

A Revolutionary Martyr

ROSA LUXEMBURG. Letters to Karl and Luise Kautsky, from 1896 to 1918. Edited by LUISE KAUTSKY and translated from the German by LOUIS P. LOCHNER. New York: Robert M. McBride & Co. 1925. \$2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN SPARGO

MADAME LUISE KAUTSKY, wife of the great theoretician of German Socialism, has rendered an important and distinguished service to students of international Socialism and its history by making public a collection of letters written by Rosa Luxemburg. At the same time, by her careful annotations to the letters and her tender and illuminating introduction, she has produced a singularly beautiful and worthy memorial to one of the most remarkable women the international Socialist movement has ever produced, to whom the term "martyr" can be applied without the least suggestion of affectation or cant.

This collection of letters, supplementing the earlier published collection of Rosa Luxemburg's letters to Sophie, wife of her co-martyr, Karl Liebknecht, will incidentally elucidate some complicated and obscure pages in the history of the once great German Social Democracy. Its chief value, however, is the light it throws upon the strangely complex character and personality of the agitator and revolutionist whose sobriquet, "Red Rosa" attests her flaming passionate spirit, but who is here self-revealed as a gentle and generous woman with a rare capacity for friendship and, outside of politics, a large tolerance.

With the exception of a few brief notes to Kautsky's mother, all the letters in this collection were addressed to Karl and Luise Kautsky, sometimes separately, sometimes jointly. Chronologically they embrace the twenty-two years, 1896-1918. Within that period international Socialism rose to its greatest height of glory and sank to its greatest depth of degradation, and in the great drama Rosa Luxemburg was a notable actor. The story is not told in these letters, of course, but there are flashes which suggest momentary raisings of the curtain giving vivid glimpses of the stage. Beginning with the most formal communications of a rather youthful contributor to the learned editor of *Die Neue Zeit*, the correspondence develops, in rapid tempo, through the phase of ardent discipleship to that of tender and intimate affection for the whole Kautsky family. Many of the letters are trivial enough, brief communications concerning party matters of no present interest or moment, or postcards with messages of friendly greeting written on trains or in railway waiting rooms. These are rightly included, for not less than the more pretentious letters they contribute to our understanding of the vivid personality of the writer.

The earliest of the letters were written in 1896, as already noted. That was the year in which I first met Rosa Luxemburg. She came to London in July of that year as a delegate to the International Socialist Congress. She was twenty-six years old—a small, rather frail, good-looking young woman with remarkably bright eyes. If I am not mistaken, she sat in the Congress as a representative of that faction of the Polish Socialist movement which was opposed to nationalism and Polish independence and identified itself with the Social Democratic parties of Germany and Austria. I recall quite clearly that the vivacious young Polish Jewess attained distinction in a gathering that included notables such as Liebknecht and Bebel. She spoke with great vigor and was listened to with more than ordinary attention.

During many years thereafter she was one of the foremost leaders of Polish Socialism, always opposing Polish nationalism. Her concept of internalism was, to the very end, the vainly romantic one involving the extinction of nationalism. In the fierce intellectual struggles associated with the history of the Polish Socialist movement the name of Rosa Luxemburg is written large. But that was not enough for her: she became a German citizen through a "marriage" that was no more than a legal device, adopted for the purpose, and took up her residence in Germany. In all the party congresses from 1900 onward she was a prominent figure. She was second only to Kautsky himself

in the opposition to Bernstein and the whole "revisionist" movement in the party. She was deeply and profoundly stirred by the events of 1905 in Russia and Finland, and thereafter became Germany's most ardent advocate of the general strike as a political instrument. Imprisoned in Germany in 1904 for *lese majesté* and inciting class war, and in Warsaw in 1906 for her participation in the "underground" movement, she became a popular heroine. Of all this activity these letters give glimpses. There are notable gaps—sometimes of months and sometimes of years—due to the fact that she saw the Kautskys almost daily, so that letters were unnecessary. The inevitable result is that one seeks in vain for some things and wishes that he could turn to other letters written to such men as Vaillant, Guesde, Lenin, and Adler, to complete the picture.

