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ON THE ROAD TO A BIWEEKLY NEWS & LETTERS

A VIEW OF FORMS OF REVOLUTIONARY JOURNALISM

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ON THE ROAD TO A BI-WEEKLY NEWS & LETTERS:

A VIEW OF FORMS OF REVOLUTIONARY JOURNALISM

INTRODUCTION

Hello. It's a good day to go traveling into the ideas of revolutionary journalism. We have a very exciting but very challenging road toward a bi-weekly News & Letters. It is an exciting road because we are reaching out toward a new moment in Marxist-Humanist revolutionary journalism. As I stated to the Resident Editorial Board: "How many times have we gotten a story in the heat of battle on the picket line and had to wait and wait for its appearance in our paper so that we could return with the workers' own story back to the line? How many times when there has been a moment of revolutionary activity or of counter-revolution in Central America or in the U.S. and we wanted to be able to share our analysis with readers and ended up having to wait three or more weeks before being able to do so?"

It is a challenging road because the kind of reorganization we need to undergo tests us in so many ways -- as elicitors, as writers, as speakers, as distributors, as fundraisers. In short as projectors of Marxist-Humanism. Again to the REB I noted: "How many times have we said, Boy, I am glad we are a monthly so that we don't have to say something on such and such a situation without a lot more time to think about it? How many times have those who are responsible for a monthly column found themselves searching for a topic or unable to fully work out a column or article to meet the deadline? How many who have been most intimately involved in the tasks of preparing for a mailing, wanted only relief before the next mailing week? How many times have we looked at the office floor three and four weeks after a paper has come out and still seen stacks of newspapers left?"

Today let's begin working out that challenge by viewing forms of revolutionary journalism that have been developed or that we are proposing be developed in preparing for a bi-weekly News & Letters.

I. WHAT THE 30 YEARS RETROSPECTIVE OF N&L REVEALS ABOUT THE PROJECTED BI-WEEKLY

It is no accident that Raya's "Retrospective look at 30 years of N&L", far from being only an anniversary celebration, has become a point of departure for the projected bi-weekly N&L. A look at the structure of Part I, its four moments or sections will help us grasp this. The birth of N&L "when McCarthyism was still raging" has its parallel in our proposal to expand to a bi-weekly under Reaganism. The parallelism is not merely the reactionary nature

of both McCarthy and Reagan. Reaganism is actual state power with a hand on the nuclear gun. No, the parallel I want to speak about is the revolutionary banner we were willing to unfurl during McCarthyism, and an understanding of the kind of banner we are unfurling today, after 30 years of publishing N&L.

Despite the bleakness of the early 1950s in terms of any on-going mass movement in America, our raising of a revolutionary banner was intimately tied to the objective situation, both its harshness and the revolutionary subjectivity we saw inherent within it. Look again at those seven dimensions that Raya said manifested our uniqueness from the beginning and you will see both the forces of revolution in America who we were determined should have a voice in our pages and a beginning of our work to bring out the Self-Determination of the Idea. Marxist-Humanism refused from its birth to separate these two. "Two Worlds", with its first column on "Letter writing and the new passions" was a manifestation of this refusal. The objective situation we had in mind was not only the immediate of McCarthyism but the historically objective of the whole age; and this on two levels: 1) the opening of a new post-World War II epoch that we characterized as "a movement from practice that is itself a form of theory"; and 2) what we then characterized as the void in the Marxist movement since the death of Lenin and what we now have further developed as the entire domain of post-Marx Marxism beginning with Engels. Thus the unfurling of a banner by the practice of revolutionary journalism in founding a new newspaper was inseparable from the decision to project Marxism anew in book form in Marxism and Freedom.

Today with the concept of a bi-weekly N&L we are again testing new moments in the objective situation and new moments in how we have been developing Marxist-Humanist philosophic categories. The philosophic moment we expressed in Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution is that of post-Marx Marxism. The practice of that philosophic moment occurs very much as a battle of ideas. That is certainly what we wish to do both in writing about the objective/subjective events in our bi-weekly and in projecting the totality of this paper to others we meet.

