

The role of Rosa Luxemburg in the German Socialist Movement and her joining the German Social Democratic Party 1898-1905

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Abstract

This research deals with the role of Rosa Luxemburg in the German Socialist Movement and the beginnings of her joining the SPD during the period between 1898 and 1905, a stage that represented an important turning point in her political and intellectual career. The research aims to shed light on the political and social conditions that contributed to the emergence of Rosa Luxemburg within the circles of the German Socialist Movement, as well as studying the nature of her intellectual and organizational activity within the SPD.

The paper also discusses Rosa Luxemburg's positions on the intellectual issues witnessed by the party, in particular the ongoing controversy between the reformist and revolutionary currents, indicating her role in defending Marxist principles and emphasizing the importance of mass struggle in achieving socialist transformation. The research also reviews her most prominent theoretical contributions through her writings and political speeches, which had a clear impact on the direction of the German Socialist Movement during that stage.

Keywords: Rosa Luxemburg, German Socialist Movement, German Social Democratic Party, Marxism.

1. Introduction

During the last decades of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century, Germany witnessed profound political, social and economic transformations that accompanied the rapid industrial expansion and the rise of the working class as an influential social force in political life. In light of these transformations, the German Socialist Movement emerged as one of the most important organized political movements in Europe, as it was able to attract increasing numbers of workers and intellectuals seeking to bring about social and political change based on socialist principles. The Social Democratic Party of Germany formed the main organizational framework of that movement and became the center of intellectual debates and ideological conflicts concerning the future of socialism and the means to achieve it.

It was in this historical context that Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919) emerged as one of the most important intellectual and political figures in both the European and the German Socialist Movement. She was distinguished by her high theoretical abilities, intellectual contributions to the development of Marxist thought, as well as her intense political activity within socialist circles. Since moving to Germany and joining the SPD in 1898, she has played an important role in the debates within the party, especially on the issue of reform and revolution, and the position of the Socialists on the political and economic developments in Germany and Europe at that stage.

The study of the role of Rosa Luxemburg during the period between 1898 and 1905 is of particular importance, because it represents the foundational stage of her activity within the German Socialist Movement, as those years witnessed her emergence as an important political theorist and defender of the revolutionary approach in the face of reformist currents within the party, as well as her writings and political positions contributed to enrich the intellectual debate about the nature of the socialist transformation and the mechanisms of labor struggle, which made her occupy a distinguished position among the leaders of the Socialist Movement in Germany.

Accordingly, this research aims to study the role of Rosa Luxemburg in the German Socialist Movement and analyze the beginnings of her joining the Social Democratic Party during the period (1898-1905), by identifying the political and intellectual conditions that surrounded her activity, and her theoretical and organizational contributions, and analyzing her influence on the course of the German Socialist Movement during that important stage of its history.

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After Rosa Luxemburg returned from her trip to Paris 1898, she decided to move to Germany to work in the field of journalism of the German Social Democratic Party in order to play an active role under an influential and dominant party in Germany, however, the laws in force in Germany prevents her from fully practicing political life (1), but as a foreigner Rosa Luxemburg could not do this task, foreigners were strictly prohibited from engaging in any political activity, especially in Prussia and the border areas (2).

In order for Rosa Luxemburg to participate in that movement, she had to legally obtain German citizenship, and the fastest way to achieve this was to marry a German citizen, the orthodox Marxist Rosa Luxemburg found it easy to actually marry her old friend Gustav Lubeck (1873-1945), one of the Sons of the family of an old friend of Rosa Luxemburg's family, Gustav married Rosa Luxemburg in a sham marriage on the nineteenth of April 1898, and separated from her then when registering his marriage at the marriage registration office, thereby obtaining German citizenship and becoming some kind of German police, who usually acted as henchmen of the Kaiser and five years later he was divorced from her Officially(3).

Rosa Luxemburg arrived in Berlin on the Twelfth of May 1898. her first official procedure was to register with the police for the purpose of checking her papers. the papers were found intact and she was granted citizenship at that time. after that, she worked actively in the joints of the German Social Democratic Party. her first work was her involvement in the party's campaign for the Reichstag elections on the sixteenth of June 1898, conducting an educational campaign among Polish workers in Silesia.

It seems that Rosa Luxemburg her most passionate desire was to work in the German labor movement, not as an outsider but as a full-fledged and equal comrade, she hoped to work as a journalist in the widespread publications of the SPD, and to obtain German citizenship, a quality that would enable her to participate in German political life.

