

## Welfare Not Warfare

# International Working Women's Day 2019

is dedicated to

*Rosa Luxemburg on the centenary of her death*

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March-7.00pm to 9.00 pm

Venue: Central Hall, Rosemary Street Belfast

War is the greatest threat to this planet, to human life and the environment:

A critical analysis

Speakers

Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg: Lynda Walker

**Thea Valentina Gardellin-Italy**

**Clare Daly TD Dublin**

Kerry Fleck: Belfast

Chairperson: Laura Duggan: Dublin

Organised by the Communist Party of Ireland-Northern Area

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[www.communistpartyofireland.ie](http://www.communistpartyofireland.ie)



**Thea Valentina Gardellin and Clare Daly** are guest speakers at the International Working Women's Day meeting in Belfast this year. Both of them spoke recently in Dublin at the **No to US Bases NO to NATO** conference, opposing warfare, military spending and military bases in Europe, America and throughout the world. These bases contribute to toxic water pollution, to intelligence operations and billions of £ and \$ are spent on the building, up keep and occupation, money that could be spent on the welfare of people. As an **independent TD Clare Daly has participated in many actions to improve peoples' lives including the anti-water charge campaign, action for pubic housing, and the YES campaign for a Women's Right to Choose. Continued**

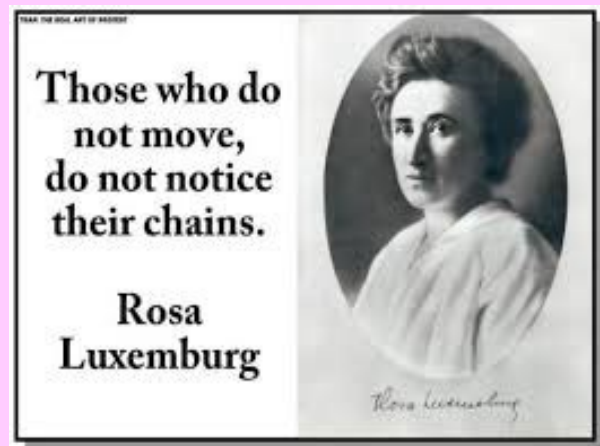
**Below Thea Valetina describes how she became involved in opposing military actions and her way of life.**

I really do not consider myself an activist. It's just a way of being in peace, above all with myself and then with the world in general. I've never been arrested or even near being arrested, even though many a times I put myself in a position or in the condition of danger. Ever since I was 14, I started going to rallies and "standing on the other side" of what people would have expected from a teenager. The first rally ever was in Vienna, it was the late 70s and the Austrian government had decided to forbid university students access to the green acres of the Burggarten so no one could either sit or lie on the grass. The city woke up one Saturday morning in Spring with the Ringstrasse blocked by hundreds and hundreds of students who in unison were shouting "Freiheit fuer den Burggarten" and that was the first time ever I had the police running after my best friend and myself and the us trying to find an open door of some condominium to go and hide under the marble stairs of these very old Viennese buildings. Amy had worn boots that day, it was difficult for her to run in high heels so I stopped and waited for her to catch up, grabbed her hand and then darted in between cars, buses and trams, looking for a safe place where we could hide.

That's how everything started and, since then, nothing has changed.

Years have passed since the times of the Burggarten, I've become older and my hair is white but my spirit and my nature have never abandoned me. It's 17 years now that I volunteer as a clown in hospitals and in prisons.

The Vicenza San Bortolo hospice and cancer wards where, with a small cardboard suitcase filled with tiny gold stars, a small group of clowns tries to help people fulfil their last dreams. Clowning is, I believe, the most anarchist of all ways of living for in your clown costume nobody judges you and you can move freely in and out of areas people would generally never access.



From refugee camps in **Palestine** to **prison wards accompanying children to visit their parents** (clowns are known to reduce stress on kids and distract them from concentrating on prison walls and fences until they reach their fathers.)

I was in **Saint Quentin State Prison** in San Francisco, visiting a native American man on death row, his name was Fernando Eros Caro. When Vicenza found itself in the condition of having to host another American military base (the sixth one), that's when I started to use my English to do plenty of research and start applying civil disobedience to my everyday life.

That was the year 2005 and, since then, not at a constant pace though because I also had a child to raise and the need to work many hours, I started to fight and resist the construction of the base and it's many problems from aquifer pollution to the general concept of war, the base was not to be built. The citizens of Vicenza united into one big struggle which lead to many actions of resistance.

From buying a piece of land (approx. 3000 SQMTs) ) adjacent to the Dal Molin (today Del Din) U.S. military base where we raised enormous tents and had our own radio. This was called the NO Dal Molin Presidio Permanente.

Occupying the Vicenza Prefecture and the base in construction itself, from people chaining themselves to the cranes, to a rally in February 2007 which saw more than 100,000 people from all over Italy and Europe participating and Dario Fo (Nobel Prize winner for Literature) and his wife Franca Rame speaking from the podium in the heart of the city.

**We too, organised three international conferences against American military bases and had people from Okinawa, Guam, NO MUOS, Jenju, Hawaii and other places talking about their hardships and their resistance via skype.**