



LIKE A
CLAP OF
THUNDER

THREE ESSAYS ON
ROSA LUXEMBURG

ANKICA ČAKARDIĆ

TRANSLATED BY ANDREW HODGES

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WHO WAS ROSA LUXEMBURG? (1919—2019)

E1 Dear young friend, I assure you that I would not flee even if I were threatened by the gallows, and that is so for the simple reason that I consider it absolutely necessary to accustom our party to the idea that sacrifices are part of a socialist's work in life, that they are simply a matter of course.

— Rosa Luxemburg's letter to Walter Stöcker, 11 March 1914¹

Rosa Luxemburg² is one of the most outstanding theoreticians, revolutionaries, and personalities in the history of the socialist movement. She is one of those authors who is often invoked under the most diverse circumstances, but who is very rarely read, translated, and written about. The same sentiment applies to the fact she inspired many political organisations, yet no large-scale movement has ever been defined by her theoretical perspective, as Peter Hudis has emphasised.³ Insofar as she is written about, a myth surrounding her personality is often created on the basis of several random episodes from her private and public life. In addition, a variety of ideas are ascribed to her texts and a specific reading of her ideas and theories is often given in a personal tone. In one of his recent essays, Paul Le Blanc illustrated this phenomenon perfectly:

I have heard people describe Rosa Luxemburg essentially as a utopian radical-feminist or as a rigidly “Marxist” anti-feminist. I have heard people talk about her — and quite positively — as if her thinking was compatible with Emma Goldman's anarchism or Eduard Bernstein's social democratic reformism or Deng Xiaoping's bureaucratic state-capitalism. She is also very frequently cast in the role of Lenin's Most Magnificent

1 In: Adler, Hudis and Laschitza (eds.) 2011, p. 329–30.

2 Translator's note: Where appropriate, descriptive/literal translations of German and Serbo-Croatian titles have been given to give the reader a sense of the titles — this is especially relevant in the third essay. I dedicate the translation to the memory of Eleanor Marx.

3 Hudis 2019, p. ix.

Enemy in some cosmic morality play. [...] Among some on the Left, on the other hand, she is criticised as a woolly-minded “spontaneist” who does not understand the need for organization in the revolutionary struggle. Luxemburg was qualitatively different from, and more interesting than, any of this, and she deserves better from us.⁴

Rosa Luxemburg was a social democrat, communist, revolutionary, anti-war activist, and one of the leading politicians of the Second International. She was known to love drawing, deeply enjoyed literature, and cultivated an interest in botany, dendrology, and zoology. She wrote a lot. Luxemburg was an author who especially depicts what she in her own words described as a world of “boundless possibilities.” Her numerous texts, newspaper articles, essays, polemics, political pamphlets, analyses, books, lecture notes, and her wide-ranging private correspondences bear witness to this. She wrote in Polish, German, and Russian; spoke French and English, and occasionally wrote certain phrases and expressions in Yiddish.

As time goes by, new research is finally coming to light that fills in the many gaps in understanding Rosa Luxemburg’s whole legacy. As a result of this, each day we are getting to know Rosa Luxemburg better and in greater depth. This is aided by the fact that over the last few years, a lot of materials have been found that were previously unknown to the public.⁵ These help us, alongside more recent English translations, to better understand Luxemburg’s entire legacy.⁶ However, it should also be emphasised that the case of

4 Le Blanc 2019.

5 See Laschitzka and Müller (eds.) 2014; Laschitzka and Müller (eds.) 2017.

6 In addition to Luxemburg’s newly found texts (of which some are anonymous or signed with a pseudonym) included in the 6th and 7th volumes of the German collected works, there are a further 3000 pages written in Polish, which have not even been translated into German. As concerns English translations from German and Polish, which make the Rosa Luxemburg’s works more accessible to a global public, Verso’s publishing project *The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg* should be

Rosa Luxemburg is incredible and practically unique. While every new discovery within her works brings us closer to Luxemburg, at the same time it has become clear why we have never got to know her in her full sense. Just when we think that her position on a certain controversial topic is clear and completely recognisable, what often happens is that some of her more recently discovered works shake up our previous understandings a little, once again teasing our resting conceptions about her and her works. Or, when it seems that one of the positions she took is an unusual, isolated episode within her wider general political direction, we come across a later text in which she more clearly repeats such an unusual position. Consequently, we may say that the one surety of Rosa Luxemburg's complexity and the historical context that marked her, is that we have still not completely met Rosa Luxemburg in her entirety.

Despite Rosa Luxemburg only living to be 48, it is as if she had lived out at least three fulfilling and tireless lives. Her days were permeated by numerous events and marked by a frequent atmosphere of uncertainty. She rarely had a permanent address and her days were filled with many friendships, loves, everyday theoretical polemics, meetings, and political organising. Hers was a life walking on the edge the whole time. Her everyday existence mostly consisted of illegal and secret addresses, numerous prisons, courtrooms, and sometimes "normal days," almost always spent under surveillance and espionage. Despite a truly restless life, often on the margins of society and full of everyday threats, Luxemburg never withdrew from the public nor from political life. Quite the opposite, it was as if her everyday uncertainty focused and cautiously

noted. This project plans to translate and publish all of Luxemburg's works (not only those that already exist in German, but also those written in Polish, Russian and Yiddish) in seventeen volumes. To date, the first three have been published, cf. Hudis (ed.) 2013; Hudis, Le Blanc (eds.) 2015; Hudis, Fair-Schulz and Pelz (eds.) 2018. See also the companion volume to the series, *The Letters of Rosa Luxemburg*, Adler, Hudis and Lasc-hitza (eds.) 2011.

directed her towards the many social problems, even when they were not top priority in the revolutionary struggle against the dominant politics of the time. Although she always had the political and friendly support of those close to her, who surrounded her both privately and politically, she was mocked, disdained, and subjected to numerous criticisms and attacks. This was equally true of her political enemies and of people from the ranks of her own party.

Rozalia (or Róża) Luxemburg was born on 5 March 1871, in the year of the Paris Commune, to a Jewish family in the small Polish town of Zamość, which then belonged to Imperial Russia. Her family moved to Warsaw a short while after, in 1873, where Rosa Luxemburg attended school. Sometime later, she fell ill there, and permanently damaged her hip, due to an incorrect diagnosis of tuberculosis and an inappropriate course of treatment. Her prescribed rest and permanent residence at home meant that, by the age of five, she had already learned to read and write. Interestingly, by the age of nine she had already translated German poetry and prose into Polish. Her first literary attempts were rather successful. At the age of thirteen she even began to write sarcastic anti-monarchic poetry. She sent the following message in a poem to German Emperor Wilhelm I on the occasion of his visit to Warsaw:

Just one thing I want to say to you, dear William.
Tell your wily fox Bismarck,
For the sake of Europe, Emperor of the West,
Tell him not to disgrace the pants of peace.⁷

She began her political activity young, still in her high school days. She was active in Proletariat, a party founded by Ludwik Tadeusz Waryński in 1882, which would come to be known

7 Nettl 2019, p. 56. Nettl states that the poem, originally written in Polish, is printed in German in *Gedenkbuch*.

as Poland's first socialist party.⁸ Due to its numerous revolutionary, illegal and contra-state actions, *Proletariat* came under constant police surveillance and constant threats of imprisonment. This ultimately influenced Luxemburg's decision to leave Poland.

In order to avoid her arrest and possible deportation to Siberia, Luxemburg emigrated to Switzerland, aided by a Catholic priest.⁹ In Zürich in 1890, she enrolled in university studies in mathematics and the natural sciences, but two years later changed courses and began to study law and political economy.¹⁰ She later joyfully emphasised that she saw her interest in economics as stemming from her primary talent for mathematics.¹¹ Throughout her entire life she pursued the natural sciences and researched botany and zoology. It was well-known that she constructed a herbarium for many years running.¹² As concerns the development of Luxemburg's political ideas, we should not forget that Switzerland was one of the most important centres of Russian revolutionary Marxism during the time she studied there. This most definitely helped form her early political views. One of the most influential Marxists residing in Switzerland at that time was Georgi Valentinovich Plekhanov. In addition, there were notable revolutionaries who operated in his Emancipation of Labour group (*Osvobozhdenie Truda*), such as Pavel Borisovich Axelrod, and Vera Ivanovna Zasulich.¹³ Luxemburg

8 *Ibid.*, p. 45.

9 Paul Frölich describes the episode in which Marcin Kasprzak, Luxemburg's party colleague, carried out a stratagem to organise Luxemburg's escape across the border. He writes how Kasprzak visited "the Catholic priest of the village and informed him that a Jewish girl wished to become a Christian, but owing to the violent opposition of her family, she could do so only abroad." In this way, Luxemburg was hidden under straw in a peasant's cart as it crossed the border. Cf. Frölich 1954, p. 12.

10 Tadić 1974, p. 7.

11 Nettl 2019, p. 63.

12 Cf. copies of Luxemburg's herbarium: Luxemburg 2009 & 2016.

13 Nettl 2019, p. 65.

also met Leo Jogiches there, with whom she collaborated, and was close to for her entire life.¹⁴

From 1893 Luxemburg began to collaborate with the publication *The Workers' Cause* (*Sprawa Robotnicza*), and a year later became its formal editor under the pseudonym R. Kruszyńska.¹⁵ By that time, she had already come to oppose the leaders of the Polish Socialists (PPS) due to her internationalist attitudes. These leaders had advocated for Poland's independence, and when a party split emerged in 1894, she, along with a handful of people from *The Workers' Cause*, founded the Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland (SDKP). After five years of participating in the active core of the party (alongside Luxemburg, core members included Leo Jogiches, Julian Baltazar Marchlewski & Adolf Warszawski, pseudonym Warski), it joined forces with the Lithuanian social democrats grouped around Feliks Edmundowicz Dzierżyński, forming the unique Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (SDKPiL).¹⁶

Despite being in exile in Switzerland, Luxemburg continued to actively follow the situation in Poland and began to report on it in Swiss newspapers. She published articles in German for the first time. In the period between 1895 and 1897 she published her pioneering works on the position of the Polish Workers' Movement, in both the Zürich paper *Arbeiterstimme* and in Stuttgart's *Neue Zeit*.¹⁷ Her disputes with Polish socialists were internationally well-known, as well as among the ranks of the Second International, which, to put it lightly, did not always endorse her views. It could be said that there were two different groups that did not always

14 Cf. Dunayevskaya 1981, chapter VII.

15 Nettl 2019, p. 70.

16 For more and new research on the problems of Luxemburg's relationship to the Polish Question, see Blanc 2017. Also, it should be added that Luxemburg founded the SDKP, but she did not actually found the SDKPiL. She rather assumed control over it after its founding as a result of a bitter factional dispute with its original leadership. Cf. Hudis 2019, p. xii.

17 Cf. Tadić 1974, p. 8.

agree with Luxemburg: one was an orthodox fraction that did not like Luxemburg's critical perspective towards Marx's theories (above all, Kautsky and Plekhanov); the other was a group with a somewhat less theoretical tone, which chiefly focused on her political and organisational views. The ways in which they — both privately and publicly — stated their disagreement with Luxemburg were often saturated with cheap *ad feminam* arguments. To this effect, on one occasion Victor Adler (as a representative of the other group) wrote the following to Karl Kautsky:

She [Rosa Luxemburg] is trying to do our thinking for us [...]. I implore you to send me as whatever more you get in before setting it in print — not for my comments, but to enable me to calm things down, and make up for all the damage this doctrinaire goose has caused us. To hell with all these refugees [...].¹⁸

In Spring 1897 Luxemburg defended her doctoral dissertation at the University of Zürich. It was titled *The Industrial Development of Poland*¹⁹ and she therein gained a doctoral degree in law. She was among the few women of that time who had the opportunity to study, let alone gain a doctoral degree in economics. In her dissertation she made use of previously unknown sources on the development of Polish industry in the nineteenth century, which made her work the first serious economic analysis on that topic.²⁰ The thesis was based on original research at the Czartoryski Library in Paris and the Bibliothèque Nationale during the years 1894–5.²¹ It immediately showed her particular gift for economics and her dissertation established her as a serious theoretician and Marxist thinker. She defended the thesis that the economic growth of Poland could not have taken place without the substantial Russian market, and that the economy of Poland

18 Nettl 2019, p. 97.

19 Luxemburg 2013.

20 Nettl 2019, p. 106.

21 *ibid.*

should be analysed exactly in that context. Peter Hudis writes: “Poland’s economy, she insisted, was increasingly dependent on global capital; any independent path to national development was foreclosed by the economic reality.”²² This thesis would later become the mainstay of her internationalism and critique of Polish national self-determination, comprising serious material for her reckoning with Polish nationalists. As concerns style, the dissertation is strongly marked by a linking up of rigorous empirical study and social theory — and Luxemburg really had a talent for both.

In spring 1898, Luxemburg moved to Germany, where she stayed until the end of her life. As it was very difficult for socialists and foreigners to gain any kind of legal security or residence rights at that time, Luxemburg entered into a fictive marriage with Gustav Lübeck, a German socialist, in order to acquire German citizenship. Her first impressions of Berlin, not in the least delighted, were summarised by J. P. Nettl in the following way:

On 20 May 1898 she moved to Berlin — a strange, friendless city with straight streets and stiff-backed people. She disliked the place from the moment she arrived; it suddenly made Zürich seem curiously comfortable and attractive.²³

Or more precisely, she evoked her angst for Berlin in her own words as follows:

Berlin is the most repulsive place; cold, ugly, massive — a real barracks, and the charming Prussians with their arrogance as if each one of them had been made to swallow the very stick with which he had got his daily beating.²⁴

²² Hudis 2013, p. x.

²³ Nettl, p. 111.

²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 131.

Her feeling of loneliness after her arrival in Berlin, as Luxemburg articulated it, was made more difficult by her not receiving the warmest Party welcome. Besides that, the constant pressure of the dominant German culture and language, which she would perfect some time later, did not favour her. In German society — but also in Party life — she came face to face with anti-Semitism, anti-Polish discrimination, and sexism.²⁵ To that effect, in 1902, in the paper *Leipziger Volkszeitung* she commented on the importance of women's right to vote for the formation of a progressive politics and an end to forced norms and traditionalisms:

In its [social democracy's] political and social life as well, a strong, fresh wind would blow in with the political emancipation of women, which would clear out the suffocating air of the current, philistine family life that rubs itself off so unmistakably, even on our Party members, workers and leaders alike.²⁶

All these impressions left their mark on Rosa Luxemburg's character, which had found the discriminatory culture difficult to digest, as in practically all aspects of her life she had thrown conventions and institutional norms into question. Nevertheless, everyday struggles and life without respite influenced the reshaping of her ideas in the cold and rigid Berlin atmosphere. Not because the urban stiffness had disappeared, but because the Berlin emptiness was decisively superseded by her political activities. Luxemburg would later come to view Zürich as her immature political phase, and her arrival in Germany as the peak of her political maturity.

With little delay, she immediately became involved in the political life of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), and soon became one of the most important theoreticians of the international socialist movement. In those first Berlin years, from September to November of 1898, she edited the

publication *Sächsische Arbeiterzeitung* and continued her collaboration with the papers *Neue Zeit* and the *Leipziger Volkszeitung*. During this time she began to befriend Karl Kautsky, and his wife Luise even more so. She began to feel increasingly at home, spending time in the company of August Bebel, Paul Singer, and Franz Mehring. This was also a period in which she became very close to her revolutionary comrade Clara Zetkin. But besides the world of comradeships and intimacy, what was the revolutionary-political atmosphere in which Luxemburg found herself really like, following her arrival in Germany?

Despite the fact that at the end of the 1890s the German SPD was powerfully rising in number — in the 1898 elections alone it received 2,107,000 votes,²⁷ and in 1903 more than 30% of votes²⁸ — starting from around the time of Marx's death, in the revolutionary 1848, the party was gradually but surely falling into a political crisis. One of the reasons for the crisis was the increasingly expressed opposition between the radical and reformist currents among the ranks of the social democrats. Eduard Bernstein later theoretically articulated the crisis in a very delicate manner. His series of articles, *Problems of Socialism*, published in the journal *Neue Zeit* from 1896 to 1898, had the hallmarks of a classical revisionist theory. His systematic critique of Marxism was not seriously analysed at first, but soon a sharp dispute with Bernstein's revisionism resulted in a period of long-standing tensions in German social democracy. Paul Frölich summarised that dispute as follows:

The Bernstein controversy ushered in the most difficult and most protracted crisis in the history of pre-war international social democracy. It called out all the Marxist theoreticians and practical politicians onto the battlefield. Parvus, Kautsky, Mehring, Bebel, Clara Zetkin, and Rosa Luxemburg in

27 Cf. Tadić 1974, p. 8.

28 Cf. Scott 2008, p. 11.

E1 Germany; Plekhanov, who defended historical materialism above all in the field of philosophy, in Russia; Antonio Labriola in Italy; Jules Guesde and even Jean Jaurès in France.²⁹

It was precisely within this political dynamic that Rosa Luxemburg began her work in the SPD. She rose to the fore in these theoretical battles with her first series of articles, *Social Reform or Revolution*, published in the summer of 1898. She became one of the most decisive and analytically precise critics of revisionism. The debate with Bernstein continued up until January 1899, when he replied to his critics with the text *The Preconditions of Socialism*.³⁰ Luxemburg critically retorted as early as in April with a second series of articles. She had already by then become one of the key figures of the German SPD:

When the German revolutionary movement began to get under way in the new century, Luxemburg was in the vanguard, giving it theoretical structure and tactical leadership, and spurring it on with her eloquence.³¹

This “new century,” the beginning of the 20th century, was marked by a strong growth in militarism, especially German militarism. Rosa Luxemburg tirelessly warned of the possibility of war, which unfortunately came to pass a short time later. Early German militarism can only be described via some of the examples, such as loan payments for the navy or European interventions in China under the leadership of a German General.³² Luxemburg spoke about this dangerous phenomenon at an international socialist congress in Paris in September 1900. Over the following few years she wrote about the Polish national question, sharply criticising the nationalism of the PPS. In July 1904, she was sentenced for the first time to three months’ imprisonment for a speech against the German

29 Frölich 1994, p. 65.

30 Bernstein 1993.

31 Carl Schorske, cited in: Scott 2008, p. 12.

32 Cf. Tadić 1974, p. 9.

Emperor Wilhelm II, in which she uttered the famous sentence: “The man who speaks of the fine secure existence of German workers has no idea of the facts.”³³ In the paper *Neue Zeit*, the same year, she published the very influential debate *Organisational Questions of the Russian Social Democracy*, from which we can discern the extent to which she was well acquainted with the state of the West and the European East, and with what power, and decisiveness she criticised the role of socialists in bourgeois governments, as well as undemocratic, and nationalist tendencies in the socialist movement of Eastern Europe. Later, after 4 August 1914, and the vote for war loans, she even more ruthlessly attacked German social democracy, calling it a “stinking corpse,” a phrase that soon became an international revolutionary motto.³⁴

During the time of the First Russian Revolution (1905), Luxemburg illegally arrived in Warsaw, under the pseudonym Anna Matschke, where she would soon be uncovered and arrested. German spy reports helped the Warsaw police close in on her. Following this, the state prosecutor prepared material for her prosecution. In a letter to Karl Kautsky, Luxemburg described her prison cell’s atmosphere:

They found me in a rather embarrassing situation. But let’s forget about that. Here I am sitting in the Town Hall, where “politicals,” common criminals, and lunatics are all cooped up together. My cell, which is a jewel in this setting (an ordinary single cell intended for one person in normal times), now contains 14 guests, fortunately all political. On either side of us are two big double cells, each with about 30 prisoners, all on top of one another [...]. Going for walks in the courtyard is quite unknown here, but during the day the cell doors are left open, and we are allowed to walk the whole day in the corridor [...].³⁵

33 Cited in: *ibid.*

34 Cited in: Lenin 1997, p. 440. Compare with Paul Le Blanc’s more recent analysis of the origin of this quote of Lenin’s: Le Blanc 2019.

