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Report by Raya Dunayevskaya
National Chairwoman of News and Letters Committees,
to Meeting of Expanded Resident Editorial Board
December 29, 1985.

New Beginnings That Determine The End

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The Parallelism of 1953-55 to 1983-85;
Categories, Tendencies, The Objective World

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NEW BEGINNINGS THAT DETERMINE THE END

I. Introduction: The Whole and its Parts

The Labor Day Plenum of News and Letters Committees this year coincided with the time when the Black majority's continuous revolts in South Africa succeeded in so shaking South Africa's apartheid ruling regime that it savagely plunged into undeclared Civil War against the unarmed majority. This, in turn, only succeeded in making translucent to the whole world the dauntless courage of the Black masses in this confrontation. The international impact is deepening. The solidarity of the world masses with the African Freedom Fighters is not alone with their bravery but with the goals, the philosophy, of their revolution. The ramifications of that type of solidarity led to the "shock of recognition" that that visage of Hitler is by no means limited to South Africa's Botha regime. Rather, that visage characterizes state-capitalism, from Russia to the U.S., especially Reagan's U.S. with its apologetics for Botha that Reagan has the gall to call "active constructive engagement."

The presence of Hitler's visage in all state-capitalist imperialisms became pivotal to Marxist-Humanist Perspectives for 1985-86. It determined the Oct. Lead article in News & Letters, "The undeclared and ongoing civil war in South Africa," which followed the Labor Day Plenum proposal to transform News & Letters into a bi-weekly that would continue to be inseparable from our philosophic challenge to all post-Marx Marxists. Objectively and subjectively, the need is to continuously concretize Marx's Humanism for our age. The "new moments" Marx experienced in his last decade made clear the following: Just as Marx's 1844 projection of a "new Humanism" indicated what Marx's Marxism would be as a totality -- the newness and vision of paths to revolution -- so the 1980s left a trail for the 1990s, including what we now call the Third World and its relationship to the developed West. It is the task of Marxists to concretize the relationship of theory/practice and do so on the basis of specific objective situations. Let us examine whether we did so in the 1980s.

The 30-Year Retrospective/Perspective of News & Letters¹ means to show the inseparability of Perspectives out of retrospective, from the very birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S. It means to influence our supplemental contribution to the

¹ Part I appeared in N&L, July 1985, and Part II in N&L, Nov. 1985.

archives² at the beginning of 1986. In re-examining what is still missing from the 30-Year Retrospective/Perspective that I haven't yet finished, I became newly conscious of all the new this half-decade has signalled for Marxist-Humanist development, from the revelations that Marx's Ethnological Notebooks had introduced into today's world, to the July 1980 Draft Perspectives Thesis whose title was "Tomorrow is Now."

Indeed, the issue of News & Letters, Jan.-Feb. 1980, on Rosa Luxemburg, was actually the second of the draft chapters published of Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, which analyzed the new of Marx's moments which none of the post-Marx Marxists knew about, or did anything about when they did know. For Marxist-Humanism, however, the fundamental changes could be seen in the very new News & Letters masthead, "Theory/Practice," which also replaced the title of the "Two Worlds" column. That same first year of the 1980s News & Letters had been so thorough in recognizing the new in the Black Miami uprising³ that we centered our whole analysis of the new stage of the Black revolt on what was called the "little shorties," the 11-, 12-, and 13-year-old Black youth who rejected the established Black leadership. It is the present activity of South Africa's "children's revolution" that has both further illuminated our analysis of the Miami shorties and showed how deep was Marxist-Humanism's relationship to Azania and to the second United States.

In the same June 1980 News & Letters that carried our analyses of the Miami rebellion, in examining other revolutionary forces we also carried Olga Domanski's essay-summary of a decade of Women's Liberation called "Women's Liberation in Search of a Theory." In a word, the conclusion of the 30-Year Retrospective/Perspective discloses the new of that 1980s decade, since our 1980 pamphlet on 25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., in all fields of Marxist-Humanist analysis that definitely both parallels and projects further the essence of the Dialectic -- the relationship of the objective situation to subjectivity as philosophy of revolution.

² The Ray Dunayevskaya Collection, Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Detroit, MI 48202. The Guide to the Collection is available from News & Letters.

³ News & Letters contained no less than four analyses: Charles Denby's Worker's Journal column, "Fires of Miami Expose Truth of Racism, USA" and John Alan's Black-Red View column, "Rage in Miami," June 1980; the Lead article in Oct. 1980, "From Poland to Miami: Masses as Reason" (excerpts from the 1980-81 Perspectives Thesis); as well as being included in the last section of the pamphlet (serialized in N&L) on 25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.: A History of Worldwide Revolutionary Developments.

