

August 6, 1986

Dear Friends:

The entire REB meeting last night was devoted to the presentation Raya will make to the Executive Session of the coming Convention on "The Philosophy of Marxist-Humanist Leadership." This report will first be given in full at the Convention itself. Here it is summarized with a brief notation of the consensus of discussion. The report had ~~three~~ parts: I. The Now (1986-87) and the Need to Return to Marx's Discovery of a New Continent of Thought and of Revolution, 1843-44, Contrasted to 1845 and the First Work Co-Authored by Marx and Engels. The Why Post-Marx Marxists Didn't (Couldn't?) Continue Marx's Marxism Rather Than be Only its Followers. II. Why it is also Necessary to Contrast the 1986-87 Executive Session to the 1985-86 Executive Session; the Importance of Trotsky, 1934-38. III. Organization, Organization, Organization: -- 1844, 1867-75-83, on the one hand, and the Present Concept of the Book-to-be, Dialectics of Organization: Philosophy, the "Party," and Forms of Organization Born Out of Spontaneity.

I. Raya said that because the new, the now, is the test of whether the tasks assigned for 1986-87 are objectively as well as subjectively not alone political conclusions, but the philosophic context of the American Revolution toward which we all aim, but know not the date, I will actually concentrate a lot on the difference between the Executive Session last year and the present year, not because there was anything wrong with the presentation in 1985, but because the need is to pinpoint the new. That is what calls for a concentration on the difference between the two years.

But in concentrating on the difference between 1985-86 and 1986-87, it is necessary first and foremost and always to have inwardized and practiced projecting the whole Body of Ideas -- and this time I do not mean Marxist-Humanist Archives but Marx's Humanism, his Archives, which did not become known until a century afterwards. In this, I wish to concentrate not so much on the 1880s as a trail to the 1980s, but 1844 as containing the whole, including the Ethnological Notebooks. Indeed, let me further stress that the very concept of Man/Woman relationship became so visible in the 1980s because the phenomenon of Women's Liberation had become a movement. It wasn't that in the year 1844.

It is precisely that year, 1844, that has the ground for seeing "The Why" orthodox Marxists were followers, not continuators of Marx's Marxism -- i.e. not facing the new reality of the 1880s through 1890s, the 12 years that Engels outlived Marx. That was when the world confronted monopoly capitalism, imperialism, statification -- what Marx had called the "hot-house fashion" in which the state helped capitalism to develop through colonization. It was Marx's analysis of the Accumulation of Capital that Luxemburg attacked, claiming that was Marx's position but adding ^{that} one had to wonder what Engels had done with Marx's manuscripts. (We will return to this later.)

For the 1840s, the first dividing line is 1845, Engels' collaboration in The Holy Family. Here is why I'm asking you to take a second, third and fourth look at the 1843-44 period, on the one hand, and 1845, on the other. Engels met Marx in August of 1844. He had written the essay called "Outline of Critique of Political Economy" which was published by Marx-Ruge in the Deutsche-Franzosische Jahrbucher. They talked endlessly for 10 days, but Marx did not show Engels his actual manuscripts, which he considered unfinished and which he said he would return to some day. They decided that their meeting in 1844 was an historic happening that would draw a balance sheet on the Left Hegelians for which each of them was to send to the other a chapter. Engels wrote 27 pages and Marx 250 pages -- nearly a whole new book. But Marx insisted that The Holy Family should

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be signed "Engels-Marx." That was 1845. That is what all Marxists ever since have been burdened with -- the concept that Engels and Marx are the same. Nothing could be further from the truth, as is clear from a look at Marx's single-pager on Feuerbach, written that same year. Nothing makes the difference between Marx and Engels clearer than the edited version of Marx's single-pager that Engels appended to his own Feuerbach in 1888.

The one word is Dialectics. Dialectics pure and simple. "Dialectic proper," i.e. dialectic as Hegel expressed it in his mystical form without ever forgetting organization, but making it clear that the Absolute met its Golgotha: "The goal, which is Absolute Knowledge or Spirit knowing itself as Spirit, finds its pathway in the recollection of spiritual forms (Geister) as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their spiritual kingdom. Their conservation, looked at from the side of their free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History; looked at from the side of their intellectually comprehended organization, it is the Science of the ways in which knowledge appears. Both together, or History (intellectually) comprehended (begriffen), form at once the recollection and the Golgotha of Absolute Spirit..." (Phenomenology of Mind, p. 808, Baille edition)

Dialectic as Marx recreated it -- second negativity -- against the Feuerbachian materialism, fully aware that the Hegelian dialectic remains source for all, but insisting that once the communist revolution abolishes the class structure, only by the new "transcendence of this mediation, which is nevertheless a necessary presupposition, does there arise positive Humanism, beginning from itself."

or In a word, Marx's critique of the dialectic (whether it be 1844 or 1867/1875-83) is the trail to the 1980s, when organization is spelled out anew for this age, and when the Self-Determination of the Idea is grasped as the Self-Bringing Forth of Liberty in new organizational forms.