From the viewpoint of Socialist history, then, these letters are simply footnotes. Her references to Russia are so scattered and so incidental that one hesitates whether to use them as footnotes, even. She was contemptuous (and one is inclined to say contemptible) in her attitude toward Georges Plechanov, whose judgment has been so abundantly vindicated by Russia's tragic experience. "Our friend Trotzky is revealing himself more and more as a bad actor," she wrote in 1911. Martov disgusted her, and it would seem that she distrusted Lenin—at least in 1911. Perhaps for the reason that in 1903 she had called him "Nicholas III." From her prison cell in Breslau she wrote at the end of November, 1917, concerning the Bolshevik revolution: "Of course they will not be able to maintain themselves."



She wanted world wide revolution. That alone could save the Russian revolution, she believed. It was her frantic efforts to promote that world wide revolution which inspired her foes to murder her. When the Social Democrats in the Reichstag, with the sole exception of Karl Liebknecht, voted the war credits in 1914, she was made almost insane by grief and disappointment. She seriously contemplated suicide. Breaking from the party, she associated herself with a small group and carried on an underground propaganda against the war through the famous Spartacus letters and the equally famous "Junius Pamphlet." Sentenced in February, 1915, to a year's imprisonment, from her cell she managed to send forth these powerful missives. On her release in February, 1916, she at once joined with Karl Liebknecht in planning a revolutionary propaganda which would bring the war to a close. In July of that year she was placed under "precautionary arrest" and confined in prison, first in Berlin, then in Wronke (Posen) and finally in Breslau. The revolution of November, 1918, set both her and Liebknecht free. They organized the Communist Party and published as its organ the *Rote Fahne*, to take the place of the Spartacus Letters. Madame Kautsky tells us that Rosa Luxemburg was far from being in full accord with the policy of the party of which she and Liebknecht were the acknowledged leaders; that she was carried far beyond her depths by a current she had released but was unable to check or control. How she and Liebknecht were foully and brutally murdered is too well known to require repetition here. Months after the murder her swollen corpse was found in the river. "I shall some day die at my post: in a street fight or in the house of correction," she once wrote to Sophie Liebknecht.

What most appeals to me in these letters is not the testimony they bear to her marvelous energy, her many-sided activity in the Socialist movement, or her intellectual gifts. Far more than any or all of these, more even than the tragedy of the last phase, the revelation of the woman herself seems to me to be the supreme justification of the book. There was a Rosa Luxemburg who was quite another being from "Red Rosa," the revolutionist, and even from Rosa Luxemburg the party teacher. That other Rosa Luxemburg could find joy in portrait painting, in serious study of botany and close acquaintance with the flowers she knew and loved so well. She found her best expression in loving service to her friends. It is the human quality in these letters, revealing as they do a generous and lovable spirit with a perfect genius for friendship and for happy living, which will keep them longest in remembrance.

Mystical Thought

THE MYSTICAL ELEMENTS IN MOHAMMED. By JOHN CLARK ARCHER. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1925.

A SMALL TOWN MAN. By MARY AUSTIN. New York: Harper & Bros. 1925. \$2.

Reviewed by RUFUS M. JONES
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ARABIAN mysticism is well-known and has produced an important literature; but Dr. Archer breaks new ground in his attempt to find a fundamental strand of mysticism in Mohammed and in the Koran. The most interesting thing about the attempt is that it is a marked success. The book is a small one, but the quality of it is excellent and the scholarship sound.

Dr. Archer takes the ground that Mohammed was a mystic in the technical sense of the word and a mystic, too, not merely in mental attitude but in habitual practice as well. The great prophet was very familiar with the practices of the Arabian Christian monks and hermits, and he made himself an expert in the practices which prepare for mystical experience, *i. e.*, for the consciousness of the presence of God. He possessed, as this book shows, a marked capacity for feeling the reality of the unseen world, and his worldly wisdom was joined with a corresponding power to *see the invisible*. One of Mohammed's followers—a later Sufi mystic—says that God declared to the prophet, "I am not contained in aught above or below, I am not contained in earth or sky, or even in highest heaven. Know this for a surety, O, beloved. Yet I am contained in the believer's heart."

One of the most interesting traits of Mohammed's mysticism, as expounded by Dr. Archer, is his constant emphasis on the nearness of God. "God," says Mohammed, "is the fourth when three are met together, the sixth when five are met, and He is with any number of men wherever they are." "He is, if anything, nearer the dying than the living." "When one prays there is no need to use a loud voice, as if God were afar off. *He hears even what a man's own soul whispers to the man himself.*" "He is closer to one than his own neck-vein." "He comes in between a man and his very heart." This will be enough to make it quite evident that the author has found a genuine vein of mystical life and thought in the great prophet.



