

17 Nov 71

y Dear Manarosa,

I think Ferruccio is right - Martin (Luther) will come round in time. He is probably frightened, for all kinds of reasons, notably you probably challenge him more than he is used to. As for us I'm concerned that is to your credit. As for us he's concerned, the same - but it is not easy to force that. There are also other reasons he could be frightened. Martin Luthers are terrified of being happy. And not only Martin Luthers.

Right now I'm trying to clear the decks, answer all letters, do all typing that I have to, so that I can leave. I saw Ferruccio Friday; this is Wednesday. He is very busy studying, but there has not even been a telephone call. I am not unhappy but I'm not happy either. I must be at the doctor 3 January 72. He said, "Go to Italy, why don't you spend Christmas + New Year's there, + then come back." He won't let me begin to walk until then, + I think after that will be a painful period, I don't know. In any case, these next weeks will be "otimus" (right?) for doing some work, + I'd like to come. To sit through a meeting now is agony. Everything seems stale + secondhand here in London. I suppose ultimately the Irish will invade the peace + quiet, + then we will have a movement, women's, etc. Meanwhile, after the last few weeks I am too impatient to be in London.

The enclosed is the Milan transcript which I promised to send. But I have changed some things. Would you please make a photocopy + send one to Milan, telling them to ~~make~~ the changes. If they have not yet printed it, they can add the changes. I will not rewrite it again but I was not happy with the section on the Gay movement + neither ~~was~~ were Mary + Virginia, who really pointed the deficiencies out to me. There are other things to change but they are not important + there are more important things to do now.

Later

I enclose also a letter to Pris. She was very upset by a letter from me + I thought you might like to ~~read~~ see it. It is not very important except that this is always the issue in the women's movement which causes the greatest consternation: we can't have the relationships we want under capitalism. It seems so difficult to accept + yet I have

always personally found it very liberating even though it is also depressing. I found two wonderful quotations in the preface to Capital I, one of them relating precisely to this. About responsibility: "My standpoint, from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them!" A slave cannot make freedom; her great adventure is to destroy her slavery. It is a limitation but only in a ~~conten~~ historical context. It is enough to keep you busy.

The second quote is different + nicer. From the same Preface to the first German edition "... we... suffer not only from the development of capitalist production, but also from the incompleteness of that development. Alongside of modern evils, a whole series of inherited evils oppress us, arising from the passive survival of antiquated modes of production, with their inevitable train of social + political anachronisms. We [women] suffer not only from the living, but from the dead. Se mort saisit le vif!" And we will add Ferruccio's wonderful statement: our aim is not to ~~make~~ fight because capitalism is backward but because it exists.

I hope your health - that liver - is all right. Don't you think you should spread the responsibility more? Even if not everything gets done. Ultimately it will not help the movement a) if you are ill, b) if women do not learn to take responsibility, c) if they get very angry with you when they do not feel they have changed + blame you for doing so much. Maybe the Italian movement is "different" - but I suspect there are some rules in politics that apply everywhere. You will know best, but please don't get too tired.

On Monday I will discharge my political responsibility which is to be a witness in the trial of Althea, Darcus, etc. They (the prosecution) are going to try to tear me apart. But that is not the problem. The problem is that as a white person I must try to get the jury (10 white - [2 women] -, 2 black) to identify with me + thus with the defendants. I will be glad when it is over.

Now it is late + I go to bed. Take care of yourself + give my love to Ferruccio + Mariarosa.

S.

I have "Technology & Women's work".

17 Nov 71

FA. Antella 1.16a  
My dear Pris,

I am sorry my letter upset you, and rereading sections of the document made it worse. I'm glad to say I think it's a misunderstanding and I'll try the best I can to straighten it out.

First, I gave only what I thought was the name of the periodical in which it was to be published: not ISR, but Socialist Revolution, a journal Martin Nicolaus knows and is some way associated with. It is not Trotskyist, and of all the things that M/r and I would choose it would most certainly not be a Trotskyist journal.

Second, the "consumerism angle" is totally revised. It's not that I don't care for it. I disagree violently with the original, and M/r ~~was~~ let me change it completely. I think you will like the change which is being checked by her now (and then you get a copy - it is after all a Padova document and they must have the last say on this version. After that, it can be revised on consultation with many others).

Third, I don't agree with you about the children not coming first. M/r wrote the first draft and that is her order. I think it is the right order, because through children, one can penetrate into the fundamental schism, between indirect production in the home and direct production in the factory. The following is the proposed summation of the section on children and the beginning of the bridge to the ~~xxxxxx~~ meat of the document:

"Since Marx, it has been clear that capital ruled through the wage, that is, that the foundation of capitalist society was the wage labourer and his or her direct exploitation. What has not been clear is that precisely through the wage has the ~~xxx~~ non-wage labourer been exploited. That exploitation has been even more effective because the lack of a wage hid it. Where women are concerned their labour appeared to be a personal service outside of capital. She seemed only to be suffering from male chauvinism, being pushed around because capitalism meant general "injustice" and "bad and unreasonable behaviour"; the few (men) who noticed convinced us this was "oppression" as opposed to exploitation. But the word "oppression" covered another and more pervasive aspect of capitalist society. Capital did not exclude children from the home and send them to school only because they are in the way of others' more "productive" labour or only to indoctrinate them. The rule of capital through the wage means and must mean that every ~~xxxxxx~~ able-bodied member of the human race must perform some function, must work, and must work in ways that are if not immediately, then ultimately profitable to the expansion and the extension of the rule of capital itself. That, fundamentally, is the meaning of school. Where children are concerned their labour appears to be learning for their own benefit."