The new Introduction to the 1986 edition of the Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought pamphlet, as well as the new collectivities for the trips to Appalachia, Mexico, Spain, and perhaps India, as well as the supplements to the Archives: all are integral to the road to a bi-weekly News & Letters. Our discussion today will also include these four brief reports: Olga Domanski on Finances; Michael Connolly on Archives and Organization; Eugene Walker on the Biweekly; and Lou Turner on Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought. Here it is necessary to concentrate on the Workshop/Classes-to-be, and therefore I turn to the second part of this report, i.e. the Prospectus or Syllabus.

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II. The Dialectic Method and the Workshop/Classes on Current Events

So new are our Workshop/Classes, not just for ourselves, but because of the kind of workshops Marxist-Humanism has in mind, that philosophically as well as concretely they are totally new. You will become practicing dialecticians as we probe the objective developments and see that while the media gives you what happened, it doesn't give you the meaning objectively and subjectively -- and that is true both of the reporters and the so-called analytical commentaries.

To grasp the meaning, objectively and subjectively, you need to have internalized what Marx meant by history-in-the-making. Naturally -- though not out of whole cloth -- each generation does bear the responsibility for how history is shaped and re-shaped in its age. Dialectics discloses, if you probe deeply, the process of development, objectively and subjectively.

The meaning of the event is grounded in the event itself; your method of examining it is not just as a single event or one which you judge in a quantitative way only, but in its totality, in its class relationships, where each class has an aim of its own. Rulers make headlines because of their power to exploit and destroy; it is that military might that seeks to terrorize people, to make us believe that our fate is in their hands. In truth that is not so, and Method will help us see the truth. Dialectics shows the nothingness of accomplishment at the Reagan-Gorbachev summit. It was made to appear as a great achievement but, in truth, the global crises that have brought the world to the edge reveal that the two Behemoths were simply not yet ready to launch a nuclear holocaust at this moment. So they smiled.

Methodology had us probe the process of a concretely developing situation which led us to the philosophic principles of being and nothing. This has nothing to do with the Sartrean expression of Being and Nothingness. Hegel's dialectic principle of being and nothing does not end with that announcement of those two opposites. The Hegelian dialectic pointed to being and nothing BECOMING.

What Marx did with "becoming" was to develop the relation of actual class struggles. This led to new unities of opposites crossing different national boundaries. In our age Marxist-Humanism disclosed the duality in the Absolute and developed that into a new relationship of practice to theory. This is what we want to concretize, work out, in the six projected Workshop/Classes.

It is important that the primary reporter in each of the six classes makes the report no more than half an hour (with the sole exception of the first, because that one needs also to develop this Introduction to the whole series as well as the first Workshop/Class). The other reporter in each session makes his/her report in only 15 minutes -- and does not speak directly after the first reporter, but during the discussion. The audience must have an opportunity to participate in response to the first report. Both reports must be on a topic of the day -- and that day should be no later than within the week preceding the class.

Each workshop will need to study the daily press inseparable from the source and principles. It is the source and principles that set the direction of the approach to the news. It is true that we approach a current event not in an abstract manner, but concretely. Concrete, however, is not just immediacy or appearance, but essence which flows from Concept -- what to Hegel and Marx was comprehensive/concrete. Precisely because the meaning of the event is seen to be imbedded in the event itself, it draws the audience into participation. To comprehend a meaning in the concrete event, a meaning the audience may not have seen when it was just a headline in the newspaper, can "transform" listeners into participants. This, too, is the purpose of the classes as workshops. The main reporter is to bring to the session one or two pages on what has been happening.

The source and principles are what give meaning to the event as well as understanding of Marx's concept of history-in-the-making and your own practice as dialectician to develop it for our age. It is for this reason that I want to consider as required reading the 10-year sum-up of Perspectives that Eugene wrote, "Methodology of Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1975-1985," the sections of which encompass State-Capitalism; Marxist-Humanism; Absolute Ideas as New Beginning; The Third World and the Black Dimension.

Finally, as you will see in a minute in the first Workshop/Class, we want to pay a good deal of attention to the expression "in the air." That is to say, what is "in the air" when an objective event compels a philosopher to so-called "anticipate" an event that hasn't yet happened. That is what we hope to achieve with these Workshop/Classes, as we are pre-occupied with the concrete, the concrete, the concrete. Hold tight to Method as I concretize the first Workshop/Class.

FIRST WORKSHOP/CLASS: THE REAGAN-GORBACHEV SUMMIT AND THE BLACK DIMENSION (The Third World that wasn't invited)

The first Workshop is not to take off only from the Editorial in the December issue of NEL (even though that was written as the summit was occurring). Though the Editorial did take into consideration the fact that the person who was not among those listed principal participants -- Weinberger -- was the one who really set the line through the Reagan-planned "leak," what is needed is to philosophically comprehend the objective situation, the masses making history, the undeclared civil war in faraway South Africa.

