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Historic Ties Brought To the Public

About the aggressive Homosexuality

(published on Tuesday 1st December)

Important questions like the worldwide structural changes and the international crises occupy the public's mind, but there is one cultural question we are also forced to deal with, this is a question we often are confronted with by the media, the question of the spread and the character of the homosexuality. There are not few allegedly revolutionary, communist or workers' groups which assert that the support of the so-called emancipation of homosexuality is self-evident. We very resolutely oppose this. On the contrary, we are of the opinion that one has to keep to the fundamental view, that this phenomenon is a reflex of a one-sided development and of decadence, characteristic in particular also for decaying and dying parasitic classes. In the way it is presently being propagated, by the capital groups ruling in the world, especially by the international financial oligarchy, it furthermore becomes a means in the service of their aim to weaken the social structure, to degenerate the population, sometimes even to diminish the population by number, and to culturally weaken the labor movement and the masses of people who in many countries are no more ready to accept the present condition.

During the time end of September - beginning of October, 1998, also a debate had developed. Our statement summing up the election campaign in Germany had been posted, in English, also to the so-called "Leninist-International" (a political mailing list), as to many other points. There it read:

"In the drawers of these parties (SPD, Greens) there are also laws like the so-called ,emancipation of homo-sexuals' which mean an utterly deep cut in the whole moral life but which are of no importance in their election propaganda (with the exception of very particular election districts). If this is a part of these parties' programs, why don't they openly offer this in their national election propaganda? This affronting program which ties on extremely reactionary traditions (,Emancipation'? not at all!) afterwards, as it seems, shall be regarded as legitimated by the election. This is a fraud which is supposed to be shifted to the population."

This passage caused an intense reaction and a very large discussion there, which first of all could be welcomed. After our organisation had refuted some standpoints, it was attacked in an offensive and outrageous way like "counterrevolutionary", and it was to be forbidden to make "homophobic" comments, etc. The swearwords would not end up to that we were slandered as Nazis, only because of our not acknowledging homosexuality as a phenomenon with equal rights and regarding it as culturally reactionary and decadent in its essence, and finally they cut us off the list on Oct.7 in order

to escape the further confrontation. In that slandering certain Trotskyites tried to refer particularly to certain experiences of the German labor movement.

We used the last weeks to examine particularly this question more closely and came upon very grave points. It is possible to say that already for more than 130 years there has been a close connection between attempts to take this homosexuality to the labor movement itself - the first attempt happened already in 1868! -, and Lassalleanism, an arch-opportunist current, which strove for evening out with Prussian militarism and the Prussian aristocracy, and the later opportunism as founded in particular by Bernstein.

Some of the main points we want to sum up here.

During the period of 1895, when Engels fell heavily ill and finally died in August, the so-called successors Eduard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky got down to massively trample all over the labor movement principles as represented by him and Marx, and to push forward a complete revision of their views. Especially openly this happened with Bernstein. It attracts attention that those two, in a base manner, against the author's will, falsified, among others, the preface to the then very well-known work about the class struggles in France. Engels complained in a letter that his preface had been "trimmed in such a way that I look like a peaceful worshipper of legality *quand même*". (MEW, vol. 39, p. 452) Shortly after this clash Engels all of a sudden fell so heavily ill that the possibilities to continue his work were virtually taken away from him.

Exactly into the same time falls Bernstein's attempt to tread out the independent standpoint of Marxism and to subordinate the labor movement to dubious bourgeois currents. And simultaneously to that he attempts to take the cudgels on behalf of homosexuality and pederasty which had been condemned so unequivocally by Engels. Exactly in the beginning of May, 1895, when Engels was already badly weakened, Eduard Bernstein attacked the labor movement that it allegedly cultivated an "almost pharisaical ultra-puritanical moralism" with regard to homosexuality, and started defending the writer Oscar Wilde who because of pederasty stood trial, together with a homosexuals' pimp. Bernstein's advance, however, did by far not only center around that trial, but had a much further-reaching background. In this

article, Bernstein runs down the whole of civilization, painting it as at least as anti-natural as homosexuality, and takes the standpoint of counter-culture. This attack is directly related to the attack on the political strategy of the labor movement as expressing itself in the distorted printing of Engels' preface. Distinctly, the elements of anti-industrialism stand out with Bernstein. This article in the periodical "Neue Zeit" of May 6, 1895, is a proof how strongly all these questions are interrelated. So within a few days we shall put its translation at the reader's disposition.

