

MILITARISM

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Militarism by Karl Liebknecht

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KARL LIEBKNECHT

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"He sowed the seed that freedom men might reap."

This book, which is now presented to American readers for the first time, has a unique history, and forms a vital part of Liebknecht's long struggle against militarism. In September, 1906, Dr. Karl Liebknecht, the author, delivered a lecture on "Militarism" at a conference of young people in Germany. The revised lecture was published in book form and the most important portions appear in the following pages. For some time, the German authorities paid little heed to it, and it was not until April 23, 1907, that the book was confiscated and the author charged with treason.

Liebknecht's trial began on the ninth of October, 1907, and lasted three days. The defendant was found guilty and sentenced to a year and a half of imprisonment. In sentencing him, the

Imperial Court declared that Liebkecht aimed at the abolition of the standing army, and that this army was an integral part of the nation's constitution. In one statement, made in the latter part of his lecture, he had theorized concerning the possible future activities of the troops in behalf of the coming revolution, asserting that these activities might be regarded as the logical result of the demoralization of the military spirit. From this statement, which was a purely theoretical hypothesis, the Imperial Court concluded that Liebkecht's intention was to injure the morale of the army. The destruction of this morale, it declared, could be brought about only by forcible means, and the use of such means was but the first step in the destruction of the constitution.

The court paid absolutely no attention to the statement of the author that only lawful means should be used in bringing about the change, and that no agitation should be conducted which would incite the soldiers directly or indirectly to disobedience. The Socialist Party, Liebkecht had maintained, as in the past, should energetic-