35 Frölich 1994, pp. 126–27.

Serving her prison sentence, Rosa Luxemburg's health became increasingly worse. The cells in which she stayed were not only crammed full of people, but also had practically no ventilation. Besides that, Luxemburg often resorted to hunger strikes in protest against the desperate prison conditions. Describing the increasingly heavy discipline of the prison in which Luxemburg served out her sentence — the notorious X. Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel — and how after building a gallows in the fortress yard, “a silence fell, full of trepidation” on the prison, Frölich narrated the following episode:

And, with ominously grave words and special ceremonies, revolutionaries were often summoned from their cells, never to return. Without the benefit of legal procedure or a verdict, their lives were blotted out through “administrative channels.” Once this fate seemed about to befall Rosa. Leo Jogiches, reserved and unsentimental, recounted the incident after her death. Her eyes were bound, and she was led away. But it proved to be only an interrogation; the unusual procedure was due either to an error or to a deliberate act of mental cruelty. Asked later what she felt at the time, Rosa replied: “I was ashamed because I felt myself blanching!”³⁶

Thanks to the numerous interventions of the German SPD, and their bail payment, Luxemburg was freed temporarily. After this, she lay low in Finland, where under the impression of the Russian Revolution she wrote the famous pamphlet *The Mass Strike, the Political Party, and the Trade Unions*.³⁷ This pamphlet made an important contribution to wider debates on the relations between the trade union and social democracy, and in a limited way, was a continuation of the revolutionary critiques of reformism that Luxemburg had begun to make in *Reform or Revolution*. The following data demonstrate just how important the topic of relations between parties, trade

unions and strikes was at that time (especially since the abolishment of the anti-socialist laws of 1890): a new network of trade union organisations was growing from day to day, the trade union membership grew from 300,000 in 1890 to more than 2.5 million in 1914; the total value of the trade unions grew from 425,845 to more than 88 million German marks, and the number of professional trade unionists grew from 269 in 1900 to 2867 in 1914.³⁸

Luxemburg returned to Germany in 1906. Without a single break from her political work, as early as in September she participated in a social democratic congress in Mannheim. Yet even this engagement of hers did not pass unnoticed: immediately in December she was sentenced to imprisonment, this time for two months, for “encouraging violent activities.”³⁹ In the same year (1906) the Social Democratic Party of Germany founded a Party school in Berlin. Right up until war broke loose, social science lessons were organised each winter, as well as continual political agitation. In any single cohort, there were around 30 attendees, mostly from social democratic, and trade union organisations. Luxemburg lectured in this school from 1907 and the foundational text for her teaching programme was Marx’s *Capital*. From her long-standing teaching work in that Party school, two of her most comprehensive works emerged: *Introduction to Political Economy*⁴⁰ and *The Accumulation of Capital*,⁴¹ which we will present in more detail in the next essay.

38 Scott 2008, p. 107.

39 Tadić 1974, p. 9.

40 Luxemburg 1975; Luxemburg 2013a. This document has a complicated history. Rosa Luxemburg began lecturing on economics at the SPD party school in 1907. At this point she started work on a manuscript giving a comprehensive introduction to economics, but broke off work in 1912 to work on the book *The Accumulation of Capital* (as noted by Hudis in: Luxemburg 2013a, p. 68.). While imprisoned during World War I she returned to this manuscript, but was not able to finish it before she was murdered by counter-revolutionaries in 1919. Parts of the manuscript may have been lost when her apartment was ransacked by these counter-revolutionaries. Paul Levi then worked to edit what was left of the manuscript and published it in 1925. Luxemburg 1955; Luxemburg 2015a.

In a certain sense, 1906 represented a pivotal moment for the German workers' movement. The catastrophes that Luxemburg anticipated in *Reform or Revolution* were slowly but surely coming to fruition. The years of 1905/1906 did not only shake up the Russian Empire; for the first time, the dispute between France, and Germany over Morocco had raised the spectre of European war.⁴² Coming to a position on the possible war became a burning question for the International. At the congress of the International in Stuttgart in 1907, this turmoil was discussed for the first time ever as an overture to an imperialist war.⁴³ Rosa Luxemburg would later return to the case of Morocco as a breaking point in the history of new imperial wars.⁴⁴ Together with Lenin and Martov, Luxemburg put together a resolution against militarism and imperialism in 1907, which the congress then adopted, concluding the following:

If a war threatens to break out, it is the duty of the working classes and their parliamentary representatives in the countries involved, supported by the coordinating activity of the International Socialist Bureau, to exert every effort in order to prevent the outbreak of war by the means they consider most effective, which naturally vary according to the sharpening of the class struggle and the sharpening of the general political situation.

In case war should break out anyway, it is their duty to intervene in favor of its speedy termination and with all their powers to utilize the economic and political crisis created

42 Frölich 1994, p. 138.

43 At that congress the first meeting of the International Socialist Women's Movement took place. It then adopted the universal right of women to vote and was responsible for proclaiming International Women's Day, in Copenhagen in the year 1910. The suggestion for an International Women's Day was initiated by Luise Zietz, and supported by Clara Zetkin. For more on the first International Women's Day, see Čakardić 2017.

44 Luxemburg 1911.

The year 1906 was marked by a season of new political battles. A period of agitation and mass gatherings had ended for the European proletariat, and a period of militant actions had begun. Nevertheless, despite the formal condemnation of Bernstein's ideas among the Party and trade union leadership, a reformist influence had begun to dominate. Socialists such as Hermann Molkenbuhr, Friedrich Ebert, Philipp Scheidemann, Otto Braun, and others totally departed from radical struggle.⁴⁶ Luxemburg, with the support of Lenin, spoke precisely on this topic at the congress of the International in Stuttgart. From that moment on, we can trace the gradual weakening of the political influence of Rosa Luxemburg within the ranks of the official German social democracy. This reached its endpoint when Luxemburg withdrew her cooperation with Karl Kautsky in 1910.

In one letter to Clara Zetkin in 1907, Luxemburg, among other points, comments ironically for a moment on the problem of Party leaders. She describes how their political domain is the "parliamentary model" and how they are in a position to zealously restrain everyone who crosses their boundaries.⁴⁷ In this political context, she was specifically thinking of August Bebel, although she had previously had a very close friendly and political relationship with him. She was probably not thinking of Kautsky at that time.⁴⁸ But from when Kautsky, in 1910, refused to publish one of Luxemburg's articles, following the "directions of the Party leadership," their private and political relationship seriously deteriorated. As Frölich describes:

45 The Socialist International 1907.

46 Nettl 2019, p. 406–7.

47 The letter can be found in: Adler, Hudis & Laschitza 2011, p. 242–43.

48 Frölich 1954, p. 187.

E1 Kautsky's holding back was a rough insult. Rosa Luxemburg was the main collaborator for the magazine *Neue Zeit*, constantly giving Kautsky editorial advice. She sometimes represented him on the editorial board. The reputation Kautsky enjoyed among radicals throughout the whole International was to a significant degree indebted to his intellectual collaboration with her. Kautsky's attitude was more than mere submission to the party leadership; it symbolised his own political *volte-face* and the fact that his intellectual alliance with Rosa Luxemburg was at an end.⁴⁹

The entire episode was additionally aggravated by a further exchange between them. The situation went so far that the collapse of their friendship shook up the unity of the radical Party majority. German social democracy then divided into three currents: (a) reformists, who were increasingly inclined towards imperialism, (b) the so-called Marxist centre, who tended towards maintaining traditional policies, but who were in fact increasingly inclined towards Bernstein's position, and (c) the revolutionary wing, also often called the left-radical wing. Besides Luxemburg, this wing was represented by Clara Zetkin, Franz Mehring, Karl Liebknecht, Julian Baltazar Marchlewski (who often used the pseudonym Julius Karski), Karl Radek, and Anton Pannekoek.⁵⁰

Despite their good electoral results in the Reichstag in 1912, which brought the Party a large number of seats, Party politics in the pre-war period was increasingly marked by problematic compromises and political retreat, which necessarily resulted in their anti-imperialist positions being suppressed. An atmosphere of political-ideological confusion was created, especially after the "shameful compromise with the new middle class."⁵¹ And as an Italian fleet departed for Tripoli on a conquest, the Balkan Wars hinted at a possible

49 *Ibid.*, p. 186.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 187.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 188.

world war. German foreign policy aggravated the situation in the Balkans and increased the danger of war, and so the “centrist wing” of the Party increasingly assumed a war position. This was evidenced by the historical fact of social democratic support for the government. In the summer of 1913 they put forward a proposal for a military budget of a form and size before unseen in the history of weaponry up to that time. This proposal received great support from the social democrats as they interpreted it partly as a progressive tax.⁵² During the negotiations, Luxemburg opposed all war loan proposals. She pointed out the logic of the problem, the fact that such support “could mean supporting an imperial war tomorrow.”⁵³ That she was correct was confirmed on 4 August 1914, when out of 111 delegates of the German social democratic fraction in the Reichstag, only fifteen voted against the loans. This vote shocked the European public to such an extent that many did not believe the news. Romania’s social democratic publication declared the news to be fake. Lenin stated that an entire issue of *Vorwärts* (Forwards), the SPD’s central paper, dedicated to the disputed Reichstag sitting, was a forgery fabricated by the German military headquarters.⁵⁴ The political breakdown of German social democracy that followed the war loan vote, as Luxemburg ironically commented, was a demonstrable result of long-standing “parliamentary idiocy”:

For the proletariat there is not one vital rule, as scientific socialism has hitherto proclaimed, but rather there are two such rules: one for peace and one for war. In peacetime the class struggle applies within each country, and international solidarity vis-à-vis other countries; in wartime it is class solidarity within and the struggle between the workers of the various countries without. The global historical appeal of the *Communist Manifesto* undergoes a fundamental revision and,

52 Scott 2008, p. 23.

53 Ibid.

54 Frölich 1954, p. 221.

E1 as amended by Kautsky, now reads: Proletarians of all countries, unite in peacetime and cut each other's throats in war!⁵⁵

The SPD even signed the *Burgfrieden* then. This was a special political treaty with a twofold significance: on the one hand it presupposed a truce whereby the parties committed to not competing with one another nor to calling the government into question. On the other hand, the trade union leadership committed to “disciplining” the workers’ movement to not act against state policies in any way.⁵⁶ Besides the First World War and the ever increasing support this war received from various European social democratic organisations (which, evidently, followed the example of the German SPD, as well as abandoning the principle of international class solidarity) the International found itself in complete decay. At that time Kautsky wrote another apology for his revisionist position, which he considered “the SPD’s wartime philosophy,” and which would advocate for “a real joining of socialism and conformism.”⁵⁷ The situation was so desperate that in one moment Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin were on the verge of suicide.⁵⁸

While she was feeling fairly broken after all these events, Luxemburg, along with a handful of her close collaborators, had already conceived a means of struggle against the imperialist policies and war. There was no time to lose. On the same evening when the SPD had voted to support the war loans, i.e. on 4 August, Luxemburg gathered together a handful of her friends in her flat to analyse the situation in detail and plan their next militant steps.⁵⁹ She and Zetkin decisively tried to gather together around twenty more radical members of the SPD in order to organise a resistance. However, they only received the support of Liebknecht and

55 Cited in: Scott 2008, p. 23.

56 Nettl 2019, p. 608.

57 Kautsky 1914.

58 Nettl 2019, p. 609.

59 *ibid.*, p. 610.

Mehring.⁶⁰ The first public reaction of Luxemburg, Zetkin, Mehring, Liebknecht, and others against the war politics of the German social democrats was published in September 1914.⁶¹ Describing the atmosphere in which this group of socialists acted, Zetkin later wrote in her preface to a new edition of Rosa Luxemburg's *Junius-Broschüre* (Junius Pamphlet):

The struggle was supposed to begin with a protest against the voting of war credits by the social democratic Reichstag deputies, but it had to be conducted in a such a way that it would not be throttled by the cunning tricks of the military authorities and the censorship. Moreover, and above all, the significance of such a protest would doubtless be enhanced, if it were supported from the outset by a goodly number of well-known social democratic militants. We therefore endeavoured to formulate it so that it would bring about the solidarity of as many as possible of the leading comrades who had sharply, even scathingly, criticised the policy of 4 August in the Reichstag and in small private circles. This consideration cost us much brain-racking, paper, many letters and telegrams, and precious time, and in the end all for nothing. Out of all those outspoken critics of the social democratic majority, only Karl Liebknecht joined with Rosa Luxemburg, Franz Mehring and myself in defying the soul-destroying and demoralising idol into which party discipline had developed.⁶²

From 4 August onwards, the historical defeat of social democracy would have many reruns. One such tragedy was repeated very soon after, when the German government demanded war loans from the Reichstag for a second time. On this occasion, Liebknecht publicly opposed the government and war. He was, in fact, the only one who dared to violate the *Burgfrieden*. Liebknecht's sharp, critical attitudes about the state of the Left

60 Ibid., p. 609.

61 Ibid., p. 610.

62 Cited in: Frölich 1994, p. 208.

at that time, of nationalist hatred, imperialist mischief and the lack of international workers' solidarity is best read through his formulation in 1915: "The main enemy is at home!"⁶³

Despite having initially supported Kautsky in his dispute with Luxemburg, Lenin soon changed his mind and at the end of October 1914 he wrote the following to Alexander Shlyapnikov:

Rosa Luxemburg was right; she realised long ago that Kautsky was a time serving theorist, serving the majority of the party, serving opportunism in short. There is nothing in the world more harmful and dangerous for the intellectual independence of the proletariat than the disgusting self-satisfaction and low hypocrisy of Kautsky. He embellishes everything, wishing for sophisms and supposedly learned turns of phrase to quieten the conscience of workers who are stirring.⁶⁴

In order to draw as much attention as possible to the crisis events that marked 1913 and 1914, in spring 1915, the revolutionary wing of the German Left set up the publication *Die Internationale* (The International).⁶⁵ Shortly after, a group with the same name was founded. The group's national conference began its work in Berlin on 1 January 1916 and it would accept "administrative guidelines" for the organisation during wartime that Luxemburg had secretly formulated in prison. This group would soon be renamed the Spartakusbund (Spartacus League), because of its tighter organisation and illegal printed matter, the *Spartakusbriefe* (Spartacus Letters).

In the first issue of *The International*, Clara Zetkin analysed the attitude of women towards the war, Franz Mehring wrote a comparative analysis of Marx and Engels' thoughts on the question of war and the current war, Paul Lange analysed the trade union politics of peace between the

63 Liebknecht 1915.

64 Cited in: Frölich 1954, p. 226.

65 Ibid., p. 234.

parties, while Rosa Luxemburg wrote two articles. One was titled *Rebuilding the International* and was signed with her name.⁶⁶ The second article, *Perspectives and Projects*, was a critique of Karl Kautsky's *National State, Imperialist State and Confederation*,⁶⁷ which she signed under the pseudonym Mortimer.⁶⁸ In the first article, Luxemburg sharply asserted that on 4 August, German social democracy had abdicated, and that this had simultaneously caused the certain collapse of the International. She conveyed her embitterment bluntly, while also calling for a future revision of the International, especially of its peacetime politics:

If the International, like the peace, is to correspond to the interests of the proletarian cause, it must be born of the self-criticism of the proletariat, of its reflection upon its own power [...]. The road to this power — one that is not paved with resolutions — is at the same time the road to peace and to the rebuilding of the International.⁶⁹

In the article *Perspectives and Projects*, Luxemburg criticised Kautsky's aforementioned text, especially his analyses and attitudes towards imperialism and his equation of "modern democracy" with a parliamentary regime. She could not believe that someone would move so far away from a progressive understanding of social democracy as the socialist accomplishment of economic and social equality, pushing democracy in a reactionary sense into the framework of a civic national state. Because of these and similar attitudes, Karl Kautsky was a lost case to Rosa Luxemburg.

The first issue of *The International* set itself the task of researching real-existing workers' movement issues under the conditions of war, from a sharp analytical, and entry-level theoretical viewpoint. It was soon banned. The state prosecutor

66 Luxemburg 1915.

67 Kautsky 1915.

68 Luxemburg 2011.

69 Luxemburg 1915.

raised charges of treason against Luxemburg, Zetkin, Mehring, and others, because of this first — and only — magazine issue. When *The International* was printed in April 1915, Luxemburg had already been in prison for two months. She was serving a one-year sentence passed in Frankfurt a year earlier, which was delayed due to her poor state of health. This time she was in Berlin's Women's Prison, where she wrote *The Crisis of German Social Democracy* in secrecy, better known as the *Junius Pamphlet* due to her pseudonym Junius.⁷⁰ Although Luxemburg managed to smuggle it out of prison, due to the danger of printing illegal papers and continual prison threats, the pamphlet would only be printed the following year.⁷¹

As she had the status of a political prisoner in prison, Luxemburg was able to move around, read, and write somewhat freely. However, several months after the sentence began, the surveillance regime became significantly stricter and Luxemburg no longer managed to smuggle her latest political replies out of prison.⁷² She followed the situation as much as she could, but did not always manage to acquire all the new information on time. The news about the situation on the ground that reached her was mostly disheartening. Mostly bad news reached her, about numerous German victories, and about “the global slaughter with its victims and suffering, with an increasing hunger among the masses and a drop in morale.”⁷³ In the sea of events that accompanied the “global slaughter,” the only positive step made was in June, when around a thousand Party functionaries signed a petition addressed to the Party leadership,⁷⁴ indicating their disagreement with official policies. But for Luxemburg, this act was too small a gesture in relation to the scale of the political problems, tough conditions of war,

70 Luxemburg 1974b.

71 Nettl 2019, p. 630.

72 Frölich mentions that the regime's tightening might have been the result of a conflict between Luxemburg and a prison officer, after which he, supposedly because of her arrogance, hit her on the head with a book. See Frölich 1954, p. 232.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid., p. 233.

and increasingly expressive nationalism among the ranks of the social democrats. It was not until the International Socialist Conference in Zimmerwald (in September 1915) that a clear and unambiguous response was manifest against the wartime politics, which Luxemburg supported without hesitation.⁷⁵

When, after several months at the end of 1915, a small crack finally opened in the work of the prison regime, Luxemburg managed to establish a secret correspondence with Liebknecht. From that period and through their communication, guidelines were set up for the organisational work of the Spartacus League. Finally, on 22 July 1916, Rosa Luxemburg was released from prison. “I have returned,” as she herself described in a letter to Regina Ruben on 25 February 1916, “to freedom with a tremendous appetite for work.”⁷⁶ In a later letter to Luise Kautsky, she complained that on the day of her leaving prison, 80 people came to visit her in her flat. She wrote how it was “literally 80 people” and that the very first day of freedom turned into “torture” because she had to say a few words to each one of them after a year in the prison.⁷⁷ She realised that there would be no more respite for her.