In the second section of the 30 year retrospective, Raya takes up the new threat from the objective situation of neo-fascism with De Gaulle's coming to power, and the birth of a whole new Third World. Other independent Marxists failed to comprehend both of these dimensions. It became proof that state-capitalist theory without Marxist-Humanism was no great divide, no matter where in the world it was propounded.

This coming year we will be embarking on a series of trips nationally and internationally. And while there is no substitute

for the founder of Marxist-Humanism's undertaking the international trip she did in 1959, when she posed to other state-capitalist thinkers the whole of Marxist-Humanism, there is also no doubt that those who do go on trips in the period ahead will have the whole body of ideas with them -- the trilogy of revolution in Spanish and in English, and the newest book. Our renewed extension of Marxist-Humanism to Appalachia, to Mexico, to Spain and to India can in turn have ramifications for the coming bi-weekly. For if we are able to meet new contacts and solidify old relations in this trip in such a way that we establish pathways forward toward full Marxist-Humanism by individuals internationally, then there is no doubt that we would have a new kind of international writing for the pages of N&L from Latin America, Europe and Asia, as well as Appalachia.

What is crucial to grasp from the section on "The Turbulent 1960s, a Critique" is two-fold: 1) Marxist-Humanism's full participation in those events from Black, to youth, to national and international; and 2) our full participation encompassed critique and projection. We were constantly searching out new forms to do this -- most especially our pamphlets from Workers Battle Automation and Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves, to American Civilization on Trial and Czechoslovakia, new additions to Marxism and Freedom focusing on Mao, and a new form of publishing -- the Weekly Political Letters beginning in 1962.

Here in the mid-1980s, we naturally want to be full participants in the freedom struggles -- and the conception of a bi-weekly N&L allows us to be participants in a manner that we haven't had a chance to do before. But it is a participation that even more intensely than we were able to achieve in the 1960s, will have the historic-global-philosophic framework that Marxist-Humanism during these three decades has helped to bring forth.

The fourth section of this retrospective look at "The divide between the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism and the thinking that theory can be caught en route . . ." is not only of 1968-69, but the whole period from the mid-1960s to the eve of Philosophy and Revolution. The emphasis here was on what Marxist-Humanism was projecting throughout this period as revolutionary events were yes, unfolding, but also aborting not only through capitalist counter-revolution, but as well from within the revolution with philosophy as the missing link. This section gives one a new way of looking at the 1960s, not only as the activism of the movement, but what the specific, unique, historic praxis of News and Letters Committees was.

As we approach the bi-weekly in the 1980s, we again need to rethink what is that specific Marxist-Humanist contribution so that we see this bi-weekly, as not merely a radical group deciding to

publish more often, but ways in which the activism and thought of the movement and the activism of Marxist-Humanist philosophy as expressed by News and Letters Committees can be manifested within the pages of a bi-weekly.

Let's move to another form of practicing revolutionary journalism on the road to a bi-weekly.

II. IN THE WORKSHOP OF REVOLUTIONARY JOURNALISM: TWO POINTS OF DEPARTURE

Let's constitute ourselves as a Philosophical-Technical Committee and begin to put out the October issue of our newspaper.

1) What is new? Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future. Most of us saw it for the first time as a printed, bound book in the last couple of days. This book is certainly going to be page one in the October issue. But we need to make it a lot more as well. How are we going to make our readers feel that this book is not alone page one, but the very being of our paper's 12 pages? How are we going to make the new of what this book is and an advertisement for this book one. How are we going to convey its newness as dialectics of revolution, as women's liberation? In sum, how are we going to make our readers feel that if they do buy this book they are indeed reaching for the future?

