

March 6-7, 1975, organized under auspices of the Upper (Higher) Institute of Social and Political Sciences

started out as a discussion on abortion & took up the whole question of WL

Mar. 6 is called a "round table" discussion with doctors, journalists, professor, and Helena Medeiros MLM

Mar. 7 is called a "political tribunal", the following political parties and orgs. there:

- Cabral Fernandes-LOI
- Cisela Bjork-LUAR
- Eduardo Barroso-MES
- Maia Gracete-SP
- Isabel do Carmo-FRP/BR

not represented, alleging various motives: MDP/CDS, MRFP, CP, PPD

p. 59 MLM-The first question made deals with the class struggle. The MLM fighting for women's liberation is put in the class struggle. We understand that the class struggle has to exist, so that capitalist society be abolished. The formulation we defend is the answer.

Another question was made to me on the existence of Portuguese machismo. We understand that the problem of sexuality was made by man, the woman only assumes her sexuality in front of the fact of having children. The sexuality of women was imposed by men, we see it daily in the TV, in advertisements and all the rest, the sex of women was always belittled and utilized... We answer the capitalist system. I note that our enemy is not the man himself, but the whole society, the whole system that is wrong.

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ISABEL DO CARMO

First of all we have to thank the organizations giving these 2 colloquiums for having done it. We think abortion is a very important issue. We're again sorry the CP and MDP don't have a seat on this debate, because it would have been our pleasure to debate with these organizations, the more so because we think that such a debate would be fruitful then, certainly having divergencies, given the polemical character of this issue and it being extremely important that this polemic takes place here in public.

As to our position on this problem, you have to interpret the actual situation of women and abortion and the family as a result of the capitalist system and the history of the class struggle. For us, the family was born with private property, to preserve this same property and all the ideology, the religion, the morality that presents it in a different way does nothing more than to prejudice a determined system. We therefore think that the women's situation in relation to abortion was created in exploitative societies and that, therefore, the dominant morality and ideology have but served to justify all along the same situations of exploitation of these societies.

We therefore think that neither discussion nor analysis can be made outside this context. We set as ground the actual situation of women, we set as ground ~~the actual situation~~ also the prejudice against abortion and we understand all this is the product of capitalist society.

You can't speak of women in general, the family in general, as if all women and all families belonged to the same class.

We understand that in this respect, some organizations and movements that touch on this subject at times speak of women as if all of them belong to the same class, as if the oppression of women was felt the same way for bourgeois women and proletarian women. The situation is completely different the one from the other, the same way that we think the situation of the family is completely different in the bourgeois family or the proletarian family. A simply cultural and abstract analysis shouldn't be made in relation to women and the family, but first relating with the class to which she belongs, and in these terms abortion is a flagrant example, because the proletarian woman stays subjected to ^{the} conditions of terrible violence which is abortion practiced in miserable conditions. Whoever works in hospital waiting rooms (?) knows this almost minute to minute, because proletarian women come in in a disgraceful condition, whereas bourgeois women almost never come in, although they too have abortions.

Bourgeois families have a child or two, few are those that have none, and some allow themselves the luxury of many children.

The majority resolve the problem of unwanted pregnancy without the fear of being subjected to these extremely violent conditions to which the proletarian woman is subjected. Thus the situation of the one and the other is completely different and we can't consider them as a solid piece.

The ideology that the dominant class has for dominating at the mental level and so that that serves the economic domination, that ideology ends up being also the ideology of the dominated class. On this point, we distinguish ourselves from other Left organizations when we hear often talk of proletarian morality, proletarian ideology, proletarian culture, as if in capitalist society there was a proletarian ideology, a proletarian culture, a proletarian morality that wasn't extremely imbued/infiltrated by the ideology, the culture, the morality of the dominant class.

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This is also a polemical point and ~~we distinguish ourselves~~ our opinion is that the dominant class infiltrates the dominated class with its own ideology, with its own morality, and that only when the proletariat makes its own revolution, seizes power and restores another system of production, only at this height will it be able to break with the ideology of the dominant class, only at this height will it create the foundations for a new morality, for a new culture, for another dominant ideology.