Without further delay, in February 1916, she immediately set about releasing her unpublished manuscript, the *Junius Pamphlet*, which had been illegally prepared for printing and was published as early as in April. This was an extremely important pamphlet, which “became a weapon for thousands of illegal militants,” as Frölich summarised.⁷⁸ Speaking in *Junius* of a “world-historic catastrophe,” and of the “capitulation of international social democracy,” Luxemburg directly and unambiguously summarised her theses on imperialism from *The Accumulation of Capital*. In the pamphlet, she showed how capitalist interests and global war homogenised the camps of imperialist powers (on the one side, the Entente, on the other, the Axis Forces) and how there can be no place for

75 See the International Socialist Conference at Zimmerwald, 1915.

76 Cited in: Nettl 2019, p. 643.

77 Ibid.

78 Frölich 1954, p. 235.

nations to initiate a “liberation mission” via war. “The scene has thoroughly changed.”, wrote Luxemburg, “The show is over.”, “Gone is the first mad delirium.”, “The curtain has fallen [...]”, “Capitalist rule is caught in its own trap.”⁷⁹ The reality of war, said Luxemburg, consists of “false rumours” of nationalist liberation “that push one into a delirium”:

Business is flourishing upon the ruins. Cities are turned into shambles, whole countries into deserts, villages into cemeteries, whole nations into beggars, churches into stables. [...] Shamed, dishonoured, wading in blood and dripping with filth, thus capitalist society stands, not as we usually see it, playing the roles of peace and righteousness of order of philosophy, of ethics — but as a roaring beast, as an orgy of anarchy, as a pestilential breath, devastating culture and humanity — so it appears in all its hideous nakedness.⁸⁰

In one paragraph in *Junius* she cites part of the parliamentary fraction’s statement from 4 August 1914, which indicates, as she says herself, the “warmongering” attitudes of social democracy responsible for the atrocities of war and the desperate condition of “working people from the villages and cities”:

We are now facing the irrevocable fact of war. We are threatened by the horrors of invasion. The decision, today, is not for or against war; for us there can be but one question: by what means is this war to be conducted? Much, aye everything, is at stake for our people and its future, if Russian despotism, stained with the blood of its own people, should be the victor. This danger must be averted, the civilisation and the independence of our people must be safeguarded. [...] Actuated by these motives, we vote in favour of the war credits demanded by the government.⁸¹

79 Luxemburg 2004f, p. 312–13.

80 Ibid., p. 313.

81 Ibid., p. 176.

The cut-throat and uncompromising responses to the lies of the “liberation war,” “survival of the nation,” and “freedom,” which Luxemburg contributes in the pamphlet, are directed at revealing what she calls the mechanisms that encourage the “convenient intoxication of people.” For her, war is exclusively “methodical, organised, mass killing.”⁸² For Luxemburg, imperialism is the high point in the development of the political global rule of capital. As written in *Junius*, “the common deadly enemy of the Proletariat of all countries.”⁸³ *Junius* was probably the harshest critical and most comprehensively formulated text arguing against the war of that time and its imperialist politics.

The anti-war activities of the Spartacus League were increasingly publicly present. They were also responsible for the organisation of the first anti-war demonstrations in Berlin on 1 May 1916. Following this successful protest and the mass mobilisation of Berlin workers, Liebknecht was sentenced to imprisonment and Luxemburg was under constant police surveillance from then on. Despite the Spartacus League not having a large number of members in its ranks, it had the mass support of numerous workers, becoming the “torch-bearer of the revolutionary feeling of the masses.”⁸⁴ With the appearance of the Spartacists, the veneer of peace between the parties disappeared and the delirium of national fervour abated.

However, a militaristic conflict with the Spartacists quickly followed. Hundreds ended up in prison, factories were combed and cleaned of all radicalism, and thousands of people were sent to the war front as punishment. The political movement present in the factories remained for some time without any organisational infrastructure. Finally, after the arrest of Liebknecht on 10 July 1916, Rosa Luxemburg ended up in prison once again. She spent the first few months of the sentence in Berlin, October 1916–May 1917 in Wronke, before finally being moved to Wrocław, where she would remain until

82 *Ibid.*, p. 177.

83 Cited in: Frölich 1954, p. 242.

84 *Ibid.*, p. 244.

9 November 1918. As she had the status of a political prisoner, she managed to communicate with many people, and wrote, and read a lot, at least inside of what the censorship permitted. During this period she especially researched geology, reading, as she herself said, “with a feverish interest and a passionate satisfaction.”⁸⁵ She also researched botany and zoology, joyfully noting down her impressions. In her own unique way, on one occasion she described her impressions of flowers:

I know the different kinds of orchids well. [...] Their slender grace and their fantastic, almost unnatural forms make them seem to me over-refined and decadent. They produce on me the impression of a dainty marquise of the powder-and-patch period. The admiration I feel for them has to encounter an internal resistance, and is attended with a certain uneasiness, for by disposition I am antagonistic to everything decadent and perverse. A common dandelion gives me far more pleasure. It has so much sunshine in its colour [...].⁸⁶

During this period of imprisonment, apart from the natural sciences, she devoted herself to literature. She studiously worked on Vladimir Galaktionovich Korolenko, translating his autobiography *The History of My Contemporary*.⁸⁷ She used to say that poetry had a virtually therapeutic effect on her, especially Goethe:

I don't know why it is that a beautiful poem, especially one of Goethe's, always seems to exercise so powerful an influence upon me. At times of profound agitation the effect is almost physiological, as if when parched with thirst I had been given a precious drink to cool my body and restore my mind.⁸⁸

85 Luxembourg 1951, p. 48. This is what she wrote to Sophie Liebknecht from Wroclaw in the middle of November 1917.

86 Ibid., p. 34. This is a part of the prison letter from Wronke addressed to Sophie Liebknecht 1 June 1917.

87 Luxembourg 1918.

88 Luxembourg 1951, p. 38. This is a part of the prison letter from Wronke addressed to Sophie Liebknecht 20 July 1917.

Alongside literature and natural sciences, she researched the history of Poland and later the Russian Revolution. Her numerous letters from that period are preserved, in which the atmosphere of everyday life in the prison can be brilliantly read; her good and bad days, periods of pessimism, and phases of optimism. In one letter to Sophie Liebknecht, we can read about her mood:

I suppose I must be out of sorts to feel everything so deeply. You know what? — Sometimes, however, it seems to me that I am not really a human being at all but like a bird or a beast in human form. I feel so much more at home even in a scrap of garden like the one here, and still more in the meadows when the grass is humming with bees than — at one of our party congresses. I can say that to you, for you will not promptly suspect me of treason to socialism! You know that I really hope to die at my post, in a street fight or in prison.⁸⁹

Just a few weeks later, completely exhausted, she wrote to her of her anxiety:

My inner equanimity and my blissful happiness can, unfortunately, go to pieces at the slightest shadow that falls across me, and then I suffer inexpressibly, only I have the peculiarity that at such times I suffer in silence. Literally, Sonyichka [Sophie], I cannot make a single word cross my lips. For example, during the last few days I was definitely feeling so bright and cheerful and rejoicing in the sunshine, then suddenly, on Monday, an icy windstorm took hold of me — I don't know “why” or “what for” — and in an instant my radiant cheerfulness changed into the deepest misery.⁹⁰

89 *ibid.*, p. 20. In the letter from Wronke written 2 May 1917.
 90 This is the letter written in Wronke on 23 May 1917, in: Adler, Hudis and Laschitza (eds.) 2011, p. 413.

E1

Although her psychophysical condition increasingly deteriorated during her imprisonment, she somehow found the strength, defiance, and meaning to push through even her worst days. In this way she repeated to Sophie Liebknecht what she had said on one occasion to Hans Diefenbach at the start of the war:

You know, Sonyichka... Just as one cannot apply moral standards to the elements — a storm, a flood, or an eclipse of the sun — here, too, one can only regard them as something given, as an object of research and knowledge.⁹¹

But what especially motivated Rosa Luxemburg at that time to persevere with revolutionary politics — despite her difficult prison life — was the Russian Revolution. For Luxemburg, the Russian Revolution was a kind of triumph of her radical political positions, and she especially interpreted it as a good sign for influencing revolutionary tendencies in Germany. Besides this, the revolution completely and clearly revealed the “war adventures of German imperialism.”⁹² She wrote about this in the text *The Russian Revolution* as follows:

Its outbreak [the Russian Revolution], its unexampled radicalism, its enduring consequences, constitute the clearest condemnation of the lying phrases which official social democracy so zealously supplied at the beginning of the war as an ideological cover for German imperialism’s campaign of conquest. I refer to the phrases concerning the mission of German bayonets, which were to overthrow Russian Czarism and free its oppressed peoples.⁹³

Although she intensively researched the revolutionary events in Russia, the prison context — even at its best — was not a good position from which to follow the events that developed

91 Cited in: Frölich 1954, p. 249.

92 Luxemburg 1974c, p. 273.

93 Ibid.

at incredible speed from one day to the next. She followed everything indirectly, through the scarce materials available, mostly German newspapers, which reported on everything cautiously and modestly. Luxemburg did not demonstrate a self-evident delight in Bolshevik politics:⁹⁴ from the start she tried her hardest to research the situation on the ground as sharply and cautiously as possible. She paid attention to the possible consequences of certain decisions and political compromises. She openly criticised Lenin and Trotsky, especially their understanding of the dictatorship of the proletariat and democracy, as well as Bolshevik politics surrounding the questions of agrarian reform and the right to the self-determination of nations.⁹⁵ Far from the actual events, she was often under the impression that the Bolsheviks “too easily give in under pressure”⁹⁶. However, in her letters she nevertheless underscored the immense significance of the October Revolution and the breakthrough of the revolutionary proletarian masses. Finally, despite her strong criticisms of the Bolsheviks’ positions and, as she believed, problems with their “revolutionary Blanquism,” she commented that “the October Uprising did not only save the Russian Revolution, but also the honour of international socialism”⁹⁷ and that “the future everywhere belongs to ‘Bolshevism’.”⁹⁸

94 Her critique of the Bolsheviks’ role in the revolution was posthumously published by Paul Levi in 1922. However, the *Russian Revolution* papers had always been “surrounded by legends” and supposedly published as an “inaccurate and incomplete transcript,” as Frölich emphasises: Cf. Frölich 1954, p. 260. However, insofar as we intend to seriously research Luxemburg’s position on the Russian Revolution, it is definitely necessary to consult materials that represent writings that *directly* address the question of revolution, most of all her discussions of the 1905 Russian Revolution, which are presented in the third volume of the *Complete Works* devoted to this subject, including her writings from 1897 to the end of 1905. Cf. Hudis, Fair-Schulz and Pelz (eds.) 2018.

95 Luxemburg 1974c.

96 Frölich 1954, p. 258.

97 Cited in: Trotsky 1997, p. 450.

98 Luxemburg 2004g, p. 310.

Reading the prison letters from 1918, it is difficult to help but feel that this year was the most difficult for Rosa Luxemburg. She fell seriously ill when still in Wronke, while in Wrocław her psychophysical condition significantly worsened. This was surely a result of her complete isolation, strict surveillance, new limitations, and the strong scrutiny of her letters. Besides that, her court appeal, and requests to be let out of prison were rejected in turn. Sophie Liebknecht complained: “My complaint was rejected with a lengthy description of my wickedness and irreparability, as was my request for leave. It looks like I will have to wait until we win the world over.”⁹⁹ Completely tired and broken, in another letter to her she wrote: “What we are now witnessing is the submergence of the old world, day by day another fragment sinks beneath the waters, day by day there is some fresh catastrophe,”¹⁰⁰ with the entire prison situation and her socialising with others making her situation unbearable:

Dear Sophie, I wrote to you the day before yesterday. So far I have had no answer to the telegram I sent to the Imperial Chancellor; I may have to wait several days for an answer. I But this much is certain, in my present mood I can no longer endure to receive my friends' visits under the supervision of the warders. [...] To carry on a conversation under supervision, to find it impossible to talk about the things that really interest me would now be intolerable. I would rather forego having visitors until we are all at liberty once more.¹⁰¹

During one period when Clara Zetkin did not contact her for a while, she very perturbedly wrote to Luise Kautsky that she was slowly “losing her nerves” and “could not sleep” from the excessive worry. She increasingly feared that something

99 Cited in: Frölich 1954, p. 274.

100 Luxemburg 1951, p. 69. In the letter from Wronke written 15 May 1918.

101 This was the letter from 18 October 1918. Cf. Luxemburg 1951, p. 70.

had happened to Zetkin or her sons: “I have enough courage to cope with whatever may happen to me. But to bear the sorrows of *others* and Clara’s too, if ‘God forbid!’ anything should happen — for that I lack courage and strength.”¹⁰² The letter from that period excruciatingly bears witness to just how much Luxemburg was at her wit’s end. On 20 October an amnesty was issued for convicted political prisoners, and on 23 October Karl Liebknecht was freed, but that amnesty did not apply to Rosa. In fact, the order for her imprisonment was renewed at that very time. While the old Germany was collapsing, Luxemburg sat out the following few weeks of her sentence in jail.

After the sailors’ uprising in Kiel on 3 November 1918, a powerful rebellious impulse spilled over into a general strike in factories and on ships within a few days. When the governor of Kiel was forced to abdicate a day later, a council of workers, and sailors ruled over the town. Despite the German government being convinced that this was an isolated rebellion, they sent — among others — the social democrat Gustav Noske to “restore order.” The wave of uprisings in the revolutionary upswing won over town after town. After Kiel, a revolution occurred in Hamburg and Bremen, later spreading to Köln, Hannover, and München, before finally sweeping over Berlin on 9 November. In the moment when Wilhelm II escaped to the Netherlands and abdicated, the president of the SPD, Friedrich Ebert, sat as head of the government of the German Reich. At that time, in the name of a majority social democracy (even against Ebert’s wishes!) Philipp Scheidemann proclaimed a (bourgeois) republic from the balcony of the Reichstag. He wanted to forestall Liebknecht’s intention to proclaim a socialist republic, which he had just uncovered. And precisely, around an hour, or so later, not knowing of Scheidemann’s notorious act, Liebknecht proclaimed a socialist republic. He did so at 4 p.m., from the balcony of the Berlin City Palace, before a vast mass of workers. At precisely that

moment, a group of workers in Wrocław forced the prison administration to free Rosa Luxemburg.¹⁰³

But nevertheless, despite the revolutionary upswing and breakthrough of the Left, the political situation was very sensitive, with continual tensions. On the one hand, reactionary forces were using all means possible to attempt to prevent the development of the revolution, while on the other hand the Spartacists were religiously sticking to their organisation's line. It was important to ensure that there was a public medium available that could transmit news and ideas daily, and cautiously warn of contra-revolutionary conspiracies. The Spartacists had taken over the "local advertising newspapers" and renamed them *Die Rote Fahne* (The Red Flag).¹⁰⁴ As the newspaper was set up, it came up against strong and continual obstacles. The new government even used wartime rules on the strict consumption of paper as a political instrument in the fight against the Left. The first issue finally came out on 18 November 1918, with Rosa Luxemburg, and Karl Liebknecht signing off as the editorial board. In *The Red Flag*, Luxemburg engaged in a ruthless reckoning with the enemies of the revolution. She followed the revolution's development, its weaknesses, and breakthroughs, with every discussion focused on the final goal — seizing power. In this way *The Red Flag* became "part of a revolutionary history, a torch, a whip, a warning shot."¹⁰⁵

In the issue of *The Red Flag* dated 14 December 1918, the Spartacus League's programme was put together by Rosa Luxemburg, with the title *Was will der Spartakusbund?* (What does the Spartacus League Want?)¹⁰⁶ When this programme was exhibited two weeks later at the founding congress of the Communist Party of Germany, she explained that she wanted to impose the ideas of the *Communist Manifesto* once again, precisely as she wrote in the programme:

103 *Ibid.*, p. 279.

104 *Ibid.*, p. 284.

105 *Ibid.*, p. 285.

106 Luxemburg 1974d.

In this hour, socialism is the only salvation for humanity. The words of the Communist Manifesto flare like a fiery prophecy above the crumbling bastions of capitalist society: socialism or barbarism!¹⁰⁷

The main points in the Spartacus League's programme raised awareness of the final means of defence in an almost cold-blooded fashion. They acted as a call directed at the working class, almost as a kind of moral call to arms against the eruption of "anger, bloodshed, violence, and political slaying."¹⁰⁸ In a struggle between life and death this can never be completely avoided, but through this process, an awareness should be cultivated of the deep responsibility for the actions decided on in such struggles. Rosa Luxemburg had always been clear that it is "stupid and crazy to believe that capitalists will voluntarily subject to the proclamation of socialism." Consequently, the "proletarian revolution," she wrote, "is at the same time the death knell for all servitude and oppression. That is why all capitalists, Junkers, petty bourgeois, officers, all opportunists and parasites of exploitation and class rule rise up to a man to wage mortal combat against the proletarian revolution."¹⁰⁹

Precisely in that revolutionary-mobilising wake, foreshadowing the imminent horrors of fascism and its close link to imperialism, without hesitation Luxemburg concluded the Spartacus League's programme:

Proletarian, arise! To the struggle! There is a world to win and a world to defeat. In this final class struggle in world history for

107 Ibid., p. 262. In general, the phrase "socialism or barbarism" presented here, was first forged in *Junius* ("Bourgeois society stands at the crossroads, either transition to socialism or regression into barbarism."; Luxemburg 1974b, p. 175). Luxemburg attributed this phrase to Engels, but more recent research demonstrates that the phrase most likely originated with Karl Kautsky. See Angus 2014.

108 Luxemburg 1974d, p. 264.

109 Ibid.

E1 the highest aims of humanity, our slogan toward the enemy is: Thumbs on the eyeballs and knee in the chest!¹¹⁰

When *The Red Flag* published the Spartacus League's programme, the events sequentially occurred at breakneck speed, with the counter-revolution already in full-swing. In the middle of November, a treaty was concluded — between Ebert (the president of the social democracy) and the Army Supreme Command — that had the interim goal of ruling over the Berlin workers. There were numerous bloody fights that month between warmongering troops from the front and workers. At the military training grounds, special units received training, in strict isolation from the civil population. As Frölich describes them:

The photographs show their typical structure: officers, old soldiers from the front for whom war has become an occupation, and lots of young recruits aged around 18 and above. These were thrown to slaughter at the last minute, like a blind giant, agitating against the “enemy within.”¹¹¹

The counter-revolutionary forces proclaimed war on the Spartacists every day. Bolshevism and Spartacism were treated as a dangerous threat to citizens. It was exclaimed in a shocked tone that “Bolshevism desires the socialisation of women!”¹¹² An atmosphere of killing and persecution was created, with the papers openly calling for the lynching of the Spartacist leaders. On walls, front-line soldiers stuck up posters with ideas such as the following:

Workers, citizens!
The fatherland is on the verge of collapse!
Save it!

110 *ibid.*, p. 269.
111 Frölich 1954, p. 292.
112 *ibid.*, p. 293.