During the nineties this phenomenon of sexual degeneration had spread in Wilhelminian Germany in an extreme way (as also in England, by the way). Already since the sixties certain persons from bourgeois circles had drummed support for this phenomenon and its alleged emancipation and attempted to link this with the labor movement, without success, though - at any rate not in the public.

The aristocracy in particular, the Prussian military camarilla and certain professions which are especially closely tied to the state like the jurists were overcome with it. Also in the entourage of the "Supreme" (Wilhelm II.) were people who were more or less openly homosexual. They formed circles which considerably influenced politics.

The extraordinary extension of homophilia in Prussia and Prussian Germany during the then times is expressly testified in some official documents. Thus one understands well that the section against homosexuality was an intensely contested subject.

In 1897 the medical councillor ("Sanitaetsrat") Magnus Hirschfeld tried a venture against the section 175 and approached the representatives of the labor movement in order to win them for a petition. It goes without saying that he did not run into problems with E. Bernstein and Karl Kautsky, but neither with August Bebel, whom since 1890 he had personal contacts with according to his own statement, contacts which the latter apparently had kept in obscurity vis a vis the public and Friedrich Engels. Bebel's role, as quite often in his life, is fairly ambiguous. Already formerly he also had made deals with the Lassalleans although previously he had fought them. At several occasions he had given in to momentary trends, correcting this later.

Hirschfeld drew heavily upon pity, upon the miserable fate attributed to "such valuable persons", but he did not leave it with that, in his petition he also exposed his

doctrine that man was of a fundamentally hermaphroditic disposition, an incredible thesis which later propagandists of homosexuality did not dare to further support in this form. But then it was announced as "irrefutable science" in order to put pressure upon people who objected the so-called emancipation. Numerous so-called scientific authorities, professors and intellectuals were to sign this petition with its absurd content. No matter whether they were well-known doctors like Virchow or other well-known personalities like Albert Einstein or the social democrats mentioned above, the responsibility of having signed such an absurd declaration cannot be taken away from them whatever motive may have led them to sign.

The matter was, however, at first to take a different turn during the following years. In 1902 Friedrich Alfred Krupp, the biggest steel and armament industrialist, an actual symbol of capitalist magnatism, is attacked by the press, apparently rightly, to have "celebrated" extensive homosexual "excesses" on his estate on the island of Capri. This again sheds light upon the condition of the then ruling class. Immediately afterwards Fr. A. Krupp dies, presumably by suicide. At the subsequent funeral service Wilhelm II. utters massive threats against social democracy which as well had taken up the case in its press. Wilhelm went as far as to virtually threaten civil war.

It is tremendously significant that this grave incident concerning such a top enemy of social democracy was suppressed afterwards by the historiography as well of social democracy as of the German Federal Republic in numerous works about the epoch and the labor movement of then.

In 1906, finally, also the contradictions within the ruling classes erupted. All too stifling was the actually illegal rule of cliques which made use of the emperor for a regime without any mandate. The journalist Maximilian Harden attacked Wilhelm's II. longtime intimate personal friend who formed a circle of a chosen few characterized by homosexuality and influenced politics from behind the scene. This time Wilhelm II. had to dissociate himself from these people.

In Germany of then this spread of homosexuality was very strongly related to the character of this depraved Junker and bourgeois upper class. Hirschfeld's activities to a very large degree aimed at influencing this upper class, the emperor himself included, in order to come to a turn in the social assessment of homosexuality. In 1897 Hirschfeld founded a so-called "Scientific-Humanitarian Committee" which

allegedly devotes itself particularly to medical aid and enlightenment but above all gets numerous contacts, counsels persons who are blackmailed because of their homosexuality, and in this way itself becomes a comprehensive information apparatus.