Mary Austin's book is of a wholly different type. It is not the fruit of scholarship; it is a literary study. The writer has done a large amount of research but she does not possess the background and technical training of a Biblical scholar. She has, however, other qualifications which fit her for what she has undertaken to do. She has produced a unique account of the Great Galilean. It is vivid, graphic, daring, often brilliant. There are frequent touches of genius in it, but there are signs, too, of oddity and caprice. It does not, in my judgment, measure up to that remarkable book by another woman, which is called "By an Unknown Disciple." I shall let others speak of her general treatment of the life in Nazareth, of the social, economic, and political background of Jesus's times, and of the work and ministry of that brief, though wonderful, public career. I shall deal only with the mystical note of the book.

She makes the claim that "the genius of Jesus was for mysticism and his mysticism was of the inner life of the spirit." She believes that his small-town home life and his small-town disciples carried his "gospel" over to social issues with which he was not fitted or equipped to deal, and that through this mistaken emphasis much of his work has failed to arrive, but wherever he speaks as a mystic and tells what his experience of God has revealed to him, he has eternal value and significance. His *practice of the Presence of God* is for her his supreme contribution and his ground for continual spiritual leadership. "They dreamed," she says, "of a society full born, permanently stabilized, in which there should be none hurt and no more crying, the lamb lying down with the lion." And she adds: "Of all the things taken over by the Christian Church, this has proved the most stultifying, this dream of a hand-made heaven, made by the hand of Jehovah." "The dream was put off century by century, until finally, after a thousand years in which nothing of that nature happened, it was put off until after death,

from which remote region it still reaches a paralyzing finger."

But turn away to the mystical aspect and all is different. Here the touch is sure, the insight infallible, the leading that of a safe, wise guide. He had "sight, from unplumbed deeps in him, of the profoundest mystery of the universe, the mystery of the fundamental shift of energy which underlies all change." "The corner stone of his mystical knowing, the oneness of the nature of God, conceived as spirit, and man the projection of that spirit into the world of sense, has become the head and foundation of modern science." "For two thousand years it has been overlooked that the recorded life of Jesus ended, not on the cross, but on the mountain."

Mary Austin's book—a new and enlarged editions of an earlier work—will reach and appeal to many readers. It arrests attention, it is out of the conventional order and it strikes a note of sincerity and reality. But it leaves much unsaid; there is much more light and truth still to break forth from the life of the Great Galilean.

Facets of the Theatre

LAUGHING ANNE—ONE DAY MORE. Two Plays by JOSEPH CONRAD. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co. 1925.

GLAMOUR. By STARK YOUNG. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1925.

A PLAYER UNDER THREE REIGNS. By SIR JOHNSON FORBES-ROBERTSON. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1925.

Reviewed by WALTER PRICHARD EATON

IN his introduction to Conrad's two plays (the only two Conrad wrote, except for his stage version of "The Secret Agent"), John Galsworthy is reverently friendly, but manages to escape the general swooning which takes place at mention of the Master's name. "One Day More" he says is "nearly a little masterpiece"—and we see him vanishing quickly through the convenient loophole of the adverb. "Laughing Anne," he declares, is "a pleasure to read." Wise Mr. Galsworthy—when it was meant to be acted! And for "The Secret Agent"—he praises the novel. The manuscript of "The Secret Agent" went the rounds of all the New York managers a few seasons ago, and was read by more than one of them, or by their advisers, with the greatest care. But it was everywhere rejected, for the very good reason that it was a very bad play. A set of characters talked all through Act one. Act two began with an entirely new set of characters, engaged so far as any mortal could discover in an entirely new story, and the first set, and the first story, were no more heard of till a later act. That may be an excellent way to write a novel, but a worse could hardly be chosen by a playwright. In neither "Laughing Anne" nor "One Day More" does Conrad err quite so atrociously, but in neither does he really set a dramatic story going and let it march with a true consciousness of what is effective on the stage.