Here are some suggestions: Perhaps we could link three different parts of the paper together on the book. On page one, we could have a picture of the book and an order blank but with a special banner referring to more on the book on the inside pages. Second, a special spread on pages 6-7 which would feature brief excerpts from each of the four parts along with pictures that would depict each part, perhaps a special section on Raya as author or quotes of an interview with her, and again an order form. Third, a section within Readers' Views on first reactions to the new book. Here, we as sellers, as founders of Marxist-Humanism have a very special job of projection. Within the next two weeks can we have conversations with people we sell the book to, or deliver pre-publication order copies to, maybe not about all the content, but maybe even why they wanted the book, what they were looking forward to in reading it, -- all of which can become the heart of this section. And of course, we need to be thinking about Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution as a continuing section of Readers' Views.

This is only the barest of beginnings. For in truth, selling, working with, projecting the new book all as founders of Marxist-Humanism is precisely on the road to a bi-weekly. How else can we

hope to meet the new readers, the new writers for, the new financial contributors for, such a bi-weekly. Indeed it is the pathway for meeting the new members of this Marxist-Humanist organization, who will join us in being the sustainers of this new moment of revolutionary journalism in all its dimensions.

2) What is new? Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1985-86. Yesterday, we heard those Perspectives and we are faced with the task of working out what we excerpt in our paper for the October issue. Is it South Africa? Most probably yes, though we cannot know for sure for another couple of weeks. But we need to grasp, with all the hundreds of thousands of words spoken and written about South Africa, what is it that is so precious about the few pages of typescript we will be sending in to the printer. Just take a second look at the title for this section on Part I: "Hitler's visage in apartheid South Africa shows the future the rulers have in store for all of us". Immediately you see that South Africa is not something over there, but the future on home ground. Now look in more detail at those pages to see how the Perspectives reaches back in South Africa's history to 1905 and the great Zulu Rebellion, and that 1905 extends from the Russian Revolution to Iran and to China as well as southern Africa. See how it brings forth the ideology of Black Consciousness out of Pan-Africanism, and how it presents the new epoch of struggles that emerged in the 1950s as not only in Europe and in America, but emerging in South Africa, here quoting Tabata's address to the Society of Young Africa in 1951. Or see how forces of revolt emerge in South Africa as the strikes of the women in 1956 against the introduction of passes for women, and then the bus boycott, and then followed with 1960 and the Sharpeville Massacre and the 70s of first Soweto with Black South African youth and then of the proletariat with the Black trade unions.

So here we have our article on the latest headlines and one sees it within the historic context of South Africa, in the global context of revolutions/counter-revolutions of our era of post-World War II as a new epoch, on the different moments being also marked by diverse ideological currents, of continually new emerging forces of revolution. The newness of what Marxist-Humanist revolutionary journalism means presenting such a totality, and presenting it as emerging new beginnings in thought as well as in action. And that that emerging new thought is Marxist-Humanist philosophy as well as the movement from below.

And then we might want to combine those pages on what is new in South Africa in this historic, global, philosophic context with an excerpt from the final section on "Marxist-Humanist Tasks as we keep an eye on the world objective situation". Perhaps excerpts from "Becoming practicing dialecticians with a new type of classes as workshops both in theory and in practice" or from "The process of becoming practicing dialecticians in the 30 year long march to

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the Marx centenary tour with RLWLKM in hand."

These two points of departure on what is new I hope can help us think about the workshops that we will be having beginning in January. What is new is not alone the latest headline, but indeed, we are always asking how the headline new is unseparated from what is the historically new of our epoch and the philosophic new of our age. So what is new means understanding that we as Marxist-Humanists are a crucial part of the new for our age. We are news just as much as any other news. And it is this full bodied dimension of what is new in all aspects, including that of Marxist-Humanism, that will be the focal point for the workshops-to-be on the road to a bi-weekly. One more point -- the deadline for the October issue is September 18th. What would allow us to develop these two concrete points -- the new book and this year's Perspectives -- as well as any of today's headlines, be it South Africa or Nicaragua or an ongoing steel strike in the Midwest, into full workshops of revolutionary journalism is the philosophic framework we situate them in. In order to help us do that, I would like to turn to philosophic developments within our Perspectives Theses over the last decade. These Perspectives Theses can serve as mediation for revolutionary journalism today.

