

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY *The State University of New Jersey*

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8/27/78

Dear Raya Dunayevskaya,

First of all let me thank you very much for your prompt response. Your criticisms were really very helpful and, though I already have a publisher (in fact the galleys of the book are sitting in front of me), I have taken pains to incorporate some of your suggestions.

The majority of your particular criticisms, I found to be exceptionally well taken. I know your work fairly well, and I know that there must be some real differences between us; that is why I especially appreciate your taking the care to emphasize points which will improve the manuscript.

Before mentioning points of disagreement, let me discuss for a moment the corrections which I made. (1) You are quite right in chastising me for simply leaving the Anti-Critique with the words "an occasional pamphlet." This was a foolish and awkward way of expressing what I wanted to say. I changed this and I agree with you that this extraordinary piece should be given more explicit credit than I gave it. (2) "The plane of abstract theory always meant very little to Rosa Luxemburg." What I meant was philosophizing for its own sake, indulging in philosophy without any relation to practice -- i.e. bourgeois epistemology, reified logic, etc. I wanted to show that Rosa's theories stemmed from practical socio-historical problems and that the conclusions which she drew -- as well as the method which she was -- were still able to transcend her own immediate situation. Thus, I had no qualms about changing the paragraph to which you objected. (3) This business about choosing friends -- arbitrary and often petty -- was a bit too loaded. I took your advice in changing that. (4) Your idea for dividing the letters into sections. Above the page, the dates will be made visible which should help some. I suggested some of the divisions to the publisher. I'm not certain, however, whether they will go for it since the manuscript is already set. We'll see.

There are, however, a few points to which I would like to take exception. The first is that you seem to argue that I downplay Rosa as a theorist. This was certainly not my intention; I consider Luxemburg to be one of the very greatest theorists in the Marxian tradition and -- with Korsch and the young Lukacs -- she was the major theoretical influence on my own development. I tried to emphasize her theoretical achievement as much as possible in the space which I had. Now, specific sentences may give the wrong idea -- and I have sought to change those -- but I believe that this is more a matter of lapses in style than a disagreement with you over Rosa's stature as a theorist. I think that I brought up all the major controversies, and tried to show the value of her insights, as well as the importance of her worldview for the present i.e. the first and last sections.

In this regard, I also think that it is pretty obvious what separates my interpretation from those of Nettl and Howard. Probably, of the writings on Luxemburg's thought, I would be most sympathetic to the positions of Oskar Negt and the late Langerhans. Nevertheless, although I don't agree

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with either Nettl or Howard, I think that it is a mistake to view them as not appreciating Luxemburg's theoretical stature because they are (men.) To my mind, the explanation involves neither sexism nor a lack of intuitive empathetic comprehension; rather it is quite simply Nettl's belief in Lenin's superiority and Howard's enchantment with Castoriadis and his disillusionment with the Marxist tradition.

Lastly, there is the issue of "dialectic;" the first section of my essay is really in the way of an introduction regarding the path which the rest of the piece will follow. I do believe -- after re-reading -- that the last section, in which the conclusions are drawn, is immanently related to what preceded it. Then too, you are correct in pointing out that I did not discuss the November Revolution in the section on Prison. But I brought it up in the preceding section and hopefully it will stick in the reader's mind. Nonetheless, I sought to make this a bit clearer.

Now, I will be sending the proofs off over the week and hopefully it will be appearing in the winter. (Naturally, I will send you a copy.) Yet, perhaps I can ask you for another favor. Would you be willing to write about two or three sentences endorsing the letters and the introduction for the back cover? I would really consider it a big favor and I would appreciate it if you could get back to me on this.

Finally, I would be very interested to learn what you are working on and -- if you're interested -- I would be glad to send you other things that I have written. Let me thank you once again for your time and wish you well.

Best,

Steve Bronne

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September 9, 1978

Dear Steve Bronner,

I was glad to get your letter of August 27 and see that you do consider Rosa Luxemburg a great theorist. Unfortunately, (for you and all men; please note I'm not saying male chauvinists) that proves not disproves my point. Here is what I mean: I'm absolutely positive that, consciously, neither you nor Howard nor Nettl consider that you have downplayed Rosa as a theoretician, but simply disagreed with her. How, then, does it happen that it is impossible to read any of the works on Rosa Luxemburg and not get that feeling that she certainly was a martyr, but that women are so courageous that she is no different from some saints, beginning with Joan of Arc, and thus completely miss on how very different and revolutionary and theoretical she really was? So deep is male chauvinism that patriarchal society has us imbued with it literally before we are born, that we seem to be unconscious of little extra digs that we happen to come up with. It's not a question of Nettl who did a very, very good job, or Dick Howard who is so superficial that he even thinks that a Kasteriade is a superior "theoretician." Nor is it a question of disagreeing with Luxemburg's theories; none more sharply disagrees with her Accumulation of Capital than I, and I certainly have not kept this to myself but wrote three very detailed analyses on that book alone. And if it will assuage you, I will say that the Marxist theorists are even more patriarchal towards her, or should I have said matriarchal?, having disregarded her totally as she didn't write on the "Woman Question".

What I do mean is that if you are serious--and I'm sure you are--about her as a multi-faceted revolutionary personality, then for heaven's sakes don't allow the particular phrases that I criticize to appear, when all you meant to say was that she doesn't philosophize abstractly. So I am glad that you agreed to change some of those phrases. I daresay my full interpretation of Luxemburg will take a whole book, and it will take me another year minimum to be finished. Perhaps you can catch from the title where I'm going. It's to be called Rosa Luxemburg, Today's Women's Liberation Movement and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution. Yes, you can send me other works that you have written, provided you do not expect fast answers as I really cannot divert from work on the book.

I will look forward to a copy of your work, and enclosed herewith is an endorsement for the jacket blurb on your book. I'm sorry I could not just make it two or three sentences, and if your publisher insists on shortening it, you might take out the sentence about women's liberation. But I really felt that it would aid extending the public for your book if both that and my possible disagreements on some aspects would be included.

Yours sincerely,



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