

January 19, 1984

Dear Neda:

Let me first begin by asking you a question of fact, in regard to point 3, to which you called attention, of your draft statement for Anjomane Azadi Zan, which says: "In the Spring of 1981, AAZ was joined by a group of independent Iranian revolutionaries ... " Wasn't it the other way around? I mean wasn't it a fact that whether those who were translating the Humanist Essays, or those women who may have had a separate organization were not Marxist-Humanists, it was only after they absorbed both the Essays and the question of Women's Liberation through today's Marxist-Humanists in the U.S. that they became the organization they now are -- whether as E&A or as AAZ?

I am returning your outline so that you can see my suggestions, but let me give them to you in typed form here:

Page 1, para. 1 -- I changed the word "gathering" (which could mean something quite loose) to the word "organization".

P.1, para. 2 -- Here is my reformulation: Just as the formation of the women's Anjomans was a high point of the Constitutional Revolution (1905) that, indeed, helped deepen and extend it to 1911, so the struggles of women in Iran during the 1979-80 revolution have, at one and the same time, extended the struggle from secular and religious domination to women's liberation for control over their own bodies and minds. Thus, the struggle for self-determination of nations, for emancipation from class oppressions, as well as the protests against the vanguardism of the male-dominated Left organizations, merged into a new totality. Indeed, the formation of autonomous revolutionary women's committees opened a second chapter for the 1980 revolution. Despite the violent counter-revolution of the Islamic Republic, this not only will not be forgotten but will signal a new beginning for the future of not only the Iranian but other Third World revolutions.

For para. 3, I would say you are writing like a German or a Russian. The sentences never end. I would divide the first sentence into two by eliminating the words "and thus", and start a new sentence with: "The need for reorganization of thought" and at that point add this: "and act ~~which~~ distinguishes Marx's Marxism from post-Marx Marxists, who left out, from Marx's philosophy of revolution the all-important Man/Woman relationship, which was proof of what Marx held to be 'the Absolute movement of becoming' for both men and women. That is the ground on which we stand."

Para. 4 remains as written, except I always prefer to say Marxist-Humanism, rather than just "Marxism."

The last para. on p. 1 which continues to p.2, including points 1 and 2, I have changed only in the last phrase. Instead of "day after socialist revolution" I suggest "day after conquest of power, as if the day after can postpone women's freedom and still be "socialism."

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Here begins point three -- my questions about that are what I began this letter with.

From your page 3, I eliminated the first 5½ lines, and suggest that, instead, you begin that para. this way: Because the bitter reality of our age has disclosed that counter-revolution can arise from within the revolution, it becomes imperative to hold on to a decentralized committee-form of organization inseparable from a philosophy of revolution.

Then continue with: " In such a way... " to the end.

Now, Neda, let me explain what may sound as if it were only a different style when I use the expression "decentralized committee-form" as against what you said "breaking with the centralized form". For that matter, the same reason underlines why I changed the word "gathering" to "organization". We both mean the same about being against "party-to-lead", against over-centralization, but we actually confuse two things. The economy, the planned, centralized economy, with the form of human relations in a specific, historic reality, which one opposes, which must be overthrown, and which must be counter-posed to a totally different form of society. Let's go back to the words "centralized form". It now means Communism, totalitarianism, vanguardism, etc. But the truth is that when Lenin in 1903 called for centralized form, it was not wrong, though it is wrong for our age. He called for a centralized form of organization because everybody who wanted to ~~consider himself a socialist~~ consider himself a socialist, could do so even though they did not belong to an organization, even though their writings appeared in bourgeois publications. So what Lenin called for -- and with great emphasis against intellectuals who did just that -- was the need to belong to an organization and be disciplined by the workers.

The other reason Lenin insisted on the word "centralized" was because Russia was a Tsarist empire, with plenty of spies, and the most horrible of Secret Police, and he wanted groups to be very small so as not to make it easy for them to destroy the whole organization. Both the Social-Democracy and the Anarchists took advantage of that phrase in order not to discuss what is a true revolutionary, and what is so-called personal freedom. The fact that nowadays, and, indeed, from the very day the Bolsheviks achieved state power, those words had a different meaning doesn't mean, historically, that we confuse periods before and after power, or confuse planned economy with totalitarianism, and it certainly is totally inexcusable to continue to have such illusions about bourgeois democracy that we leave out the adjective "bourgeois", & as I said at the REB degrade the concept of "democracy" to "rights for fascists." Naturally, I am not saying that you confuse such things, but only that we have to be very precise in our language at all times.

Yours,



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January 11, 81

Dear Raya:

Enclosed please find a draft of the new statement of "Anjoman-e Azadi Zan" (Iranian WL committee of EGA) which we hope to print in the winter issue of EGA.

