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Chl, D.M.

June 29, 1978

Dear Sheila Rowbotham:

Way back when you were in the Bay Area and you gave a friend of mine your London address I meant to write to you. In fact, I wanted to write to you ever since WOMEN, RESISTANCE, AND REVOLUTION was published. But the love-hate relationship with you whom I have never met induced by appreciation of your serious historic work on women's liberation struggles, but weighted down by what I considered your supercilious attitude to Marx's new continent of thought and your total disregard of Rosa Luxemburg, kept me from trying to establish a relationship between us. What finally has decided me to write to you is your recent interview in Socialist Review, where your emphasis on the openness of organization you favor sounds sufficiently like my opposition to the concept of the vanguard party to lead.**

Let's see whether you will be interested in corresponding with me on the work-in-progress I am projecting on Rosa Luxemburg. It was to have been called Rosa Luxemburg and Today's Women's Liberation Movement, not because there is any direct connection, but precisely because today's women liberationists have not shown great concern about that great revolutionary--very nearly all the works on her are written by men--though she has a great deal to say to us today and not only on revolution and against imperialism but even on women, yes, women. (Read this letter of hers to Mathilde Wurm whose husband was among those who betrayed; "I swear to you, let me once get out of prison and I shall hunt and disperse your company of singing toads with trumpets, whips and bloodhounds--I wanted to say like Penthesilla, but then by God you are no Achilles. Had enough of my New Year's greeting? Then see to it that you remain a human being...To be human means throwing one's life 'on the scales of destiny' if need be...")

But I have had considerable difficulty with the writing since I disagree with a great many of her theories, especially on the National Question, and also on her most important theoretical work, Accumulation of Capital. The more I grappled, however with her thesis "The revolution is magnificent; all else is bilge", the deeper became its connection with Marx's Theory of Revolution, and the minute I made that as the 3rd phrase on the book, and things began to fall in place. That is to say, the book then becomes, in my mind in any case, a work on RL and WL that is no way separated from what is the burning question for all: the realization of Marx's theory of revolution for our times. If you too see these subjects in any such way, may I expect to hear from you?

Yours,

*Opposition to the concept of the "party to lead" was the very first topic I fought with Tony Cliff on in 1947 when I was in England on way to a congress of the Fourth International I had rejoined and being given the right to present the theory of state-capitalism. I would be the only with that position even in that year and since Tony was working out the same thesis I had first projected in 1941, I asked for his help. He refused on the basis that my "giving up" the theory of vanguard party permitted no ground for our collaboration and, moreover, his thesis, which was not yet completed, would be quite different from mine, more "objective." I was then the hyphenated part of the Johnson-Forest Tendency, and no doubt CINF was considered the great one, not me. In fairness to Cliff, I will add, that, though I had been working on the "Woman Question" for some years then, I wasn't in any way relating it to male chauvinism in the Movement. But it all came back to mind in that form last year when I happened to have met some ISers in Oregon, and in the dis-

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discussion on the Portuguese Revolution I criticized TC's analysis which had not so much as bothered to mention that the very organization they thought most revolutionary, PRP/BR, was headed by a woman, much less give her name her personality, Isabel Do Carmo; was it because she espoused apartidarismo? To my surprise, they answered in the most offhand manner as if it meant nothing, but Tony Cliff is the biggest male chauvinist; we always knew that. I answered that if one acknowledged male chauvinism in our organization--News & Letters Committee--he would be expelled since the Constitution of Marxist Humanists lists that as 1 of the only 3 reasons for expulsion; the other 2 being opposition to class struggle and Black Dimension. I walked out.