This is quintessential because it is important to not be diverted by seeing opposite nations talking, even when they are as far apart as the U.S. and Russia. The absolute opposite is within each country -- the masses against the exploiter-rulers. It is the dissatisfaction of the masses with their conditions of labor, with their lives in their respective countries, and it is the birth of the Third World in particular that are the real pivots.

Even if we knew the secret, so-called unrecorded "personal" talks between Reagan and Gorbachev, we would not know what motivated them if we were bereft of Marx's dialectical analysis of history-in-the-making. For example, whether or not anything was mentioned by the two Behemoths about South Africa, the rulers' preoccupation was the dissatisfaction of their masses at home, and far, far away was the Third World that, to them, was silent. But in truth the Third World spoke loudly and clearly; it didn't wish to tie its fate to either one of the two nuclear poles of capitalism. That is to say, that was "in the air," kept developing, and is ongoing.

Philosophy is needed to penetrate that. Let's examine what is Method. Dialectic Methodology is primary to any subject. The point is that any so-called "simple" event has arisen out of something past as well as the present, and is "in the air" as some possible future we do not yet know.

Let me give you a concrete philosophic example. Take "Being and Nothingness" in the subject we are discussing, the Reagan-Gorbachev summit. In analyzing both what was published of their talks and what was left absolutely blank, as well as what hadn't yet emerged fullblown even from the objective situation, let's examine what philosophy as anchor (or rather, as attitude) would have you probe. First, what

do you have in the back of your mind when you write a brief two pages for the paper; then, expand, work it out in full, after discussions with the Workshop/Class and later with yourself, as an essay for the future.

The co-existence of two different "systems" could be seen in their true state -- as merely different forms of world state-capitalism. What was pushing at Reagan and Gorbachev to smile was the concrete crisis in each one's country revealed by the dissatisfaction of the masses in their countries and the continuing unrest in all of the Third World, climaxed by what is happening in the most "stable" (i.e. militarized) country in the world -- South Africa.

The visage of Hitler is projected not only in apartheid South Africa but in all the countries. Just as we now see that the stage of automated and robotized capitalist production has produced a permanent army of the unemployed, so what is new since the 1950s is the emergence of a Third World as a measure of the whole world. That means the masses of the globe. What the rulers will never understand is that it is not they but the masses in revolt who are the absolute opposite who will win. Those masses have not had their final say. They will not stop their revolt until their revolutionary struggle and passion for truly new human relations has become reality.

- READINGS:
1. 1954 Editorial on Guatemala (reprint^{ed} in Guatemalan Revolutionaries Speak)
 2. Footnotes 17 and 165 in first (1957-58) edition of Marxism and Freedom. (See Sept. 1957 postscript at end of Introduction to first edition)
 3. Workers Battle Automation by Charles Denby (1960)
 4. 1934 edition of Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions

SECOND WORKSHOP/CLASS: THE STATE OF THE UNION AND MARX'S
CRITIQUE OF THE GOTHA PROGRAM

We all know that in January the President has to deliver what is called the State of the Union address. All media pundits -- economists as well as politicians -- also sum up the year and try to see into the next. Statistics continue very nearly endlessly through January and into February.

We will consider them as we ponder the headlines of the week. But to really embark on one's task as a revolutionary

worker-student-youth theoretician, we need to turn back the clock over a century to what may seem irrelevant, but will be a profound illumination of today -- Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program.

In that work, Marx (in what he called "Marginal Notes") commented on the proposed union of "Marxists" (Eisenachists) and Lassalleans that was being founded to fight Prussian overlords. Bismarck's Germany was in its most reactionary period following the White Terror of the first counter-revolution in France against the first attempt for a workers' republic, the Paris Commune. So new were the truly new human relations emerging in the Paris Commune -- with the women having been the first to sound the alarm and take up arms, as well as with men working out production relations in so new a form that Marx made "its own working existence" a beacon for all future attempts to create a new society.

This session will be especially difficult both for the reporters and for the audience itself, precisely because every one of us without exception has views on this, and there are a multiplicity of Left tendencies who are all against Reagan but refuse to discuss the topic of what they are for.

Yet this is precisely what Marx talked about in those Marginal Notes. It is the first time ever that Marx wrote anything resembling a so-called party program, not limiting it to immediate tasks, much less the existing situation, but insisting on projecting what communism would be after the overthrow of bourgeois society. Just as on the question of women, who are supposedly not mentioned but are actually so pivotal to his thinking that he dismisses the Lassallean proposals as "bourgeois twaddle," so the youth are also not mentioned directly and yet are actually at the center of his thought. The method makes you see that the whole question of what follows after the overthrow is aimed at the new generation of revolutionaries, not the older Social Democratic leaders he is sending the Notes to.