It isn't threatened from outside, but from within:
 By the Spartacist group.
 Kill their leaders!
 Kill Liebknecht!
 Then you will have peace, work and bread.¹¹³

The first two weeks of January 1919 were filled with these bloody clashes in Berlin. During the night of 8–9 January, *The Red Flag's* editorial offices were attacked with machine guns. As a result of this, the editorial board immediately moved out. As Nettel describes, a “horror-atmosphere” reigned during these days.¹¹⁴ For reasons of safety, Luxemburg constantly changed her address, but even this did not prevent her from continually writing and publishing. Rosa Luxemburg's final article, *Die Ordnung herrscht in Berlin* (Order Prevails in Berlin), appeared in the 14 January issue of *The Red Flag*.¹¹⁵ We can infer from that text that Luxemburg was prepared for all eventualities and had foreseen that her death was unavoidable and near. We can read her final words as her dying message, heroically completed:

“Order prevails in Berlin!” You foolish lackeys! Your “order” is built on sand. Tomorrow the revolution will “rise up again, clashing its weapons,” and to your horror it will proclaim with trumpets blazing: I was, I am, I shall be!¹¹⁶

Just one day after publishing these words, in the evening of 15 January, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were arrested at one of their latest Berlin addresses, in Mannheimer Street. Despite their having been housed in secrecy, a large number of paid informants were researching their movements day and night. The Anti-Bolshevik League founded by Russian barons began to launch propaganda against the workers'

113 In: *ibid.*, p. 294.

114 Nettel 2019, p. 776.

115 Luxemburg 1974e.

116 *ibid.*, p. 307.

leaders. They had a Germany-wide network of spies at their disposal.¹¹⁷ Besides the numerous others, the SPD had their own espionage organisation, named the Auxiliary Service of the SPD, *Section 14*.¹¹⁸

After the German ultranationalist paramilitary unit, the *Freikorps (Free Corps)* had arrested them, they were taken to the Hotel Eden under guard. The military espionage organisation, the *Garde-Kavallerie-Schützen-Division* (Guards Cavalry Rifle Division) was residing there. Captain Waldemar Pabst was there, the right hand of the “National Commissioner,” the social democratic Minister of Defence Gustav Noske, who had already organised their murder. Regarding his decision to order the murder of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, Pabst said in an interrogation in 1962, without any regrets:

In January 1919, I attended a KPD [German Communist Party] meeting where Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were speaking. I gathered the impression that they were the intellectual leaders of the revolution, and I decided to have them killed. Following my orders, they were captured. [...] I do maintain that this decision is morally and theologically legitimate.¹¹⁹

Although he admitted to ordering the murders of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, Pabst was never charged.¹²⁰ Following his instructions, they first hit Liebknecht with their guns. Then when he was semi-conscious, they took him by car to Tiergarten park, where they killed him. His body was taken to a local morgue and handed over as the body of an unknown man. After Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg was next in line. They took her from the hotel and one soldier hit her twice with his gun, causing brutal head injuries. As she was not yet dead, the lieutenant Kurt Vogel finished her with a bullet

117 Frölich 1954, p. 319.

118 *Ibid.*

119 In: Schütrumpf 2008, p. 8.

120 For a more detailed analysis of Rosa Luxemburg’s murder, cf. Gietinger 2019.

to the head.¹²¹ Her body was then driven to Tiergarten and thrown in the Landwehr canal. The water pushed her on to the shore on 31 January 1919 in a completely decomposed and unrecognisable state. Rosa Luxemburg was finally buried on 13 June 1919, in the Berlin cemetery Friedrichsfelde.

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121 See the photograph dated 16 January 1919, in which Luxemburg's murderers were filmed sitting at a table in the Eden hotel, giving a toast saying cheers. In: Nettl 2019, p. 763.

E1

**A MARXIST-FEMINIST
INTERPRETATION OF
ROSA LUXEMBURG'S
THEORY OF
ACCUMULATION**

E2 This kind of work [bringing up children, or their housework] is not productive in the sense of the present capitalist economy no matter how enormous an achievement the sacrifices and energy spent, the thousand little efforts add up to. [...] As long as capitalism and the wage system rule, only that kind of work is considered productive which produces surplus value, which creates capitalist profit. [...] This sounds brutal and insane, but corresponds exactly to the brutality and insanity of our present capitalist economy. And seeing this brutal reality clearly and sharply is the proletarian woman's first task.

– Rosa Luxemburg, *Women's Suffrage and Class Struggle*¹

INTRODUCTION²

Luxemburg did not write many texts on the so-called “woman question.”³ However, that does not mean that her work should be omitted from a feminist-revolutionary history. On the contrary, it would be highly inaccurate to claim that her works and, specifically, her critique of political economy lack numerous reference points for the development of progressive feminist policy and female emancipation, throughout history, and today. With Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital* in mind and her strong emphasis on the vibrant dynamics

1 Luxemburg 2004d, p. 241.

2 This article is a slightly altered version of the paper titled “From theory of accumulation to social reproduction theory: A case for Luxemburgian feminism,” published in *Historical Materialism*, 2017 (25/4), pp. 37–64.

3 Restricting ourselves to the available English translations, several works/speeches from the period from 1902 to 1914 in relation to the “woman question” can be identified: “A Tactical Question” (1902), “Russian Women Workers in Battle” (1902), “Address to the International Socialist Women's Conference” (1907), “Women's Suffrage and Class Struggle” (1912) and “The Proletarian Woman” (1914). All texts are from Hudis and Anderson (eds.) 2004, except “Russian Women Workers in Battle” present in Hudis, Fair-Shulz and Pelz (eds.) 2018. Here we shall refer to all five essays.

between capitalist and non-capitalist space, let us try to take Luxemburg's theory a step further. Is it possible to speak of a "Luxemburgian feminism"? Is it possible to speak of a Marxist-feminist approach to Luxemburg's theory of accumulation or "Luxemburgian feminism"? Is it possible to establish a connection between the Luxemburgian "dialectics of spatiality" and social reproduction theory? Can the framework of the Luxemburgian critique of political economy be used for the Marxist-feminist analysis of women's reproductive work and its economic role in the reproduction of accumulation? In this essay the above questions shall be analysed in more detail through a) a presentation of Luxemburg's critique of bourgeois feminism and, subsequently, b) an established connection between crucial elements of Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital* and social reproduction theory.

On the eve of World War One, after around fifteen years of preparation, Rosa Luxemburg published *The Accumulation of Capital: A Contribution to an Economic Explanation of Imperialism* (Berlin, 1913),⁴ her most comprehensive theoretical work and one of the most relevant and original classical works in Marxist economics. *The Accumulation of Capital* was a follow-up to the *Introduction to Political Economy*,⁵ which Luxemburg wrote while preparing her lectures on political economy held between 1906 and 1916 and delivered at the German Social Democrats' Party School.

Briefly put, *The Accumulation of Capital* sought a way to scientifically study and explain the conditions of capitalist monopolisation, extended reproduction, and imperialism, while taking into account the dynamic relation between capitalist and non-capitalist spatiality. Luxemburg held that Marx had neglected capital's spatial determination, while in his critique of capital, Marx had focused exclusively on time, i.e. the temporal dimension to the internal dynamics of capitalist

4 Luxemburg 2015a.

5 Hudis (ed.) 2013. Also translated as the *Introduction to National Economy* (see Mattick 2003).

reproduction. In contrast, Luxemburg “sought to show that capital’s inner core consists of the drive to consume what is external to it — non-capitalist strata.”⁶ Luxemburg’s goal was to articulate her own theory of extended reproduction and critique of classical economics, which would not only contain a temporal but also a “spatial analytical dimension.” Peter Hudis has termed this spatial determination of capitalist accumulation the “dialectics of spatiality.”⁷

Throughout her work, especially in her texts *Introduction to Political Economy*, *The Accumulation of Capital*, and *Anti-Critique*, Rosa Luxemburg emphasised the importance of understanding the strong inherent drive of capitalism to destroy non-capital related communal formations in order to reproduce itself. She vividly demonstrated that imperialism was inseparable from the law of motion of capitalism. In her critique of Marx’s formulae of expanded reproduction at the end of Volume Two of *Capital* and in her effort to further develop his temporal theory of accumulation, she underlined that “Imperialism is the spatial correlate to capital’s cooptation of time.”⁸ In this essay we will argue that Luxemburg’s critique of political economy, framed around a “dialectics of spatiality,” might also be used for an analysis of specific registers of social reproduction. Our goal is to suggest a specific Marxist-feminist reading of Luxemburg’s theory of accumulation based on an analysis of the dynamic relation between household and market, in order to propose an analytical method that goes beyond usual feminist approaches that are often based on several isolated episodes from Luxemburg’s life. We believe that a feminist analysis of Luxemburg’s theoretical and revolutionary legacy should strive to make use of what her theory of accumulation actually offers us and what is worth comprehending in Marxist-feminist terms as we try to understand and change the world around us.

6 Hudis 2014.

7 *Ibid.*

8 *Ibid.*

Before we move to the Marxist-feminist analysis of Luxemburg's theory of accumulation, let us briefly make a few introductory remarks concerning the specific phenomenology of the reception of *The Accumulation of Capital* once it had been published. The moment the text appeared, friends and enemies alike piled sharp criticism upon Luxemburg for noting Marx's "glaring inconsistencies," which, she believed, were "defects" of his approach to the problem of accumulation and expanded reproduction from the second volume of *Capital*.⁹ In a letter to Franz Mehring referring to critiques of *The Accumulation of Capital*, she wrote:

In general, I was well aware that the book would run into resistance in the short term; unfortunately, our prevailing "Marxism," like some gout-ridden old uncle, is afraid of any fresh breeze of thought, and I took it into account that I would have to do a lot of fighting at first.¹⁰

Lenin stated that she "distorted Marx,"¹¹ that "she was mistaken on the theory of the accumulation of capital,"¹² and her work was interpreted as a revision of Marx, in spite of the fact that it was Luxemburg who mounted a vehement attack on revisionist tendencies within the German SPD. In opposition to the social democrats who grouped around "epigones" and an opportunistic current of political practice that "corrected" Marx into a gradual dismissal of socialist principles, revolutionary action, and internationalism. Luxemburg instead insisted

9 See the critiques of Anton Pannekoek, Gustav Eckstein, Otto Bauer and Karl Kautsky in Day and Gaido (eds.) 2012. On the other hand there were also positive responses; see Franz Mehring's review where he states: "While some reject the work as a complete failure, even denouncing it as a worthless compilation, others consider it the most significant phenomenon in socialist literature since Marx and Engels took up the pen. This reviewer belongs completely to the second group." Day and Gaido (eds.) 2012, p. 746.

10 Adler, Hudis and Laschitza (eds.) 2011, p. 324.

11 Quoted in Day and Gaido (eds.) 2012, p. 677.

12 Quoted in Brangsch 2019, p. 66.

on harnessing existing Marxist thought in order to offer more precise responses to and explanations of the growing economic crisis and newly emerging facts of economic life.

Although *The Accumulation of Capital* received severe criticism upon publication by the opportunistic-reformist and revisionist elements of the SPD, as well as by orthodox Marxists led by Karl Kautsky, it was not just her work that was criticised as ostensibly suspect in its Marxism. These critics often used cheap psychological and conservative arguments that were meant to undermine the credibility of Luxemburg herself and expose her as supposedly inept or insufficiently acquainted with Marxist texts. Werner Sombart provided a good example of this type of criticism, who stated in his *Der proletarische Sozialismus*:

The angriest socialists are those who are burdened with the strongest resentment. This is typical: the blood-thirsty, poisonous soul of Rosa Luxemburg has been burdened with a quadruple resentment: as a woman, as a foreigner, as a Jew and as a cripple.¹³

Even within the German Communist Party she was dubbed “the syphilis of the Comintern,” and Max Weber once “assessed” Rosa Luxemburg as somebody who “[belongs] in a zoo.”¹⁴ Raya Dunayevskaya, the author of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women’s Liberation, and Marx’s Philosophy of Revolution*, writes:

Virulent male chauvinism permeated the whole party, including both August Bebel, the author of *Woman and Socialism* — who had created a myth about himself as a veritable feminist — and Karl Kautsky, the main theoretician of the whole International.¹⁵

13 Quoted in Bulajić 1954, p. VIII.

14 Quoted in Thomas 2006, p. 154.

15 Dunayevskaya 1981, p. 27.

Dunayevskaya's gendered social analysis also cites a part of a letter in which Victor Adler writes to August Bebel on the subject of Luxemburg:

The poisonous bitch will yet do a lot of damage, all the more so because she is as clever as a monkey [*blitzgescheit*] while on the other hand her sense of responsibility is totally lacking and her only motive is an almost pervasive desire for self-justification.¹⁶

A certain type of conservative political tactic that amounted to attacking prominent women was evidently at play here, which in this case included a serious sexist dismissal of Luxemburg's work. Luxemburg was well aware of a "suffocating" sexism that pervaded not only society as a whole, but also the rank and file of the social democratic movement. In an article from 1902 entitled "A Tactical Question" she wrote:

In its [social democracy's] political and social life as well, a strong, fresh wind would blow in with the political emancipation of women, which would clear out the suffocating air of the current, philistine family life that rubs itself off so unmistakably, even on our Party members, workers and leaders alike.¹⁷

In the introduction to the *Anti-Critique* she stressed how no other Marxist book received such harsh reviews as her *Accumulation*:

Such a fate has befallen no other party publication as far as I know, and over the decades social democratic publishers have certainly not produced all gold and pearls. All these events clearly indicate that, in one way or another, there have been passions at work other than those of "pure science."¹⁸

16 Ibid.

17 Luxemburg 2004a, p. 236.

18 Luxemburg 2015b, p. 348.

Although this important aspect of social and gender history will not be further discussed here, its ubiquity needs to be borne in mind when discussing the theoretical and numerous quasi-theoretical critiques of *The Accumulation of Capital* and Luxemburg's experience as a woman theoretician, teacher, and revolutionary.

Bearing in mind that texts tackling the feminist dimension of Luxemburg's theorising are few and far between,¹⁹ here we shall try to make a contribution to Rosa Luxemburg's Marxist-feminism or to a so-called "Luxemburgian feminism." If feminist analyses of Luxemburg's works in general are rare, feminist engagements with her *The Accumulation of Capital* are even rarer.²⁰ If there is any interest in feminist interpretations of Luxemburg's work, it is usually defined in relation to her personal life and rather occasionally to her critique of political economy.

The fact that Luxemburg did not write much on the subject of the "woman question" certainly contributed to the fact that the subject of most interpretations of Luxemburg's feminism is linked to episodes from her life and personal relationships. These are, naturally enough, highly important subjects, particularly bearing in mind that historical scholarship has traditionally avoided women and their experiences. However, here we aim to step away from that sort of interpretation in order to analyse Rosa Luxemburg's

19 Further "complications" are added to by the fact that those existing analyses, like the one developed by Hannah Arendt, do not work within the Marxist tradition. Arendt's interpretation is focused primarily on Luxemburg's personal life, portraying a woman who encounters a range of sexist barriers within the top layer of the Party. Even if we were to agree with Arendt's indisputable claim that Luxemburg's life as a woman in a man's world of politics was extremely difficult, a claim in line with our introductory remarks to this essay, we are still faced with Arendt's questionable methodological conclusion, wherein she suggests that Luxemburg should not be interpreted in the Marxist tradition and that it "might be doubted that she was a Marxist at all." See Arendt 1968, p. 38.

20 We must bear in mind the contributions from Dunayevskaya 1981, and Haug 2007.

writings on women, with the larger aim of showing how Luxemburg's *Accumulation* can be creolised through its entering into conversation with contemporary Marxist-feminist social reproduction theory. While developing this kind of approach we will ask questions such as: What can Luxemburg's few texts and written speeches tackling the "woman question" tell us about her feminism? Can we use these works to identify discursive entry-points that can be used to establish a connection with her critique of political economy? The answers to these questions affirm a Luxemburgian feminism or even an updated version of Luxemburg's fierce criticism of bourgeois feminism as failing to address class inequalities in the context of neoliberalism. In the following section we shall attempt to identify Luxemburg's underlying position vis-à-vis the so-called "woman question" in order to move to the second part of the essay, in which we shall establish a connection with her theses on the accumulation of capital and the role of non-capitalist spatiality in multilevel processes of social reproduction.

LUXEMBURG'S CRITIQUE OF BOURGEOIS FEMINISM

Luxemburg did not exclusively devote herself to organising female workers' groups; her activity in that field was obscured by the fact that she usually worked behind the scenes. She fervently supported the organisational work of the socialist women's movement, understanding the importance, and difficulties of work-life for female emancipation. She usually showed her support through cooperation with her close friend Clara Zetkin. In one of her letters to Zetkin we can read how interested and excited she was when it came to the women's movement: "When are you going to write me that long letter about the women's movement? In fact I beg you for even one short letter!"²¹ Relating to her interest in the women's movement, she stated in one of her speeches: "I can only

marvel at Comrade Zetkin that she [...] will still shoulder this workload.”²² Finally, while rarely acknowledging herself as a feminist, in a letter to Luise Kautsky she wrote: “Are you coming to the women’s conference? Just imagine, I have become a feminist!”²³

Besides the fact that she was working “behind the scenes” and privately showing her interest in the “woman question,” she still engaged herself in an open discussion concerning the class problem faced by the women’s movement. In a speech from 1912 entitled “Women’s Suffrage and Class Struggle,” Luxemburg criticised bourgeois feminism and assertively pointed out:

Monarchy and women’s lack of rights have become the most important tools of the ruling capitalist class [...]. If it were a matter of bourgeois ladies voting, the capitalist state could expect nothing but effective support for the reaction. Most of those bourgeois women who act like lionesses in the struggle against ‘male prerogatives’ would trot like docile lambs in the camp of conservative and clerical reaction if they had suffrage.²⁴

The question of women’s suffrage along with the philosophy of the modern concept of law based on the premise of individual rights played an important role in the so-called big transition from feudalism to capitalism. For Rosa Luxemburg, the question of women’s suffrage is a tactical one, as it formalises, in her words, the already established “political maturity” of proletarian women. She goes on to emphasise that this is not a question of supporting an isolated case of suffrage that is meaningful and completed, but of supporting universal suffrage through which the women’s socialist movement can further develop a strategy in the struggle for

22 Luxemburg 2004c, p. 237.

23 Cited in Dunayevskaya 1981, p. 95.

24 Luxemburg 2004d, p. 240.

the emancipation of women and the working class in general. However, the liberal legal strategy of achieving suffrage was not class inclusive and did not aim to overturn the capitalist system. Far from it. For Luxemburg, the metaphysics of individual rights within the framework of a liberal political project primarily serves to protect private ownership and the accumulation of capital. Liberal rights do not arise as a reflection of actual material social conditions: they are merely set up as abstract and nominal, thus rendering their actual implementation or application impossible. As she contemptuously argued: “the[y] are merely formalistic rubbish that ha[ve] been carted out and parroted so often that [they] no longer retain any practical meaning.”²⁵ Luxemburg rejected the traditional definition of civil rights in every sense, including the struggle for women’s suffrage, and she pointed to the definition’s similarity with the struggle for national self-determination:

For the historical dialectic has shown that there are no “eternal” truths and that there are no “rights” [...]. In the words of Engels, “What is good in the here and now, is an evil somewhere else, and vice versa” — or, what is right and reasonable under some circumstances becomes nonsense and absurdity under others. Historical materialism has taught us that the real content of these “eternal” truths, rights, and formulae is determined only by the material social conditions of the environment in a given historical epoch.²⁶

What Rosa Luxemburg suggests in the aforementioned quotation from “Women’s Suffrage and Class Struggle” pertains to classical problems initially raised and debated within the framework of socialist feminism from the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth century: the role of bourgeois feminism in capitalist reproduction and the use of feminist goals as a means of achieving profit. Whenever capitalism is in crisis or

25 Luxemburg 2004a, p. 235.

26 Luxemburg 1976, p. 111.

needs “allies” for its restoration or the further accumulation of capital, it integrates marginalised Others into its legal liberal political form, be they women, children, non-white races, or LGBTIQ people — whoever is disposable or potentially useful for further commodification:

Thus, one of the fundamental conditions for accumulation is a supply of living labour that matches its requirements, and that capital sets in motion [...]. The progressive increase in variable capital that accompanies accumulation must therefore express itself in the employment of a growing workforce. Yet where does this additional workforce come from?²⁷

According to Luxemburg’s economic theory, the capitalist mode of production reproduces itself by creating surplus-values, the appropriation of which can only be hastened by a concomitant expansion in surplus-creating capitalist production. Hence, it is necessary to ensure that production is reproduced in a larger volume than before, meaning that the expansion of capital is the absolute law governing the survival of any individual capitalist. In *The Accumulation of Capital* Rosa Luxemburg establishes the premises for understanding capitalism as a social relation that permanently produces crises and necessarily faces objective limits to demand and self-expansion. In this sense she developed a theory of imperialism based on an analysis of the process of social production and accumulation of capital realised via various “non-capitalist formations”:

There can be no doubt that the explanation of the economic root of imperialism must especially be derived from and brought into harmony with [a correct understanding of] the laws of capital accumulation, for imperialism on the whole and according to universal empirical observation is nothing other than a specific method of accumulation [...]. The

essence of imperialism consists precisely in the expansion of capital from the old capitalist countries into new regions and the competitive economic and political struggle among those for new areas.²⁸

Unlike Marx, who abstracted the actual accumulation by specific capitalist countries and their relations via external trade, Luxemburg claims that expanded reproduction should not be discussed in the context of an ideal-type capitalist society.²⁹ In order to make the issue of expanded reproduction easier to understand, Marx abstracts foreign trade, and examines an isolated nation, to present how surplus value is realised in an ideal capitalist society dominated by the law of value which is the law of the world-market.³⁰

Despite Luxemburg's objections, she nevertheless realises that Marx's analysis of the problem of variable capital serves as the basis for establishing the problem of the law of the accumulation of capital, which is the key to her social-eco-

28 Luxemburg 2015b, pp. 449–50.

29 She poses a question that directly criticises Marx and his “bloodless schemes” of the relations between the two departments ($c + v + s$) in the second volume of *Capital*: “How then can one correctly conceive of this process and its inner laws of motion by using a bloodless theoretical fiction that declares this entire milieu, and the conflicts and interactions within it, to be non-existent?” See Luxemburg 2015b, p. 450. As underlined by Krätke 2006, p. 22: “Any effort to improve or enlarge the Marxian schemes is futile. In her view, the Marxian reproduction schemes were fundamentally flawed and no reformulation could save them.”