At this point it is indispensable to spend a remark on the incidents on "Leninist-International". Here today, in 1998, Louis Proyect with the support of other Trotskyites presents quotations in which social democracy is attacked because then it criticized the aristocracy because of its homosexual excesses. For us this raises questions as to what kind of people are ruling such platforms for discussion. What kind of platforms are these in which aggressive and fanatic Trotskyites feel trodden on their toes because in our contributions, completely calmly and objectively, the so-called homosexuals' movement was criticized?

Time and again, one of the essential points is the reference to the first legislation of Soviet Russia. As to the first Soviet government, it actually abolished tsarism's whole section about sexual criminal law. But there is not one detailed explanation from decisive Bolsheviks about this question, let alone Lenin. There is no utterance by Lenin at all in which he might have spoken for equal rights for homosexuality, e.g. Instead, the experiences of the Soviet Union during the twenties increasingly led to the realization that homosexuality is a phenomenon of the degeneration of the possessing classes. Beginning with the thirties punishability was initiated, a law was enacted in 1934. It should be stressed here, that the question if a social phenomenon is punishable, and the question how it should be fought is different from the question how its social content should be basically assessed. It also has to be taken into account that in the Social Democratic Workers Party of Russia the German social democracy for a long time was viewed as a model party until one arrived at differentiated judgments based on practical experiences. It cannot be excluded that the opinions of the German social democracy about certain questions of detail at first continued to have some influence.

A special chapter of the KPD

A very important chapter which in our opinion needs examination in detail is the chapter of the KPD and the debate on the sections of the bourgeois criminal law. In the KPD there were certain forces who from time to time took up the discussion on the so-called emancipation and undertook advances in parliamentary bodies against the criminal status of homosexuality. Nowhere, however, in the party's basic programs or statements known to us there are demands to be found which urge equal rights for homosexuality or only abolition of § 175.

Here, however, lies a chapter of greatest interest which neither we did learn before we made enquiries and detailed studies during the past weeks. It is also of general interest, because it simultaneously concerns Nazism.

The role of social democracy as described above finds an astonishing continuation in certain branches of the KPD. In the "Rote Fahne", for instance, [the party's official daily newspaper, translator's remark], the KPD's position approaches the Soviet position which names the social character of homosexuality, and it is spoken of phenomena of decadence after also in the Soviet Union during the twenties more and more experience is being gained about this matter. But there are certain leading representatives of the KPD who - even to an extraordinary degree - make themselves mouthpieces of this so-called emancipation. In the official resolutions, in documents of party congresses or the big speeches by Thaelmann or other well-known representatives nothing of this kind is to be noticed, so it also was right to say that such demands as raised today never concerned the totality of the party.

The case Richard Linsert

But there is a phenomenon like the functionary Richard Linsert who according to different publications occupied an important place in the KPD's defence apparatus in the then civil war situation around 1930. Linsert simultaneously appeared as a book author, well-known in the public, in accordance with Hirschfeld's "Scientific-Humanitarian Committee". What is even more, he was a closest cooperator of Hirschfeld, and it is even alleged that he de facto replaced the latter in the committee's leadership since appr. 1930. Linsert came to the fore as a book author producing a certain kind of so-called "homoerotic" literature, which partly describes intrigues and scandals from the past decades and centuries, with a partly pleasurable

exposition of details, and in which Linsert behaves as an actual strategist of Hirschfeld's direction. So one is at first confronted with the astonishing fact that the KPD in 1931 possesses an immediate connection between its secret apparatus and Hirschfeld's committee. In the widely distributed descriptions about the KPD's history this fact is not at all mentioned, neither by western nor by GDR authors. Only if one makes a specific enquiry one comes upon this point.