- READINGS:
1. Lead in N&L, December 1985, by Olga Domanski, "Spreading U.S. strikes resist 'two-tier society,' pose questions"
 2. Summation of State of the Union in regular press
 3. Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program
 4. Chapter 9 of Philosophy and Revolution, "New Passions and New Forces"

THIRD WORKSHOP/CLASS: THE POST-WORLD WAR II WORLD: LATIN AMERICA'S NEW TYPE OF WORKER-PEASANT REVOLUTIONS (Its world ramifications call for a look back to Spain, 1937)

Although what I am going to say now is just for keeping in the back of your mind, the methodology points us to the relationship of something in the movement from practice that signalled the new as not only against capitalism but also against the so-called Communism in Russia. It was the 1937 Revolution in Spain. It made for a kind of new Divide in the 1930s not only in Spain but projected to the whole world, especially Latin America which was not tied to Russia in the first stages of revolt.

A multi-faceted spontaneity emerged that laid the ground for a new generation of revolutionaries and, at first, even united the many native tendencies from anarchism to socialism. Though soon the global outreach of Stalinism with its murderous attacks on dissidents wasted away that spontaneity, it remains a task for this generation to work out its full dimension, as it definitely will illuminate the whole problem of the dialectic of the "Party."

Whether it was the Debs or Lincoln brigades in the U.S. or the very first nationalization of the oil industry in Mexico, there was, and continues to be, a very new and historical alternative to both the transformation ^{into} opposite in Russia and a new stage of capitalism born out of Depression, i.e. state-capitalism, welfare state, co-prosperity sphere.

Relate how this impacted on the way we were to work out state-capitalism as the world stage of capitalism, of which Stalinism was but the Russian name.

Although this is kept in the back of your mind, the central point of Latin America is the new opposites brought on by the Bolivian Revolution, on the one hand, and Pax Americana on the other, all the way to El Salvador and Nicaragua in the 1980s. Reagan leaves no doubt in anyone's mind that his view of Pax Americana will make headlines throughout 1986 as he continues his mad pursuit to overthrow the Nicaraguan Revolution.

READINGS: 1. Lead in N&L, May 1978, by Eugene Walker, "The Latino struggle unites freedom fighters in North and South America"

2. Essay by Peter Vermuth on Bolivia
3. The whole 1930s period in the John Dwyer Archives Collection
4. Two Political-Philosophic Letters of Raya Dunayevskaya: "The Latin American Unfinished Revolutions" (1978); and "Grave Contradictions in the Iranian Revolution" (1979)
5. "The Peasant Dimension in Latin America" by Michael Connolly and "Latin America: Revolution and Theory" by Eugene Walker in Latin America's Revolutions: In reality, in thought

FOURTH WORKSHOP/CLASS: THE POST-WORLD WAR II WORLD: REVOLUTIONS IN EAST EUROPE FROM UNDER TOTALITARIAN COMMUNISM

The point here is to show how totally new events, that become what philosophically would be called categories, actually are grounded in what is magnificent about Dialectics -- whether that be Dialectics in Thought alone (or maybe I should say where the objective situation, especially the revolution, is not openly seen as a determinate); or whether that be where both philosophy and revolution are definitely seen as determinate, as in Marx (but that was the 19th century, not today).

For Lenin, in 1914-17, dialectics was the determinate in defining not only the politics of being against both imperialism and Second International socialism, but 1917 as the actual concretization of the dialectics of revolution. Central, however, is neither 1917 nor 1937 but the three decades from the 1950s to the 1980s with daily headlines on new forms of worker-opposition, from the birth of Solidarnosc in Poland to the ongoing underground revolts as they are related to new points of cognition -- and to such betrayals as Kolarkowski's writing, when he was in Poland, "Towards a Marxist-Humanism," but adhering in the 1980s to the new Reaganism, as seen in his coming lecture (in June) at the University of Chicago.

- READINGS:
1. Chapter 3 of Philosophy and Revolution, "State Capitalism and the East European Revolts"
 2. Chapter 12 of Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, "The Last Writings of Marx Point a Trail to the 1980s"
 3. "Introduction and Overview" of Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution

4. Chapter 5 of Kevin Anderson's Thesis, The Dialectical Sociology of Social Change: A Study of Lenin and Hegel, "Lenin's References to Dialectics, 1914-1923"
5. Response by Dunayevskaya to Peter Bergman's discussion of "Why Hegel? Why Now?", in N&L, Nov. 1974

FIFTH WORKSHOP/CLASS: REVOLUTIONARY JOURNALISM AND THE ABSOLUTE
METHOD: NEWS & LETTERS

The combination of the 30-Year Retrospective/Perspective and Eugene Walker's "Methodology of Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1975-1985" will set a good foundation for what can only be worked out ever anew, daily. (Yes, you not only have to imagine that News & Letters will become a bi-weekly but how daily reading and analyzing of the press leads to the projection of the philosophic revolution that initiated the 30-years of the post-World War II world.)

