

for exactly those qualities, not only to Jogiches, but to all the serious, bearded gentlemen who surround her in the photographs of Socialist International congresses.

Luxembourg belonged to three oppressed groups. She was Polish, a woman and Jewish. She did not discount these oppressions the way many of her male colleagues did, but she subordinated the liberation struggle of these three groups to the struggle for socialism. By doing so, she cut herself off from a critique of sexual and racial politics which worked against her again and again. Had she understood her oppression as a woman, she might have been more conscious of her dependence and longing for "normalcy," her apology for her emotional, intuitive, practical nature. She might have enjoyed herself more for what she was, instead of measuring herself against the ideals of Jogiches and the society she lived in.

Yet today, Rosa Luxemburg remains a model for us, a woman who spoke out clearly and courageously. Her thinking has lasted sixty years and influenced the course of history. And because of her letters, she has also survived as a woman struggling constantly with her socialization, her doubts and depressions. She died defeated and discouraged, and yet very hopeful. She reminds us that inner conflict and lack of confidence are the measure of oppression that a person has experienced, not of a person's power to bring about change!

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## WOMEN AND STATE SOCIALISM: Sex Inequality in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia.

ALENA HEITLINGER.

*Montreal: McGill - Queen's University Press,  
1979. Pp. 241.*

The work under review, a revised Ph.D. dissertation written by a sociologist, is a welcome addition to growing literature on the status of women in socialist countries. The theme is the position of women in two socialist states, the USSR and Czechoslovakia. The approach, sociological in essence, does not omit the historical and the political. And rightly so. Because the writer has concentrated on two countries and included extensive statistical data, the study has the advantage of providing the reader with much factual knowledge not easily obtainable. The thirty-three tables contain data on issues ranging from "Percentage of time and hours spent on housework in Vancouver," to "New Dwellings in Czechoslovakia." An attempt is made, wherever possible, to draw comparison with women's position in Western societies. Often comparative statistical data is given for Canada, a welcome feature in particular for Canadian readers. The comparative approach adds scope to the work, thus helping one to see the question discussed in a broader perspective.

The book is divided into four parts. In Part I, entitled "Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Women," the three theoretical perspectives that analyse social relationships between males and females are discussed: the sociological approach of structural-functionalism; Marxist theory of domestic labour and reproduction of labour power; and Marxist theory of women's oppression. Part II, "Socialism and the Women's Movement,"

provides a background for the understanding of the developments in the Soviet Union and in Czechoslovakia in addition to the discussion of the origin and growth of the movement, and the attitudes of the socialist parties to the women question. The status of women in the Soviet Union is the theme of Part III, entitled "Women in the Soviet Union." It consists of five chapters where the following topics are discussed: family versus the house-commune; housework; employment and politics; maternity, child-care and birth control. Part IV, "Women in Czechoslovakia," provides the reader with information on the historical background and legal changes; housework; employment; earnings and positions of authority; child-care and pronatalist-population policies. In the conclusions the author summarizes her findings and re-asserts the thesis, now quite well known, that "despite the official commitment to sex equality and despite policies designed to emancipate women, in neither country had the communists created a society in which sexual inequality, any more than other forms and types of inequality, is absent."

The failure to implement the idea of full sex equality is caused, according to the author, by the inability of the system to put into practice full integration of women into the national economy and at the same time provide conditions that would allow women to withdraw from domestic economy. Structural changes, maintains the author, "must be accompanied by a cultural revolution arrived at the elimination of sex-role stereotypes."

All the above has now been discussed in a number of works written on the women question in the socialist states. What then is new and significant in the study? It seems that the main value of the book lies in the thorough analysis (quantified) of the status of women in

the countries considered; in the comparisons made, wherever data was available, with Western societies and with other countries of the socialist bloc, and in the use of a variety of primary sources. In addition, the writer, a native of Czechoslovakia, had the advantage of drawing on her own experiences and encounters with women in Czechoslovakia and was able to add the personal to the factual.

The work reads much like a dissertation. Perhaps one of the factors contributing to that impression is the form of documentation. In addition, transliteration of Russian titles is somewhat puzzling. For example, one accustomed to the Library of Congress transliteration table is surprised to see *Rabotnitsa* transliterated as *Rabotnica*. But these are minor issues. The work includes useful explanatory notes, an interesting bibliography and an index. The statistical data, contained in the above mentioned tables and wherever relevant, inserted in the text, enhances the value of the study.

The book will be of interest to specialists in the field and to all concerned with the status of women in socialist countries.

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