Rosa Luxemburg achieved what she sought by becoming a German citizen and had the right to join the German Social Democratic Party as an active member, and she became able to devote her efforts to the German movement and direct influence at that time on the German working class in words and in writing, and thus she became completely free to legally exercise her political activities. in Prussian Germany, Prussian censorship, after all, was not much different from Russian censorship, but Rosa Luxemburg never knew fear, and arrived in Germany with high spirits the scene of her future political activities.

Rosa Luxemburg firmly established her position as a polemical writer, speaker and "conservative" Marxist, between 1898 -1905 her main activity was her struggle against "revisionism", which was causing a great stir in the ranks of the party, the party leaders treated revisionism as a tactical problem (4).

After her position in the German Social Democratic Movement took root, and she soon became one of its most important figures, she published her first famous works, which earned her wide fame and a prestigious international position within the Socialist Movement in the year 1899 namely, "social reform or revolution", which became a classic reference in Marxism, and the most important work of those who advocated the necessity of socialist revolution, her book came in response to the arguments of Eduard Bernstein(1850-1932) in favor of a revisionist interpretation of Marxist teachings, and while it was characterized by its polemical character, it also reflected some of the main points in Rosa Luxemburg's formulation of Marxism (5).

Revisionist tendencies within the German Social Democratic Movement were not an emergency phenomenon during the period in which Rosa Luxemburg became involved, but this is accompanied from its very inception, as there was an intense debate within it about the means by which the working class was able to reach power and build socialism, as well as about the means to achieve this. at the end of the last century, the struggle between the old radical trend and the new "revisionism," that new trend aimed at sharpness and revision (6).

Rosa Luxemburg realized more than anyone else that revisionism posed an explicit and obvious threat to the marxist ideological basis of the SPD, however revisionism was not the only challenge she was trying to eliminate at that time, and in 1899 she also fought the threat to the reformist practices of the party, as these practices, along with the growing influence of trade unions(7). As well as, trade union awareness, posed an additional threat to the SPD in the eyes of radical figures such as Rosa Luxemburg, and through her statements and writings, which were mostly critical of the party leadership, as Rosa Luxemburg was able to clarify her positions on vital issues of conservation On the Marxist character of the German Social Democratic Party, these issues are related to such problems as parliamentarism and its possibilities, the limitations of reform in bourgeois society, the need to prepare for revolution, the inevitability of a violent struggle between

the bourgeoisie and the working class(8).

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During the period (1898-1899) Rosa Luxemburg lived in Germany alone, exchanged letters with her friend Leo Geschichs (1867-1919) and spent her free time reading Karl Marx's capital (1818-1883), Immanuel Kant's critique of pure reason (1724-1804) and the history of social and political movements by Viktor Adler (1852-1918) (13).

In the same year, Rosa Luxemburg joined the second International Workers' Movement in Germany and followed her path in that movement, and her ideas matured in perception and clarity in expression, so that with her interventions, speeches, her boldness in putting forward ideas and the high quality of her publications, she was able to become a valuable member of the international despite her young age at the time, and even achieved strong relations with leading Marxist thinkers such as August Bebel(1840-1913) and Karl Kautsky(1845-1938) and was able to give herself space in writing, after which she became one of the most important editors-in-chief of the most important Marxist magazine named at that time "NOWE Zeit", which was headed by Karl Kautsky at that time, Rosa Luxemburg also had. With a widespread interest in the field of rhetoric, she emerged as one of the pivotal figures in the left wing of the German Social Democratic Party, and there was probably no man in that party whom Rosa Luxemburg (14) does not criticize.

Since 1900 Rosa Luxemburg published in newspapers analyses of contemporary socio-economic problems in Europe, attacked the German military and colonial equipment and called for a general strike, which was aimed at mobilizing workers for solidarity and preventing wars, in the same year the Polish socialist democracy resumed its political activity, which had been aborted several years earlier, and Stanislaw trusevich, pseudonym Kazimierz Zalewski, activist in Lithuania gained great influence, trusiewicz came to Berlin and proposed that Rosa Luxemburg Poland and Lithuania in the international arena (15), which I agreed, also acted temporarily in favor of the Polish socialist party of the Prussian partition, but resigned after failing to convince local activists to join it or to strengthen cooperation with the German socialists (16).

