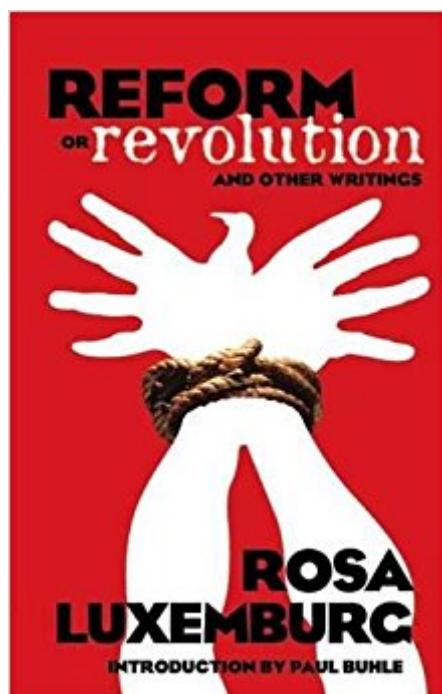


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Reform Or Revolution And Other Writings (Dover Books On History, Political And Social Science)



Synopsis

A polemic writing by the famous "Red Rosa" Luxemburg, *Reform or Revolution* (1899) explains why capitalism can never overcome its internal contradictions. An effective refutation of revisionist interpretations of Marxist doctrine, it defines the position of scientific socialism on the issues of social reforms, the state, democracy, and the character of the proletarian revolution. *Reform or Revolution* opposes Edward Bernstein's revisionist theories, which rejected Marxism in favor of trade unionism and parliamentary procedures. Luxemburg offers articulate and reasoned objections to all of Bernstein's arguments. She defends the necessity for socialism, which provides an answer to the contradictions and inevitable crisis of the capitalist economy, along with a means for a transformation in working class consciousness. This essay remains a key explanation of why there can be no parliamentary road to socialism. It appears here together with Luxemburg's writings on "Leninism or Marxism," "The Mass Strike," and "The Russian Revolution."

Book Information

Series: Dover Books on History, Political and Social Science

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Dover Publications; 1 edition (July 21, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0486447766

ISBN-13: 978-0486447766

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.5 x 8.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #71,462 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #93 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Communism & Socialism #99 in Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Political Science > Political Ideologies #417 in Books > Science & Math > History & Philosophy

Customer Reviews

The volume includes several important pieces. "Reform or Revolution" is essential reading. So is "The Russian Revolution." Whether you agree or not with Luxemburg's critique of Bolshevik decisions, the issues she raised are certainly important.

Amazing texts, I really mean it. It's fundamental to recognize Rosa as of critical importance to the

construction of Socialism, not only for dismantling the reformist farce, but also for dismantling the dogma behind authoritarian ideologies that are wrongly called "Socialism". She effectively raises the need for a "power by the working class", in contrast with "power *over* the working class" as advocated by many marxist-leninist tendencies (specially stalinist ones).

One of the great minds of revolutionary thought. She was both brilliant and irreproachable in her principles. She understood how Marxism could be undermined and betrayed by the pressures of petit-bourgeois opportunism, and was clear and resolute in her opposition to that phenomenon and its logical result: social patriotism in an era of war. Her ideas are well suited for those who agree that Stalinism does not represent the logical progression of Leninism; but also feel Lenin, like all historical figures, should be subjected to measured criticism in light of the outcome of Russian history. Those who think Lenin was always consistent and infallible will not like her writings.

Excellent insights and analysis of political, economic and cultural conditions, originally applied to post-WW1 Germany, but more relevant than ever today. In a time of much anger, sadness and despair, this book offers a version of hope that offers a way forward, no matter how drastic the situation, through organization primarily around class lines (but her thinking on this is much more complex than this), while remaining deeply critical of liberal and what we'd now call "Scandinavian socialist" political programs (e.g. Bernie Sanders, as excited by his campaign as I was), and their inability to achieve true equality or end exploitation. Capitalism will inevitably decimate any reforms that get pushed through by these progressives when profits come on the line, so any politics without revolution as its ultimate goal will fail to win real lasting demands for the people. As unrealistic as revolution sounds, especially in America today, the tide is changing, and to paraphrase a socialist whose name I forget: there are years where nothing happens, and weeks where years happen. Surely before any revolution in history, it was still quite hard to imagine a revolution overthrowing the current political system. There will always be naysayers, "realists", "pragmatists", and the like, but pay them no mind: if they were right, we would still be living in small tribes hunting and gathering. Revolutions do happen. Not inevitable, not easily, and not overnight, but the power of workers united together is greater than the might and ruling elite could ever muster. Also less dry than other political writings of the time. And dispels illusions many people have about marxism/socialism is economic determinism being only concerned with race, and not race, gender, or sexuality (not that she talks about any of these at any length, but her analyses are anything but simplistic or reductive of everything to economics. There's not nearly enough women writers in the "canon" of

socialist/marxist/anti-capitalist books - I'd recommend *Caliban and the Witch* by Silvia Federici. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*, a fascinating history of the horrific witch hunts and their fundamental role in the overthrow of feudalism and its bloody replacement capitalism, Clara Zetkin's selected writings. *Clara Zetkin: Selected Writings*, and Angela Davis' *Women, Race & Class*, an excellent historical analysis of the titular 3, primarily of political and economic conditions America.

I bought this book along with *On Marx: Revolutionary and Utopian* (Liveright Classics) at Powell's in Portland, one of the truly great bookstores in the USA along with the Tattered Cover in Denver (which is a tenth the size of Powell's). I bought it largely because of its focus on the general strike versus the partial strike as a tactic that might or might not be possible depending on the country and where it is in its economic degeneration. Although I received a very good education in political thought from Charles Bednar at Muhlenberg, I confess that it is only now at 63 that I have realized that most of what our government, media, think tanks, and even universities offer in the way of commentary on "political economy" is ideological crap -- they do not do their homework, they really have no clue, and they get away with it because everyone else has no clue either. Peter Linebaugh's *Stop, Thief!: The Commons, Enclosures, and Resistance* (Spectre) is what forced me to reconsider Marx's critique of capitalism and I recommend that 2014 publication to anyone who wishes to think critically about capitalism today, along with the following: *Occupy the Economy: Challenging Capitalism* (City Lights Open Media) *Griftopia: A Story of Bankers, Politicians, and the Most Audacious Power Grab in American History* *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* *No Logo: 10th Anniversary Edition with a New Introduction by the Author* *Liar's Poker (25th Anniversary Edition): Rising Through the Wreckage on Wall Street (25th Anniversary Edition)* In short, the rest of us have caught up with Marx. Predatory Capitalism is toxic and unsustainable. While Communism (along with Socialism and Facism) have proven to be just as bad as predatory or plutocratic capitalism, Marx, as an intellect and economists, and others such as the author of this book Rosa Luxemburg, are now recognized by a growing body as having been over a century ahead of their time.

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