

Oct. 20, 1977

Dear ET:

Instead of trying to explain the long silence (especially since the German edition of P&R has once again been delayed), may I start right off by asking you whether I may engage in a dialogue with you on Rosa Luxemburg? There is a very specific field that I thought you would be most profound in--the difference between correspondence, especially with women, and the writings (very nearly non-existent) on that very subject, Women. I'm not referring to the fact that they were on flowers, cats, or other small talk. Rather I am referring to the very sharp attacks on their reformist husbands, there using many references to mythical or long-ago historical characters--Penthesilea, the queen of the Amazons. The letter I have in mind is the one to Mathilde Wurmon New Year's Day, 1917. I was so surprised at that particular reference that I went to the trouble to look up, which, specifically, event she was referring to and it was Achilles who slew Penthesilea when she took the side of the Trojans--and then praised her bravery, etc. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Russell, in his work on the Oriental Heritage as well as the Greek, mentions that the Greek Urn that Keats wrote that magnificent ode to (which he, Durant, prefers above the urn) may have been the other one where Achilles spears Penthesilea. Now, my question is: what has all this to do with with the Second International betrayal, 1914, and how does it happen that whereas she kept away from the "Woman Question" other than what all Marxists were for--equal wages, suffrage, etc.--would certainly go to mythology and the roles of women as greater than life? Was it common to show that one's interest in literature, in character building, in self-development of idea though one kept strictly to economics-politics in books, pamphlets? Did you by any chance know people who knew her? I remember Marcuse (who was evidently a young Spartacist in Army at the time Rosa was murdered) speaking gloriously of her as orator? There seems a great contradiction between her awareness that there is more to the "Woman Question" than economics in letters as contrasted to books, pamphlets, etc. I would love to get the feeling of the times--Germany, women, intellectuals between WWI and WWII.

How are you? What is new?

Yours,

Enclosed is mini-pamphlet on Sexism, Politics and Revolution in Mao's China which, by cutting off reference to the Kuang-Ch'ing battle, may become title of my work on Rosa Luxemburg and Women's Liberation, Today.

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