

RI SPEAKS, by Mary-Alice Waters, 1970 Pathfinder Press.

Mary-Alice Waters' stupid introduction, while it does introduce you to the periods, which are important in RL's life historically, i.e. it does include more writings by Rosa than any other English anthology, falls into the most ridiculous errors and narrowness of Trotskyism, not only only on what you expect her to be vanguardist about, out over-estimation of Menshevism. And I say, not by accident! Read this (p. 21): "As against the Bolsheviks' concept that it was necessary to organize revolution, she (RI) came closer to the Menshevik slogan of 1905 -- 'Unleash the revolution'. Now if the Mensheviks were for unleashing the revolution, why are Trotskyists opposed? Not only that, if they did unleash, it would be a revolution without her stupid organized revolution. And more important still is '44 pp' (p 376) where H. were spelled as 'here' - of course makes no sense whatsoever either Outside of RL's writings, which, of course, are the center, the only important and contradictory appendices by Trotsky reveals some interesting new facts. First, in the one on "Hands off Rosa Luxemburg", June 28, 1932, directed against Stalin's unleashing a campaign of slander against RL, it is interesting to see how, in revealing facts, one suddenly tells what is in the back of one's mind, rather than the subject one writes about. Thus, in showing that Kautsky remained Lenin's "leader" up until 1914, he quotes one article which is in the middle of the 1905 Revolution -- Two Tactics -- and again in 1906 on "The Crisis of Menshevism", Lenin's remark that he was "not creating any special sort of Bolshevik tendency" has a very peculiar and wrong twist. And what is most wrong of all is the statement that Lenin "did not support RL up to 1914". That is not only wrong but, again, has the wrong twist that makes the next point (p. 444) quite diverting, since he mentions specifically 1910 to 1914, thus making it appear that the expressions about "questions of war militarism and pacifism" is WWI, whereas, in fact, it was over colonialism and the war was when she and Lenin were together in the 1907 Congress. And even more amusing is the reference to Radek's holding back a letter of 1911 by Lenin, where he supposedly defended Kautsky against the "German lefts"

-- RL. It probably is a reference to Lenin's support of the International and KK about RL's "indiscipline" by publishing so-called personal letters on the Morocco crisis. Since none of this is mentioned, the impression given is quite different.

However, there is of course some magnificent writing, especially when it is against Stalin. But again the very best quotations are: A) from RL herself, especially when she talks about the "civility of a theoretician" (p.444) and B) Lenin's, especially his defense of RL: ~~her participation in the~~ "Her participation in the Jan. 1919 insurrection has made her name the banner of proletarian revolution," and that very same paragraph contains a reference to her superior position also in 1907, the one on war. Finally, LT must have been proud of that 1909 article in the Polish journal, as even in this piece and, of all things, on the peasantry, he refers to it.

There is one other piece by LT, "Luxemburg and the Fourth International" (6/24/1935) where LT speaks of how "with full justification" (we) place our work in the 4th Int. under the sign of the "Three Ls", that is, not only under the sign of Lenin, but also of Luxemburg and Leibknecht." The two interesting points about this article are: that it is in the context of an attack on the German Party (SAP) which misused RL's concept of spontaneity. But in the very soul of Trotskyism -- leadership, leadership, leadership; organization, organization, organization; and cadre, cadre, cadre -- is here expressed in the clearest, i.e. most vulgar, form: "But it is just the squandering of these immeasurable energies (of RL- rd) that forms the basis of the great depression in the proletariat and the successful fascist advance. Without the slightest exaggeration, it may be said: The whole world situation is determined by the crisis of the proletarian leadership. The field of the labor movement is today still encumbered with huge remnants of the old bankrupt ORGANIZATIONS... great actions require a great leadership... To sing a monotonous song about indefinite future mass actions in this situation

in contrast to the purposeful selection of the cadres of a new international, means to carry on a thoroughly reactionary work."

I'll divide this book into 6 parts, one ~~is~~ up to 1905 (includes in addition to Reform or Revolution the 1904 organizational question). The 2nd part is the Mass Strike, which I will summarize. The 3rd is the Junius pamphlet and the letters from prison. The 4th is all by itself, Spirit of Russian literature: ~~XXIENKA~~ ^{KOROLEVA}. The 5th is the Russian Rev'n and the 6th is the Founding Congress of the German ~~XXIENKA~~ Communist Party.

The MASS STRIKE, the Political Party and the Trade Unions, written in mid-August to mid-September in Kuokkala, Finland. (RR had been arrested March 4, 1906; released from jail July 1906; permitted to leave Warsaw August 1906; and at once went to Finland.) It has 8 parts, the first of which is to show that the opposition to General Strike as an anarchist slogan, especially influenced by Engels' analysis, 1873, was all written before the RR, and that revolution which was the 1st historical experiment, which actually meant "the historical liquidation of anarchism" and proof of the historical dialectic, but the anarchists gave it up and the Marxists took it over.

*****The essence of the whole pamphlet is really ^{not} in the following statement -- that the mass strike is ~~XXIENKA~~ an artificial creation, "not a crafty method discovered ~~by~~ by subtle reasoning for the purpose of making a proletarian struggle more effective, but the method of motion of the proletarian mass. The phenomenal form of the proletariat's struggle, in the revolution."