30 Although Luxemburg rightly claims that Marx does not deal with external trade in detail, she disregards the fact that he unequivocally placed the society he researched and analysed in the context of the global economy: “Capitalist production never exists without foreign trade. If normal annual reproduction on a given scale is presupposed, then it is also supposed together with this that foreign trade replaces domestic articles only by those of other use or natural forms, without affecting [...] value ratios [...]. Bringing foreign trade into an analysis of the value of the product annually reproduced can therefore only confuse things, without supplying any new factor either to the problem or to its solution.” See Marx 1992, p. 546.

conomic theory. Equally, that line of argument allows for an understanding of the highly important distinction between productive and non-productive labour,³¹ without which it would be almost impossible to understand social reproduction theory as a specific reaction to neoclassical economics and its partnership with liberal feminism. Precisely for this reason, in *The Accumulation of Capital* Luxemburg quotes Marx:

The laboring population can increase, when previously unproductive workers are transformed into productive ones, or sections of the population who did not work previously, such as women and children, or paupers, are drawn into the production process.³²

This type of economy and the liberalistic inclusion of the “labour population” obviously has low democratic potential and lacks any aspiration to emancipate the oppressed class. Rights are allocated very cautiously, on an identity-level basis (as opposed to the material social level), and exclusively according to a formula designed primarily to safeguard the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. Bourgeois women from the early nineteenth century did not have the abolition of the class system in mind; on the contrary, they supported it. Moreover, bourgeois feminism affirms capitalism and one’s own class position, and disregards the rights of working-class women. The processes of accumulation of

31 The difference between productive and non-productive labour is interpreted through Marx’s concept but also through an elaboration of Savran and Tonak 1999, and Cámara Izquierdo 2006. The authors state that the aforementioned difference presents the basis for understanding capitalism as a whole, and particularly an analysis of specific traits in twentieth-century capitalism. The emphasis is on the duality of the problem, depending on whether we refer to “productive labour in general” or “productive labour for capital.” This distinction is considered very important in understanding the relation between reproductive (domestic) labour and the problem of non-productive labour.

32 Luxemburg 2015b, p. 587.

capital, the modern state, the aspirations of liberalism, and then bourgeois feminism move along the same path:

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At a formal level, women's political rights conform quite harmoniously with the bourgeois state. The examples of Finland, of American states, of a few municipalities, all show that a policy of equal rights for women has not yet overturned the state; it does not encroach upon the domination of capital.³³

Luxemburg explains that the role of the women's suffrage movement is reactionary not only because of the simple failure of bourgeois women to support the struggle for workers' rights and the social rights of proletarian women, but also because of their active participation in affirming the oppression of women. Such active participation arises from social relations based on the reproductive work of women within the household sphere. The central methodological point of Luxemburg's theory of economics consists of an assertive clash with classical political economics. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that the subjects of her critique also include precisely the social phenomena and processes that enable capitalism — liberalism and the role of the bourgeoisie in the transition from feudal monarchy to capitalism. Rights, laws, and modern-day social contracts are institutions that played a key historic formal role in the affirmation of capitalism.³⁴ But also, bourgeois feminism plays an important role in the maintenance of capitalist class-structures. On the one hand, the bourgeois class of women only demands that women in the ruling class have the political right to vote. From an individualist standpoint they hold no interest in tackling the issue of the position of women in general or class-related causes of the oppression of women. On the other hand, in Luxemburg's opinion, the role of bourgeois women is very

33 Luxemburg 2004b, p. 244.

34 For a more detailed elaboration of a social-historical approach to Western liberal theory and modern political thought, with an emphasis on so-called transition, compare with Wood 2012.

important and it maintains an active presence in perpetuating the established social relations:

Aside from the few who have jobs or professions, the women of the bourgeoisie do not take part in social production. They are nothing but co-consumers of the surplus value their men extort from the proletariat.³⁵

By opposing the goals of bourgeois women to the goals supported by proletarian women, Luxemburg clarifies that the problem here is not only gendered, i.e. a “woman problem,” but also a classed problem. Talking about women in general while feigning universality will not do, because gender analysis without class analysis is reductive. Women belonging to the higher classes mostly do not participate in production within the framework of market processes and thus consume surplus value, which has been drained through the exploitation of the working class; thus their role in the reproduction of social relations is of a “parasitic nature”:

They are parasites of the parasites of the social body. And co-consumers are usually even more rabid and cruel in defending their “right” to a parasite’s life than the direct agents of class rule and exploitation.³⁶

Thus, Luxemburg adds, the only social role of bourgeois women is to maintain and reproduce the existing order. In almost all cases they do not participate in social reproduction; they rather function as parasitic co-consumers. Empowered with the vote, they therefore viciously supported the interests of the ruling class, shoring up the bourgeois state and the domination of capital:

The women of the property-owning classes will always fanatically defend the exploitation and enslavement of the working people by which they indirectly receive the means for their socially useless existence.³⁷

Luxemburg is not alone in her sharp criticism of bourgeois feminism. Clara Zetkin, Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya, and Alexandra Kollontai, among others, have contributed a great deal, particularly if we bear in mind their standpoint towards the reactionary attitudes of liberal women regarding the emancipation of women. Socialist women's universal demands arose as an effect of social material motives and causes, ultimately finding more in common with men belonging to the same class than with women of a higher class. This was despite the fact that, historically, the appearance of women on the labour market was frequently seen as an attempt to introduce cheaper competition for the male labour force, which in turn influenced a decline in the price of labour. Considering the problem of the female labour force, socialist women point out that the workload of women is additionally aggravated by reproductive labour within the household sphere. One could almost speak of the "first wave" of, or "early" social reproduction theory, when Zetkin states: "Women are doubly oppressed, by capitalism and by their dependency in family life."³⁸

THE DIALECTICS OF SPATIALITY MEETS SOCIAL REPRODUCTION THEORY

Luxemburg's Marxist standpoint in all her analyses of economics, particularly in *The Accumulation of Capital*, stems from a critique of classical economics and capitalist social formations. In her social-economic analysis of labour and the labour theory of value, Luxemburg, in the wake of Marx, intro-

37

Ibid.

38

Cited in Riddell 2014.

duced a distinction between productive and non-productive labour. One such example comes from her interpretation of the societal role of the family. Referring to Engels, in a speech from 1912, she differentiated between labour in the market sphere and labour in the household sphere, thereby laying the foundations for early social reproduction theory:

This kind of work [bringing up children, or their housework] is not productive in the sense of the present capitalist economy no matter how enormous an achievement the sacrifices and energy spent, the thousand little efforts add up to. This is but the private affair of the worker, his happiness and blessing, and for this reason non-existent for our present society. As long as capitalism and the wage system rule, only that kind of work is considered productive which produces surplus value, which creates capitalist profit. From this point of view, the music-hall dancer whose legs sweep profit into her employer's pocket is a productive worker, whereas all the toil of the proletarian women and mothers in the four walls of their homes is considered unproductive. This sounds brutal and insane, but corresponds exactly to the brutality and insanity of our present capitalist economy. And seeing this brutal reality clearly and sharply is the proletarian woman's first task.³⁹

In her article "The Proletarian Woman," referred to earlier, Luxemburg focused on the issue of the "political maturity" of working-class women and the ways in which ruling-class individualism during the transition from feudalism to capitalism strongly influenced the restructuring of the family and the gender division of labour within it. She continued to argue that bourgeois women, who existed without friction alongside the processes of establishing and formalising private ownership, had no interest in struggles relating to the inclusion of women in that "great workshop of social production," and also how "[f]or the property-owning bourgeois woman, her house is

the world.”⁴⁰ Due to the very fact that bourgeois women do not participate in society’s economic processes, Luxemburg highlighted that the historic appearance of women in the productive sphere is marked by a highly conservative reflex. It is a structure of capitalism that is now being additionally formalised with regard to feudalism through a specific and entirely new pattern of social reproduction. As Lise Vogel put it, a huge gap between the sphere of surplus production and the domestic sphere was established in capitalism:

While women have historically had greater responsibility for the ongoing tasks of necessary labour in class-societies, it is not accurate to say that there is some universal domestic sphere separate from the world of public production. In class-societies based on agriculture — feudalism, for example — the labour processes of necessary labour are frequently integrated with those of surplus production. It is the development of capitalism [...] that creates a sharp demarcation between the arena in which surplus-labour is performed and a sphere that can properly be called domestic. To the extent that analysts assert the universality of some invariant domestic sphere, they are in fact projecting onto non-capitalist class-societies a distinction that is the product of capitalist relations of production.⁴¹

Thus, women appeared for the first time in history as a labour force that reproduces both the capitalist mode of production and the working class itself, by caring for employed and unemployed family members (children and the elderly). Luxemburg underlines the key analytical issue we face if we are to attribute the disadvantageousness of women’s position simply to the ideology of the “antagonism” between women and men, instead of to the capitalist mode of production. That warning illustrates how wrong and reductive it is, according to Luxem-

40 Luxemburg 2004b, p. 243.

41 Vogel 2013, p. 152.

burg, to interpret the oppression of women trans-historically and in line with liberal feminism, instead of interpreting it as a product of the antagonism between capital and labour:

The call for women's equality, when it does well up among bourgeois women, is the pure ideology of a few feeble groups without material roots, a phantom of the antagonism between man and woman, a quirk. Thus, the farcical nature of the suffragette movement.⁴²

Lise Vogel takes a very similar critical stance in *Marxism and the Oppression of Women*:

In the theoretical sphere, the first requirement for further forward motion is to abandon the idea that the so-called woman question represents an adequate category of analysis.⁴³

Luxemburg begins *The Accumulation of Capital* with "The Problem of Reproduction." She points out that the problem of the reproduction of the entirety of social capital was identified by Marx in his theory of political economy.⁴⁴ She goes on to explain that reproduction is repetition, "renewal of the process of production," hence implying that

the regular repetition of production is the general precondition and foundation of regular consumption, and is thus a prerequisite of human civilisation in each of its historical forms.⁴⁵

In order for society to survive it needs to reproduce. Social reproduction theory points out that reproduction may allude either to the process of the regeneration of the conditions of production that enable society to survive, or to the regen-

42 Luxemburg 2004b, p. 243.

43 Vogel 2013, p. 142.

44 Luxemburg 2015a, p. 43.

45 Ibid.

eration of humankind.⁴⁶ To simplify, using the example of classic industrial labour, this would mean that reproduction is used to secure work operations, its regularity, investment in machines, factories, and raw materials. When machines break down, they need to be repaired, replaced, or have new ones purchased in their place. Moreover, the labour force that delivers work-based production and that reproduces social relations must be secured. Similarly to the machines, when labourers grow old or die they are “replaced,” while those of working age need to eat, rest, and renew their strength in order to be fully ready for work:

Ordinarily, generational replacement provides most of the new workers needed to replenish this class, and women’s capacity to bear children therefore plays a critical role in class society.⁴⁷

In order to present my arguments, which draw a connection between Luxemburg and social reproduction theory in a clear manner, I shall elaborate on the ways in which I intend to use its key points and notions.⁴⁸ We are presented with the task of placing “the reproduction of labour-power in the context of overall social reproduction,” due to this aspect of reproduction not having been adequately dealt with in the contemporary tradition of socialist theory, as pointed out by Lise Vogel.⁴⁹

In the capitalist mode of production, the capitalist secures through the market the means needed for the operation of a factory and workers’ wages. Wage labour enables the working class to secure/consume items and services necessary for life — like food, clothes, covering household expenses — however, those needs are met in the household,

46 Čakardić 2018.

47 Vogel 2013, p. 135.

48 Here, we have in mind elaborate analyses of Marxist feminism that directly relate to social reproduction theory: Vogel 2013; Bhattacharya (ed.) 2017; Gimenez 2019; Arruzza 2013; Ferguson and McNally 2013.

49 Vogel 2013, p. 142.

not on the market. Moreover, in order to eat, one needs to take into account the preparation of food; if one buys clothes, they need to be washed and maintained; and, also, physical care needs to be provided to elderly members of the family and/or children. Unlike labour in the “productive” sphere of society, domestic labour belongs to the “reproductive” sphere. And to conclude, both capitalists and labourers consume, in one way, or another, food prepared at home; their clothes must also be washed, or depend on some other kind of reproductive labour. Consequently, their life and work in the productive sphere is mediated through a range of activities belonging to the domestic sphere. Much of the problem lies in the fact that both the working and capitalist classes perceive reproductive work as requiring no explanation, as taken for granted, and “natural.” This structural and spatial gap between the reproductive and productive spheres of society points to the fundamental reason for the oppression of women in capitalism. On what basis can we make this claim?

Historically, the reproduction of the working class is mostly undertaken by women outside of the productive sphere and is unpaid.⁵⁰ The reproduction of the working class in capitalism represents three aspects of necessary labour: a) maintenance of direct producers, b) maintenance of non-labouring members of the subordinate class (usually implying caregiving to old people, children, and the unemployed) and c) generational renewal of workers and their lives (with birth taken for granted as the biological reproduction of the new labour force).⁵¹ This indicates the ontological level of the problem: activities not defined as labour (food

50 It should be noted that the reproduction of labour-power in family households represents only one possible mode of renewing the bearers of labour-power. Vogel points out that labour camps and dormitory facilities can also be used to maintain workers, and that the workforce can be replenished through immigration or the enslavement of foreign populations, as well as by the generational replacement of existing workers. Cf. Vogel 2013: pp. 144–45.

51 *Ibid.*, p. 150.

preparation, cleaning, care, breast-feeding, giving birth) and lacking any market value are *not* considered labour. The mathematics is clear here: if the labour in question is transferred to, for example, a capitalist with an employee, he would be obligated to organise a range of activities and to invest time and money that are traditionally free and a burden to the household. In other words, adding more work to women who are already burdened. The question of an alternative, more egalitarian distribution also requires a significant shift in attitudes towards the market, changes that cost money, and are thus not feasible.

Marxist-feminism has tackled the problem of social reproduction in various ways.⁵² Feminists supporting the *Wages for Housework* campaign in a dual-system manner offered one approach. A second (materialist) approach is found in Christine Delphy's characterisation of social reproduction as a series of actions within the domestic sphere, which she views as a separate mode of production. Finally, Lise Vogel offers a "unitary" approach, in which social reproduction is taken to mean the simultaneous reproduction of the labour force and class society.

Autonomist feminists involved in the *Wages for Housework* campaign initiated discussion in the early 1970s in relation to the unpaid labour of women. This was announced in the pamphlet by Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*,⁵³ and the debate was followed later by a text written by Silvia Federici, "Wages against Housework,"⁵⁴ and the book *The Arcane of Reproduction* written by Leopoldina Fortunati.⁵⁵ For our current purposes, we shall shortly refer only to Fortunati.

Leopoldina Fortunati, just like Rosa Luxemburg, started from Marx's formula $c + v + s$ in an attempt to further

52 For a more detailed overview, see Arruzza 2013, especially chapters 3 and 4, pp. 79–124.

53 Dalla Costa and James 1975.

54 Federici 2012.

55 Fortunati 1996.

develop his labour theory of value by focusing on the role of reproductive labour in the production of surplus value. Although she misinterpreted the model of the labour theory of value (as was also the case with the *Wages for Housework* campaign, which tried to apply the abstract model to individual households) by equating productive and reproductive work, she nevertheless accomplished a veritable epistemological leap in both feminist and Marxist theory by pointing to the dialectics of the market and the household: accumulation is impossible without reproductive labour.

The basic analytical unit of Fortunati's political-economic theory functions through (what she calls) the "obvious antithesis" — production/reproduction. She believes that the capitalist mode of production and its cycles cannot be fully analysed while holding on to the dual ontology in which production connotes value, and reproduction non-value. Moreover, according to her understanding, this would represent an omission and a methodological error in Marxism. Criticising the naturalisation argument (which understands reproductive work as natural, as opposed to produced by production relations) in this sense also means casting doubt on the thesis that only production creates surplus value — unlike reproduction which, according to the Marxist interpretation, has no such potential. In short, Fortunati questions the assumptions of orthodox Marxists who claim that reproductive labour is a precondition of value production, but valueless in itself.

Lise Vogel as a response to the domestic-labour debate argues that reproductive labour does not produce surplus value, only use-values. She also uses Marx's theory of accumulation to offer an alternative interpretation of women's oppression. Although the domestic-labour debate produced a view of domestic work as "productive labour — a process or set of activities upon which the reproduction of (capitalist) society as a whole depends,"⁵⁶ we could hardly find a more important contribution to the socio-materialist

foundations of women's oppression in terms of Marxian political economy. Equally so, this debate undoubtedly served as a springboard for *Marxism and the Oppression of Women*, particularly in so far as it offered a "unitary" analytical framework to theorise domestic labour as an integral part of the capitalist mode of production.

When Luxemburg (much like other socialist feminists from the late nineteenth century) criticises bourgeois feminism and states that the oppression of women is an integral part of the capitalist mode of production, therein developing her theory of accumulation as a dynamic between capitalism and non-capitalism, her analysis affirms the conclusions of the "unitary" theory of Lise Vogel.⁵⁷ While the reasons behind Luxemburg's and Vogel's drive to expand the conceptual reach of the key categories of *Capital* differ, their specific, individual contributions, and their expansions of *Capital* can be connected. On the one hand, Vogel proposes extending the key categories of *Capital* that relate to researching the biological, social, and generational reproduction of labour-power, whereas Luxemburg attempted to create a theory of capitalist reproduction starting from Marx and drawing on a dialectics of spatiality. It seems that both elements of these contributions are crucial to grasping the wider notion of reproduction, or the accumulation of capital, respectively. Although domestic labour produces only use-value and not exchange-value, and therefore does not directly produce surplus value, domestic labour "is [possibly] its own mode of production, operating according to a distinct pre- or non-capitalist labour."⁵⁸ The commodification of do-

57 As Ferguson and McNally state, Brenner rightly criticises Vogel "for her overly narrow review of the socialist tradition on the 'women question'," disregarding, for example, Emma Goldman and Alexandra Kollontai. See Ferguson and McNally 2013, p. XXXII. We could add a similar complaint to the case of Vogel's treatment of Rosa Luxemburg, not only in relation to the "woman question," but also when it comes to Luxemburg's political economy.

58 Ferguson and McNally 2013, p. XX.

mestic labour presents a key point of connection between the Luxemburgian critique of political economy and social reproduction theory: only when a large part of the population is dispossessed and forced to sell its labour-power on the market, including the female workforce, is it possible to talk of the systematic process of capital accumulation.