For us, only with a Socialist Revolution will conditions be created so that all these problems will be resolved. Only with a socialist form of production and with the workers in power, by way of the dictatorship of the proletariat, will conditions be created for the resolution of women's problems, for the resolution of the problem of abortion.

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In this case, we regard the following immediate means to take: economic ~~xxx~~ social and political conditions equal for the man and for the woman, free abortion practiced under secure conditions, that the state undertake the education of the child. They are the 3 basic conditions for the creation of conditions of the liberation of the woman and for the resolution of the problem of child-rearing.

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Here at this point, reflecting on the problem of children's education, the education cell of the PMP has some questions and some problems, about which we ourselves haven't yet reached a conclusion. Among the experiences made in socialist countries in relation to the child in early infancy, some are very extreme and the problem that is posed in some of these countries of the very premature separation of the children from the mothers in the sense of a greater production goes on to give bad results.

Today many psychologists place the problem of intimacy between mother and child in the first period, and this is for us a serious problem.

In a country like ours in which arranging the institution of the socialist system will create immediate problems stemming from a great struggle of production, we can't be without means that are idealist and think in a perfectly utopian program in relation to the necessities of production. However, there are questions we pose: how to conciliate determined facts acquired from experience that say that there is a very strict necessity of intimacy and of life in common between mother and child in the first period, how to conciliate that with the necessity of work by the mother and father in production the entire period. These are polemical questions that will be posed in that height/high level of socialist society.

As for the party, we believe that neither through the dictatorship of the proletariat in a socialist society, ~~through~~ will all the problems by miracles or holy water be resolved at the cultural or moral level automatically.

it isn't
~~through~~ we believe that ~~neither~~ there is not a socialist society through the dictatorship of the proletariat that by a miracle or holy water will automatically resolve all the problems at the cultural or moral level. Also on this point we disagree with those organizations and movements that in a mechanistic form consider that automatically, the socialist revolution made and the power seized, these problems will be resolved. We understand that these problems, that is, the problems of taboos, of prejudices, are in such a way ingrained/rooted, that generations will be needed for some to disappear.

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And also there are many contradictions. There are many men who say they are revolutionaries, and in many of these aspects they aren't. There is a fight to slow down. We think that this fight to slow down doesn't end by any means with a socialist revolution, nor is radically transformed with the transformation of the economic-social structures. We believe these create the necessary base but nothing more. It's necessary to begin a new fight for a new culture and new morality.

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* Isabel do Carmo

As to the actual struggle through concrete and objective immediate means, we think that only the transformation in the socialist sense can carry through the women's problem to resolution. Like at this moment there are workers' (revendicativs??) struggles to increase wages and increase holidays, so too you could have concrete women's struggles through concrete means. Naturally, as much in the one as in the other, it's necessary to constantly have the revolutionary perspective that only the total alteration of society can begin to resolve the problem and that for all that, reforms will not do it.

Just as much in some struggles as in others, you have to fight for immediate objectives, for free abortion, through determinate concrete means in relation to the woman; but every minute fighting for them, keeping in perspective that only a global alteration can resolve the problem.

We consider that there are two ways of being reformist: on the one hand, some feminist movements that search for but an alteration on the cultural and chauvinist level, not putting as ground society at the level of structure; on the other hand, certain organizations likewise of democratic women who pose the problem of some reforms like equal wages for equal work, without posing as ground the whole system, the entire society. We consider the one and the other reformist, and that only the Revolution will begin to resolve global problems.

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I'd like to make some (determined) questions to the representatives of the SP and MES.

In relation to the MES representative who here spoke of the transformation of the family in the sense of its turning into a revolutionary nucleus of support, I wish to ask how is it that she understands that that transformation can be given.

The family, father, mother, children, uncles, aunts, are a conservative nucleus of the dominant ideology. How to transform this same nucleus, being certain that that which is revolutionary is the confrontation between classes. How is it that he understands, then, that that transformation can be given.

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Social relations can't be left off from being transformed in the sense of the family's disappearing and in the sense of creating other types of community relations, other social types, through ~~mutual~~ mutual choice, through (affection??) through new values created after the liberation of the actual economic-social relations; it seems to us that this is the revolutionary way to point out. To conceive the actual family structure in the sense of reform so that it be less conservative or so that it be able to turn revolutionary, seems to us impossible and therefore, I would like to ask the MES representative how is it he would do it.