In the 2nd part, all of the above is explained in the very title, "The Mass Strike, ~~XXIENKA~~ a Historical and not an artificial product." And this theme is also carried through in the third section which is entitled, "The Development of the Mass Strike Movement in Russia."

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It starts in 1896 and goes up to 1905. "The general strikes of January and February broke out as unified revolutionary actions to begin with under the direction of the Social Democrats... Throughout the whole of the spring of 1905 and into the middle of the summer there fermented throughout the whole of the immense empire an uninterrupted economic strike of almost the entire proletariat against capital..." And she even shows how that caught the support also of everyone from artists to servants and even to some strata of the lumpen proletariat; and even knocked the iron gates of the military barracks." (p. 170)

On p. 174 she shows that the 8 hr day was won by certain groups of workers -- oil in Dec. 1904 in Baku; sugar workers in Kiev May 1905; printing workers in Samara, Jan. 1905; and in Feb. some factory workers.

P. 176: "The most precious, because lasting, thing in this rapid ebb and flow of the wave is its mental sediment: the intellectuals, cultural growth of the proletariat, which proceeds by fits and starts, and which offers an inviolable guarantee of their further irresistible progress in the economic ~~as~~ as in the political struggle."

p. 179, she shows how the general strike "has formed a broad background of the revolution from which, in ceaseless reciprocal action with the political agitation and the external events of the revolution, there ever arise here and there now isolated explosions... Within a week the 8-hour day prevailed in every factory and workshop in Petersburg.... As a further echo followed the mass strike and the sailors' revolts in Kronstat, Libau and ~~Wladivostok~~ Vladivostok."

p. 181 The climax of that section, and it follows the Dec. outbreak of the 3rd general mass strike throughout the empire so that ~~the~~ the beginning of 1906, she concludes, "The role of the political mass strike alone is exhausted, but, at the same time, the transition of the mass strike into a ~~general~~ general, popular rising is not yet accomplished. The liberal episode is past. The proletarian episode has not yet begun. The stage remains empty for the time being."

The 4th section deals with the inter-action of the political and economic struggle and has that quotation I put at the beginning about the mass strike being a method of motion of the proletarian mass and it occurs on p. 182.

And on p. 185 relates it, as I felt was characteristic of her philosophy, everything to root cause and effect, to purpose. "Cause and effect here continually change places; and thus the political and economic factor in the period of the mass strike ... merely form the two interlacing sides of the proletarian class struggle in Russia. And their unity. It is precisely the mass strike ... Finally the events in Russia show us that the mass strike is inseparable from the revolution."

P. 188: "Further there are quite different limits set to initiative and conscious direction ... The element of spontaneity, as we have seen, plays a great part in all Russian mass strikes without exception, be it as a driving force or as a restraining influence. In short, in the mass strikes in Russia, the elements of spontaneity plays such a predominant part, not because the Russian proletariat are 'uneducated', but because revolutions do not allow anyone to play the school-master with them."

The 5th part, "Lessons of the Working Class Movement to Russia, Applicable to Germany", RL is trying to prove that the reciprocal action of economics and politics which is at one and the same time the main spring of present-day strikes and "regulating mechanism" "would result also in Germany, and quite as naturally from the conditions themselves." (p.195)

The 6th part is devoted to showing that the unorganized as well as the organized workers are needed for victory. "Mass strikes and political mass struggles cannot, therefore, possibly be carried through in Germany by the organized workers alone, nor can they be appraised by regular "direction" from the central committee of a party. In this case, again -- exactly as in Russia -- they depend not so much upon "discipline" and "training" and upon the most careful possible regulation beforehand of the questions of support and cost, as upon a real revolutionary, determined, class action, which will be able to win and draw into the struggle the widest circles of the unorganized workers, according to their mood and their conditions." (p. 198)

P. 199 "A year of revolution has therefore given the Russian prol. that 'training' which 30 years of parliamentary and trade union struggles cannot artificially give to the German prol."

The 7th section is on the role of the mass strike and the revolution, and on p. 201 RL says: "The Russian prol. however, who are destined to play the leading part in the bourgeois revolution, enter the fight free from all illusions of bourgeois democracy..."

On p. 203, she continues with her dialectic: "The most backward country of all, just because it has been so unpardonably late with its bourgeois revolution, shows ways and methods

of further class struggle to the proletariat of Germany, and the most advanced capitalist countries... It is much more important that the German workers should learn to look upon the RR as their own affair, not merely as a matter of international solidarity with the Russian prol., but first and foremost, as a chapter of their own social and political history."

The final, the 8th section, "Need for United Action of Trade Unions and Social Democracy" is all directed against the trade union bureaucracy that the so-called "equal authority" of trade unions and Social Democracy "is likewise not a mere theoretical misunderstanding, not a mere case of confusion but an expression of the well-known tendency of that opportunist wing..."

Here, too, she speaks of "a direct causal connection"

(p. 218) "But it is high time for the working masses of social democracy to learn how to express their capacity for decision and action, and therewith to demonstrate their ripeness for that time of great struggles and great tasks in which they, the masses, will be the actual chorus and the directing bodies will merely act the "speaking parts," that is, will only be the interpreters of the will of the masses."

"The trade-union movement is not that which is reflected in the quite understandable but irrational illusion of a minority of the trade-union leaders, but that which lives in the consciousness of the mass of proletarians who have been won for the class struggle. In this consciousness the trade union movement is a part of social democracy.

•And what it is, that should it dare to appear!"