The market, in order to accumulate capital, is maintained by spreading to non-capitalist spaces, integrating populations that were not traditionally part of the market into the productive sphere. The specificity of the historical-materialist method, which places the feminist understanding of reproductive labour within the framework of the dialectics of spatiality, is that it offers an explanatory analysis of the systemic correlation of women's work and the reproduction of accumulation. If we wish to look at reproductive labour through the lens of the Luxemburgian analysis of surplus realisation, it would be necessary to take into account relations towards the household as a non-capitalist space, i.e. its commodification and surplus accumulation.

Domestic labour is not a productive part of the market and can, for the purposes of this discussion, be treated as an "external" element of the capitalist economy. It does not have a value or a price and ontologically it does not have the status of labour. The commodification of domestic labour could — in the Luxemburgian framework — be viewed as a typical example of the expansion of capitalism into a non-capitalist field. From the mid-1970s onwards, social welfare was increased through the inclusion of households in market circulation. A whole variety of economic activities was concentrated around domestic work, care, and similar services previously offered in a non-capitalist manner. The neoliberalisation of the market through the introduction of part-time labour contracts, the flexibilisation of the workforce and deregulation of labour and welfare legislation are all phenomena that relate to the 1970s crisis and stagflation, when the neoliberal regime was being formalised, in part, through women's labour, and the commodification of domestic work.

From the mid-1990s onwards this trend is even more present.⁵⁹ Furthermore, since 2007 a number of programmes have been adopted to mobilise the female workforce — including non-EU/non-western migrant women in the national labour market — following a European directive and seeking to secure resources provided by EU integration funds.⁶⁰

Vogel points out in her theory of social reproduction that the family as a social-economic formation is not an exclusive unit that allows for the reproduction of capitalism. She stresses that labour-camps and dormitory facilities can also be used to maintain workers and that the workforce can be replenished through immigration or the enslavement of foreign populations, as well as by the generational replacement of existing workers.⁶¹ Her historical-materialist approach traces the arguments of Luxemburg who, in her analysis of imperialism, insists on the historicisation of capitalist accumulation and its tendencies to spread and “adjust” to the requirements of reproduction. As such, this historicisation of a case demonstrates that, with time, social units that were traditionally not a constitutive element of the productive sphere become integrated into market circulation. Female migrant labour is certainly one such example and it illustrates how such labour is useful for carrying out reproductive labour. It should be noted that from the mid-1970s the growth in female migration to Western Europe “represents the unintended consequence of the *Gastarbeiter* [lit. guest worker] systems established in northern Europe after World War II.”⁶² This system continues to be employed in the informal sector, for the famous three “D” types of jobs: dirty, dangerous, and demanding. In terms of the articulation of general civic integration policies that promote migrant women’s employment, the social reproduction sector (care and domestic work) appears to be the only branch of the

59 Farris 2017, p. 135.

60 *Ibid.*, p. 124.

61 Vogel 2013, pp.144–45.

62 Farris 2017, p. 147.

economy where these women are encouraged to work, or even volunteer.⁶³ Sara Farris notes:

Since the late 1980s [...] European women have entered the paid labour force *en masse*. Albeit at different paces and in different forms in each country, the majority of working-aged women are now in some form of employment outside the household. Furthermore, the immigrant population is no longer predominantly male; on the contrary, in some European countries women constitute the majority of migrants. [...] The demand for carers, cleaners, child- and elderly-minders, or social reproducers in general has grown so much in the last thirty years that it is now regarded as a phenomenon brought about by the global crisis of social reproduction as well as the main reason for the feminisation of migration.⁶⁴

Given that today half of the world's migrant population are women, we may confidently speak of the phenomenon of the feminisation of migration.⁶⁵ Within the framework of the “new imperialism” and neoliberalism, female migrant work — a cheap and precarious labour force — becomes the ideal force for the reproduction of capitalism. The integration of the migration problem into an analysis of capitalism facilitates an understanding of the “new imperialism,” by pointing to a necessary link between the accumulation of capital and imperialism. The concept of social reproduction contributes to the analysis of capitalism in its entirety because it integrates both market and non-market aspects of capitalism. It should be noted that, despite the fact that migrant women were integrated into the productive sphere through the market, their appearance on the international labour market in no way constitutes competition for the male working class. That is because they mainly participate in a

63 Farris 2017, p. 130–31.

64 Farris 2015.

65 Morrison, Schiff and Sjöblom 2008.

work sector connected with reproductive labour. On the one hand, Western upper-class women have attained “emancipation” and have thus outsourced their domestic work to migrant women; but on the other hand, by outsourcing that labour they treat migrant women, whose labour they buy, as they might any commodity on the market.⁶⁶ History repeats itself through the paradox of liberal feminism. In the midst of a crisis in social reproduction, the labour of migrant women in households and in care-work primarily plays a support role to the female workforce in the Global North and migrant women are called upon, as Farris underlines, “to ‘clean up’ this whole mess — literally.”⁶⁷

As opposed to the earlier trend of women leaving their homes and home countries as part of the family, today women undertake this move independently, often accompanied by children.⁶⁸ As such, the dynamics of the countries of the Global South are to be understood through the concrete consequences of migration processes, bearing in mind the role of women in such vibrant dynamics. This is a highly specific configuration of capitalism in the context of its imperialist tendencies, achieved through cheap female caretaking labour that is materialised in rich countries. Thus, contemporary analyses of political economy should broach the phenomenon of female migrant work, as it enables us to understand how the crisis of social reproduction functions and the ways in which modern-day trends of accumulation are being realised using the relations between, as Luxemburg put it, capitalist, and non-capitalist worlds. This relation is particularly strengthened in the specific connection of capital and gender, as Selma James has stated: “It is impossible to speak of the relation of women to capital anywhere without at the same time confronting the question of development versus underdevelopment.”⁶⁹

66 Farris 2015.

67 Farris 2017, p. 138.

68 Eisenstein 2010, p. 158.

69 James 2012, p. 104.

Luxemburg devotes a lot of attention to the problem of foreign trade in her critique of political economy, hence developing arguments for her theory of imperialism. Even if we were to disagree with her claim that imperialism is based on the problems of insufficient demand and under-consumption, which cause capitalist crises, her undisputed and topical thesis on the relation of crises and elements “outside” capitalism through which the system is stabilised or crises are overcome, remains:

Growing profits (surplus value) meet the barrier of realisation resulting from insufficient aggregate demand. In other words, there is a tendency to create a surplus of accumulation that has no rational use, or, from the other perspective, to create the demand gap that does not realise the production made. In order to reduce this barrier it is necessary to find, or even create a demand that would realise the production, and thereby capitalist profits. Luxemburg presented examples of forming these (additional) artificial sources of demand: primarily expansion to non-capitalist economies, but also militarisation of the economy and international loan expansion.⁷⁰

This is precisely the reason why I have insisted on the importance of the “dialectics of spatiality” and of the dynamics between productive and reproductive labour, particularly within the framework of neoliberalism. Similar historical examples, such as that of the transition from feudalism to capitalism, which also unfolds through the transformation of social reproduction that is presently, of course, capitalist, enable insight into the modern-day relations of productive and non-productive labour:

Once the small peasants have been ruined, domestic production frequently becomes the main occupation of men, who work for capitalists either under the putting-out system or

as wage-laborers in the factory, while agricultural production devolves entirely on the women, old people, and children.⁷¹ E2

Luxemburg considers the integration of the non-capitalist elements of society into the circulation of the capitalist economy as necessary to achieve capital growth, but the mode of integration varies throughout the course of history. At a certain point in time, the productive sphere of the economy, or rather its non-productive “external” counterpart, encompasses different populations in specific ways. Contemporary global capitalism’s tension between the developed and developing worlds should be considered through the connection between capitalism and the non-capitalist social environment:

On this basis, the conceptions of internal and external markets, which have played such a prominent role in the theoretical disputes around the problem of accumulation, can be revised. Internal and external markets certainly each play a great and fundamentally differentiated role in the course of capitalist development — not as concepts of political geography, however, but rather as ones of social economy. From the standpoint of capitalist production, the internal market is the capitalist market, this production is itself the purchaser of its own products and the supplier of its own elements of production. The external market, from the point of view of capital, is the non-capitalist social environment, which absorbs its products and supplies it with elements of production and labor-power.⁷²

Neoliberalism brings certain innovations into this relation, innovations that David Harvey called “creative destruction.”⁷³ One such example is the commodification of domestic labour and female migrant labour. Moreover, despite the fact that the aforementioned quote dates from 1913, it still bears the stamp

71 Luxemburg 2015a, pp. 595–6.

72 Luxemburg 2015a, p. 335.

73 Harvey 2005.

of cold reality and not merely in relation to agriculture in Third World countries and the role of female labour within it, but also in relation to the actual consequences of the dichotomy of productive and non-productive labour. The historicisation of the capitalist mode of production and the tendencies of the “new imperialism” indicate the contemporary relevance of Luxemburg’s thesis concerning the dialectics of spatiality, particularly once the theory of reproduction is integrated into it.

CONCLUSION

This essay functions as a contribution to Marxist-feminist analyses that are methodologically based on Luxemburg’s critique of political economy, but also as a contribution to contemporary social reproduction theory that aims to integrate Luxemburg’s legacy alongside that of Marx.

The aspects of Luxemburg’s political economy were analysed as a problem of the “dialectics of spatiality,” which serves as a key link between her critique of political economy and social reproduction theory. In order to establish a connection between Luxemburg’s dialectics of spatiality and the feminist interpretation of the role of reproductive labour in surplus-creation, the essay opened with an overview of Luxemburg’s critique of bourgeois feminism, or the basis of her socialist feminism. Since we argued that Luxemburg’s contributions to feminism were of an intermittent and incomplete nature, this essay has “filled gaps” in the existing structure of her critique of bourgeois feminism and thus functioned as an introduction to a concept we have termed “Luxemburgian feminism,” based on the link between Luxemburg’s theory of accumulation and social reproduction theory.

In a certain way, we discussed the Luxemburgian critique as a tool for a materialist analysis of the connections between the household and the market. Although it may seem that both frameworks function as independent analytical elements, the contemporary methods of capital accumulation and women’s reproductive labour are two interconnected processes. This is illustrated in the essay using the example

of women's reproductive work, particularly with a view to its commodification, as is typical of neoliberalism. We demonstrated the importance of discussing contemporary methods of capital accumulation, bearing in mind migration processes and their role in social reproduction. Moreover, it would be also be very interesting to analyse the problem of commodification (or to use the "law" of the dialectics of spatiality) when it comes to the contemporary feminist movement. From the 1970s onwards, in line with the process of the neoliberalisation of society, the feminist movement established itself as a useful niche market.⁷⁴ The NGO-isation of social movements undeniably meant their inclusion in the market. The market, which had become actively state-regulated as part of the process of neoliberalisation, either through "outsourcing" (with the state transferring its tasks in the field of welfare to NGOs, such as women's groups working with victims of violence) or the direct inclusion of women's organisations in the circulation of the market (as with women entrepreneurs or free-market feminism). In a way, the problem of which Luxemburg warned has continued. Bourgeois feminism from the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries underwent shifts that have, through the neoliberalisation of social movements and in the absence of a systematic critique/struggle, recurrently pointed to tangible support for processes of the reproduction of the capitalist market.

Although Rosa Luxemburg's enduring support for feminist socialist activity was not a central feature of her published writing, as she focused her public speeches and writings mainly on non-gendered arguments about class, her brief public statements on suffrage and the fundamentally class-inflected interests of different sectors of women read together with her dialectics of spatiality outlined in *Accumulation* to offer ample resources for the development of a contemporary Marxist-feminist social reproduction theory. Ironically, even if she mainly avoided public reflections on the

specificity of being female, it informed her attention to the ongoing reliance of capitalist exploitation on its outsides in ways that made her ideas especially useful for understanding the limits of bourgeois feminism under neoliberal conditions.

As neoliberalism successfully exploits gender for the purposes of the class interests of capital, we are now faced with the important task of designing anti-capitalist strategies based on resistance to the market and its reproduction, thereupon focusing simultaneously on the domestic sphere and reproductive processes within the framework of the capitalist mode of production. At a time when systematic analyses of the relation between the market and the state — either at the national or international level — are necessary points of departure for a discussion of any short or long-term alternatives to the capitalist mode of production, Luxemburg's dialectics of spatiality, and her connection to social reproduction theory seem to present not only a valuable introductory reference, but also a political model well-suited to organising alliances among parallel structures and aligning their progressive goals.

ROSA LUXEMBURG IN YUGOSLAVIA: A FATE OF FIVE FOOTNOTES

E3 In Dalmatia today, you can still see a woman carrying a heavy load on her back with a *strong* man complacently riding his donkey alongside, puffing away at his pipe. [*my emphasis*]

— Rosa Luxemburg, *Introduction to Political Economy*¹

Rosa Luxemburg stands before us as one of the greatest women characters in world history. She is a shining example, demonstrating that only the socialist movement can offer the path towards the emancipation of women in general and towards the development of humanity's highest intellectual potential.

— Milan Gavrić, *Foreword*²

On one occasion in 1984, when Branko Horvat was asked for his thoughts on the particular economic situation in Yugoslavia in the year 2000, he replied:

There are two possible scenarios. In the year 2000 we will not have any unemployment and we will be one of the leading European countries; we will have a socio-economic system that we will proudly call socialist. If, however, no lessons are learned from the present-day political experience — which is in line with the assumptions of the second extreme scenario — then we will lurch from crisis to crisis, we will remain at the tail end of Europe, the number of unemployed will increase, and with them demoralisation too; self-management will be discredited, and with it all the accomplishments flowing from the revolution. The final result of this scenario is frightening to the extent that I do not dare think about it any further.³

From today's position, many years after the interview and precisely 19 years after the year 2000, a great deal could be written about this quote. At the very least, we might speak in an analytic way about socialist society, Yugoslav self-management, and then about the breakdown of Yugoslavia and everything caused by the accomplished "second" frightening scenario: of war, capitalism, and crises. Or of the precision of Horvat's visionary style, which left a powerful impression and a bitter taste in people's mouths. But we will not discuss these topics here. Instead, we will simply stop at a side detail: the mentioned discrediting of the revolution's accomplishments. We will use this as a motif for switching to our main topic — an analysis of the reception of Rosa Luxemburg's works in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Of the "first" and "second" scenarios, after the latter evidently came to pass, Yugoslav, and world revolutionary history slowly but surely disappeared from post-Yugoslav history, as Horvat foresaw in his quote. Sidestepping the intention of offering a more ambitious, comprehensive analysis of representations of revolutionary heritage in post-Yugoslav theory and society, we will take advantage here of the opportunity to single out Rosa Luxemburg from general revolutionary history. In just a few passages, we will analyse Luxemburg's presence in the socialist Yugoslavia — but not after the 1990s as due to decades of silence and the lack of existence of a more serious interest in Luxemburg, this task would be pointless. In the following sections, we will try to answer questions such as: Did her ideas form a serious point of reference in Yugoslavia, either in a theoretical, or political sense? How much was written about her and how? Were her works translated into Serbo-Croatian? This attempt to systematise the presence of Luxemburg and her works in Yugoslavia should be understood as just a sketch, an intervention, a modest introduction to more serious future research on Rosa Luxemburg in the post-Yugoslav region.⁴With

4 While we will focus on just a few of the most accessible texts written about Rosa Luxemburg from 1945 in this essay, it is

also worth drawing attention to some of the less accessible archival materials. It is interesting to note that many workers' and communist newspapers wrote obituaries just a few days after the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, and also marked the anniversaries of the murders over the years that followed. Let me refer to a few examples from the earlier years, in the period I researched from 1919 to 1929: 1919 — "Karl Liebknecht i Rosa Luxemburg," *Radničke novine* [Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, *The Workers' Newspaper*], II/1919, no. 4; "Roza Luksemburgova," *Naprej* [Rosa Luxemburg, *Forward*], III/1919, no. 137; "Lipkneht i Luksemburg," *Radničke novine* [Liebknecht and Luxemburg, *The Workers' Newspaper*], XVII/1919, no. 6; "Karl Liebknecht i Roza Luxemburg, dvije žrtve revolucije," *Sloboda* [Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg: Two Victims of the Revolution, *Freedom*], Zagreb, III/1919, no. 7; "Liebknecht i Roza Luksemburg ubijeni. Berlin, 3. januara," *Epoch* ["Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg murdered. Berlin 3 January," *Epoch*], II/1919, no. 10; "Roza Luksemburgova," *Naprej*, III/1919, no. 1919; Karl Liebknecht i Rosa Luxemburg," *Radničke novine*, II/1919, no. 3; "Dvije lješine," *Radničke novine* [Two Corpses, *The Workers' Newspaper*], I/1919, 9; "Roza Luksemburg, Libkneht i njihove ubice," *Sloboda* [Rosa Luxemburg, Liebknecht and their killers, *Freedom*], Novi Sad, VII/1919, no. 7. 1920 — "Karl Liebknecht i Roza Luxemburg: 15. siječnja 1919–15. siječnja 1920," *Radnička riječ* [Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg: 15 January 1919–15 January 1920, *The Workers' Word*], 2/1920, 3; "Dva mučenika," *Komuna* [Two martyrs, *Commune*], 1/1920, 6; Živko Jovanović, "Posle jedne godine," *Radničke novine* [After one year, *The Workers' Newspaper*], 18/1920, 16; Sima Marković, "Spomen veče u slavu K. Libknehta i R. Luksenburg," *Radničke novine* [The eternal memory and glory of K. Liebknecht and R. Luxemburg, *The Workers' Newspaper*], 18/1920, 14; "Herojima revolucije: Karlu Libknehtu i Rozi Luksenburg," *Radničke novine* [Heroes of the revolution, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, *The Workers' Newspaper*], 18/1920, 11; Sima Marković, "Slava herojima revolucije!," *Borba* [Celebrate the heroes of the revolution!, *The Struggle*], 1920; "Život i rad Karla Libknehta i Roze Luksenburg," *Radničke novine* [The life and work of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg; *The Workers' Newspaper*], 18/1920, 11; Živko Jovanović, "Rozi Luksenburg," *Radničke novine* [For Rosa Luxemburg, *The Workers' Newspaper*], 18//1920, 11. 1921 — "Uspomeni Roze Luksemburg i Karla Lipknehta," *Socijalist* [In memory of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, *Socialist*], 1/1921, 11; "Posmrtna svečanost: za spomen na Rozu Luksemburg," *Radnička borba* [A post-humous ceremony: in memory of Rosa Luxemburg, *The Workers' Struggle*], 14/1921, 7. 1922 — "Roza Luksemburg: glas iz groba – 15.1.1919. – 15.1.1922.," *Slobodna riječ* [Rosa Luxemburg: a voice from the grave – 15.1.1919–15.1.1922, *Free Word*], 1/1922, 3; "Umorstvo u Eden hotelu," *Slobodna riječ* [Murder in the Eden Hotel, *Free Word*], 1/1922,

this in mind, let us begin with an answer to the final question, namely of what translations of Luxemburg's entire works are available to us today.⁵

If we read through the previous two essays in this collection and pay attention to their corresponding bibliographies, we can gain a really good sense of the state of translations of Luxemburg's works into Serbo-Croatian. Let us, then, try and systematise this impression and all the available translations somewhat more seriously, and present them here in one place.⁶ The first translations of Rosa Luxemburg emerged very early on, while Luxemburg was still alive. The texts "Two Methods of Trade-Union Policy" (published in 1906)⁷ and "Socialism and the Churches" (published in 1908)⁸ were translated in the magazine *Radničke novine* [*The Workers' Newspaper*], the organ of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, a section of the Communist International. Since this was a daily newspaper, these translations unfortunately cannot be obtained today.⁹ In

23. 1923: "15. januar 1919. godine," *Borba* [15 January 1919, *The Struggle*], Zagreb, II/1923, no. 1-2; "Četiringodišnjica smrti Karla Liebknehta i Rose Luksemburg," *Radnička štampa* [The four-year anniversary of the death of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, *The Workers' Press*], 3/1923, 44. 1926 – "Dva junaka," *Gideon* [Two heroes, *Gideon*], VII/1926, no. 1, p. 34-37; Mirko Kus-Nikolajev, "Profil Rose Luxemburg," *Bankarstvo* [The profile of Rosa Luxemburg, *Banking*], III/1926, no. 5, p. 235-37. 1927. godina – Konstantin Atanasijević, "Pre osam godina," *Novi istok* [Eight years ago, *The New East*], January 1927, no. 1; "Na grobu Spartakusa," *Novosti* [At Spartacus' grave, *News*], VII/1927, no. 1880. 1928: "Karl Liebknecht i Rosa Luxenburg," *Borba* [Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, *The Struggle*], Zagreb, III (VII)/1928, no. 3; "V spomin Karlu in Rozi: 15.1.1919. -15.1.1928.," *Enotnost* [In memory of Karl and Rosa, *Unity*], Ljubljana, III/1928, no. 3. 1929: "Kraj Lipknehta i Rose Luksemburg," *Samouprava* [The end of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, *Self-management*], 16/1929, 7.