This will be a certain type of summation and concretization of what we have done thus far when our need has been to express events as they happen and the attitude must be that to get the full meaning one must turn to it philosophically. You will be surprised at how many new things are seen in the same event, depending on the relationship it has to history, to our other writings, as well as to what we are trying to project for the next year.

Look again at Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future, not as a whole but singling out something like the 1950 article on the miners' wives, as written when the strike happened and as seen in relationship to the 1969 article that precedes it in the book, written when the category of "Woman as Reason" was created, as well as in relationship to the article "Marx's 'New Humanism' and the Dialectics of Women's Liberation in Primitive and Modern Societies," delivered during the Marx Centenary, 1983, and reprinted in the international-Yugoslav dissident philosophic journal Praxis. Try to do the same thing in relationship to something you have written, whatever period you choose, relating it to what you think about the same subject now.

- READINGS:
1. News & Letters at a turning point in each decade -- one issue from each decade, the '60s, '70s, '80s. What is decisive is not a single article but the paper as a whole.
 2. Eugene Walker's essay on "Methodology of Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1975-1995"
 3. Michael Connolly's essay, "When Archives are not Past, but are Living," in Dialectics of Revolution: American Roots and World Humanist Concepts

the Absolute and the Absolute still remained an abstraction, Marx had dug out from the process of objective development that the class instinct of the proletariat is so profound that, if revolutionary theoreticians single it out, that proletarian instinct will release, liberate, the theoretician to work^{it} out to its logical conclusion fully, objectively and subjectively. Dialectic philosophy makes it possible to anticipate the future i.e. develop a new relationship of theory to practice. That was Marx's transformation of Hegel's revolution in philosophy into a philosophy of revolution. It could not be done unless it was rooted in the practice from below.

Marx proceeded in his last decade to call attention to his substantial additions to the French edition of Capital -- especially on the Fetishism of Commodities in Chapter I, and in the last Part on the Accumulation of Capital. At the same time, remember this is the period after the Paris Commune, when he wrote his Critique of the Gotha Program; studied what was then a "new science," Anthropology, especially Morgan's Ancient Society; and wrote his Ethnological Notebooks. From all of this he drew the following conclusions about what we now call the Third World:

1) The multilinear view of human development reveals -- whether in the Iroquois in the U.S., or in the "Oriental Commune," or the Western peasant -- that there are other paths to revolution;

2) The peasants and the women are revolutionary forces as well as the proletariat.

3) Revolution may come first in a backward land like Russia before the advanced West Europe.

Standing on Marx's Marxist ground and reason for a new relationship of theory to practice, Marxist-Humanism saw in the new moments of Marx in the 1880s a trail to the 1980s. Our tasks begin there, but that is not where they end. It is the todayness that has to be worked out anew in each epoch, rooted in the concreteness of the new age. That cannot be anticipated; it must be worked out anew by the new generation of revolutionaries. That is what we aim at in all these Workshop/Classes.

It is this which I want to sum up briefly so we can define our immediate tasks for a bi-weekly. The sum-up will take us from the first workshop on the two opposite current events -- the Reagan-Gorbachev summit and the headlines about

may be hard for revolutionary dialecticians to project to those who never leave go of fixed Particulars, as we long ago found out with the theory of state-capitalism. As Hamlet's father told Hamlet regarding his mother who married his murderer: Leave her to heaven.

As for me, I have to admit that I had to work out Ch. 12 even before I had it on paper as a chapter, even before, indeed, I could complete the preceding Ch. 11, "The Philosopher of Permanent Revolution Creates New Ground for Organization."

For the present, in this sixth Workshop/Class, we are limiting ourselves to how what we have projected in these sessions is to be expressed journalistically and philosophically at the same time. What Marx called "Marginal Notes" were not only organizational but philosophic. They were the only place where Marx concretely projected a communist society. Though that is exactly what we began tackling with Ch. 12 of Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, it will not be fully developed until I have worked out the new book. What relates directly to the Workshops/Classes is our concept of new forces of revolution, not only workers but peasants, not only the generic man but Man/Woman, and most pivotal of all, youth as a new generation of revolutionaries which is not burdened with as many birthmarks of the capitalist society from which we all emerge.

