

FA, cartella 2, 58
Dear Susie

I'm writing in semi-darkness here - there is no electric - but don't get worried, there is a postx - and it is getting towards evening. I've just finished the modifications in the intro based on your criticisms which were very helpful and made me "precise" everying, as Mariarosa would say. She is here with me and is pleased with the intro. I went over your letters with her point by point, and the following are our joint replies: -

1. All that you are arranging about the headings is fine with us both. Only I would like a full stop not a bracket after A, B and C, i.e. A., not A). You will see on page 13 we have joined two paras to make room for the expanded head.

2.p. 17 t e sentence certainly can become a footnote. OK.

3. t/set copy p. 5 2nd para. A footnote will come in the next post after "the usual desperation of children..."

4. t/set copy p.10 bottom para "Capital abolished the family, etc." No, they must read and they will see that it is specific to capitalism, though it is clear elsewhere that there is a general subordination in other societies.

5. t/set copy p. 13, para 1 - "This was basically the viewpoint of Marx - no reference - it is a general attitude, M. says. I frankly disagree here, but the course of true political love never did run smooth.

6. t/set copy p. 14 para 1: "In Italy wmen are still necessary in the home..." "in the home" here means exclusively in the home, and I think the reader should get that; the implication is also wider, because as women leave the home to work, housework is in fact socialised, that is, more and more wage labor and not domestic labour creates labour power, but that is for another document, or rather for the book. For now it is more correct to leave it as it is.

7. t/set copy p. 14 bottom para the demand for ~~pink~~ peisons - you will get a footnote in the next post, and an expanded footnote on the CP's demand. That is, M is now writing a footnote on wages for housework and I have already got from her the precise CP demand.

8. t/set copy p.17 para.3: "It is always at the very least the opposite of the Paris Commune!" The question is not to know about the Paris Commune, only to know that when workers take action it is always at the very least the opposite of capital, and when capital takes action it is always at the very least the ... I think people will come to think this way, and no footnote will encourage them; it would take a general strike for some in England to learn this, so let us pray for class action!

9. footnote 7: "rebound of the costs of schooling..." Much the same applies. No cost is a private cost and those who press for the State to pay are the proletarians. I think an explanation will be too long. Let it go.

10. footnote 8: The same. The price of the wage is our life, whether we receive it directly ~~through~~ by getting a job or through men by slaving at home. See intro: whose life is consumed in the process of producing - that is the price of the wage. The whole document is on a wavelength unfamiliar to us in England, and it must be read as a whole to get the drift. Otherwise we'd have to explain every line.

11. On the signature, there are a lot of very good reasons why M's name should go on, but she is adding a note which you will get saying something about a mutually productive association with one S.J.; I think that does it.

12. There just isn't time to do an article about Rome. As it is, this whole book thing has cut into my time on the book, the one I'm supposed to be making notes for. The only thing that keeps me going is your efficient and careful letters which pay the kind of attention to detail I didn't think I'd ever find! I am very grateful.

13. The international meeting was not representative, and was called because we found ourselves together, all Marxist feminists, and all in close agreement. We meant only to represent ourselves and to make that point of view available on an international level. I think the statement is good, and is in a sense the first organisational result of the Dalla Costa document (which, by the way, is moving around the states in that masculinated RA edition).

One of the most important decisions of that meeting was that we would not permit a group of men representing the Italian left in NY to publish the Dalla Costa thing, and that the English edition would stand for the US, so get ready for a bestseller, Falling Wall. More seriously, we decided that these men could circulate our printing, and I was glad to see that both the document and AWP were done in American spelling. I would be glad if you would change the whole intro into American spelling to match the rest. I've already switched in the enclosed pieces, i.e. labour to labor, and organised to organized, etc. Mind you, I would not have suggested this from the beginning, and I originally expected that it would be changed by typesetters to English spelling (was even somewhat disappointed when it wasn't). But now it is just as well, and I am very happy that the book is being done by a group of women, and that the traffic in ideas is going the other way across the Atlantic. (Though I always felt that The Rowbotham "WL and the New Politics" deserved an international audience and bought a couple of dozen copies to send around. I'm trying to encourage the women here to translate it, and I met a woman who read SR's book for the publisher in Milan and returned a favourable report. Do tell her if you see her.)

