



WOMEN'S PEACE CAMPS AND ROSA LUXEMBURG

The worldwide movement of women who oppose militarism has found an exciting new expression in the women's peace camps in Britain. Not only have scores of women thrown themselves so fully into the movement that they are encamped outside nearly a dozen different facilities, but nearly 100,000 joined in on Easter weekend to create a human chain that stretched 14 miles.

A woman at Greenham Common, trying to work out some of her questions about the direction of the movement, writes me that not just in principle but in actuality the women are beginning to draw ties between militarism and other problems in society. Thus some of them have been quite affected by both the conditions for women prisoners and the non-existence of jobs for them once they are out; others joined in the protests following the death of Colin Roach, a young Black man shot to death right at the Stoke Newington Police Station. She writes, "I hear more discussion on the whole class issue again - the women's movement having 'left out' working class women - also it being a very white movement..."

When she refers to "leaving out" working class women and Blacks, it's not that either the women's movement or the anti-nuclear movement, here or in Britain, hasn't discussed either class or race. But a very different attitude towards Blacks and workers is called for when what you are concerned with is developing a philosophy of full freedom, and deepening the movement into one which can uproot the very foundations of British society. Here in the U.S., for example, don't we need to finally recognize that the first to protest war, as they did during WWI, precisely because they are keenly aware that the government's banner of freedom abroad has really meant the very opposite for Blacks here AND in the Third World?

At another critical period in anti-war history, pre-WWI Germany, the great revolutionary Rosa Luxemburg transformed her own thoughts about where ideas about freedom and organization come from. It has taken our Women's Liberation Movement, and the questions we have raised, to recognize the importance of Luxemburg for today. Because

she brought together anti-militarism, feminism and being a revolutionary, Luxemburg is taken up in a very new way by feminist philosopher Raya Dunayevskaya in her new book, ROSA LUXEMBURG, WOMEN'S LIBERATION AND MARX'S PHILOSOPHY OF REVOLUTION.

Luxemburg shook up the established Marxist Party, the German Social Democracy, from the moment she stepped foot into Germany because, as a revolutionary and feminist, she refused to be pigeonholed into the "Woman Question," and insisted on taking part in every aspect of work, from writing theoretical articles to participating in actual revolution when it broke out in 1905 in Poland. It was that participation that sparked her most original work for it changed her very notion of revolution. When, as the revolution broke out and the Polish Party grew overnight from 7 1/2 members to 30,000, she saw that revolution was hardly made by Party leaders educating the workers about either organization or class consciousness, but by precisely those workers the leaders thought of as so "backward."

But Luxemburg's originality did not stop there. She was also the first to see that German's bloody incursions into Africa signalled a new stage of capitalist development - imperialism -

and split from the Party leaders because they had become so opportunistic that they refused to oppose imperialism. Even before WWI broke out she fought for the autonomy of the working women's organization which, when the

war began, became THE group which did not separate anti-militarism from the movement to totally transform Germany.

Luxemburg's questions about organization were deepened in a new way by the Women's Liberation Movement when it burst forth in 1970. The women who had participated in the Civil Rights and anti-war movements and in the Left refused to have their own liberation put off by the male leaders until "after the revolution," and demanded decentralization. Dunayevskaya shows that the very concept of revolution was altered in such a critical way that it involves the two most important questions of today:

They are, first, the totality and the depth of the necessary uprooting of this exploitative, sexist, racist society. Second, the dual rhythm of revolution: not just the overthrow of the old, but the creation of the new; not just the reorganization of objective, material foundations but the release of subjective personal freedom, creativity, and talents (p. 108).

Women in the anti-nuclear movement have gained "a mind and voice of our own" and challenged all vanguardist notions of organization or revolution. How can we now follow through on these ideas to develop so new an appreciation for the Blacks and workers, the unemployed and yes, youth, who are looking to change this society, that we never again let our actual participation in the movement and our philosophy of full human freedom get separated?

-Laurie Cashdan

ROSA LUXEMBURG, WOMEN'S LIBERATION AND MARX'S PHILOSOPHY OF REVOLUTION, by Raya Dunayevskaya, is available at most movement bookstores in the Bay Area.