- READINGS:
1. Dialectics of Liberation (not to be considered for this session alone) which contains both the summaries of Hegel's major works and my "Letters on the Absolute Idea" as well as "Lecture Notes: Lenin on Hegel's Science of Logic"
 2. Chapter 1 of Philosophy and Revolution, "Absolute Negativity as New Beginning"
 3. Chapters 11 and 12 of Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, "The Philosopher of Permanent Revolution Creates New Ground for Organization" and "The Last Writings of Marx Point a Trail to the 1980s"
 4. Part II of Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal, by Charles Denby
 5. "Introduction and Overview" of Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future
 6. New edition of Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought

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III. Return to the Beginning: The Parallelism of 1953-55 to 1983-85; Categories, Tendencies, the Objective World

What I haven't talked about (and didn't expect to) is our own philosophic development in the context of the actual events that were occurring (1) when we were still bound to the old organization, 1953, and when we launched News & Letters, 1955; and (2) the two years since the Marx Centenary, 1983-85.

The parallelism kept mysteriously hovering in the background as I wrote the Dec. N&L Editorial on the Reagan-Gorbachev summit. It appeared again as I met with Lou Turner to rewrite the new Introduction to Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought. Lou then reiterated his previous proposal that, in addition to the new Appendix on Negritude by Depestre and Ngugi, he favored another Appendix, or perhaps we should call it other than an Appendix; in any case, it must include the Marxist-Humanist view, such as my Political-Philosophic Letter on Grenada, and even part of our 1985-86 Perspectives Thesis.

At that point -- a month ago -- what had been hovering in the background suddenly loomed large and no longer mysterious but straight ahead in the objective situation -- that parallelism between the two years 1953-55 and today's 1983-85.

All one has to do to see that there is nothing mysterious about becoming conscious anew of that parallelism -- as well as with it, C.L.R. James' voluble silence -- is to examine the two different historic periods.

In 1953 McCarthyism pervaded the land as the first unpopular war in U.S. history -- the Korean War -- was drawing to an inconclusive end with the two super-powers continuing to put down markers for the next war between "West" and "East." Its effects on the Left tendencies will here be limited to C.L.R. James of the Johnson-Forest Tendency,⁴ but it is characteristic of others, which is what Historical Materialism has always warned about. Rulers' ideology creeps into the thinking of even revolutionaries, though they seem to draw very opposite conclusions. They fail to see what is new, like national revolutions from practice and thus fail to reorganize their theory into a full philosophy. As Lenin put it during the first World War, war is so overwhelming a development that the rulers' reactionary ideology creeps into some revolutionaries who cannot see that more is needed than just being against

⁴ The Johnson-Forest Tendency derived its name from the movement names of James (Johnson) and Dunayevskaya (Forest). See Part One (Vols. I-III) of the Archives, "Birth and Development of State-Capitalist Theory"

what is. Lenin went so far as to designate his Bolshevik co-leader, Bukharin, as projecting "imperialist economism" because he failed to recognize the revolutionary nature of the national question in the imperialist world.

Similarly, during the Korean War, what emerged at first stealthily was a division within the Johnson-Forest Tendency, in different attitudes to the new beginning manifested in the Miners' General Strike of 1949-50, and to the old, old (Luxemburgian in fact) stand on the National Question, in seeming to expound world revolution.⁵ This signalled two different visions of the kind of new paper we would issue -- it was then called Correspondence -- when freed from Trotskyism. This was inherent even before I made the breakthrough on the Absolute Idea as a movement from practice as well as from theory. It showed itself in the attitude to the very first Lead, on the objective situation in Russia -- the Beria Purge. While I was working on new beginnings that would determine a totally different end, 1950-53, C.L.R. James was holding back on attacking McCarthyism, culminating in his breakup of the Johnson-Forest Tendency when we were listed.⁶

Presently, James' never-ending forked-tongue-style of thinking and writing disclosed ^{itself} over again on Grenada, in Communist Affairs; and Third World Book Review shows his preoccupation with the Caribbean personality as being "unique, cui generis." This has culminated in his denial of African roots: "I do not know what are the African roots of the language and culture of the Caribbean intellectuals. I am not aware of the African roots of my use of the language and culture ... We of the Caribbean have not got an African past. We are black in skin, but the African civilization is not ours. The basis of our civilization in the Caribbean is an adaptation of western civilization." (This 1984 interview was considered so earth-shaking that they called it "An Audience with C.L.R. James.")

In both this interview and in the article in the same year on Grenada, what is really preoccupying James is leadership. In his characteristic forked-tongue article on Grenada in Communist Affairs (July 1984) where he in the first paragraph speaks of 1979 as "a great revolution" "never before in the Caribbean," a page later he says it was not a revolutionary

5 See State-Capitalism and World Revolution, a 1950 Discussion Bulletin, in the Archives, Vol. II, Sec. II

6 See Vol. III, Sec. II of the Archives, "1951-1955 -- From the Establishment of Correspondence Committees to the Split between Johnson and Forest." See also the Prologue to 25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., "New stage of production, new stage of cognition, new kind of organization"

act but only one of self-defense (obviously because Bishop and the New Jewel Movement had heard that Gairy had ordered their murders). Here he repeats what he had said in his "Audience":

"A mass movement above all needs leadership and if the political leader does not give it, people turn to another organization, often the army. The army consists of organization, commanders, lieutenants, majors, etc."

