

And then she does show how she makes do in her drab, solitary cell

Handwritten: RL's reaction to the crudgery of prison life by looking at the clouds and the multi-colored stones. She watches insects and feeds the titmice. She reads everything from animal husbandry to literary criticism, from geology to political economy, from history to Shakespeare. In everything she writes about, no matter how far-fetched, is always as to its immediate relevance.

*Handwritten: Unconnected bits of history, theory, women characters in Shakespearean plays, anti-war politics, revolution and poetry, get jammed up without any seeming order and yet out of it comes, at one and the same time, the rigor as well as the lyricism of her greatest piece of theoretical work, her lyrical descriptions of nature, the piece of toilet paper on which, not having a pencil, she would use the urine to write revolutionary instructions. The letters to friends which breathe fire, but also console and ask about the condition of her cat, Mimi. She hails the RR, and not only Feb. but Lenin and Trotsky's Nov. with great stress on those 2 leaders as the only ones who dared without in any way giving up her right to criticism. That ~~XXXXXX~~ and freedom of expression remain the 2 governing principles of her life. The multidimensionality does not, however, overpower the governing principle -- revolution. *Handwritten: no need for self-diff.**

*Handwritten: In the same period on Feb. 16, 1917, she also writes to Mathilde Wurm: "But look, lady, since you so rarely get to open a book, at least read only good books and not Kitsch like the 'Spinoza-novel', which you sent to me. What do you want with this particular suffering of the Jews? The poor victims on the rubber plantations in Putumayo, the Negroes in Africa, with whose bodies the Europeans play a game of catch, are just as near to me. Do you remember the words written on the work of the great General Staff about Tortha's campaign in the Kalahari dessert? * And the death rattles, the mad cries of those dying of thirst, faded away into the sublime silence of eternity."*

Handwritten: "All this 'sublime silence of eternity' in which so many screams have faded away unheard. It rings within me so strongly that I have no special corner of my heart reserved for the ghetto: I am at home wherever in the world there are clouds, birds and human tears."

14326