain—they would no longer have to go to beauty doctors for advice on how to reduce.

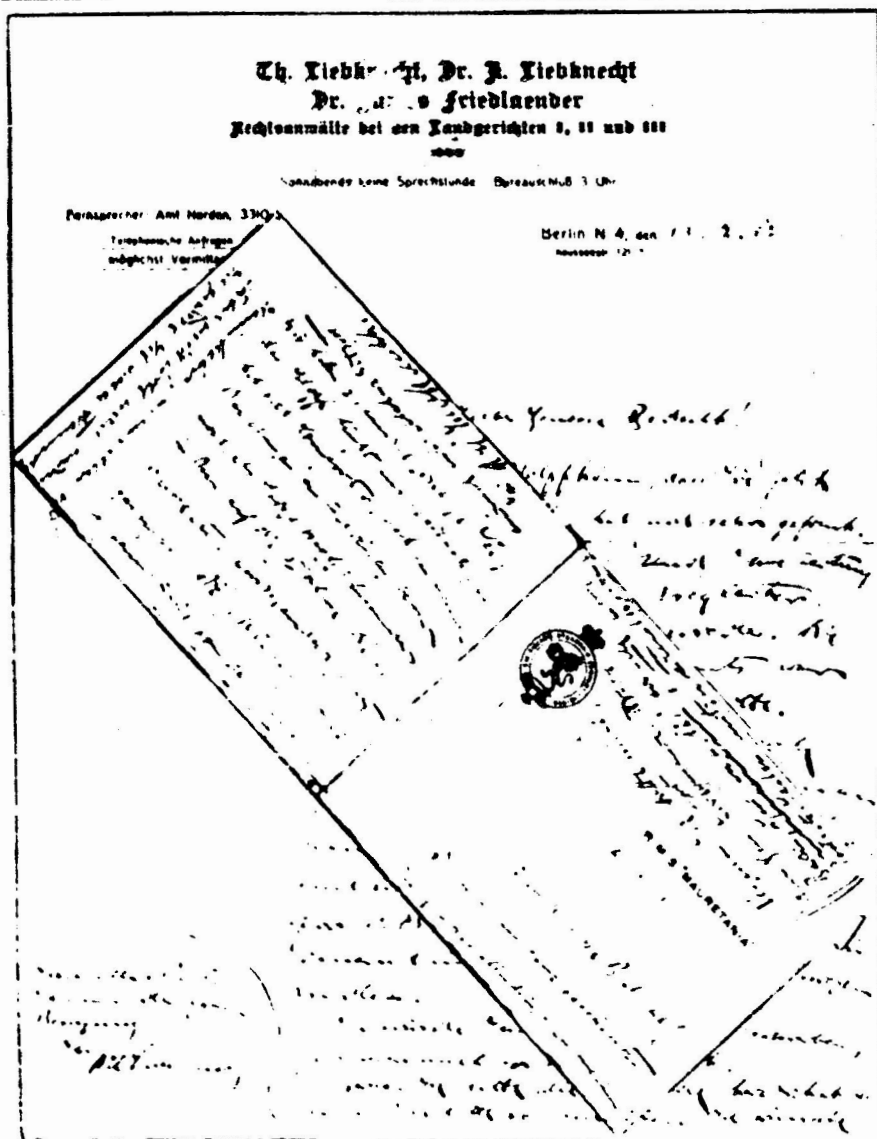
Figures don't lie. But liars can figure. Everybody claims a victory in the Chicago primary elections. Thompson because he polled the largest vote. Litsinger, because he polled the smallest vote, and Dever because he ran away from his opponent in the Democratic primary. The arguments are something like these—Dever: Thousands of Democrats voted for Thompson in the Republican primary, because they figured he would be easier for me to beat in the elections. Litsinger: I received a majority of the genuine Republican votes. Many Democrats voted for Thompson to prove that they have no confidence in him. In the meanwhile, we find very little money on Dever.

On the same day, the newspapers carried items dealing with executions. One was the execution of a Russian counter-revolutionist, a former prince who had led white guard armies against the workers' and peasants' government, who had done spy work for the British, who had executed hundreds of workers and peasants who fell into his hands. He had returned to Russia to try to recover a treasure that he had buried before he fled. He was given a trial and executed. The other item dealt with the summary beheading of 60 Chinese workers by the counter-revolutionary militarists of Shanghai. The workers were executed without trial of any kind. A militarist did not like that looks, so he pulled out his sword and did the job. The newspapers slobbered over the first case, calling down the vengeance of God upon the heads of the blood-thirsty Bolsheviks. But their only comment on the execution of the Chinese workers was that the people in Shanghai were angered at it, and that next day they forgot all about it.

Senator Shipstead has introduced a bill into the senate asking that the United States take the initiative in the calling of a conference of representatives of the Central American countries to consider the organization of a Federation of these countries. The fact that the United States will have anything to do with this conference will destroy any effect it might have. The United States is only interested in consolidating its power in Central America, and will undoubtedly use such a conference to further that aim. The only effective Federation the Central American Republics, and the Republics of all of Latin America can organize is one that will have as its aim the complete elimination of American imperialism and control from these countries. The conference must therefore be called not with the participation and help of the United States, but against the United States. The masses of Central America have already had sufficient experience with any conference they participate in now with the United States will be used against them just as previous conferences were.

Give my regards to all comrades and please, write yourself. I wish you and the whole movement best success.

Your  
Karl Liebknecht.



Facsimile reproduction of some of Liebknecht's American letters addressed to Max Bedacht

Next Issue—"Liebknecht as Parliamentarian," by Max Bedacht.