Nothing, however -- at least not since the revised 1963 edition of his Black Jacobins -- has changed his position on the uniqueness of the Caribbean personality. In the 1963 added, lengthy new Introduction to Black Jacobins, he compared Castro to Toussaint L'Ouverture. He has now extended the Caribbean personality to anyone born there, no matter if he left it as a child and all activity is in the U.S. The specific person is Stokely Carmichael who now (the 1985 edition of James' History of Negro Revolt) has not only been included in the latest mix of Castro and Toussaint but also raised to their company as well as to Aime Cesaire and Frantz Fanon.

The 1983-85 parallelism to the 1953-55 situation discloses the horrors of today's McCarthyism which is not just the "ideology of a Senator," but the power of a President, Reagan, from on high, armed to the teeth and reaching for the mad phantasmagoria of Star Wars. His retrogressionism at home covers all fields from anti-labor, anti-Black and anti-Women's Liberation to gaining ideological adherents with so-called former Lefts becoming "the new Right"; abroad, he tries to extend his imperialist invasion of Grenada as he works mightily to destroy the Nicaraguan Revolution and help the contras overthrow the legitimate government there.

Now: how do all these conflicting powers, as well as very different political tendencies in the Left, relate intimately to this year -- specifically the past few months since our Plenum, and from this expanded Resident Editorial Board meeting to our Convention next year over Labor Day? Let's turn to Absolute Method to grasp in full that parallelism between 1953-55 and 1983-85, even if it is a little critical of us as well.

In order to better understand the present moment in the sense of reaching for the future, we have to return all over again to what has been the theme of all these Workshop/Classes -- not history as past, but Marx's concept of "history-in-the-making." Let's begin with our Bulletin on

Dialectics of Liberation, which contains no foreword that would direct you to see what connects the Letters on the Absolute Idea, written in 1953, before the break with C.L.R. James, to the summaries of Hegel's major works, written in 1960-61, after the break, and the 1967 Lecture Notes on "Lenin on Hegel's Science of Logic."

It is true that what we did, the minute we were free of C.L.R. James (who had fled from the listing), was not only not to run away from McCarthyism, but to unfurl a new banner of Marxist-Humanism with a new type of paper, News & Letters, and my "assignment" to complete Marxism and Freedom. It is these facts, these labors, that led me back to re-examine how much labor is involved even when you are driven by the objective situation to act as a revolutionary and how much more labor when your theoretical instincts help you dive into dialectic philosophy to work out a new philosophic category to embark on organizational conclusions. What you have to do here is face what happened when we not only plunged into the Absolute Idea, but had already worked out new categories by 1983.

By then -- the Marx Centenary Tour -- I had in hand Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution which contained that historic challenge to all post-Marx Marxism in Ch. 12, and this time new doors had opened both in the Black Dimension and together with it Women's Liberation sponsors.

Why, then, did we still wait until 1985 to make the organizational conclusions I am now making after my recent New York trip?

Well, study the gap that keeps continuing organizationally before "volunteers" emerge to meet the challenge with you. Listen first to how much philosophically new had already been included way back in 1953 that had not resulted in direct organizational proposals.

Listen to the very first May 12, 1953 Letter, as I related the Absolute to Marx's "absolute general law" of capitalism's general contradiction in accumulation of capital; and concluded on the "dialectic of the party": "I am shaking all over for we have come to where we part from Lenin. [emphasis in the original]"

"H, are you as excited as I? Just as Marx's development of the form of the commodity and money came from

Hegel's syllogistic UPI, so the Accumulation of Capital (the General Absolute Law) is based on the Absolute Idea.

"Remember also that we kept on repeating Lenin's aphorism that Marx may not have left us a 'Logic' but he left us the logic of Capital. This is it -- the logic of Capital is the dialectic of bourgeois society: the state-capitalism at one pole and the revolt at the other ..."

With that conclusion on the "economics" in accumulation of capital and its general absolute law, I ended by showing that Marx had ended with the new beginnings (the revolt of the masses) by setting "the limits to the dialectic of the party [emphasis not in original] which is part of bourgeois society and will wither with its passing as will the bourgeois state." Whereas "full liberation takes precedence over economics, politics, philosophy, or rather refuses to be rent asunder into three and wants to be one, the knowledge that you can be free ..." (Svitak told me that the underground dissident revolutionary Left in East Europe know that sentence.)

The May 20, 1953 Letter then goes into Philosophy of Mind, where Hegel goes from the objective situation where "freedom presents itself under the shape of necessity" in the "form of reality" (objective world). By the time Hegel reaches the Mind Absolute, I write: "The movement is from the logical principle or theory to nature or practice and from practice not alone to theory but to the new society which is its essence." I conclude the commentary on the paragraphs #575, 576, 577 with the declarative sentence: "We have entered the new society."