III. PERSPECTIVES THESES: THE UNDIGESTED VANTAGE POINT FOR MARXIST-HUMANIST JOURNALISM.

Every year for the past three decades Marxist-Humanists have entered into a dialogue on the ongoing objective-subjective events that have taken place globally in the form of Draft and Full Perspectives. Having recently written a discussion article and a name, place, event index for the last decade's worth of Perspectives, both of which will be issued after this year's Plenum, I was almost overwhelmed with the wealth of material covered. Here, I want to limit my presentation to a short discussion of the way philosophy is presented from the Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, a way in which leaps in cognition are tied to objective/subjective events. Perspectives Theses have spoken to, indeed challenged, how we as Marxist-Humanists have practiced dialectics. (Let me say parenthetically that this long letter on dialectics is addressed not just to ourselves, but to the whole revolutionary Left. But it is ourselves I am concentrating on here.) That is, just as Marxist-Humanism is analyzing, testing, the objective/subjective events of the day, it is challenging itself to follow out the Self-Determination of the Idea. The single dialectic of action and thought is tested right within our own existence. A simple listing of Perspectives Thesis by the title of its philosophic section would show how they characterized the consciousness of and the working out of that single dialectic as Marxist-Humanism's unique contribution.

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Our discussion of a methodology of Marxist-Humanist Perspectives cannot here take in the fullness of each of those discussions of the self-development of the Idea as related to objective/subjective events. Instead we will limit the discussion to only touching upon the two philosophic moments of Marxist-Humanism which most characterize this decade of Perspectives: 1) the drive to concretize, "realize", the Marxist-Humanist philosophic category of Absolute Idea as New Beginning after the publication of Philosophy and Revolution; and 2) the process by which a new category of post-Marx Marxists was created as Marx's new moments as a trail to the 1980s were worked out in writing RLWLKM.

1) The first discussion, on Absolute Idea as New Beginning, that will be on two philosophic moments that Raya took up in the mid-1970s under the impact of world events and what had been worked out philosophically in Philosophy and Revolution:

Facts emerging out of ground: This is discussed in the 1975 Perspectives Thesis. Its Part II, "Dialectics of Organization and Dialectics of Liberation" singles out Hegel's categories of Fact, Ground, Condition. It begins by arguing that facts piled upon facts cannot give us a "direction of the absolute opposite of these counter-revolutions we have been tracing." Instead of considering facts empirically, we need to consider them as Hegel described them: facts emerging out of ground. The Perspectives asks us to see the relationship between "what appears and is its opposite, mediation, development, relationship to all other facts -- a totality of conditions that has brought about the facts we see."

The particular traced in this specific Perspectives is Portugal in the midst of revolution. If you took the facts of that revolution and allowed the ground to be that of the neo-fascist General Spínola, then you would not have caught the moment of the revolution, the fact that what began as reform in 1974, became quite different by 1975: "Hegel said the transformation of Ground externalizes itself, that is, appears. The release of social forces -- masses in motion -- emerged, were born anew. Clearly the new immediate was the result of a mediation process."

That revolutionary Ground in turn becomes Condition: "The transformation of Ground into Condition, that is to say, its becoming history, is precisely what has caused both the immediate and the mediation to unite in a new way, so that instead of looking at one single fact in isolation, you were seeking facts coalescing and moving on, that is to say, the Subject who is seeking these facts moving on to change what is. In Portugal 1975, the Armed Forces Movement shows itself, but so do political parties and Women's Liberationists, and there is a lot of dialogue -- self-development.

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Now jump from a fact to the whole world. It cannot be a view of the world as a mere compilation of facts whose totality is supposedly the objective world: "It, too is one-sided unless we see that objective world with its ingrained subjectivity, we will not see both what is meant about totality and how, at this critical juncture, counter-revolution is not only an outside enemy, but comes from within."

