

to. By Peter

translation of Rosa Luxemburg letter to Hans Diefenbach of May 12, 1917
from RL Das Menschliche Entscheidet (Munich: Paul List Verlag), pp. 45-48.

Received number five, with many thanks; I'm waiting for your style corrections. Your observation that some passages in the Anti-Critique are wangled to an unrecognizable degree motivates me to revise the material once more. As a rule I am never able to do this when I still have my notes to read through, and my writing experience confirms that with so much around it can become settled and done with only later. I well know, Hans, that I write my economic matters for six persons. But in reality I write for only one person--for myself/ The time when I wrote the Accumulation resounds as the most fortunate of my life/ Then I really lived in a frenzy, seeing and hearing of nothing other than this one problem which evolved so majestically before me, and I have no idea what made by lofty pleasure endures. In the process of thought, when I am poring over an involved question, I slowly pace back and forth through the room, attentively examining Mimi who lies on the table with the red covering. Did you know that I once wrote through the whole of 50 proof sheets in a stretch for four months--an unheard of thing!--without reading through for printing errors even once? That's giving in directly to the pressure! It went similarly at Barnum street with the Anticritique. To be sure my "state of affairs" in the last year and a half has been somewhat difficult.

Eckstein you certainly think too highly of. His "Critique" was nothing more than revenge for my rejections of his lengthy harsh and futile 'friendship visits', and precisely these communications with the 'superman' in the Alpine region of pure science has filled me with scorn for him. But besides this he can also be rather ~~am~~ nice and witty. Once when I made a despairing visit to the Kautsky's, in the entrance hall he reached for my jacket on the coat rack (and with it my damned little ~~sk~~ figure) politely holding out my jacket and silently murmuring Wolf's line: "Little things can also delight us..." (You ~~ge~~ well know that Hugo Wolf was allied with Eckstein in Vienna and is the household deity there).

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Your idea that I write a book about Tolstoy contains little promise. For whom? For what purpose, Hans? All people can still read Tolstoy's books, and I cannot furnish their strength of life through commentary.

* Can one ever 'explain' what Mozart's music is? Can one ever 'explain' wherein endures the charm of life, when I cannot even convey the smallest and day to day matters with sensitivity ~~or~~ or certainty? For example, I leave the whole of the colossal literature on Goethe (i.e., the literature about Goethe) ~~for~~ for scrap paper, and am of the opinion that already far too many books have been written about him--for genuine literature forgets mankind to ^{steadily} ~~steadily~~ its gaze upon the beautiful world.

Since the first of the month we have had a series of sunny days, and already I'm greeting the first morning rays, for my window lies to the east. In the south where I live, as you know, all parts of the sun stand forth like a lantern, forming itself very beautifully in the morning hour. At breakfast I took the usual heavy prism ~~with~~ with the innumerable angles and corners, and pointed it at the sun, which immediately scattered beams of light in hundreds of little rainbows all over the covers and walls. Mimi enthusiastically watched the game, particularly when I moved the prism ~~and~~ and the colored spots went fleeting and dancing back and forth. At the beginning they greatly flowed and leapt, but then passed into a 'nothing', into mere optical illusions. We produced delightful effects when a little rainbow fell on a white hyacinth on the flower table, or on the marble bust atop the writing table, or onto the great bronze clock in front of the mirror. Within the room full of sunshine the wallpaper breathed with so much comfort and color. Through the door penetrated the song of the sparrow, occasionally the hum of electricity, or the loud sound of workers being beaten who were somewhere ~~repairing the~~ ^{went} repairing the rails. At breakfast I ~~went~~ into the garden and did some excellent business; watering my 'plants' in front of the window. I have a charming little watering can to take care of, and a dozen ~~watering~~ tubs of water have to flow from it before the soil bed becomes wet enough. The water sprinkler sparkles in the morning sun and drops sliver down the pink and blue hyacinths, already half closed. Why ~~am~~ I ~~am~~ still so confident? I almost believe I think too highly of the sun in the sky and its power, for it sometimes doesn't warm me

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when my own heart lends no warmth to itself.

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