Clearly it wasn't only a matter of my first "debate" with Lenin about that last paragraph of Hegel's Science of Logic that Lenin said didn't matter. That last paragraph led me to the May 20 Letter which showed I went where Hegel directed me, his Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences, especially the Philosophy of Mind. And clearly, insofar as C.L.R. James was concerned he embarked on an organizational conclusion though he took till the listing before he actually broke from the Johnson-Forest Tendency which was to spell itself out as MARXIST-HUMANISM once we did have a new organization, News and Letters Committees, with my assignment to complete the theoretical work, Marxism and Freedom, which would make our aim of Marxist-Humanism public.

Why then was it so long before I could make the next philosophic leap by going where none had trod before i.e. where those last three syllogisms in Philosophy of Mind were developed as the Absolute Idea as New Beginning that would determine the end, in Philosophy and Revolution, 1973?

Thanks to the great archival work of Mike Connolly, he has found 82 letters between Herbert Marcuse and myself. These letters show that as early as May 5, 1955 I broached the Absolute Idea to Marcuse. By Jan. 28, 1958 I called the Absolute Idea a "supplement" to Marxism and Freedom. By Oct. 16, 1960 I had included a sort of outline to the next work which would not only develop Hegel's Absolute Idea but concretize it for our age by turning to the new in our age, THE NEW AFRICAN REVOLUTIONS. Indeed, in all the debates between Marcuse and me it became clear that, along with African Revolutions, I meant to take up all new revolutions and counter-revolutions as I argued on Mao's strange admixture of an administrative mentality and his ("the Helmsman's") adventurism that kept offering LEADERSHIP to the Third World; I insisted that Maoism was the Third World's new enemy.

Now relate the question of origin and source to the new category, Absolute Idea as New Beginning. We all know 1953 as origin and source when I worked out the split in the Absolute Idea. We can now see, long before it was a book, a direct relationship to the concept of Absolute Idea as New Beginning in Philosophy and Revolution. AND YET, and yet ... does that really mean that was "it"? No. Only when the philosophic category was fully worked out in Philosophy and Revolution as book and resulted in organizational development and thus philosophy was projected, became inseparable from organization, did it signal: "This is it."

EACH new philosophic stage, as it is projected, and becomes real, is concretized organizationally, and in your personal life.

The new doors, opened by the Black Dimension, along with platforms opened a little by Women's Liberation, were NOT "followed through" i.e. concretized organizationally, in the Marx Centenary Tour, though we already had Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution in hand and that had Ch. 12 which threw down the gauntlet to all of post-Marx Marxism. Ch. 12 made post-Marx Marxists a pejorative term, which designated that they had not fully grasped and projected Marx's Marxism as totality. It is true that we

attempted to concretize this organizationally with the move of the Center to Chicago. It is not true that the locals -- whether New York or Bay Area, Detroit or Los Angeles, or Chicago, followed through on all the new types of relations opened by the 1983 Centenary Tour.

Why has it taken to 1985 to make the proposals I am presenting today?

In a word, it was not until we had Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution in hand and I made my trip to New York this fall after I had already made the proposal to the Plenum for a bi-weekly News & Letters that all of us accepted ORGANIZATIONAL responsibility for what those new doors to the Black Dimension and new strata in Women's Liberation signified, as tasks to be done first of all by ourselves.

The new beginnings for 1986, in a word, do not stop, large as those tasks are, with the trips to Appalachia as well as Mexico and Spain, not to mention completing the '80s Retrospective/Perspective and New Introduction and Appendices for Frantz Fanon, Sovieto and American Black Thought. But the Workshop/Classes I just outlined are to be further concretized and expanded by reorganization -- of individuals, of locals, Center -- as follows:

Four moving to New York, means two leaving Detroit, which will also lose one more when Chicago needs expansion of its Philosophic-Technical Committee of the paper next year. But at the same time, Detroit will gain two: one a National Editorial Board member who is experienced as activist, archivist, and "Our Life and Times" writer; the other a young worker-activist-archivist. Two others will be going to New York from Utah, and we cannot help that new local; but one friend there at once rose to the challenge and joined News and Letters Committees to keep Marxist-Humanism growing and developing there. (And you already know from the discussion at the Plenum that with our move to the bi-weekly will come the move of Peter to the Center.) None of this releases us from Absolute Method as the way to work for philosophy and revolution to become real.

Absolute Method helped us reach today. Let us all this time concretize it organizationally in 1986 by projecting it to others. Thus our self-development will bring those hungering for philosophy and revolution to join the News and Letters Committees of Marxist-Humanism. See you and them on Labor Day.

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