

hour day was Caterina Eufemia. It is she who was to become the symbol for the women's movement — MDM — that was organized in the underground. For that matter, she became also the symbol for the struggle for women's rights of the new MLM, which was organized by intellectuals and middle-class women, when the "Three Marias"⁶ were freed from jail.

The undercurrents of revolt had actually been germinating long before 1974. When no others were paying attention to Portugal as the youth rebellion around the world reached a high point in 1968, there was, in fact, an outbreak of revolts in Portugal by students who were fighting not only for academic freedom, but against being drafted for the Portuguese imperialist wars in Africa. The two high points that were reached in all these undercurrents of revolt came from within the army in Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Angola,⁷ and from within Portugal itself.

Within the country itself there was a whole series of wildcats in 1973. Women became especially important in 1973 when a labor shortage sent them into textiles and electronics, and directly into the fight against multinationals. It is in textiles and electronics and shipyards where the grass roots workers' movement first erupted, and where none questioned the militancy of women workers. But they were asking not only for a fundamental change in labor conditions, but for different relations at home, as well as raising totally new questions of revolution and new human relations.

With the overthrow of the fascist Caetano regime in April 1974, there were outbreaks of all sorts of wildcats, freeing the revolution itself from the neo-fascist "leadership" of Spínola, and creating the foundation also of a new Women's Liberation Movement. Women's participation became critical as three movements — the rebellion within the army, and the wildcats of industrial workers covering the length and breadth of the country, as well as the peasant occupation of the land — coalesced. It was no accident that one of the revolutionary political movements that arose, PRP/BR, was headed by a woman, Isabel do Carmo.

As can be seen, the question of revolutionary creativity is not just that of an individual, not even when she's as great as Rosa Luxemburg, and certainly not that of artists or scientists. Now then, let us see whether the movement from practice was the stuff out of which the women theorists of today, whether they be in the U.S., England, or any other technologically advanced country, built their theories.

With the rise of the Women's Liberation Movement in the mid-1960s, when a whole new generation of revolutionaries was born out of the Black Revolution, the anti-Vietnam war movement, and the world-wide national liberation struggles, we had the rise also of women theorists. The new in the struggles of the mid-1960s, when it came to the Women's Liberation Movement, was the women's refusal to wait for the day after "the Revolution" for their total freedom. They refused to narrow their struggles to fight for equal wages or, for that matter, any other economic demands. They raised all sorts of new questions, from sexually to opposition both to patriarchy and the ingrained division between mental and manual labor. For what they aspired to was nothing short of the wholeness of the person.

6. The original title of the work for which Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta, and Maria Velho de Costa were imprisoned was *New Portuguese Letters*, published in 1972.

7. The leaflets of the FRELIMO in Mozambique, the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau, and MPLA in Angola may not match the fraternization leaflets that the Bolsheviks wrote in 1917, but they certainly were an entirely new ground for fighting in Portugal, 1974. In urging the Portuguese soldiers to go home and make their own revolution, the national liberation forces were raising questions, including the role of women, that the "advanced" Portuguese had not even heard of. See *The Struggle for Mozambique* by Eduardo Mondlane and *Return to the Source* by Amílcar Cabral.

The women theorists have done considerable work in exposing male chauvinism in history, and in the Movement itself. It was certainly of the essence to make such relatively undiscussable subjects as sexuality discussable, not à la Freud, but against Freud. Works like Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* exposed the male chauvinism of great writers of our day, from D. H. Lawrence to Norman Mailer. Others took issue with all forms of patriarchy. The weak point was that none of them were in any serious way related to working class women, their activities, their thoughts, their aspirations. The one exception was Sheila Rowbotham's *Women, Resistance and Revolution*.

In dealing with 300 years of women's struggles, in concentrating on labor struggles and revolutions, and openly espousing socialism, and in bringing in the question of male chauvinism not as something only capitalistic, but very much pervasive within the Movement itself, she focused on the validity of an independent women's movement. Unfortunately, so preoccupied was she with "the new" that she neither dug deeply into philosophic roots, nor so much as mentioned one of the greatest revolutionary theoreticians, Rosa Luxemburg. Whatever the reason — whether it was because Rosa didn't write voluminously on the "Woman Question," or Rosa Luxemburg's works and activities are not, to her mind, relevant to today's women's tasks, or whatever — she thereby actually degraded women's revolutionary role. Indeed, flying in the face of history, she writes as if all revolutions were "male-defined." This only leads her to a vanguardist conclusion that women, even when doing nothing short of initiating a great revolution that toppled Tsarism, lacked "consciousness." That is still one other form of considering women "backward." In a word, no matter how "consciously" one favors an independent women's movement, one doesn't really consider them capable of "getting there" — unless led by a "Vanguard Party." Vanguardism, elitism cannot but impede the Women's Liberation Movement of today from working out a new relationship of spontaneity to organization, theory to practice, philosophy to revolution. It is but one more form of separating thinking from doing, especially as it relates to women as thinkers and as revolutionaries.

Working class women have a very special reason for their passionate interest in revolutions, not simply because they're exciting events, but because they show working class women in motion as shapers of history. The dialectical relationship of spontaneity to organization is of the essence to all of us as we face today's crises. It is not only Portugal which is under the whip of counter-revolution that began Nov. 25, 1975. The global struggle for power between capitalist imperialism and state-capitalist societies calling themselves Communist, all nuclearly armed, has put a question mark over the very survival of humanity.

Creativity that can really tear things up at their roots and genuinely start something new, humanly new, can only come from mass creativity. It is only then when it is totally revolutionary, is not hemmed in by the concept and practice of the "Party to lead," and it is only then it can once and for all end, aborted and unfinished revolutions.

Be it something as "simple" as the question of women's struggle for equality in the very midst of all the myriad crises, or the deep recession and racism in the U.S., what women are hungering for is working out the relationship of their creativity to a philosophy of liberation. We surely do not need yet one more form of elitism. What we do need is a unity of philosophy and revolution. Without it, we will not be able to get out from under the whip of the counter-revolution.