The former, dramatized from "Because of the Dollars," has a clumsy opening act of exposition in the Do-you-remember style, and a still more clumsy and inadequately developed last act of sheer melodrama, about one-quarter as long as it should be to get its proper effect, and played all in the dark—an almost impossible demand, as Galsworthy points out. The one character which might be acted with any considerable effect is that of a man without hands! Galsworthy says this would be too horrible. It wouldn't; it would be too ridiculous. The actor's arms would look as long as a gorilla's.

"One Day More" is rather the better of the two for stage purposes, if only because it is in one act, sustaining a mood to the end. But here, again, the character of the blind father, admired by Galsworthy, is close to burlesque crustiness, and the character of Captain Hagberd is that of an idiot—and insanity on the stage is no longer contemplated with any pleasure, even tragic pleasure, by audiences. There remains only the wistful pathos of Bessie, and her cry to her vanishing hope of a lover, down the road, is the one authentic note of drama in Conrad's theatrical attempts. Galsworthy declares that these plays show he *might* have written plays if he had given his whole attention to it, and mastered the necessary technique. Perhaps. But, like Henry James, he tried plays not from love of the theatre but from hope of royalties. He turned to the theatre briefly, with some scorn. I cannot myself regard

this as Conrad's tragedy. Rather are his plays an indication of a flaw in his artistic integrity.

What Conrad entirely lacked, Stark Young, the critic, has in overflowing measure—that passionate and even at times unreasonable love of the playhouse which has always characterized successful workers in the theatrical arts. In calling his latest collection of papers about plays and players and playing, "Glamour," he has happily expressed what it is he seeks and often in rather unexpected places finds, in his pilgrimages along Broadway. When he doesn't find it, he finds a glamour in telling the offending actors, in his choicest prose, that it *ought* to be there—as in Margalo Gilmore's *Consuelo*, in "He Who Gets Slapped." Mr. Young, of course, finds the peculiar glamour which is most satisfying to his subtle aestheticism in the art of Duse, and it is acting like hers which calls forth his most characteristic passages, passages not untouched, one fancies, by subconscious memories of Pater's prose and Pater's individualized and reiterated vocabulary, with its evocative power. A brief chapter called "Wonder in Acting," ends with this paragraph, which justly enough may illustrate both the direction of Mr. Young's search for glamour in the theatre, and the wrought texture of his style—a style his daily newspaper reviews do not adequately mirror:—

And so in the art of acting it is the revelation of some ultimate reasonableness rather than mere expected logic, of something luminous as well as convincing, that distinguishes talent from intention. There is always about a moment of fine acting a kind of fringe of wonder. A certain section of it, obviously, must satisfy mere daylight, reasonable expectation; must appear to explain itself; possess its rightness and propriety; it must accord to what we call, offhand, the mind, to the mind's consideration and exercise. But at either end of this plausible section it moves toward the farther reaches of our living, and it is lifelike in so far as it begins and ends in wonder.

Conrad's connection with the theatre was brief and that of an outsider. The theatre owes him nothing. Young's connection (though he has been both playwright and director) is chiefly that of commentator and critic. Sir Johnson Forbes-Robertson, on the contrary, has given nearly half a century of his life to the nightly creation of dramatic illusion, to carrying on the torch of the Royal Line handed from Betterton to Garrick, from Garrick to Kean, from Kean to Macready, from Macready to Irving and Forbes-Robertson. His Hamlet was truly a sweet Prince, and from his lips the meaning and the music of verse came exquisitely married. His Caesar, in Shaw's "Caesar and Cleopatra," had all the weight of the grand manner, but the ease and naturalness of thorough-going modernity. Behind this player was a long tradition, and his personal background, too, was rich in early association with the pre-Raphaelite painters, with Samuel Butler, with Jimmie Whistler, with most that was alive and worthy in the England of his day. From a player of such obvious intelligence, and a man with so many years of rich associations behind him, one naturally expects an autobiography of rather unusual interest and quality.

But one doesn't get it.