And, of course, this affair of the beginning of the thirties together with some other well-known facts from then stands in the focus. Especially in the so-called storm detachments (SA) of the NSDAP were many homosexual leaders who then, in 1931/1932, because of their pederastic practices in the fascist youth organizations caused public sensation. Did the KPD attempt, for instance via persons like Linsert, to come into contact with such people as Roehm and his gang? This question really imposes itself. And really, in Linsert we find a direct glorification of the former "Freikorps" (volunteer brigades) which after 1918 had massively knocked down and butchered the workers. From several passages of that kind may be quoted, e.g. (Richard Linsert, "Kabale und Liebe", 1931, p. 540):

"Soon, however, it turned out that the idolization of the idea, the inconsiderate commitment of body, life and freedom came from a general solidarity. The great individual or collective achievements of men of the volunteer military units [Wehrverbaendler] without exception testify a strongly developed feeling of comradeship. I already said and thoroughly explained that the roots of this spirit of solidarity and comradeship are rooted in certain homoerotic components, in the vibrations of a certain aura from man to man" **Makes you sick!**

The roots of these units come from the raid undertaken by German capitalism especially during the final phase of the war, among others from the role of the expanding eastern army which systematically produced such a lansquenets' mentality. "Homoeroticism" is a consequence of this criminal role, but not the reason of the Freikorps.

The KPD's defence apparatus was dealing with the safeguarding of the illegal work, with the protection of individual party members, and with obtaining information from other parties and military organizations, that is to say with the intelligence activities of this revolutionary party. Even if one takes it as an isolated fact it is very astonishing that such a representative occupies a leading role in such an area of responsibility. Linsert is even described as "right hand" of Hans Kippenberger, the leader of this military unit.

The case of Richard Linsert deserves examination in a special way. His position virtually amounts to a full-blown glorification of the Freikorps which are an immediate

source of Nazism and occupied a central role in the very bloody suppression of the labor movement during 1918-1923, it amounts to addressing their dubious traditions. Also in his person itself a direct bridge between homosexuality and Nazism and other ultrarightist political movements becomes visible. It is really unclear how somebody like him could occupy a leading position.

Class struggle, or social analysis in general, one seeks in vain in Linsert. How was it possible that such a person could occupy a leading role? Linsert attacks the people as "Mucker" [narrow-minded apostles of morality, translator's remark] who call homosexuality degeneration, and lumps them (that is to say a great part of the KPD members) together with proclericals and other conservatives.

In a relatively new book (1993) "Der Nachrichtendienst der KPD 1919-1937" by Bernd Kaufmann et al. which gives a lot of details about the defence apparatus, nothing is described about the case Linsert although it stands out by the remarkable circumstances. There is only one tiny annotation saying that Linsert in 1930/31 lead department C which in fact was responsible for approaching certain Nazis in elevated positions. One gets the impression that certain people in the KPD were looking for connection to certain people of the NSDAP via the subject homosexuality. The information in the book supports such conjectures about political intentions.

All of this under the conditions that the SPD but also the KPD in 1931, but also in 1932 led a public exposure campaign against the pederastic excesses of Roehm in the Nazi party! Roehm, responsible for the brutal Nazi terror against other parties, also is said to have been a member of the so-called "Bund fuer Menschenrecht" [League for Human Right], a further organisation for "emancipation" of homosexuality, which had connections to Hirschfeld.

Also by this one sees that the idyllic picture of support for a poor suppressed minority proves treacherous if one lights up the concrete. Homosexuality is connected to a lot of dirt, to intrigue and misuse of the labor movement. All the more the question poses itself as to how Richard Linsert could stay in this position so long, who stood in such a crass contradiction against the whole commitment of most of the leaders of the KPD. In connection with Linsert further are to be mentioned Wilhelm Koenen, a member of Reichstag for the KPD, and Felix Halle, the KPD's so-called law expert. who goes so far as to speak of "so-called (!) unnatural fornication between man und animal" as a "sexual activity to be found particularly in the countryside" ("Die

Internationale", 1926, p. 666), and in a different place even speaks up for the freedom of incest. In a different place, however, he calls sodomy with animals a sexual aberration; gradually even he must have felt uneasy. Also Kurt Hiller is to be mentioned, an intellectual who massively took up this so-called emancipation, whose views themselves, however, are not far from racism, and who represents elitarian concepts.

As said already: about all of this there is no word in the main documents, in the political resolutions. And also most of the KPD's fighters were occupied with the all-decisive struggle during these years. But it hardly needs to be mentioned that the Nazis in spite of their own extensive homosexual scene made use of this alleged position of the "Marxist parties" for their demagogy, which actually is a contraband of revisionism and the right wing.

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