

October 4, 1976

Isabel do Carmo
PRP/BR
Lisbon, Portugal

Dear Comrade Isabel do Carmo,

Ever since last November 25th reactionary, military coup, when the developing revolution in Portugal had to work under the whip of the counter-revolution, we, as revolutionary Marxist-Humanists in the U.S. have been very concerned with the work of the Left, especially PRP/BR, and you, with whom we felt a revolutionary affinity. You probably have seen the writings we have sent you—News & Letters (the paper), News & Letters pamphlets including also two major philosophic books: Marxism and Freedom, and Philosophy and Revolution. Enclosed herewith is this year's Perspectives Report as well as Marxismo y Libertad, the new Mexican edition which includes a special preface that expresses the solidarity of the other, i.e., the revolutionary U.S. with the Latin American revolutionaries against U.S. imperialism. I am its author, as well as National Chairwoman both of News and Letters Committees and News & Letters paper.

In this letter, I wish to limit myself to the topic, "Rosa Luxemburg and Today's Theorists in the Women's Liberation Movement," which is the tentative title of my next book. I am most anxious to learn your views on this topic. Two of the statements you have made in your writings relate to it—one, to the question of the relationship of theory to practice in general, and the other to Rosa Luxemburg in particular. You wrote that PRP, since it was a revolutionary organization in Portugal today, didn't relate to only one Marxist theoretician alone, but to Marx and Lenin, to Trotsky and Luxemburg. May I ask which of Luxemburg's theories—The General Strike, the relationship of spontaneity to organization, the Russian Revolution, the Shop Stewards and the German Revolution, as well as the theory of capital accumulation—do you consider most relevant for today? You will note that in Marxismo y Libertad Ch. 8, the second section "Apariencia y realidad" (pp. 143-149), I strongly criticize her theory, Accumulation of Capital, which doesn't mean that she hasn't made a great revolutionary contribution, both theoretically and practically.

The period that interests me most is 1910-13. That is the period she broke with Karl Kautsky—some 4 years before Lenin had. It is the period, which, again before other revolutionary leaders, had witnessed the rise of imperialism. She was the first, not only to sense the opportunism of the Second International, but what she was later to call that "stinking corpse." And she began her fight against imperialism, on the Morocco crisis, on the Algerian question, in the specific relationship to the opportunism of the German Social Democracy. Finally, it was in those 3 years that she also made a most important speech on women's suffrage, not just as a parliamentary right, but as a force for revolution itself. That is to say, although she

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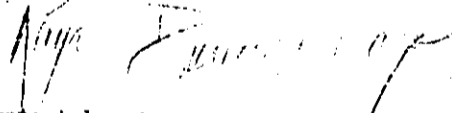
rightly refused to be restricted to the "Woman Question," she not only worked closely with Clara Zetkin, but in those 3 years when she broke with Kautsky, followed and fought the new imperialism, she also became active, as theoretician at least, in the women's movement which, to me by no accident at all, turned out to be the most revolutionary section of the German Social Democracy once World War I broke out.

The phrase that I consider most distinctive to characterize the Women's Liberation Movement is "Woman as Reason as well as Force." It is this which prompts my preoccupation with Women's Liberation. I am especially annoyed with today's women theorists who, even when they consider themselves revolutionaries, act as if Marx contributed nothing to that subject, although he is the founder of all of us, and although he not only, as far back as 1844 when he first broke with bourgeois society, wrote of man/woman as the most fundamental question which exposed the alienation of capitalism, but also was actually active in women's movements both in England and France. (Have you by any chance read The Women Incendiaries by Edith Thomas who, despite the Anglo-Saxon name, has written a fairly recent work on the Paris Commune, in French?)

Finally, no question today can be seriously considered if one separates revolution from philosophy. Because it is the unity of philosophy and revolution that alone will be able to move us of today from the constant, aborted revolutions, to one that will actually be, I became quite excited when I first read the Draft Program of the PRP which stated: "It is also the organization capable of making a synthesis between theory and revolutionary practice." (Have you read "Will the revolution in Portugal advance?" in the January-February 1976 News & Letters?)* The dialectics of liberation demands the working out of so new a relationship of theory and practice, that we must start with the new concept which Lenin first projected when he returned to Hegelian dialectics as of the essence for the revolution-to-be in Russia in 1917, but never worked out in as total a way as our age demands.

I do hope I will hear from you on the questions I posed, or on anything you wish to write yourself, whether in letter form or an article for our newspaper.

In revolutionary solidarity,
comradely yours,



* The PRP acknowledged receiving our material and promised to send your documents, but we have not received them.

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