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in the same year she also participated in the second congress of the second international. on her return she received the news of her father's death (17). in 1901 she went to Poznan, where she participated in the by-election campaign and became close to Franz Mehring. in later years she worked closely with Francis ZEC, who is a prominent theorist of German socialism, one of the first biographers of Karl Marx and the founder of, among other things, the foundations of Marxist socialist theory, military thought, and literary theory, and in the same year Rosa participated in the fight against denationalization responded, among other things, to the Tsarist repression of Polish students in vrseschnia and published publications such as "in defense of citizenship", in which she defended the right of its citizens to speak their native language, this activity drew the attention of the German government and the local minister of education at the same time, and a year ago 1902she is one of the editors of the newspaper "review of prices", the new newspaper of the Social Democratic Party of the kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, having for years published articles criticizing the Polish socialist party and its pro-independence rhetoric(18).

Rosa Luxemburg was an internationalist and revolutionary, and she is not only interested in the course of the German Social Democratic Party, but also followed the political developments within the Tsarist empire. after she began her political activity in Germany, she became widely involved in the revolutionary movement in the Central European countries, especially the Polish cause. she commented on Polish events as much as she participated in German debates. the Social Democratic Party of the kingdom of Poland and Lithuania published articles in party newspapers(19), including the Red Banner newspaper, and Rosa Luxemburg was one of the most important voices in it. she wrote several articles that opposed the nationalist position of the Polish workers ' party Socialists, demanded The end of the Russian autocracy and the European reactionary forces required parallel revolutionary uprisings in Warsaw, Moscow and St. Petersburg, which, according to Rosa Luxemburg, meant an organized revolution against the rule of the Tsar and the system of capitalist exploitation he was defending(20). At the international conference which held in Amsterdam in August 1904, with the support of Karl Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg gained attention thanks to her ideas(21), as well as achieved great success in revisionism, so much so that the majority of the delegates at the Congress eventually agreed that it is the class struggle and not the reforms that led to socialism (22).

Upon her return to Germany, she faced a trial on charges of royal self-insult for insulting the German Emperor William II (1859-1941) during one of her inflammatory speeches, calling him a man who did not know what the German workers were suffering, but the German government pursued her, arrested her and sentenced her to three months in prison, although she was later released only six weeks later, under an amnesty issued after the accession of Friedrich Augustus III (1865-1932) to the throne of Saxony on the fifteenth of October 1904(23).

After her release from prison, Rosa Luxemburg turned her attention to the Russian Empire. the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) showed that the Tsarist empire was militarily weaker than many observers had expected, and that the revolutionary potential seemed ripe for internal unrest. in May 1904, Rosa Luxemburg had already emphasized the impact of that war as follows:

"The thunder of the Port Arthur cannons that shook the stock exchanges of Europe strongly reminds the socialist ideologues of bourgeois society, in their illusions of European peace, of only one thing: modern colonial policies, which have so far bypassed the stage of local European conflicts by transferring them to the Great Ocean" (25).

The first major Japanese victories were achieved by land and sea in December 1904, the Social Democratic Party of the kingdom of Poland and Lithuania published an appeal to the workers of the Russian Empire, especially in its Polish territories (26), in which it declared:

"The moment has come for the workers of Poland to throw off the yoke of Tsarist autocracy"... It's time to "get political freedoms" and join the civilized world... The Russo-Japanese war marked the right time for a revolutionary uprising, as the Tsarist regime, which had been absorbing and strangling millions of people for centuries, was shaking at its foundations... The Japanese War exposed the tyranny of the Russian regime and ignited revolutionary action among the broad masses of the working class of the Russian Empire" (27).

At the same time, Rosa Luxemburg emphasized that the revolution should be led by the masses, through which the mentioned political freedoms can be guaranteed to everyone, against a minority of people representing only the aristocracy or the interests of the bourgeoisie (28), and the war in East Asia sparked the spark of the revolution when the regime reacted violently to the demonstrators who, led by the priest Georgy apollonovich Gapon(1870-1906), marched to the Tsar's Winter Palace on the twenty-second of January 1905 to ask for his support in the face of the suffering of industrial workers and Gapon described

the events of that day, later recalled as "Bloody Sunday", and represented the point of no return in the revolutionary process of 1905(29).

Conclusion

The research found that Rosa Luxemburg was one of the most influential figures in the German Socialist Movement during the period (1898-1905), as her joining the SPD contributed to strengthening the Revolutionary Marxist current within the party and enriching intellectual discussions related to the future of the Socialist Movement. Through her writings and political activity, she was able to impose her presence as a thinker and activist with a clear critical vision towards the reformist trends that emerged within the party. The study also showed that the first years of Luxemburg's activity in Germany constituted a decisive stage in the formation of its political and intellectual position, as it defended the principles of class struggle and mass action, and stressed the importance of revolutionary change in achieving socialist goals. Their positions contributed to the development of many intellectual and organizational issues that occupied the German Socialist Movement at the beginning of the twentieth century.

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