Naturally the fact that since the convention we have become "organizationally" conscious of ourselves has everything to do with both the amendments to the original form (which was published in 1981 when we had the pamphlet Woman as Force and as Reason but the committee did not include all Marxist-humanists) and its publication this issue.

We have tried to keep parts of the original format (for historical's sake) which we thought were acceptable to us, and included many new sections (particularly point 3. where we differentiate ourselves from others)

Since the Boston women's convention of last summer, various WL committees have been issuing their own statement of purpose, the emphasis has been on how to practice democracy and fight vanguardism through a clever statement of purpose.

Two important points: First, through our newest member and a friend of his (who is close to joining as well in Chico) we have are in contact with two feminists who seem to be close in ideas and thus present truly new possibilities, which is why it is crucial that we do present our ground on the basis of which we wish to work with them.

Secondly, A letter of protest which I wrote to Iranshahr after they published a sexist article, and was not published but was answered by their editorial staff has created a "hot debate" among the various WL of women circles we are in touch with who wrote a letter of protest to Iranshahr. Ironically Iranshahr which has published us before on Marxism, this

time objected to what was a "literary critique" in which the vision of Iranshahr writers, as well as progressive Iranian writers was compared to that of Marx on man/woman relations. Finally Iranshahr in its last issue

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the need to help
deepen and extend
the 1911

Anjomane Azadi Zan (Women's Liberation Committee) is an autonomous
organization
gathering of Iranian women in exile which was formed in the Spring of
1980 in support of the struggles of the women of Iran for freedom.

Just as the formation of the women's Anjomans was the highest
achievement of the Constitutional Revolution (1905) so the struggles of
women of Iran during this ¹⁹⁷⁹⁻⁸⁰ last revolution for freedom from secular and

religious dictatorships, for control over their own bodies and minds,
for self-determination of nations, for emancipation from class oppressions,
as well as their protests against the male-dominated Left organizations,

and for the formation of independent women's committees were the highest

achievements of that revolution. ^{Ch. 2 of the 1980} ~~which~~ ⁱⁿ spite of the violent counter-
revolution of the Islamic Republic, ^{the} will not only not be forgotten, but
signals a new beginning for future Iran, indeed for the other Third
world revolutions.

The fact that such a historic movement was not appreciated by the
majority of the Iranian Left, points to the bankruptcy of thought which
passes for Marxism among our intellectuals, and thus the need for re-organization
of thought ^{and out in Marx's words} which is the ground on which we stand.

Because the human philosophy of Marx ^{from first Marx-Humanism} which aims at freedom and development
of creativity of all people, includes the freedom of men and women as an
integral part of its vision, and because the international WLM in our time has
become a revolutionary force ^{in reality Reason} that has raised its banner in every corner of the
world, Anjomane Azadi believes that the unity of Marx's Marxism and feminism
is not not one imposed from without but is a movement from within, so that in
our age, genuine Marxism includes feminism as an integral dimension, ^{think}
genuine feminism finds its most explicit, that is revolutionary expression in
Marxist ^{Humanism}.

The collection 'Woman as Force and Reason of Revolution' which was published

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on the first anniversary of the demonstrations of Iranian women (March 8, 1980) and includes the works of the Marxist-Humanist philosopher Raya Dunayevskaya, demonstrated this new philosophic expression of the coming together of Marxism and feminism which led to the formation of Anjoman Azadi Zan.

Such a philosophic perspective, distinguishes us from the following associations:

1) Women's organizations which limit themselves to fighting for the 'equality' of men and women in the political/legal domains of the capitalist system

and see no need to continue the struggle for the total freedom of men and women, *re. the police's humanity.*

2) Some of the Left groups who still reduce socialism to a question of nationalized property (as in the State-capitalist societies of Russia and China), and often label independent women's movements as "bourgeois" postponing them to the

"day after the *socialist revolution*" *with the 'day after' as a can't be done*

3) Independent women's committees that in spite of their break with the *women's person and still not "socialist"*

Old Left groups, do not see the necessity of breaking with the philosophic basis of these organizations - except for their patriarchal beliefs - and

instead of submerging themselves in Marx's Marxism and recreating it for today, still consider Marxism as a series of economic formulations geared at

"nationalizing industries through single-party regimes"

In the Spring of 1981, Anjomane Azadi Zan was joined by a group of independent Iranian revolutionaries, who during the revolution had translated the Humanist essays of Marx (1844) and together, the marxist-humanist organization Anjomane Azadi and its organ, Engelab va Azadi was founded.

In reflecting the ideas and struggles of Youth, workers, women, peasants and national and religious minorities, we believe that the collectivity of

these revolutionary forces which are at the same time Reason, gives a new

perspective of our vision of the new human society for which we are struggling.