5 I would like to thank Marko Pustaj, who helped me immensely in locating the archival and less accessible materials on Rosa Luxemburg.

6 Although we have researched the existing available translations, it is entirely possible that this list is not complete.

7 Cf. Luxemburg 1907.

8 Cf. Luxemburg 1905.

9 "Dva metoda u sindikalnoj politici," *Radničke novine* [Two met-

addition, as the communist press rarely listed the translators' names, we can only guess that this translation was completed by Dimitrije Tucović. As the *Radničke novine* [*The Workers' Newspaper*] was printed at a press coordinated within a section of the Communist International, and the first translation available today is precisely that of Tucović, it is possible that he also translated the two aforementioned articles.

As concerns the first translation of one of Luxemburg's texts available to us today, as earlier mentioned, the first was Tucović's translation of the essay *Jedinstvo pokreta* [The Unity of the Movement], published in Belgrade in 1909, as part of the Socialist Bookshop. This was released in a publication with the name *Partija i sindikati* [The Party and the Trade Unions], in which, besides Luxemburg, Tucović included his translations of Karl Kautsky and Anton Pannekoek. This exceptional endeavour should not surprise us at all, as Dimitrije Tucović was one of the founders of the Serbian Social Democratic Party [Srpska socijaldemokratska partija — SSDP], which was a member of the Second International. Thanks to this linking of organisations, Tucović directly collaborated with Luxemburg, Lenin, Kautsky and others, and occasionally wrote for *Die Neue Zeit* and *Vorwärts*. The extent to which Tucović's SSDP stuck to the Spartacist line at a decisive moment is evidenced by the following details. Prior to World War I and when the majority of representatives of the European Social Democratic Party approved their governments' loans, the SSDP was the only party of the Second International, which publicly declared itself as being completely against the war, voting against the war loans in their national parliament.¹⁰ As Miloš Baković Jadžić writes:

hods of trade-union policy, *The Workers' Newspaper*], VI/1906, no. 143, p. 2-3; "Crkva u monarhiji i u republici," *Radničke novine* [Socialism and the churches, *The Workers' Newspaper*], 8/1908, no. 25.

Baković Jadžić 2014, p. 8.

The Party began an open fight against the war, both in parliament and outside of it. This was not met with much understanding by the general public, but was met with delight by those socialist groups who were opposed to the war, the Russian Bolsheviks, the Bulgarian “tight” socialists, the German fraction around Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, the left minorities in France, Holland, Italy etc.¹¹

The first confirmed translation of Rosa Luxemburg after Tucović,¹² was the writer Antun Branko Šimić. He translated one of Luxemburg’s prison letters sent to Sophie Liebknecht in the middle of December 1917 and was published in the second issue of *Književnik* [Writer] in 1924.¹³ Alongside the translation of the letter, Šimić commented:

In Karl Kraus’ paper, *Die Fackel*, I found this letter from Rosa Luxemburg, which she wrote to Sophie Liebknecht in December 1917 from Breslau’s prison. An ordinary letter, but an extraordinary example of humanity and poetry.¹⁴

Ten years would pass from Šimić’s translation to the printing of a collection called *Knjiga o Marksu* [A book about Marx], which Milan Durman translated in 1934.¹⁵ This collection is

11 Ibid.

12 We can also refer to a translation of the text from 1920, entitled “Štrajkovi masa” [The mass strike], published in the magazine *Nova istina* [New Truth] II/1920, no. 82, p. 8. *Nova istina* was the mouthpiece of the Socialist Workers’ Party of Yugoslavia and of the Central Labour Union Council for Croatia and Slavonia.

13 Cf. Antun Branko Šimić, “Jedno pismo Roze Luksemburgove” [One of Rosa Luxemburg’s Letters], *Književnik* [Writer], I/1924, no. 2, p. 63–65.

14 Ibid., p. 63.

15 We also refer to some of the seldom available texts of Luxemburg translated in the Yugoslav press from 1919 to 1932: “Protiv nemačke socijalne demokratije” [Against German Social Democracy], *Radničke novine* [The Workers’ Newspaper], XVII/1919, no. 138, p. 1–2; “Porazi revolucija” (Iz eseja “Red vlada u Berlinu”) [The Defeats of Revolution, from the essay

important because its original editor, David Rjazanov, among other contributions included Luxemburg's text *Zastoj i napredak u marksizmu* [Stagnation and Progress of Marxism]. This translation was republished in 1974 in Belgrade on 6 October, with a foreword by Vera Pilić from which we actually learn about the first edition of the collection.¹⁶

While A.B. Šimić was one of the first to alert us to Rosa Luxemburg's letters, only after World War II was more of her correspondence translated. Two different editions of the same prison letters that Luxemburg wrote during the period from 1916 to 1918, were published in 1951. The Zagreb version was published by Zora, the letters translated by Vera Georgijević,¹⁷ and the afterword was written by Ervin Šinko. The Serbian Cyrillic version was published by Kultura, and translated by Ivan Ivanji, with a foreword composed by Mitra Mitrović. Only four years later, in 1955, Kultura's edition also released a translation of Luxemburg's most comprehensive work, *The Accumulation of Capital: A Contribution to an Economic Explanation of Imperialism*, with her *Anti-Critique* added as a supplement. Milan Gavrić was responsible for both translations into Serbo-Croatian and wrote a foreword for the occasion.

“Order prevails in Berlin!” *Omladinska borba* [Youth Struggle], II/1924, no. 1–2, p. 3; “Borba masa. Štrajk masa, partija i sindikati” [“Mass Struggle: The Strike of the Masses, Party and Trade Unions”], *Omladinska borba* [Youth Struggle], II/1924, no. 1–2, p. 5; “Vloga militarizma v akumulaciji kapitala” [The Role of Militarism in the Accumulation of Capital], *Zapiski delavsko-kmetske matice* [Notes on Worker-Peasant Heritage], 1925, no. 1, p. 3–4 (this text from *The Accumulation of Capital* is found in this reprint: “Vloga militarizma v akumulaciji kapitala” [The Role of Militarism in the Accumulation of Capital], *Delo* [Work], VII/1926, no. 271 and “Vloga militarizma v akumulaciji kapitala” [The Role of Militarism in the Accumulation of Capital], *Prosveta* [Education], 19/1926, 174); “Jedno taktičko pitanje” [One Tactical Issue], *Radničko jedinstvo* [Workers' Unity], 8/1932, 12.

16 Pilić 1974, p. XXIV.

17 Some of her translations were also published in the journal *Polja* [Fields], 1958, IV, p. 28–30.

In the collection *Marxism and Revisionism*, edited by Gajo Petrović in 1958, in addition to articles by Bernstein, Lenin, Plekhanov, and Bebel, Luxemburg's text *Social Reform or Revolution?* was included. The manuscript was translated by Roland Knopfmacher, and the collection was published by the publishing house Naprijed. This translation would later reappear in another of Naprijed's editions, from 1974, in a collection of Luxemburg's most famous books, pamphlets, and polemics, with the title *Selected Writings*. The collection was edited by Ljubomir Tadić, who drafted a foreword for this edition.¹⁸ In this collection, besides the mentioned text *Social Reform or Revolution?* We can find the following articles translated by Hrvoje Šarinić: *Organisational Questions of the Russian Social Democracy; The Mass Strike, the Political Party and the Trade Unions; The Junius Pamphlet (The Crisis of Social Democracy); What does the Spartacus League Want?*, and *The Russian Revolution*. The final text in the collection, *Order Prevails in Berlin*, was translated by Ljubomir Tadić, the edition's editor.

Besides the mentioned titles, in Yugoslav publishing there are another two translations of the complete works of Rosa Luxemburg. The first is *Introduction to Political Economy*, published in 1975 in an edition by the *Zagrebački centar za kulturnu djelatnost omladine* [Zagreb Centre for Youth Cultural Activities], authored by Nadežda Čačinovič-Puhovski and Žarko Puhovski. The final translation of Rosa Luxemburg in Yugoslavia emerged in 1976.¹⁹ Once again, it was the book *Social Reform or Revolution?*, with the text *The Militia and*

18 A shortened version of this foreword is also found in Tadić's book *Da li je socijalizam naša sudbina? I druge rasprave i polemike o naciji, socijalizmu i federaciji* [Is Socialism Our Destiny? And Other Debates and Polemics on the Nation, Socialism and Federation], Belgrade: Multiprint, 1986.

19 We also refer to the 1982 Slovenian translation of one part of the second chapter of Luxemburg's dissertation *The Industrial Development of Poland*: "Russia's Economic Policy in Poland," translated by I. K., *Časopis za kritiko znanosti* [Journal of Critical Sciences], 1982, X, 49, p. 74–89.

Militarism added, translated by Milan Tabaković. A foreword to this edition was written by Predrag Vranicki, and the book was published by BIGZ.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the publishing house *Rad* [Labour] in Belgrade also published Paul Frölich's study of Rosa Luxemburg in 1954 (*Rosa Luxemburg: Her Life and Work*), translated by Božana Milekić.²⁰ This book, along with all its possible faults, remains — in addition to Netti's two tome biography — one of the most important studies of Luxemburg's work and life. Frölich completed the book, as Luxemburg's close collaborator, on the basis of her legacy documents.

If we take all the aforementioned Yugoslav translations of Rosa Luxemburg collectively, including her books, letters, or shorter studies, it is clear that the situation before Yugoslavia's collapse was incomparably better than today. Indeed, these old translations permit a fairly decent overview of Luxemburg's legacy. However, translations become outdated, while in the meantime, many of her previously unpublished works have been found, mostly in Polish, and German. Organising new translations and editions is of key importance.²¹ Yet alongside the mentioned primary literature, what about secondary sources? How was Rosa Luxemburg written about, if she was written about at all?²²

- 20 Some of Frölich's texts were translated into Macedonian on the fortieth anniversary of Luxemburg's murder and were published in the journal *Nova Makedonija* [New Macedonia], 15.1.1959, XV.
- 21 Compare with footnotes 5 and 6 in the first essay. Besides this, we mentioned that only about 15% of all materials have been translated into English.
- 22 Compare with the following works that we will not be able to cover in detail in this essay. They mostly consist of obituaries and texts connected with Luxembourg's letters: Zorislav Ugljen, "Marginalije uz 'Pisma iz zatvora' Roze Luxemburg," *Naprijed* [Notes on the Margins of Rosa Luxemburg's 'Prison Letters,' *Forward*], 5-X-1951, VIII, 41; N. S., "Sveščica poezije i čovječnosti," *Književne novine* [A Fascicle of Poetry and Humanity, *Literary Papers*], 10-XI-1951, IV, 43.; "Sudenja Libknehtovima, Bebelu i Rozi Luksemburg," *Borba* [The sentencing of Liebkne-

This final question leads us directly to this essay's subtitle. When preparing a text on the reception of certain Marxist theories in the Yugoslav context, and hence also on Rosa Luxemburg, an undoubtable point of departure has to be *Praxis*, the most important journal of Marxist theory and Marxist humanism in Yugoslav space.²³ In the introductory "Opening Words of the Korčula Summer School"²⁴, published in *Praxis* in 1969 (no. 1/2, p. 5) Ernst Bloch, writing in his typical style and warm spirit, stated:

cht, Bebel and Luxemburg, *The Struggle*] 24 and 25-XII-1955, XX, 304–305; Milan Gavrić, "Uspomena na Rozu Luksemburg i Karla Lipknehta," *Oslobođenje* [In memory of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, *Liberation*], 16 i 17-I-1959, XVI; Vladimir Milanović, "Lenjin–Libkneht–Luksemburg," *Narodna armija* [Lenin–Liebknecht–Luxemburg, *The People's Army*], 16-I-1959, XVI; Drago Mitrović, "Uspomena na Vladimira Iljiča Lenjina, Rozu Luksemburg i Karla Lipknehta," *Prosvjetni list* [In memory of Vladimir Ilych Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, *Educational Papers*], I-II-1959, VIII, 131; Dušan Nedeljković "Karl Lipkneht i Roza Luksemburg," *Politika* [Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, *Politics*], 15-I-1959, LVI; Bosa Pejović, "Lučonoše proleterske revolucije," *Glas rada* [The torchbearer's proletarian revolution, *The Workers' Voice*], 16-I-1959, XV, 3; Ljubomir Milin, "Smrt spartakovaca," *Dnevnik* [The death of the Spartacists, *Daily*], 1 do 18-V-1959, XVII; Ervin Šinko, "Karl Liebknecht i Rosa Luxemburg," *Polet* [Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, *Upswing*], 1959, VI, 7, p. 393–97; Erna Muser, "Dve veliki revolucionarki," *Medicinska sestra na terenu* [Two great women revolutionaries, *Nurse at work*], 1960, VII, 1, p. 46–50. (On Clara Zetkin and Rosa Luxemburg); Andrija Dujić, "Neka gledanja u međunarodnom radničkom pokretu na diktaturu proletarijata i sovjetski politički sistem povodom Oktobra," *Mogućnosti* [Some views on the international workers' movement, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the Soviet political system in October, *Possibilities*], 1964, XI, 8, p. 792–809.

23 All issues of *Praxis* are available here in PDF-format: <http://www.praxis-arhiva.net/digitalni-arhiv-praxisa-i-korculanske-ljetne-skole/>.

24 Alongside publishing a journal, the *Praxis* members also organised the Korčula Summer School, an annual philosophical Marxist meeting in which many of the most respected international philosophers participated. To mention just a few: Ernst Bloch, Herbert Marcuse, Henri Lefebvre, Karel Kosik & Jürgen Habermas, Erich Fromm, Henri Lefebvre, Lucien Goldmann and others.

E3 [T]here is something in Marxism with its own moral background, which pushes into fantasy, and with the help of its own revitalising moral and fantasy, it forms a warm current in Marxism. It is this which brings forth revolutionary rapture, which drives people, without scorn of death, to go to the barricades, for a transition from a realm of necessity to a realm of freedom, in which violence and power become redundant, in which ruling over people switches to managing things. Finally, there is space for the more important concerns that we have, when in place of the freedom to earn, a freedom from earning emerges, where leisure and muses become sisters of freedom. [...] [This warm current in Marxism] evidences itself in Rosa Luxemburg as a person, in a concrete utopia called Marxism.

So as not to be led in the wrong direction by Bloch's quote, with its beautiful concluding Luxemburgian gesture, please note that it does not in any way represent the general state of the reception of Rosa Luxemburg among the Praxis group members. It is rather an exception. Namely, in the ten years of its existence (from 1964 to 1974), Praxis did not publish a single text relating to Rosa Luxemburg, nor an overview, or review of any one of her works. If we go through the journal issues in more detail, we find a total of five lonely footnotes in which the members of the Yugoslav Praxis group refer to Luxemburg: In his text, "Pojam revolucije" [The Concept of Revolution], Mihailo Marković mentions *The Accumulation of Capital* (1969, no. 1/2), while in the same issue, in the essay "Socijalistička revolucija i politička vlast" [Social Revolution and Political Rule], Ljubomir Tadić states in a footnote that Luxemburg, "in a famous polemic with the Bolsheviks, decisively challenges the significance of the Jacobin model for proletarian revolution, calling it a *bourgeois dictatorship*" (p. 251), Predrag Vranicki in his review of Bloch and Lukács refers to Luxemburg, but focuses primarily on Lukács' interpretation of Luxemburg's theory (1969, no. 5/6), Zagorka Pešić-Golubović, in her article "Ideje socijalizma i socijalistička stvarnost" [The Idea of Socialism and Socialist Reality], states

Luxemburg's polemic with the Bolsheviks in a footnote, and in that context mentions the text, "The Russian Revolution" (1971, no. 3/4). And finally, in his overview "Sociologija i ideologija" [Sociology and Ideology], Nebojša Popov states that "the revival of Marxist theories of revolution and revolutionary practices found its dignified representative in Rosa Luxemburg, in her revolutionary activities" (1972, no. 3/4; p. 95).

There are several places in which Luxemburg is casually mentioned, literally just her name and without any elaboration of her ideas,²⁵ most often in a self-explanatory manner alongside Lenin, Bukharin, Trotsky, or Lukács. Similarly and without a more thorough analysis, Miladin Životić in his essay on Svetozar Marković & Dimitrije Tucović stated that, on his understanding, Tucović "in everything he wrote and did relating to the national question, [...] was closer to the views of Rosa Luxemburg than Lenin" (1972, no. 3/4; p. 515). If we search for *Praxis* articles that more seriously take into account the political and economic theory of Rosa Luxemburg, we will come to the realisation that members of the Yugoslav Praxis Group did not write such studies.²⁶ How, then, do we interpret the fact that the most prominent Yugoslav Marxist journal found itself in the position whereby it did not even dedicate a single article to Rosa Luxemburg?

The phenomenon is, in fact, extremely unusual, and multi-layered. On the one hand, *Praxis* members such as Ljubomir Tadić and Predrag Vranicki wrote more serious articles on Luxemburg elsewhere,²⁷ while Tadić, Puhovski,

25 E.g. Danko Grlić (1964, no. 1); Predrag Vranicki (1964, no. 1; 1964, no. 2); Dragoljub Mićunović (1965, no. 4/5); Ljubomir Tadić (1966, no. 3); Antun Žvan (1967, no. 5/6); Vjekoslav Mikecin (1969, no. 3/4; 1973, no. 3/4); Zoran Vidojević (1970, no. 5/6); Trivo Indić (1972, no. 1/2); Veljko Korać (1973, no. 3/4).

26 However, more serious references to Luxemburg's theory in *Praxis* can be found via these authors: Iring Fetscher (1969, no. 1/2); Franz Marek (1970, no. 1/2); Ernest Mandel (1970, no. 5/6); Lucien Goldmann (1971, no. 2); Jean-Michel Palmier (1971, no. 6); Daniel Guerin (1972, no. 1/2); György Lukács (1973, no. 3/4).

