

1 Marias (New Portuguese Letters) by Maria Isabel Barrebi
Maria Teresa Horta
1975, Pub'd in Portugal, 1972 TR by Helen R. Lane
Maria Velho da Costa

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"All lit. is a long letter to an invisible other"

Other pretext, real ques. is passion, the chevalier was
A man who thought he was doing the counting & instead was mounted."

p.89 "Mother Abbess I have been sent here from the hse. of my father & mother

--THERE WAS NO BREAD FOR US AT MEN'S TABLES."

p.120: "I see our interchange as the fundamental journey to the lower depths
that we must take to the lower depths.... This, perhaps, is the 1st path
path we must take in order to dismantle our his. & pol. situation."

pp.373-4: "THE SOIL OF REV. IS NOT THE DEATH OF DIFFERENCE, NOR DOES JOYOUS LAUGHTER
COME EASILY. THE SOIL OF REV. IS THE DEATH OF THE, of all

difference... (and what do all of us women have left if we are not spontaneous,
if we do not possess the foundation of rev. that our brother is still devouring?
..(pp.378-9: "What is literature? and what is this experience shared by the 3 of
of us..ence we have launched our gesture, passing it on to others, i t is all
a ques. of the right moment."

IT
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*Because preference with
REV: 10/1/74*
*Creating
technical
illiteracy when*
to, mind of genius, toward, absence;
Give it FORM as against patriarchy

*Rev. Rev. Bla: "No word seems
too high if he owns on his
own wings."*

Mind-Jog's "Mandelos"

*Clare's Outcast
MFK "Words felt,
never heard"*

Wichame Heights 1847

*Courtee
Cullen*

...bringing about a change in today's economic and political system, which is founded on this domination, would not necessarily bring about the destruction of all the cultural crystallizations whereby the woman is made out to be an imbecile in the eyes of the law, a socially irresponsible creature, a castrated man, the wicked flesh, the sinner, Eve tempted by the serpent, a body without a soul, the virgin-mother, a witch, the devoted, self-sacrificing mother, the vampire that feeds on the man's blood, the good fairy of the household, a stupid human being who is ashamed of her sexual desires, a whore and at the same time an angel..."

Maria Barreno speaks for herself

(Ed. Note: We print below excerpts from a talk given in Berkeley, Cal., last month by Maria Isabel Barreno, one of the "Three Marias" who authored "New Portuguese Letters," reviewed last month on this page.)

We were three women, three friends living in Portugal under a fascist government. All of us worked, and all had sons. We had to work and be responsible for our children. We discussed the condition of women in Portugal and decided we wanted to discuss this with more women. So we began to write.

Some people see individual creation as someone who has an inspiration and creates by himself. It's his own property. I always thought this conception completely wrong because, though I was an author of this book, I felt my experience was not mine alone, but was common. Only because it was so, could it be understood by others.

THE REASON THE fascist government banned our book was the fear of such a book written by women — three women. They were very aware of the danger when people are together. Every kind of meeting, even a little one, was forbidden. So it was very important that three of us had got together.

The Portuguese government chose to charge the book as "pornographic" and an "outrage." Much of the material in the book could have been charged as political subversion. But to have a book banned because of political suppression in Portugal gave it prestige, and the government did not want that.

WSU forum

Highlights women's creativity

Detroit, Mich.—A crowd of both women and men participated in the discussion that followed a talk on "Women's Creativity and Liberation: Nationally and Internationally" by Raya Dunayevskaya, chairwoman of News and Letters Committees, at the March 7 celebration of International Women's Day sponsored by Wayne Women's Liberation at Wayne State University.

Ms. Dunayevskaya began by emphasizing that creativity is not just individual, but comes when masses are in motion to uproot society. She described examples of women's creativity expressed in 1946 in West Germany when miners' wives in the Ruhr closed down the mines. A spontaneous strike in 1929 by East

CHARGING THE BOOK as obscene and pornographic was an important symptom of the way women are seen by society and not only the fascist government. If men describe society or write of their relationships with other men, their books are considered to be, whether political or non-political, about cultural or social questions. But when women speak about their problems it is called "just a female book." We dared to seek equality, so it was a way of breaking the official specification of things. Women must be put somewhere nobody can see them.

During the trial journalists coming to interview us in Lisbon asked, "Is your book political or is it just feminism?" When women are fighting for their freedom it is not seen as a political matter.

One way to oppress people is to hide them. Women are the most hidden people. It is not by accident that housework is not seen as work. It is seen as a natural duty and so it is not paid. If it was taken as work, the entire economic structure would have to be changed.

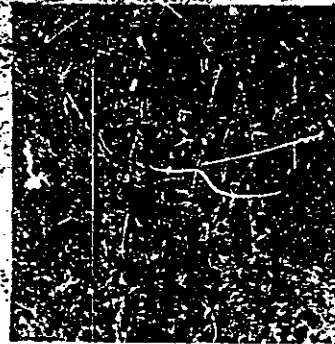
Another thing hidden is the question of children. The children of society are the future workers, soldiers. The reason the government says abortion is illegal and that contraceptive methods are not allowed has nothing to do with morality. It is to force women to produce children even against their will. Abortion is forbidden when society needs an increase of births. In France, for instance, the laws against abortion were made more effective during the last war; they needed soldiers; so women had to produce them. Today that is not such a strong problem, so abortion is allowed in France.

OUR BOOK IS ONLY a little experience, but for me it is the beginning, and a good example of how women have to work for change. I believe in feminism because for me it is the hope to change society. That does not mean changing only some little things, or letting women do the same things men are doing now. For instance, there is an official way of thinking, the "rational" way. That may be good for some things, but we want also to create things, and not in the "rational way." And there is the question of the division: that is made between work and play. Work has to become something we enjoy.

And there is also the way we are involved in politics. I believe in political involvement only if it is before everything else, a kind of practice, a new experience, a new way of involving ourselves, a new way of doing things. Our book was only a little thing, but I saw it as women having to create a new culture. And this is perhaps the most important point about feminism.

PEOPLE ARE OPPRESSED by images—Black and white, men and women, and even countries. The images given about countries are to keep people divided, so they

MARIA BARRENO



will not understand the true problems. It was great happiness for us that in the second year of our trial the international women were talking about us. Something going on inside Portugal was known outside. And it was the women who were taking this first step against the ignorance about Portugal. They understood they had to fight for all women and not only themselves. When we saw the publicity in the U.S., Germany, France, Holland, Italy—then our fight had meaning.

THE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT was uneasy with the publicity our fight made around the world. Many people said the coup last April freed us. But this is not so. This is another way to hide the fight of the women. We would have been freed anyway. When the international fight began, our trial changed completely. In the last session, before the coup of April 25, even the prosecutor did not attack the book. He praised it. We can see how the struggle of women worked. When we are together, we are really strong.

Now that I am in the U.S., I think more about how we are taught about other countries and other people. In Europe and Portugal, the U.S. is thought of as a society where women have all rights and are completely free. I never believed that. The ideas and the laws are not so different between the U.S. and Portugal. We have to be aware that our oppression is really common everywhere, because the same roots exist everywhere. The form of oppression in Portugal is more open than in the U.S.—but women are always placed as mothers and housewives.

NOW WOMEN MUST go on, taking the Marxian concept of the socialist philosophy and going on to the analysis of their specific oppression. Marx did not go very deeply into the oppression of women. I am trying to take some concepts of Marx's philosophy and analyze the oppression of women specifically, because I feel that in Marxist thinking and in socialist philosophy, there are many things that can join well with the feminist movement.

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