HOW THE INTRODUCTION

14. Who are the women I'm referring to? I've worked that section over and you will see enclosed. More specific than that I cannot get, and I hope now it is clear that it is a minority of the movement. If there had been more space I would have developed a number of questions related to that, but I've done bits and pieces in other writing and I hope now they will see the light of day. The whole question of caste and class must be dealt with from the point of view of political economy: We are in essence saying that the family is superstructure and structure. Marx did not see it this way, and he had good reason not to - because it was not to anything like the same degree structure when he was alive. As superstructure the middle class woman ~~performs~~ performs a function which oppresses her, and the middle class family is increasingly being brought into a structure, that is, a productive function. The wagelessness of all housewives is a caste question with class overtones, etc. But it must be done right, and I could only hint at the political ramifications in the intro. We will talk about this when I get back, if you like, but I hope the intro now deals with at least some of your doubts and hesitations which, I repeat, I was very glad to receive. I feel you hit the weak spot, but it was weak also because I could not go into the essence of the question, only to the political form it assumes.

15. p.3 footnote 3: I've made a change which more nearly expresses my point of view. You were of course right. I hope you now agree or at least do not find it objectionable. Those demands, I think, you underestimate. We have been stuck with them, ~~xxxxx~~ and are stuck with them to the present day.

~~But~~ But I do think that you take ~~the~~ ^{some} women who say they want to smash capitalism much too literally. What their concept of smashing capitalism is, is my idea of reform. This is a specifically British problem - not a problem of WL only, but the key weakness in the class. The working class in Britain as compared with the class elsewhere has been relatively non-violent. Why is another question. But the result of this we feel deeply in the movement. We need their violence to encourage our own, especially because we are women who are repressed into non-violence in the deepest way. And most especially because so many of us are middle class who cannot ourselves break through but are dependent on the class to ~~make~~ make the breakthrough with us. This is yet another big question which we will have to deal with in our movement in time, and there is not a lot of that.

16. You will see the inverted commas around 'Marxist' men in drag" closed.

17. Morton and Benston, and a touch of Mitchell. OK? God, I could have written five pages on Benston whom I have reread. It is really very bad, and I tried to be kind because last year is not this year, and my article in that same book (written in '56 and '70) is in some ways pretty stupid too.

18. bott (old) p.9 and top (old) p. 10 I've changed the sentence and I think it reads more coherently now. Thanks.

19 p. 13 "Through an international movement." If you look at the preceding page you will see what it means. I am repeating in more general words what I have said on p. 12: "By herself in the Catholic ... ~~for~~ ~~themselves~~ ~~and~~ ~~for~~ ~~her~~... for themselves and for her." I speak earlier (p. 10) "There is no doubt that the courage ... so hated to work for." That is the power of the wage. It is this power which women in the home are denied and which men use against them. It is a power relation within the class which we can now begin to use in the struggle. But to go into all that would have been to write not an intro but a whole book. I'm afraid I had to leave that one.

20. Mariarosa's whole article is a confirmation of the view about the U.S. that I attribute to her, espec. her references to Blacks in the US. She didn't want me to change that, ~~xxxx~~ and I would not like to. I've made clear that "the writer" is "the Dalla Costa".

21. I don't understand why you don't understand "whomen are the contradiction in all previous political frameworks." If men in factories cease to be the sole pivot of your politics then your whole political framework is contradicted if it was based on these men. That is why no left group now in England can really understand and support our autonomy, because they think that we are appendages to their political framework and are not about to change that framework where we fundamentally contradict it. In Italy there are some sighs after the "Roman events" that we are posing a profound contradiction in all previous Italian political frameworks.

22. I'm glad you like the title.

23. Footnotes for AWP ~~in~~ at end: fine. Signed with my name, not Marie Brant.

24. Glad letters not taking long, except t is one - held up for a week in Padova. I write from the volcanic and beautiful island of Stromboli and will be back in Padova in a week, available at the ~~xxxx~~ phone: ~~xxxx~~ Padova 44720, or Mariarosa: 653016. You'll hear tomorrow with footnotes ~~xxx~~ of document. I hope all is going not too badly and I'm still ready to go to Bristol when I return to help out, but you will say if I'm needed. Much love and thanks for patience. And power, sister, power.