27 See footnote 18 in this essay and cf. Vranicki 1976. The foreword by Predrag Vranicki states that this text was taken from

and Čačinovič-Puhovski translated Luxemburg, as earlier emphasised. However, as concerns *Praxis*, Rosa Luxemburg's works were literally reduced to five footnotes. We can pose the perfectly valid question of whether this issue was sexist: was the editorial board aware of its "gender troubles"? Not only did *Praxis* fail to publish articles in the fields of the philosophy of gender and feminism, despite the extremely strong Yugoslav and global feminist movement and theory before and during the time when *Praxis* was publishing. There was a second problem — in the ten years in which *Praxis* operated, only fifteen women authors published their original academic articles in the journal.²⁸ It is possible that there was a combination of problems of a gender-political nature — the emphasis was always on Lenin (who in an almost self-explanatory manner stood alongside Marx and Engels), while Luxemburg only appeared as an accessory. Or could it have been the specific nature of Luxemburg's theses and positions, her radicalism not always in harmony with the dominant party line, which meant she therefore came to be of secondary, or even tertiary importance? Finally, perhaps the problem was epistemological, as *Praxis* focused less on economic topics, which Luxemburg most frequently wrote about. It is difficult to isolate a single reason with absolute certainty; it was surely a combination of the mentioned phenomena. Within *Praxis* there are evidently very few texts on Rosa Luxemburg — at best we may speak of barely ten pages — and so from these we cannot read anything of theoretical relevance about Luxemburg's work. Let us therefore try in the following section to give a number of widely available examples from other published texts, from literary criticism, and socialist, feminist, or anarchist literature.

his book *Historija marksizma [A History of Marxism]* (Zagreb: Naprijed, 1969), rather than it being especially written for the book on Rosa Luxemburg.

28 It consists of: Svetlana Knjazeva, Zagorka Pešić Golubović, Ágnes Heller, Ljerka Šifler, Vera Horvat-Pintarić, Marija Kraljević, Blaženka Despot, M.V. Ivanova, Raya Dunayevskaya, Jasminka Gojković, Eleonora Prohić, Erna Pajnić, Nadežda Čačinovič, Rada Iveković and Judith Adler.

This will give us at least some kind of general impression of the ways in which Luxemburg and her theories were written about in the Yugoslav context.

Let us begin this intervention with a single lesser known detail. The most significant Yugoslav intellectual of the twentieth century and probably the most influential Yugoslav writer and communist, Miroslav Krleža, wrote a poem just a few days after the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in memory of Liebknecht. It was published for the first time in 1919 in the third issue of the revolutionary journal *Plamen: polumesečnik za sve kulturne probleme* [Flame: Bimonthly for all the Cultural Problems]. This journal was edited by Miroslav Krleža and the writer August Cesarec, and it was based around a soviet role model, Anatoly Vasilyevich Lunacharsky's journal *Plamya* [Flame]. It advocated for avant-garde, mostly expressionist poetics, and Leninist revolutionary ideas. A poem with the name "Good Friday 1919: in Memory of Karl Liebknecht" ends with a strong revolutionary message "The Dawn. / International.," and on the level of ideas, it offers a faithful rephrasing of the New Testament legend of Jesus Christ's crucifixion on Golgotha.²⁹ History repeats itself in its desperate errors ("The bloody nails once again muck a man's hand"), as Krleža curses the mindless, reactionary world. An unmistakable comparison between Golgotha and Berlin is made in the lyrics:

In battle with a horde of false and guilty Gods
 The Son of Man fell.
 The crosses of Golgotha made by a circus
 from the Leperlands of Judea to the emperor's Berlin.

29 Miroslav Krleža, "Veliki petak 1919: Karlu Liebknechtu u spomen," [Good Friday 1919: In Memory of Karl Liebknecht] *Plamen: polumesečnik za sve kulturne probleme* [Flame: Bimonthly for all the Cultural Problems], 1919, no 3, p. 81–82. This poem is reprinted in the book *Pjesme* [Poems] III (Zagreb, 1919) and in its final version in the book *Poezija* [Poetry] (Zagreb, 1969).

Without waiting for days to pass from the horrific tragedy that befell Liebknecht and Luxemburg, Krleža recorded his poetic obituary dedicated to the revolutionary, which would be reprinted over the coming years to mark the occasions of the anniversaries of Liebknecht and Luxemburg's murder. In the same issue of *Plamen* his associate August Cesarec wrote the essay "Pobeda duše" [Triumph of the Soul] in which he describes how at the very end of World War I, the "revolutionary spirit and international communism" of the Spartacus League's leaders was violently suffocated, "with the impact of that painfully echoing pellet of Karl's following and the screams of the manic lynching of Rosa Luxemburg."³⁰ Cesarec figuratively concludes: "Racket and noise on earth is large, but many, many have no hearing, they are deaf and do not hear anything, and will not hear anything."

And other literary figures wrote about Luxemburg. In his very measured and poetic essay dedicated to Rosa Luxemburg and her prison letters, Ervin Šinko (the writer and founder of the Department for the Hungarian Language and Literature of the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad), wrote the following:

[Rosa Luxemburg is] always selfsame, and so powerful, so broad in nature, that she can be in the same person a poet and theoretician, an aesthete and sociologist, wise and playful, sentimental and sober, gentle in her sentimentality and tough in her intransigent consistency [...].³¹

In concluding his essay on Luxemburg, and emphasising the importance of reading the letters in the context of the socio-historical conditions in which they arise, and always in relation to the entirety of Luxemburg's theoretical opus and politics, Šinko would say:

30 August Cesarec, "Pobeda duše" [Triumph of the Soul], *Plamen — polumesečnik za sve kulturne probleme*, 1919, issue 3, p. 82–86.

31 Šinko 1951, p. 79.

Her letters are precious to us precisely because, instead of some abstract heroic perfection, they reveal the individual and close-up female character of a big hero in the struggle of the proletariat, in humanising an inhuman society.³²

Šinko's essay is a very useful starting point for an analysis of Luxemburg's works and life, especially because it is extremely well thought-out, without further trivialisation, and it emphasises the importance of her private life as well. Yet of equal importance is the fact that in his short writings on Luxemburg and her letters, the author does not only keep to the private aspects of Luxemburg's life: he also attempts to fill in and complete it with her public-political world. Hence, the private is political, but not in a self-explanatory and exclusive sense.

There was one other Yugoslav literary figure who wrote about Rosa Luxemburg. This is a work by Izet Sarajlić from 1985 with the title "Uz ponovno čitanje Roze Luksemburg" [Reading Rosa Luxemburg Once Again].³³ And while the title strongly points to a serious critical-theoretical study and with it, it could be said, intentionally cautions against the marginalisation of Luxemburg's legacy, it conveys a dedication in the form of a poem made up of two broken verses. In that poem, Sarajlić in a worried, and somewhat downcast tone, notices how the working class has forgotten Rosa Luxemburg, and reminds us of how she, as "an outstanding militant of the international workers' movement" foresaw her own death before she was "savagely murdered." The first begins with a mention of Luxemburg's prison letters, and the second verse goes as follows:

[I]n the trams,
 on the underground,
 in the trains,
 I have seen many workers relishing novels by
 Agatha Christie

E3 And not one,
I repeat,
not one
who would hold in her hand Rosa Luxemburg's
book.

A completely different approach to Šinko's essay, displayed above, can be found in a short text by the Croatian feminist and sociologist Lydija Sklevicky. In contrast to Šinko's well-measured approach, it sketches the relationship between the intimate and public life of Rosa Luxemburg. The essay is called "Drugovi i ljubavnici" [Comrades and Lovers], published in 1988. In it, the author bases her account primarily on the romantic relationship between Rosa Luxemburg and Leo Jogiches.³⁴ This short essay is really difficult to digest; all we can learn about Luxemburg in these few pages based on the her correspondence with Jogiches is that she wished to become a mother, that she was unhappily in love, that she was extremely emotionally fragile, and that she required her lover's attention. Sklevicky depicts Luxemburg and Jogiches' relationship as a constant fight and competition, and focuses too strongly on jealous episodes from their lives. It is almost as if we are reading a bad soap opera. Finally, it was important to Sklevicky to point out that "Jogiches suffered from guilt over the rich annuities off which he lived," while for Luxemburg, she writes, "that fact, as well as her inattentiveness to money" was no more to her than a "small difficulty." Along similar lines, within the sea of letters and quotes, Sklevicky selects precisely those in which Luxemburg writes to Jogiches, saying how she wishes to settle down "as members of the middle class" and that she feels like a "kitty who wants to fondle and be fondled." In addition, Sklevicky approvingly quotes Netti's description of the relationship as "one of the great tragic love stories of socialism," which is precisely the worst part

of Nettl's biography of Rosa Luxemburg, written in a particularly non-feminist tone, as certain feminists have warned.³⁵

The antifascist militant [member of the AFŽ — the Women's Antifascist Front of Yugoslavia], Mitra Mitrović also wrote about Rosa Luxemburg. In her — let us say more benevolent — unusually interesting text “Jedna nezaboravna žena” [An Unforgettable Woman], published in 1940 in Issue 27 of the magazine *Žena danas* [Woman Today; the magazine of the Women's Antifascist Front of Yugoslavia], Mitrović showcases the political life of Rosa Luxemburg across several pages. She briefly recounts Luxemburg's revolutionary life story and emphasises her key role in the history of the communist movement. Moving to the subject of Rosa Luxemburg's death in the concluding section of her essay, but also in several other places, Mitrović cannot help but feel that Luxemburg was “ugly” and therefore unhappy. She writes:

And so the life of this intelligent, determined, honourable, sickly, and ugly great woman ended. A woman not a single man loved (which is unusual for the famous women spoken of by history teachers) yet a woman loved by millions.³⁶

Along similar lines, in her essay of February 1951, in issue 80 of *Žena danas* L. Bihalji-Merin writes:

35 Cf. Dunayevskaya 1981, p. 93.

36 Mitrović 1940, p. 16. The extent to which feminist interpretations sometimes focus on the intimate aspects of Luxemburg's life is astonishing, as well as how in line with their dispositions, they draw various problematic conclusions, whether along the lines of Sklevicky or Mitrović. We have covered this methodological problem in the previous essay. Out of curiosity, given that these details were probably not available to Mitrović, it is worth mentioning that we can read about Rosa Luxemburg's love life in her letters in: Adler, Hudis & Laschitzka (eds.) 2011. If important at all, of Luxemburg's preserved “love” letters, most of them were addressed to Leo Jogiches and Kostia Zetkin, the son of Clara Zetkin.

E3 Her portrait hangs in the flats of revolutionary workers: her long face, replete with slender sensitivity, perhaps not beautiful in an everyday sense, but beautiful in its power of expression, warmth and the intensity of her big dark eyes.

Apart from these primarily image-focused approaches to Rosa Luxemburg, there are other more suitable and somewhat more reserved approaches, also from the socialist tradition. The socialist Nada Cazi, in a book she wrote in 1974 *Društveni položaj žene* [The Social Position of a Woman] in the thematic section “Učešće žena u radničkom pokretu” [The Participation of Women in the Workers’ Movement] highlights that Luxemburg was “one of the most consistent militants and brightest characters in the international workers’ movement.”³⁷ In this brief intervention we learn of “several valuable theoretical contributions to the Marxist economy by Luxemburg.” This is a praiseworthy approach, especially when we compare it with the usual portrayals of Luxemburg, primarily in terms of political comparisons with Lenin or the retelling of random episodes from her intimate life. Cazi concisely and with the correct emphasis, summarises Luxemburg’s biography:

Rosa Luxemburg was one of the initiators and leaders of the rising masses of German workers in the years before the outbreak of World War I. She was a founding member of the Spartacus League, an organiser of the Spartacus Uprising in January 1919 and the founder of the Communist Party of Germany. Rosa Luxemburg’s life path was that of a consistent revolutionary in the top militant ranks of the workers’ movement. This path resulted in her persecution, imprisonment, and torturous murder after the uprising collapsed.³⁸

Besides the classical socialist approach, in a foreword to the book *Revolucija nije partijska stvar* [Revolution is not a

Party Matter], Laslo Sekelj, taking a specifically anarchist tone, especially highlights Luxemburg as “a born leader in the communist critique of Bolshevism.”³⁹ In this book, the brochure *Ruska revolucija* [The Russian Revolution], which was earlier published in the aforementioned edited collection by Tadić, was included in its entirety. Besides comparisons between Luxemburg and Lenin, Sekelj stated that Luxemburg “in accordance with Marx’s thesis on universal emancipation, demanded a dictatorship of the proletariat, as an all-encompassing class action, and not that of a single socialist party, fraction, or a group of professional revolutionaries.”⁴⁰ Without a more detailed analysis of the validity of certain theses stated by Sekelj, we can say that this short text is a powerful entry point to a kind of anarchist interpretation of Rosa Luxemburg, and an interesting contribution to Luxemburgian studies.

Finally, let us mention two more texts. If there is one text that ought to be highlighted as offering a broad overview of Luxemburg’s work, at least in our view, then that would be Ljubomir Tadić’s text *Život i revolucionarno delo Rose Luxemburg* [The Life and Revolutionary Work of Rosa Luxemburg].⁴¹ In its twenty-something pages, this essay offers a sketch of Luxemburg’s biography and her key ideas from which it can be really beautifully and picturesquely read just how much Luxemburg abhorred “the cliqueness of the hierarchy in German social democracy,” “the grave discipline” and “blind and meek obedience.”⁴² And if we were to single out the best Yugoslav overview of Luxemburg’s critique of political economy, then it is surely worth reading Milan Gavrić’s 1955 text,⁴³ in which he emphasises: “Every reader with even the slightest education will immediately notice that with *The Accumulation of Capital* Rosa Luxemburg emerged from under the feathers as a thinker of great size and the broadest

39 Sekelj 1987, p. 11.

40 Ibid., p. 12.

41 Tadić 1974.

42 Ibid., p. 16.

43 Gavrić 1955.

level of culture.”⁴⁴ On another occasion Gavrić writes (and it is difficult to not agree with him):

Reading *The Accumulation of Capital*, we can see with what theoretical conscientiousness and dedication this great revolutionary worked on the text. Underpinning it lay the essential need for the further development of revolutionary thought, will and actions on the part of the international workers’ movement.⁴⁵

Gavrić’s interpretative template of Luxemburg’s *The Accumulation of Capital* is really a rare example of a more serious analysis of Luxemburg’s economic theory, both then in Yugoslavia, and today.⁴⁶

INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

When everything is counted up all together in one place — of what translations are available to us in the region today, of how much has been written about Luxemburg and her works in Yugoslavia, and in what way — it is hard to shake off the impression that what is left of the engagement with Luxemburg’s work is rather a modest and insufficient engagement. Short works in the vein of obituaries and commemorative

44 Ibid., p. V.

45 Ibid., p. VI.

46 We managed to locate a further four texts on *The Accumulation of Capital*, of which two were written by Gavrić: Milan Gavrić, “Roza Luksemburg: *Akumulacija kapitala*” [Rosa Luxemburg: *The Accumulation of Capital*], Belgrade, 1955., in: *Ekonomska politika* [Economic Policy], 1955, IV, 170, p. 538 -539; Milan Gavrić, “Roza Luksemburg: *Akumulacija kapitala*,” *Književne novine* [Rosa Luxemburg: *The Accumulation of Capital, Literary Papers*], 1 i 15-VIII-1955, VI, p. 9-10; Radivoj Davidović, “Roza Luksemburg: ‘Akumulacija kapitala,’” *Ekonomist* [Rosa Luxemburg: *The Accumulation of Capital, The Economist*], 1955, VIII, 2, p. 416-24; Ana Žilić Jurin, “Rosa Luxemburg: *Akumulacija kapitala*,” *Politika* [Rosa Luxemburg: *The Accumulation of Capital; Politics*], 12-VIII-1955, LI. Also see my text on the subject: Čakardić 2015.

texts dominate, while by far the smallest number of texts draw on analytical discourse, connected with the interpretation of her theories or political ideas. From the seventies onwards, articles on Luxemburg have generally dwindled, and over time collective memories of her have ever more slowly but surely disappeared from Yugoslavia. As Yugoslavia grew older, the presence of Luxemburg faded, and after the collapse of Yugoslavia she completely disappeared from theory, practice, and political imaginaries. We might describe an analysis of Luxemburg's legacy in Yugoslavia as "walking on the edges." As moving between some kind of initial rapture and euphoria due to knowledge of early works about her and the early Yugoslav translations, to the anguish accompanying the realisation that Luxemburg is too little present here today.

To finish, instead of a more comprehensive and final conclusion, here are three extraordinary pieces of information that link Rosa Luxemburg and Yugoslavia. The first is tied with Macedonia. This country was under Turkish rule until 1912, but after the 1878 Berlin Congress, uprisings and turmoil persisted in Macedonia. In 1893, the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (VMRO) was founded. This was a secret organisation supported by Macedonian socialists, as part of which women's revolutionary secret groups were established.⁴⁷ Macedonian women were involved from early on in the socialist movement, with Rosa Plaveva being among the first of the prominent socialist women.⁴⁸ She gathered together Macedonian and Turkish women in her flat, where they discussed various feminist topics and the communist struggle.⁴⁹ One incredible detail is that Plaveva corresponded with Luxemburg and that in 1917, when the Committee for the Liberation of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht was founded, she also organised the gathering of signatures for their liberation.⁵⁰ Neda Božinović writes that "the petition was

47 Božinović 1996, p. 98.

48 Vesković-Vangeli 2006.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 411.

50 *Ibid.*

signed by around one hundred women, which in that time — during World War I and the Bulgarian Occupation — was an impressive number.”⁵¹

The second detail relates to Pula (Croatia). In that city, at the start of 1920, the first women’s communist association with the name Rosa Luxemburg was formed. The club gathered together around 60 women, and meetings were held every week at which political and social issues were discussed.⁵²

And finally, the third, little known detail, relates to Yugoslav streets. In two cities in the Yugoslav region, today there are two small streets that managed to keep the name Rosa Luxemburg, one in Belgrade (Serbia), and the second in Maribor (Slovenia). The street in Split (Croatia) with the present name Mihanovićeve ulica bore the name Rosa Luxemburg, before memories of her were erased from post-Yugoslav public space. And in Zagreb from 12 May 1980, there was a Rosa Luxemburg street. As to be expected, it was renamed on 12 February 1993, in memory of the opera singer Zinka Kunc. This change is an almost perfect illustration of the post-Yugoslav discrediting of the revolution’s legacy, a topic with which Branko Horvat’s remarks introduced this essay. Let us end it with the idea that this book, along with the recently held conference dedicated to Rosa Luxemburg,⁵³ in Yugoslav space, can serve as a modest contribution to future research on this historically important revolutionary. Today, precisely one hundred years after the murder of Rosa Luxemburg, it is high time that Luxemburg’s legacy in this region is moved from a secondary footnote and casual mention, to assuming an undisputedly deserved political and research focus. This aspiration is best summarised in her own words:

51 *Ibid.*

52 Šoljan 1967, p. 81.

53 See the conference programme; Čakardić (ed.) 2019.

I want to affect people like a clap of thunder, to inflame their minds not by speechifying but with the breadth of my vision, the strength of my conviction and the power of my expression.⁵⁴ **E3**

If just one part of the entire Luxemburg school is taken up, an outstanding contribution to the politics of emancipation and progressive social-humanist critiques will be made.

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BIO

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Ankica Čakardić's monograph *Like a Clap of Thunder* is an extremely valuable, powerful and above all inspiring triptych of sharp and energetic philosophical-political essays on Rosa Luxemburg, which offers us a multi-layered introduction to Luxemburg's thought and works in a contemporary and historical context.

The first text in the triptych guides the reader through the key trajectories of Rosa Luxemburg's biography, evoking both her historical significance for Marxist and feminist theory and politics, as well as the distinctive character, thoughtfulness, sensitivity and vitality of this revolutionary woman, a woman of a special intimate-public ethical cast and poetic texture. The central piece that Čakardić offers us in the "triptych on Rosa" is the foundational piece — it contains an analysis of the relevance of Rosa Luxemburg's economic thought in *The Accumulation of Capital* and of the relevance of her spatial dialectics for today's Marxist-feminist theories of social reproduction.

The final part of the triptych gives an overview of how the works of Rosa Luxemburg were translated during the twentieth century in Yugoslavia, and of how they have been interpreted and shortened and/or neglected in academic thought and the intellectual life of the socialist period. This has to be a reminder and lesson for today's regional Marxist and feminist production.

—From the review by Jasmina Husanović,
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