It is not that the situations are parallel, because the position of the woman is in my view the fundamental position out of which flows the position of children. But sometimes what is at the surface, when viewed accurately, can lead you to greater depths.

On another level, if the children were later in the document, it could also be done that way, and I can see the point of your criticism. But since it is already first, and the rest of the document now flows that way, and returns to children, the aged, etc., at the end, to sum up, I think it's OK.

I don't know much about the tactics and strategies of the SWP etc. in the U.S. re abortion, etc. I would be very glad to; do please let me know. To say it is "not facile reformism", however, is to deal with a particularly Italian phenomenon, at least in part. Maybe I get your point that is, this is posed in the U.S. against repeal of all laws. Is that it? Unfortunately when you have a Catholic Church such delicacy is denied you, and I very much doubt that M/r had this in mind. It certainly never crossed my mind. If you think something should be added there for safekeeping (if this is the point) please let me know. Perhaps I have missed the point entirely.

The key question, however, is prefiguring. You'll see in the enclosed the final footnote. (More later re the document itself, which you know from before.) There is nothing in this document, to me, that condemns or casts overboard the value of the work in Bloomington. When you say, "I have seen it work out; I have recognised it in the eyes of women I have talked with and worked with" I feel I understand what you are saying. What I am saying is something else. What is in their eyes in no way

"prefigures" (to use the word again) free people. Darcus, Barbara, etc., are on trial in London - you heard us speak of it. Out of nine black people, two - Althea and Darcus, are defending themselves. They are challenging British imperialist justice for the first time, as far as I know, in ~~the~~ its history. The look in their eyes is also new. Between that and the communist social individual is a revolution. There are many examples I can think of. The Gay movement to me does break the ground for the destruction of sexual definition, and this paves the way for the social individual to be born. But they are not that social individual. I do not believe liberation lies in our power in this society. What lies in our power is to destroy this society and in the process remake ourselves. I think the child care centres in Bloomington are part of that process, but when mothers work at home or in factories and fathers work always somewhere out of home; when children are segregated with little contact with other age groups, including old people; when we are all ghettoised, all we can do is burn down the ghetto. In a sense the Bloomington experience is that burning down, because what it is doing is challenging the State as the owner of children. (The appearance is that the parents own them; this is ultimately not the case - the professional child minder is the State's agent.) And the nuclear family in my view is continually being preplaced in the technologically advanced world, by non-biologically related professionals - to "free" women for the labour market, and also to more successfully indoctrinate them, get them earlier, etc). Mr did raise one question about Bloomington: was it relevant to other parts of the country where there was not a university community - or even where there was. To me, whatever the answer, it cannot discredit concrete work in a concrete place. But I don't feel safe enough to generalise on your experience until at least I have read what I long to read, namely your pamphlet on the subject.

To give what I consider a perfect example of "prefiguring" here is a quote from Ray's book, MARXISM AND FREEDOM:

"...As centralisation has increased and the number of capitalist magnates diminished, so of necessity has the labor bureaucracy grown. (For labor bureaucracy in my view read professionals in all spheres of life - S) For ~~the~~ the magnates by themselves are too few to discipline tens of millions of workers. (Inside direct production and in the community - S) This bureaucracy is their weapon against the cooperative society. (my emphasis - S) Every worker in large-scale industry recognises that today; hence the wildcats."

This expresses most crudely what I think was inherent in JF for good historical reasons (namely McCarthy on the part of capital and Trotskyism on the part of the revolutionary left). But a production line in no way prefigures the cooperative society. It is capital's way of organising workers so they are more productive. It also disciplines and organises them to fight capital but on a limited scale. Hence the women's movement. That cooperation has always excluded those ~~who~~ who were excluded from it; it divided the class. It is not the cooperation we want to integrate into. That is Trotskyism (or more correctly, Stalinism.) In any case, the aim of our movement is not the cooperative society; it is the social individual who can cooperate at one point (be social) and at another not cooperate (be individual), and these two modes of existence are an integral part of each person regardless of sex and age, which are the only two biological differences once class is abolished. I'd like to hear your comments from the point of view of your work before I go on. But I do believe that there is something of a misunderstanding between us and the divisions, if it exists, is not nearly so severe as to make you worry. And then maybe we're both right. Let's see.

Thanks for the books. I haven't opened them yet, but the next period is going to be devoted, finally, to some reading. I'm taking the leg as a blessing in disguise. No typing for the BBC, a little poverty, not much political activity - so Mr and I are going to use the time to get some ideas down on paper. I think it will be useful. The enclosed is that same speech in Milan, but I've modified it. I wanted you to see it, but I also wanted to know if you thought it worth publishing. Barbara Friedman has sort of been asking me to write something and I ~~think~~ thought this might interest her. Can you make a copy and send her, please. I'll write her separately. Do let me hear from you soon. Much love, no joke.