

About one year ago we have started our workshop project with the call “100th Anniversary of ‘The Accumulation of Capital: A Contribution to an Economic Explanation of Imperialism’: A Century-Old Work Remains Current, Provocative and Seminal”. We have wanted to use this anniversary to honor Rosa Luxemburg as one of the most fascinating characters in the struggle for freedom in equality, to come together for a mutual learning process – i.e. in order to discuss our political-economic analysis of historical reality and to improve our academic methodology. We had published the call on the 70th birthday of our friend Frieder Otto Wolf, who has been a close partner of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation for many years.

We did not forget to send out the call in 2012, and we have planned to highlight two extremely dramatic dates in 2014 which are connected with the theoretical work and the political struggle of Rosa Luxemburg: The start of the colonial Berlin conference in 1884 with its terribly brutal and bloody consequences for the African people; the beginning of World War I in 1914. By her “Accumulation of Capital”, Luxemburg had aimed at providing an economic analysis of imperialist policy, above all of colonialism. This project is an expression of the unique combination of the radical fighter for humanity, the exclusive socialist politician, the exceptional theoretical thinker, the excellent teacher, and the so very loveable woman, in her person.

So our workshop dramaturgy is guided by pursuing two distinct, but closely linked aims: to use the “Accumulation of Capital” as a source of inspiration to deal with current problems and to improve our research method and to radically criticize a kind of “Marxism” which has killed or defamed the very critical, dialectical approach of Marx, constituting the actual strength of his theory. We want to invite interested people already now to a working process which shall have a new highlight in 2018: the 200th birthday of Marx. In this context, the publication planned for 2015 as a follow-up of our workshop should highlight the deep idea of the struggle of Rosa Luxemburg, as formulated a few days before her brutal murder: “We are with Marx again”. In that connection, we want to highlight the contribution and the heritage of Rosa Luxemburg for dealing with a dogmatic or orthodox “Marxism”. So we are underlining the question of the “workshop policy” using a “declaration style”:

- Rosa Luxemburg has used the heritage of Marx not for at first for legitimating her own work and ideas, but for realizing, explaining and changing social reality. She has had to deal with objective contradictions and contradictions in real interests and she has had to critically appropriate the Marxian heritage, to criticize, to continue, and to use it. Having done that, Rosa Luxemburg has enriched the Marxian intellectual tendency within the emancipatory social movement, within the socialist movement, significantly – by her addressing concrete issues of substantial content, above all in political economy, as well as by her culture of argument, and by her clearly reflected methodical approach. Even her undeniable mistakes and deficits are to be taken as reflections of real problems, discussed by her in a highly productive way.

- But in doing so, we shall also have to explain, what all the afore-mentioned elements do mean in practice mean for our addressing current problems of politics, of theory, as well as of methodology – as e.g. with regard to the new phenomena of land grabbing, of neo-colonialism, of the neoliberal strategies and attacks; with regard to financialization, to oligarchization, and to peripherization; with regard to finance and currency issues, with the crises of economics, ecology, food provision, energy use, and the ensuing crisis of reproduction; with regard to methodological deficits; with regard to questions of political education, of organizing, and of our theoretical work on political strategies itself.
- When we from the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation organize a workshop, we want to learn from our guests, and bring about a common learning process, together with the workshop participants. We want to build on and to improve what already exists, and to start and to develop a new practice of co-operation. Of course, not all our invited guests do share such a longer perspective. The desire to participate in such a long-term perspective is not a condition for joining us in a specific project. But we should really like to also offer some space for such a long-term perspective, open especially to people who would like to think together with us “on the day after the workshop”. So we should like also to use the workshop for preparing for our 4th EU-experts’ discussion in Belgrade in October, as well as for some other activities and publication projects, and for working with a look forward to 2018. This does not mean that we have a traditional series of separate commemorations of historical events in mind, but our aim rather is a continued work on an intellectual, cultural and above all politically effective renewal of socialism.

Thinking in this way, we are trying to focus the common attention on two more issues: The *first* concerns the role of Rosa Luxemburg for the development of a dissident, critical strand of socialist thinking. It is of central interest for us, how Rosa Luxemburg has criticized theories, including Marxian ones, while looking for a solution of concrete theoretical problems which had very specific consequences for political action. In this connection, we should like to refer to the *second* issue: the fact that the left emancipatory opponents of Stalinism have tended to refer back to Rosa Luxemburg. Of course, her criticism of Lenin, referring to earlier or later Soviet developments, has been a crucial reason for that. But we consider the way as still much more important, in which Luxemburg has radically insisted upon a specific understanding of contradictions and has looked for ways of dealing with contradictions within social and political practice, in order to make use of them in an emancipatory way.

When we have started our project, we were still somewhat afraid of an old discussion which we wanted to avoid: the discussion if Luxemburg had really believed in a possibly automatic crash of the capitalist system or not. We understand that her work is not only exposing different contradictory tendencies existing in reality, it also is exhibiting contradictions itself. But after clearly exposing the very brutality of the

domination of the capitalist mode of production – and above all of the agencies through which it is effected – she could not have believed in any kind of automatic character of a positive historical development and, after all, she has never given in to “revolutionary attentism” and has been politically active, struggling for emancipation, all her life. In that connection we should like to underline the deeply democratic as character of Rosa Luxemburg.

Reading the existing contributions to the debate on “The Accumulation of Capital” we are confronted by at least two fundamentally different approaches: On the one hand, an approach relating to the history of Marxist dogmas, on the other hand, an approach aiming at dealing with current political, theoretical and methodological problems. We explicitly prefer the second one and also should like to underline a sharp difference between the history of dogmas and the real history of political economy. In this vein we do understand the history of political economy as an integrated essential part of political economy highlighting its method as methodology.

Further reading the contributions received so far, we see a clear difference between discussing one element of “The Accumulation of Capital” and the work in its entire internal complexity. Of course, both approaches are perfectly legitimate, but the first is under an obligation at least to explain the rationality of and the reasons for an acceptable concentration on only one problem. Our reading of the contributions received so far leads us to formulate our advice also to study Rosa Luxemburgs “The Accumulation of Capital – An Anti-Critique ‘The Accumulation of Capital’, or What the Epigones Have Made of Marx's Theory” (<http://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1915/anti-critique/index.htm>)