On the other hand, MES talks of organizations of counter-power at the level of health, creating clinics where abortion would be free. Eventually, determined (shares???) of this type could be examples, but

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it doesn't seem possible to us to create counter-power, once that health clinics, be they for abortion or destined for other ends, it seems to us--and this is consequence of a discussion within the health cell of P&P--impossible to practice sanitary activities without their being integral in a system of national health in a socialist society. This is consequence of a prolonged discussion we had and seems to us that it isn't possible to create structures of counter-power of this type on the national level.

In relation to the position of the SP, there is a matter with which I agree, that is when he talks of women and political organizations and at this table there are only two.

It's a terrible (consistency??) that the political organizations, the same as the revolutionary ones, generally don't have women, much less in leadership, and when I came here said a militant of another organization, and I informed him that it's necessary to make of liberation movement of militant women in political organizations, to liberate ourselves from the oppression of men in these organizations. This is as much anecdotal as anything else (??) because people look at the daily papers and magazines and see that the political organizations, the same as the revolutionary ones, rarely have women. What does this signify?

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In relation to the position taken by Maia Cedete (SP), the question I make to him, within the rules of the colloquium, is if he thinks that the actual Portuguese conditions, economic-social and political, are identical to those of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries when they made their revolutions and when what he calls bureaucratic dictatorships were born. Understanding that there are no abstract political functions separate from a determinate economic-social reality, I ask if he understands that the conditions here, now existent, economic and social, percentage of workers, percentage of rural laboreres, percentage of illiterates, political development, if he understands that the positions are identical to those of those countries when that which he calls bureaucratic dictatorships were born.

And if he also understand that in Portugal that course of stages has, also in the function of those economic-social conditions, any viability. And, finally, this second part of the question will give rise to a discussion that ends up being political, departing from the pivotal and (enjoyable??!!) problem, therefore, of knowing if he understands in general that the conditions are identical, because if they are different, different things have to be generated.

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In relation to the question that was made to me, we consider that the women and the workers should be side by side, as much in autonomous organizations in the workplace, as in the party organization. The principal struggle in the struggle against the bourgeoisie and therefore

men and women have to be paired/united in this struggle that is the principal struggle.

We understand nevertheless that there is a specific struggle of the women and the working youth that are particularly oppressed in this society and therefore ~~that~~ they have a specific field of struggle there that can justify forms of organization for that concrete and specific struggle.

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(This paragraph I just couldn't get.)

To the proposition of abortion problems come ~~fixing~~ for the table saying in respect to a general serious political discussion is playing a little bit with the proposition of abortion to go on discussing these general problems, like the Social Revolution, or counter-~~revolutionary~~ power, etc. and to be carrying abortion into this discussion, nevertheless I just won't go.

In relation to legislation, it's evident that abolishing it purely and simply is pure euphemism. And I think it's the same to revindicate a different legislation, meaning by that a struggle through the Social Revolution and through the perspective of the Social Revolution, is wasted time.

As to the question that was made to me related with the observation of Cabral Fernandes (LCCI) about women in the political parties, I go back to saying that only the socialist society will create grounds for the liberation of women; I state that that liberation also goes through the actions of women in political organizations, as political militants, as political leaders. It's symptomatic (I think) and that it translates more than any other thing of what state of development of Portuguese society, the fact that in active Portuguese political organizations the women haven't emerged as leaders.

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I think that, more than being a simple model or reflex of the actual society of the Portuguese women, translated into the organizations, the men haven't made a break within themselves with certain prejudices in relation to the role of women and men. It's symptomatic that of the 14 parties that were legalized for going into the elections, no women appeared as spokespersons (literal: bull-horns) of these parties. It's a coincidence, and more. It's symptomatic of one thing more, and in this respect I'm proud that in my party the spokesperson is a woman.

The reason why I appear to respond in public is because I belong to the Political Secretariat of the PRP/BR and within that Secretariat it was voted that the spokesperson be myself. It grants that in interviews, inquiries, etc. I come forth to respond in the name of the party, just as determinate persons come forth in the name of MES or LCI. For me, as a militant of the PRP/BR, I am proud that the spokesperson be a woman, because that seems to me a revolutionary position.