One gets, instead, chiefly a succession of names and dates, an outline of the superficial events in Forbes-Robertson's life, from his boyhood years (these form his most charming chapter), through his art student days, his early career on the stage, down to the time a few brief years ago when he doffed for the last time Hamlet's sable suit of woe, in Saunders' Theatre, at Harvard, and said farewell to the stage. There is a kind of stubborn reticence about his autobiography, which may be the mark of a British gentleman, but is certainly not the mark of a born autobiographer. Not even when writing of other people does he pass beyond brief and casual comment, or sketchy anecdote, to any revealing utterance. The book is curiously bare, unimaginative, chilly. Those of us who read anything and everything about the theatre will read this story, for the memories of past events it awakens, and for admiration of the splendid player who wrote it. But no one is likely to read it as we read the divine Sarah's memoirs, for the feline purrings, the claws stretched Duse-wards, the promise of shouted secrets; nor as we read Joe Jefferson's autobiography, for the garrulous geniality, the flow of anecdote, the warmth; nor as we read E. H. Sothorn's "Melancholy Tale of Me," for the delightful and whimsical literary art in narration.

In spite of the fact that he was not only an actor but a fine actor, it is barely possible that Forbes-Robertson doesn't sufficiently appreciate his subject to do it justice. He lacks sufficient enthusiasm.



Balisand

AS he ascended the steps of the wharf, Richard Bale told himself that he had just landed from the boat that had brought him from Balisand, he was sure, to Toddy Hundred, he had no doubt. A mimosa tree beckoned him with its fragrant clusters, but he could not, he recognized, stop. It was necessary, he knew, to keep moving. On his way, from Balisand, he remembered, in the canoe Richard Bale had drunk three bottles of peach brandy. Was it three? Damned if he knew. It might have been thirty-three, he silently concluded.

There must be no staggering, he admonished himself—no reeling to and fro; he shifted his thoughts to Gawin Todd's announced engagement. To a Miss Lav-Liv-Lovania somebody. That, he assured himself, was a damned hard name to pronounce. A name, he reiterated, damned hard to pronounce.

His room, Richard Bale found, had two beds, two mirrors, two cases of drawers, four chairs and eight windows that looked out, he was confident, upon all quarters of the known world. There was not a spot in all God's creation, he asserted loudly that could not be seen from those windows. Not a damned spot, he reiterated.

The servants, he perceived, who had brought his leather box, had also, he smelt, brought many decanters of Antigua rum. He took a deep drink and then, critically, finished two decanters.

Richard Bale, he realized, then took a drink. He sat on several chairs with his legs on many others and considered the political situation. There was General Washington—or was it Beau Brummell? Damned if he knew. But there he was anyhow or wasn't he? Aaron Burr and Grover Cleveland! He repeated their names with an utter savage contempt. If he could have remembered any other names, he was confident, he would have repeated them also, he told himself, still more savagely, he was sure. After all, it occurred to him it was lime toddy he wanted. There was, he recognized, none.

Richard Bale drank more Antigua rum with an abstracted manner and, he asserted to himself, a steady hand. Six decanters, he found, were empty. Negroes appeared, he was confident, with bowls of lime toddy. How many? Richard Bale speculated. Perhaps eight or twenty, he could not be sure. A few bowls more or less could not matter, he reflected.

He threw the empty bowls, he thought, through the windows, he heard, into the garden, it seemed to him. His hand fell on a polished rectangular, he recognized, case and he lifted out a pistol. With unfaltering steps, he assured himself frequently, he descended, to the drawing room. There was General Washington or was it Gawin Todd? How could he be certain? he asked himself for was not Thomas Jefferson in league with these damned Federalists? Richard Bale thought of the seventy years he had been in the army, fighting from Lexington to Waterloo and back again and it left him in no condition, he realized, for tenderness. There must be no trifling with the Rebels, he insisted. Sumter must be avenged. It must, he reflected, be fifty-four-forty or fight! The Peerless Leader, he had no doubt, would insist on Free Silver, but what was that to Richard Bale of Balisand? he queried. Absolutely nothing, he answered. Not a damned thing.

He could make out the pale indefinite blur, it seemed to him; of a white dress, he told himself. "I am Richard Balisand," he understood himself to say. "And I am Lav-Liv-Lovania—damn such a name!—Roderick or Broderick," she seemed to him to answer. "I wish you would talk politics to me."

"General Washington" he thought—or did he say it? Damned if he knew. "General Washington and Count Cavour have the situation well in hand," he reflected. "If the Treaty of Versailles and the Venezuelan Message," he added.

The bitterness of his life surged within him, he was sure. Or was it Antigua rum? Damned if he knew. How could Benedict Arnold—as he knew him—ever aspire to matrimony with this child? he