A New Stage and a New Beginning: The 1977 Perspectives begins with an Introduction entitled "Facing Reality on the Question of the Difference Between Totally New Beginnings, and a New Stage." "The whole point is that not all great events which mark new stages of revolt are also epochal new beginnings, initiating a historic new in thought as well as in fact, and cannot be driven out of history even when defeated." East Germany is raised as such a new beginning while Paris, May, 1968, "did not initiate a new epoch in thought. Rather, it ended the epoch of the 1960s." Here was the dividing line in saying '69 was not '68 and why it was so: "To draw a balance sheet between what were truly new, epochal beginnings, and what were only new stages of revolt" meant thinking about what were near revolutions without philosophy whose remaining mark becomes not new points of departure upon which to build, but a compulsion for returning again to find new points of departure in thought which had not been developed in these revolts.

If the 1960s as a whole meant not a new beginning, but only a new stage, then our return to Hegelian dialectics at that moment, to reinvestigate Hegel's Absolutes, was our decision to complete in thought what those 1960s did not do in activity -- create a new beginning -- Absolute Idea as New Beginning as characteristic of the Age.

2) The second discussion I want to have here is on the category of post-Marx Marxists. That category could only be created when we had the totality of Marx and thus had realized what a chasm there was between Marx and all others beginning with Engels. The new moments Raya works out in Marx here become key. Let's trace how she takes up Marx's new moments in the Perspectives:

In the 1981 Full Perspectives, Raya singles out the new moments in Marx directly in relation to additions he made to the French edition of Capital. First were the additions Marx worked out on the concentration and centralization of capital. Second, were the additions on the fetishism of commodities after the Paris Commune posed the alternative of freely associated labor. Third, Marx's writings on primitive accumulation not being only at the dawn of civilization but characterizing its latest stage of industrialization as well, so that one can clearly see as one continuous development, imperialism and industrialization at home, or internal trade and foreign trade.

In the 1982 Draft Perspectives the section entitled "New Moments in Marx and Today's New Challenges" brings forth new moments in a different manner as new paths for development. Here the Perspectives points out "1) New revolutionary forces, no longer limited to the proletariat in advanced lands but present also in the underdeveloped countries. 2) New cultures which, even when 'primitive', actually disclosed more human relationships, as witness the Iroquois women. 3) The multi-dimensionality of civilization, in which the West was by no means seen as 'civilized' and the Orient as 'backward'. There is no Chinese Wall between civilizations. Dialectical development allows for no such unbridgeable stagifying."

The Perspectives then asks, were any post-Marx Marxists grounded in such a magnificent vision of humanity's "absolute movement of becoming"? And traces the negatives of that answer save for Lenin on Hegelian dialectics, but not on the party. We as Marxist-Humanists then are able to show both this view of Marx and the need to break with "all the post-Marx Marxists who congealed Marxism to their dogmatism and failed to work out the new moments as a continuing development."

In the 1983 Draft Perspectives section entitled "Marx's Final Writings Let Us Hear Marx Thinking" Raya takes two kinds of looks at Marx's Last Decade. First is of his study of pre-capitalist human cultures especially in his Ethnological Notebooks, his unmailed answer to Mihailovsky, his new preface to the Russian edition of the Communist Manifesto. All show "Marx's dialectical methodology as the dialectics of 'revolution in permanence' which led him to experience new moments of human development."

Second, Raya looks at Marx's 1875 Critique of the Gotha Programme on the relationship of philosophy to revolution and to organization which the German Social Democracy paid no attention to, and even Lenin did not allow that Critique to influence his concept of the party to lead. The 1983 full Perspectives is a review of the several ways of looking at Marx's new moments.

The different illuminations one can get from the new moments of Marx's last decade is precisely what fully developed the category of post-Marx Marxists. The Perspectives Thesis of the 1980s developed many of these points both on the road to RLWLKM and as extensions of it.

Whether as sources of political analysis or as ground for working out Marxist-Humanist philosophy in an ongoing manner, we need to ask whether our Perspectives Thesis have remained undigested vantage points for our thinking. Wouldn't grasping their methodology have helped us to have a different series of classes this past year? Won't a journey through Perspectives Theses as objective, as subjective, as Marxist-Humanist methodology, help us work out the

organizational-philosophic-journalistic conclusions for the period ahead?