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In breaking with the centralized form of organization, we aim at
 presenting the single dialectic which arises ^{on} from the one hand from
 the activity of these revolutionary forces, and ^{on} from the other hand
 from the ~~real~~ study of the revolutionary philosophy of Marx and ~~Lenin~~
~~illuminates what you were able to see~~
 an understanding of the bitter reality of the rise of counter-revolution
 from within revolutions of our time. In such a way, we hope to create a
 new kind of organization of Iranian revolutionaries in exile, with the
 ultimate goal of reaching a new human society ~~in Iran~~, and in this
 road we welcome the ^{joining} ~~participation~~ of those women who feel they
 have an affinity to our ideas ~~in~~ Anjoman Azadi Zan.

~~Just counter-revolutionaries are from within revolution.~~

Because the reality of our age
 has disclosed ~~that~~ ^{it} ~~becomes~~ ^{becomes} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~importance~~ ^{importance} of human
 relations ~~within~~

~~that~~ ^{that} ~~all~~ ^{all} ~~organization~~ ^{organization}
 should ~~be~~ ^{be} ~~a~~ ^a ~~decentralized~~ ^{decentralized}

Committee form of organization.

WHO WE ARE STATEMENT OF ANJOMANE AZADI ZAN

Anjomane Azadi Zan, is an autonomous organization of Iranian women in exile which was formed in the Spring of 1980 in support of the struggles of the women of Iran for freedom.

Just as the formation of the women's Anjomans was a high point of the Constitutional Revolution (1905) that indeed helped deepen and extend it to 1911, so the struggles of women in Iran during the 1979-80 Revolution have, at one and the same time, extended the struggle from secular and religious domination to women's liberation for control over their own bodies and minds. Thus, the struggle for self-determination of nations, for emancipation from class oppressions, as well as the protests against the vanguardism of the male-dominated Left organizations, merged into a new totality. Indeed, the formation of autonomous revolutionary women's committees opened a second chapter for the 1980 Revolution. Despite the violent counter-revolution of the Islamic Republic, this not only will not be forgotten, but will signal a new beginning for the future Iranian as well as other Third world revolutions.

The fact that such a historic movement was not appreciated by the majority of the Iranian Left, points to the bankruptcy of thought which passes for Marxism among our intellectuals. The need for re-organization of thought and act distinguishes Marx's Marxism from post-Marx Marxists, who left out, from Marx's philosophy of revolution the all important Man/woman relationship, which was proof of what Marx held to be the 'absolute movement of becoming' for both men and women. This is the ground on which we stand.

Because the human philosophy of Marx which aims at freedom and development of creativity of all people, includes the freedom of men and women as an integral part of its vision, and because the international WLM in our time has become a revolutionary force, as well as Reason, that has raised its banner in every corner of the world, Anjomane Azadi Zan believes that the unity of Marx's Marxism and feminism is not one imposed from without but is a movement from within.

Genuine Marxism includes feminism as an integral dimension, while genuine feminism finds its most explicit, that is revolutionary expression in Marxist-Humanism .

The collection Woman as Force and Reason of Revolution, which was published on the first anniversary of the demonstrations of Iranian women (March 8, 1980) and includes the works of the Marxist-Humanist philosopher Raya Dunayevskaya, demonstrated this new philosophic expression of the coming together of Marxism and feminism which led to the formation of Anjomane Azadi Zan. Such a philosophic perspective distinguishes us from the following associations:

1) Women's organizations which limit themselves to fighting for the democratic equality of men and women in the political/legal domains of the capitalist system and see no need to continue the struggle for the total freedom of men and women i.e. the whole of humanity.

2) Some of the Left groups who still reduce socialism to a question of nationalized property (as in the state-capitalist societies of Russia and China) and often label independent women's movements as "bourgeois" postponing them to the 'day after the conquest of power' as if the 'day after' can postpone women's freedom and still be "socialism".

3) Independent women's committees that inspite of their break with the old left groups, do not see the necessity of breaking with the philosophic basis of these organizations, except for their patriarchal beliefs- and instead of submerging themselves in Marx's Marxism and recreating it for today, still consider Marxism as a series of economic formulations geared at "nationalizing industries through single-party regimes".

In the Spring of 1981, a group of independent Iranian revolutionaries, who during the revolution had translated and published selections from the Humanist Essays of Marx (1844) and members of Anjomane Azadi Zan, together, formed the Marxist-Humanist organization Anjomane Azadi and its organ Engelab va Azadi.

Anjomane Azadi in reflecting the ideas and struggles of Youth, women, peasants, and national and religious minorities, believes that the

collectivity of these revolutionary forces which are at the same time Reason, gives anew perspective to our vision of the new human society for which we are struggling.

Because the bitter reality of our age has disclosed that counter-revolution can arise from within the revolution, it becomes imperative to hold on to a decentralized committee-form of organization inseparable from a philosophy of revolution. In such a way, we hope to create a new kind of organization of Iranian revolutionaries in exile, with the ultimate goal of reaching a new human society. In this road Anjomane Azadi Zan welcomes the joining of those women who have an affinity to these ideas.