

February 25, 1975

Dear Maria Barreno,

Your brief visit to the United States has, fortunately, resulted in comrades of mine taping your talk at the University of California in Berkeley. I read this with great interest, paying close attention to what I consider new and most specifically, creatively, "feminist." If we once again separate feminism from Marxist-Humanism as if they're not of the same root and branch, we will hardly deserve to consider ourselves on any higher level than the Portuguese journalists who asked you, "well, your book, is it political, or is it just feminist?" You put your hand on the crucial part when you stated that unless a political involvement means "a kind of new experience...a new way of doing things" it would not be of great importance, but that you felt your book was one path to women "creating a new culture," and this is perhaps the most important point about feminism." It is indeed.

On the other hand, I feel strongly that Trotskyists as well as Communists, Althusserites or U.S. cultural faddists or Maoists, who limit their own contribution by saying that Marx "didn't see" the new, as if that creates for them a career by telling women they must become "political," are vitiating what Marx as revolutionary had said, be it in 1844 where he stressed the most fundamental of all relationships--Man/Woman--or be it in 1872 as he was working on the French edition of Capital after the Paris Commune, when "chinking, bleeding Paris" was masses as Reason and women as Reason as well as force. We cannot bring in what is truly new of the mid-1960s unless we first come up to the level of Marx, "the 19th century man." Marx's philosophy of liberation is not, I repeat not, "a male-defined revolutionary movement" or just "politics dominating the gun." Rather it is so total and demands of this generation so much that we used to think we need not solve until "after" the revolution, that we must work these matters out on the basis of all the new forces from practice as well as from theory.

If you have had a chance to read the work that had been given you, Philosophy and Revolution, you no doubt have seen that I have approached the question of feminism from a very different experience than that which was yours, but I do think that there is an affinity of views between us and would like to develop a dialogue with you. I enclose also one of my briefer articles from Notes on Women's Liberation that you may not have noticed.

Comradely yours,

14400

Lisbon, 1 de Junho 1975

Dear Raya

I was waiting to have some time to write you a long letter, so I never answered you until now.

For the moment I'm very busy, with the events in my country, and trying to finish a book (and some things you want to discuss with me are there also); a book I started to write a year and a half ago, and that I have postponed because of many other things - 25th April and all things I lived since then. I must finish it now: things have a time to grow up, after that they die. With all my new experiences another book is already born in my mind, and to release the tension that this conflict - between the old book and the one to be - causes inside me, I must finish my work.

I loved your letters. I am going to begin today, finally, to read your books. I write you to tell you this. In one month I will be able to write you that long letter.

Yours

Maria José Barroso

14401

Dear Maria:

June 17, 1975

It was great to receive your letter and

I am more anxious than ever to get your commentary on Philosophy and Revolution, Marxism and Freedom as well as the small piece on Women as Reason as well as Force because I feel it imperative for women liberationists to work out a whole philosophy of liberation and not just reduce dialectics of liberation to a theory of current events. Presently, for example, I am preparing this fall for a series of 6 talks on the subject of Reason as Well as Force: 1) Russia, 1917; Germany, 1919; Portugal, 1975. 2) The American Working Woman, from Abolitionism to Women's Liberation, Now. 3) The Black Dimension, Africa and America. 4) The Present Women Theorists: Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett, Juliet Mitchell, Sheila Rowbotham, Maria Barreno. 5) Literature and Revolution. 6) Philosophy and Revolution.

As you can see, not only does Portugal occupy as big a place in the 1970s as Russia in 1917, but I am especially interested in you. (We--NEWS & LETTERS-- incidentally are the only ones who published the talk you gave at Berkeley.) The more you write me of your views or send me articles and books. Unfortunately, I do not know Portuguese. Are any of your writings available in Spanish or French (OR RUSSIAN!--I could struggle through those. I am very sad to read that one of the Three Marias has declared herself to be a Communist--and that after that awful sexist attack on the women liberationists by the Portuguese male "left". Can you write me more about that?

What is your new work about? Is there any way to know about it ahead of publication? By the time I reached California on my current lecture tour I read about your being in N.Y. and producing a new play. I will not come to NY until late fall; do you suppose either you could be there then or your writings? I consider writings "persons" and indeed feel a greater affinity to some who are dead if Ideas have been left for us than some livingly dead.

Philosophy and Revolution is being translated into Spanish and Italian and I have been invited to both (Mexico, not Spain) countries, and the Italian invitation is the one I am most excited about, though I do not know whether either financially or in time (I am forever running and losing the race with time) that is possible. Incidentally in 1959 I was on a boat to Italy when Marxism and Freedom had been translated and since the ship I was on was first after a very long strike, it became a sort of horse cart, stopping at all sorts of unscheduled stops, including Lisbon. After wasting 2 hours debating whether I should get off in a fascist-ruled land I of course could not resist contact with those wonderful Portuguese who were supposed to take me at my word (lie) that a combination of Spanish, French, & English equalled Portuguese--and some were emotional enough to do so. The main street looked like Paris or Italy, but when I got off to the side streets, it was a very different culture and people.

Yours,

14402

Sept. 9, 1975

Dear Maria Berrene:

No doubt the objective-subjective, volatile, contradictory, multi-faceted, demanding situation in Portugal has made it impossible for you to find time to write me. Yet, since the creation of time is the test of "individualism that lets nothing interfere with its universalism, i.e., freedom", and since the "individualism" is you, I hope you will get to answer this letter. I am referring to the fact that you are one of 7 theoreticians of Women's Liberation I am analyzing in the series of 6 lectures I am giving this year. (Ad of Wayne State University adult education courses is enclosed.) You will note that the first lecture seems to be nameless: Russia, 1917, Germany, 1919, Portugal, 1975, but it is that one that sets the idea--revolution. The unifying force in all 3 is that in the first it will be women as masses who started the revolution--the textile workers; in the second Rosa Luxemburg as revolutionary theoretician but I chose 1919 when she was murdered rather than 1918 when the revolution appeared to be as deep as the Russian in order to include counter-revolution as well as revolution; and 1975 rather than 1974 for Portugal has the revolution when, in the precedence of all the undercurrents, from Three Marias to the African guerrillas, the first negation of overthrow of fascism merged into open confrontation within the revolutionary forces and the question whether it will ever achieve second negation totality is still in question, but open. Now, when in the other lectures, specifically on women theoreticians, I get to you all I have to go on is Three Marias and the couple of speeches we (News & Letters Women's Liberation Committee) taped that you gave in San Francisco.

You may also be interested in the "title" of the series of lectures. I had given it Women's Liberation as Reason as well as Force, but the University administrator, that if he didn't know what it all meant the "public" won't, whereupon I changed it to Women As Thinkers and Revolutionaries, but it is inconceivable to me that revolution can succeed without thought and thought itself must grasp things at their root, or just be words, and therefore it would have been more precise if I just had said Women As Revolution, but in these times of aborted revolutions and incompletes ones both as stillbirths and counter-revolutions arising from within, and thinking is indeed the inward that we have neither been credited with, nor will the revolution be total unless we are there in the exercise of philosophy of liberation and not only in its activity, I let it stand.

You can either write it in form of letter to me, or in a more formal way if you wish, and do please specify whether you wish it published or only referred to orally.

How are you? And what new are you engaged in, and are you planning any trips, to the US I mean.

Yours,

14403