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The kind of Marxist-Humanist projection that we want to attain in the year to come is unlike any other we have undertaken in our 30 years of existence as an independent tendency. Toward that end I want to make a few suggestions of how we can work with the paper in the year ahead:

1) I know we have had a long history of opposition to focoism, and certainly against any kind of circle spirit. But I want to risk using foco and circle in a very different way. Cannot each one of us consider ourselves to be a focal point for Marxist-Humanist journalism and think about how we individually could develop a circle of contacts, friends of Marxist-Humanist journalism, who we would have as readers and subscribers, some as financial supporters, as writers of Readers' Views, and perhaps articles. I am stressing here not the organization as a whole, I take for granted we are always striving to do that. Here I am speaking about individual Marxist-Humanists developing such relationships so that each time a paper comes off the press we as individuals have in our minds a group of friends who we want to share an issue with, and begin eliciting from them for future issues.

2) Connected with this kind of work with the paper would be a motion I wish to put before the Plenum of individual responsibility for working with a number of copies of N&L each time it comes off the press. I know radical groups had had a long history of mechanically assigning members so many copies of their paper to work with, and I don't mean that we should adopt this in a mechanical way. But I would like to propose that each Marxist-Humanist take responsibility individually for say 15 to 25 copies of N&L each month to sell to friends, to place in a bookstore, to take to a political meeting on Central America or Women's Liberation, to find a neighborhood shopping area or a mass transit stop or a college campus to stand at the entrance of, or a picket line discovered on the way to work. Can we not, much more creatively than my mere listing of possibilities, individually find a place to spend an hour once a week and try and meet people with N&L in hand? How else will we be able to develop that circle of readers, subscribers, writers and financial supporters for Marxist-Humanism? It is not the total number of copies that one takes that is the key, it is rather to see that we don't take for granted that the paper comes out, then the next issue comes out and so on. Let's see if this doesn't at the same time bring a new quality to the activities section of our meetings, and in the end bring forward a new circle of friends at our meetings.

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3) As part of such a reorganization of our work with the paper, I take for granted that in each local we will be having continuing discussions on where they want to be working with the paper as a local.

4) For the local at the Center, Chicago, I would like to suggest a way that Marxist-Humanists could get a feeling of how this paper is created which would lead to new ways of individuals working with the paper. When members from outside the Center come here for a short period of time, we have often invited them to work on the Philosophical-Technical committee for an issue of the paper. In the next year I would like to invite one or two members of the Chicago local each month to work in the PTC to help us put out an issue of the paper. Perhaps the way to volunteer is to decide, after seeing what will be the lead, or Theory/Practice column in a particular issue, plus the REB discussion, and the unfolding objective events, how you as a member would want to relate yourself to see how all of that became reflected in a particular issue.

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Finally let's end "on the road", yes to a bi-weekly, but really on the road to the social uprooting and new beginnings that remain the human endeavor. It is only when the view of totality and the concrete tasks of the moment become a fused ongoing quest, that the road becomes an open one. Everywhere paths for freedom are before us. South Africa as in Eastern Europe. Latin America as in Asia. The United States is no exception. And yes, here in this room among these few, precious, Marxist-Humanists.

It is for that reason that I want to close as I opened, inviting all of us to go traveling into the ideas of revolutionary journalism. We need a most serious dialogue in these few hours of our Plenum and continuing for the year to come. Let's not treat the bi-weekly as a fait accompli. Believe me it isn't. It will be created by all of us in the period ahead. It isn't a question of a few at the Center, or on the Philosophical-Technical Committee, but all of us together. If we are saying that philosophy itself in our epoch is part of a new objectivity, if self-determination encompasses the self-determination of the Idea, if we are saying that Absolute Idea as New Beginning for our age means Marxist-Humanism, then let us together test this out as News and Letters Committees, as its practitioners in our philosophic-organizational-journalistic life. Our revolutionary subjectivity can indeed be a determination of a new revolutionary objectivity.