In relation to what the representative of LCI said about the proportion of women at the table, I, to cite what has to have been said by the SP, evidently that demonstrated that the SP doesn't (...?...in text) is contagious, that all the words he said (...?) Or that the SP said in relation to the women at this table as far as is true and which Cabral Fernandes (LCI) when he spoke about the woman of Mario Soares was ready to let himself be carried into some demagogery, as the assembly is totally against the SP and this union has to reflect itself against my intervention. I find it perfectly demagogic, I didn't speak of anything else, I spoke of the position of women at the table.

As to sexuality and the youth, we think that the Socialist Revolution should create conditions so that the family as the social cell rapidly disappears.

In this sense we defend the determinate means that I pointed out very quickly: the elderly won't be economically tied to the family, children won't be economic dependents of the families, ~~the~~ housing will be thought of in reference to the community, like my collective and not the family cell, industrial and agricultural production will be thought of in the community sense and not in the familiar sense. And we think that in a few months conditions will be created for the social transformation of relations among people.

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In relation to the youth, we've already had a discussion in the "bosom" of the party and we think the following: generally ~~the ideological aspect of woman and man is put greatly in evidence, but it's fixed in place on the side of the aspect of pleasure, and we think that the so-called sexual education is a hypocritical education that is intended to try and hide the taboos.~~

For the other side of this education you have to have material conditions so that the youth have sexual relations, simultaneously with spreading the possibilities of birth-control. The problem of abortion in youth is also a very particular problem, since it's in the more specific conditions either through the impulses of sexual relations or through age. The majority of youth are not warned about contraception. And we are ready to think that if birth control methods are a radical form, we think it's dealt with in a hypocritical form because the major part of youth begin by having occasional relations before they settle down definitively.

We think that all this is only possible if the youth were to have economic independence, because if they're economic dependants of the parents, none of this is possible, being subject to the cultural and moral pressure of the parents.

In relation to the period of gestation, it was discussed--and it isn't a partisan position, it's the position of the group that discussed it--it was thought in 3 months, considering post-partum necessities are greatest in 3 months, and that the necessities of evolution of a country like Portugal to turn itself socialist are great and neither

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the father nor mother can be dispensed with for a longer time. In a more detailed conversation the hypothesis was posed of, at the end of 3 months, a gradual system be adopted of the mother or father working part-time until the infant reaches 6 months.

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It seems to me that in this last round of intervention on the part of the public (questions from the audience), the clarification of the different parties hasn't been asked properly, and without various persons taking a position in the face of problems in the discussion. It seems to me also that some of these people arrange, as pretext for their taking a position, affirmations that in reality here don't form activities ~~through the parties~~, by the parties. Thus to say that here reformist positions were hardly taken or only economic solutions were advanced is whatever thing that doesn't have feet or a head, because good or bad, with divergencies or without divergencies, more than one organization here present puts that as ground (...).

In relation to the position of the PRP in respect to taking houses for clinics, we have effectively a position as a party. We think that it is impossible to make a capable medicine without the auxiliary infrastructure of diagnostics, without x-ray and without analysis, even without talking about medications. We think that it's deceiving the public to affirm that the simple existence of a house with eventual tables across which will sit eventual doctors, can resolve any problem of health. We don't align with the seizing of clinics and in concrete cases, like that of Barreiro, in which the CP invited us to occupy jointly I know what was occupied (?). Once that house didn't have any possibilities of resources with those means and in this movement, not even having doctors, nothing happened with the house, we refused and considered it adventurism and we made a communique to this effect. Only with the Socialist Revolution will the problem of health be resolved.

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As to the practice of women in revolutionary organizations, we think that the revolutionary practice of women ~~in revolutionary organizations~~ has to be concretized. When one speaks of weapons in hand at this moment in which there is a confrontation with the bourgeoisie, weapons in hand means weapons in hand, and weapons in hand is a concrete thing, like pistols, machine guns, etc. that women should have in hand. During 4 years there were women in the Revolutionary Brigades that went with weapons in hand and with bombs in hand. We think that that is a concrete practice to do now.

(At the end, some back and forth from Carlos Antunes a leader of PRP p126 ff)