

Remembering the Dead

I

The funeral march for the murdered national heroes of our state was purposely disturbed; the memorial service for the martyrs of the Communist party was to be wantonly desecrated. They did not intend to participate in the demonstration out of reverence, but rather in order to draw attention to themselves.

What happened here is just as reprehensible as blasphemy. No church would tolerate it if someone were to degrade a commemoration procession honoring a Catholic cardinal or a Protestant bishop. In the same manner, one cannot ask that we tolerate it when someone disturbs and defiles the memory of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.

Should one like an even closer analogy, one needs only imagine what would happen if the funeral procession to Olof Palme's last resting place were disrupted by protests, regardless of what kind. Incidentally, there are laws in every civilized country that forbid someone to insult the memory of the dead.

II

It is even more outrageous when the General Secretary of the CDU in Berlin (West), Mr. Landowsky, calls on those involved to exercise self-criticism and ask themselves "if the arrests helped contribute to the legacy of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht." He also made it quit clear in the Schöneberg House of Representatives what he understood to be the nature of this legacy: "I mean, that the deaths of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were an objective, albeit undesired, contribution that made the Weimar Republic even possible."

Today, whoever justifies this assassination supports terrorism in our time as well, if he likes it or not.

III

One should not invoke Rosa Luxemburg, to whom the phrase "freedom is the freedom to think differently" is attributed. In truth, this phrase is found in a manuscript that she worked on while in prison in early 1918. If one wants to quote her here, one should not keep silent the fact that she later refused to publish these notes, because the German November Revolution taught her what the Russian Bolsheviks already knew.

She made it quite clear before her death what her legacy is: "The historical question that has made its way to the agenda of today is – bourgeois democracy or socialist democracy. Dictatorship of the proletariat is democracy in the socialist sense."

“It is not where wage-slaves sit next to the capitalists and the peasant proletariat sits next to the Junker in equality for a parliamentary debate on the questions of life. Only there, where the millions who comprise the proletarian masses grab hold of the entire power of the state with its calloused fist in order, like the god Thor uses his hammer, smashes the ruling class on the head. There alone we find a democracy that does not cheat the people.”

One can agree or disagree with her. However, he who misappropriates her last cognitions is either unrighteous or ignorant.

Source: Heinz Kamnitzer, opinion article, “Die Toten Mahnen,” trans. Jon Berndt Olsen, *Neues Deutschland*, January 28, 1988.