

Page  
20  
Nov. 16, 1980  
Dear Raya,

What strikes one in your draft chapter is that never again will it be possible to say that for Luxemburg the Woman Question was at most a passing reference, a decidedly minor cord. It was instead integral to her revolutionary being, even if not at the forefront of her activities at each stage. As well, what comes through quite powerfully is the women's movement in Germany of that period, especially in contrast to the German Social Democracy on the war. There is no doubt that the way in which you pose this creates an area for rich research by serious revolutionaries.

Having said that, I want to concentrate my comments on what seems to me to be the major thrust of the chapter, and what enables you to link 'yesterday, today and tomorrow' in women's liberation. It is revolution -- as passionate activity, as a measure of man/woman relation, as the determinate of form of organization, and perhaps most difficult of all, revolution as philosophical preparation for revolution.

One can feel within all your chapters on Luxemburg that revolutionary passion of her being. Luxemburg as the paramount representative of that expression you often quote from Marx on passion being the "striving after" something. The linking of passion and revolution in the person of Luxemburg will be a dimension that should draw a response from within the women's movement, where society has always belittled women's passion. Will socialist-feminists catch the full dimension of passion when it is linked to revolution in such a personality as Luxemburg?

Most striking for women's liberationists seeking a link to revolution will be your two discussions on the man/woman relation and revolution. I'm referring to Luxemburg and Jogiches as you took them up, first in "Before and After the 1905 Revolution," and then again in "Women's Liberation, Then and Now." What had struck me when I read Before and After was that the question of love and revolution was no simple question of which side of the barricades you were on. Luxemburg and Jogiches were on the same side and yet after 1905, although both were active revolutionaries, the separation was there. To me it was not that Luxemburg loved Jogiches less, it was that there was a new measure to the man/woman relation -- that of revolution. It became the way in which you had to look at man/woman, not just in general, but in your own life as well. In the 1905 chapter all of this was for the most part hinted at.

In the new chapter, you confront the relation directly (pages 7-9). It does become so important not reduce it to a question of triangles, even if they existed. For as you note, the question is then really only evaded. Is it now Luxemburg's attitude toward revolution, and thus her attitude to Jogiches? And doesn't that say something to today's women's liberation movement, where, if I am not mistaken, you are asking them not to forget their attitude to men or to a man, but to make sure that the measure, the ground for that attitude, is always a revolutionary uprooting of this society, and seeing what man/woman relation would come out of that uprooting. It is attitude to objectivity, to even one's lover, through attitude to revolution.

Each of the first three sections are quite moving. Where I felt some incompleteness still was within section 4, "The New Contributions of Today's Women's Liberation Movement." On page 17 and 18 the relation of history and today did not quite flow. When it comes to the concrete beginning on page 19, the difficulty I found was that it didn't feel that we were within the new of the last half decade, but still further back, with what you had taken up in 1973. The problem here really involves our own attitude to revolution, our theoretical preparation for revolution. Have the News & Letters Women's Liberation groups really experienced the latter half of the 1970s, not alone in activities, but in the battle of ideas in such a manner that they could convey to you what the last half of the decade has or has not brought forth in the women's movement? I think that if there had been the experience in grappling with all the ideas that had been coming forth, and a feeling of compulsion to communicate that

14374

experience, to make a summation, to draw a balance sheet for you, then, with their contribution to the chapter, ~~that~~ the form of that section could be quite different. The theoretical preparation for revolution that you are questioning with a Rosa Luxemburg, is one that extends to ourselves very forcefully.

Finally on the question of form of organization. I feel the need for that discussion, but I believe the transition (page 24) needs to be reworked. Perhaps it has to do with all of section four and that one doesn't yet see flowing out the the activities and thoughts of today's women's movement the compulsion toward new form of organization.

Eugene

14375