

1974 Across the Berlin Wall

In 1974 Cillie Rentmeister and Cristina Perincioli wrote:

In Westberlin, there are two major women`s groups: the left feminist Women`s Center (Frauenzentrum) and the Socialist Women`s League of Westberlin (Sozialistischer Frauenbund – SFB) which is close to the Communist Party (SEW). There have been discussions around the political differences of the two groups. We in the Women`s Center have been disagreeing with the SFB on several important points. The theoreticians of the SFB see the economic position of women and their political power only in connection with the situation of the working class.

Thus Frigga Haug, one of the leaders, writes: „Women are not, in contrast to the proletariat, the creators of all values, of the social wealth. They do not have a world to win.“

Since the socialist women understand the marxist analyses of production and reproduction only in a mechanistic way and consider social wealth exclusively dependant on surplus value, they overlook completely the specific basic conditions which make it possible to create surplus value. Maria Rosa Della Costa has recognized this factor very well and we have accepted her argumentation as a basis for developing our own position. Maria Rosa writes:

“Since Marx it has been clear that capital dominates and develops itself through wage, that is, that the basis of capitalist society ist the wage laborer and his/her direct exploitation. The organizations of the workers movement

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Why we have to look at the GDR

The Westberlin Socialist Women`s Federation inclines to a notion of women`s liberation similar to that which is propagated and partly realized in the German Democratic Republic: a liberation based on the realization of equal rights in all spheres. These equal rights are realized Stepp by Stepp according to the necessities of the development of a socialist economy. As the change from capitalism to socialism in the GDR was pushed (forward) by means of decrees and laws, women`s rights were not gained by women`s struggles, but successively decreed.

In this article, we seize the opportunity of living so close to the socialist part of the world and spotlight on women`s situation there from our point of view. Unfortunately, this subject has been ignored until now by the women`s center. So this articel must be a very individualistic one, but it is meant as a demand for controversies among ourselves, too. At the moment, we have more questions left than answers to give. This ist he way this article should be understood.

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Women at work: The so-called >Women`s Wonder of the GDRbeautiful sex