This has no precedent. I do have to go to uncharted roads in the dialectics of organization. I do know what it will not be -- Trotsky's concept of the party, any more than Lenin's vanguardism (we will return to this later).

Remember that, though Engels' clear statement to the new edition in the 1880s of the Communist Manifesto asserted that Marx alone, in 1845, had related orally all that we now (1888) call Historical Materialism and that Marx alone was its sole author -- we have been burdened with the concept that Engels and Marx were one, and were brought up as Engelsian Marxists, not as Marx's Marxists. This seemed right to the German Social Democracy precisely because Engels was as sharply critical of Lassalle as was Marx and was faithful to Marx for 50 long years and had Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program published. This does not change the historic truth that Engels was a post-Marx Marxist, an original as the pragmatists insist, who do not see the half-way dialectic that Engels introduced with his "rigorous" materialistic version. The diversity was, indeed, not due only to the 12 years that Engels outlived Marx. The start, the determinism, the Feuerbachianism, began in 1845, continued throughout his life, and was not Marx's Marxism, long before his first work after Marx's death, Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State. It begins with the way Engels edited (comprehended) Marx's 1845 single-pager against Feuerbach that he appended to his own lengthy, very different pamphlet, his Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of German Classical Philosophy.

The WHY post-Marx Marxists didn't (couldn't) become continuators of Marx's Marxism, is that the coming stage of production that Marx pointed to with his concept of the centralization and concentration of capital to where it would be held in the hands of a single capitalist or capitalist corporation, was not concretized by any in the 1880's when Engels' publication of Vol. II caused the raging disputes on the Accumulation of Capital. To have been able to confront the new stage when it appeared would have meant the inwardizing

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The new continent of thought and revolution that Marx discovered in the 1840's demanded so total an uprooting of capitalism--its production and its culture--its politics and all its alienations--in a word, its dehumanized existence. It meant that all human relations, beginning with the Man/Woman, centering on labor, and at the same time extending it to culture (yes, he used the word class culture).

Why no Marxist, beginning with Frederick Engels, were continuators of Marx's Marxism is rooted in Marx's body of ideas, its totality and being able to comprehend the new stage and work out that new in production in the heartbreaking 1880's-1890's with the new stage of monopoly capitalism and the beginnings of imperialism which Marx called colonialization, which had been developed by him fully in Vol. I. We had better first of all get straightened out on the facts.

First of all, the Accumulation of Capital in Vol. II, which Luxemburg departed from but claimed it was Engels' editing, was actually worked out in Vol. I. To this day, the English edition of Vol. I that Engels edited is not the edition as Marx left it. Not only had Engels left out parts of the 1875 fundamental additions to fetishism of commodities, but when it comes to the center of all disputes--Accumulation of Capital--what Marx had written for Vol. I, Part Seven, included the part on the "So-Called Primitive Accumulation". Engels decided to create a new Part Eight for that section which should have been inseparable from the Accumulation of Capital.

Now, when it comes to Vol. II, that is not the way Marx conceived Vol. II to be. He left had left Vol. II and what we call Vol. III as Vol. II. What we now know as Theories of Surplus Value, was called by Marx History of Theory, and was to be Vol. IV. and was written first.

We cannot here go into detail on that or the 1880's and 1890's--and we all know very well how the study of the Russian economy as state-capitalist rooted itself in Accumulation of Capital, Vols. I through IV. The point here is, that all the debates on Accumulation of Capital Vol. II were naturally stopped once World War I broke out. That was no debate; the test of Marxists was to transform the imperialist war into civil war, and that produced the Russian and German revolutions.

As we saw, Marx's Archives were not just a question of the parts of the Archives that were unknown, that is to say, that neither Engels nor Eleanor Marx had read the whole. Yet it wasn't because something wasn't known, as the 1844 Manuscripts weren't. Marx no sooner broke with capitalism in 1843 than he discovered a whole new continent of thought and of revolution, by no means limited to the necessity of overthrowing capitalism. The greatness of the Ethnological Notebooks was not (I repeat, not) "new" in the sense in which we read it now, Marx starting something entirely different from his whole life. Quite the contrary. The greatness of the EN is that all of the new Marx was finding out about what we now call the Third World confirmed what he had said about pre-capitalism. You could see that in his greatest work, Capital, as well as in the Grundrisse, as well as the 1840's and 1880's. As early as 1843, in the essay on the Jewish Question (actually on religion in general) he made it crystal clear that he wasn't talking just about civil rights. To uproot capitalism, said Marx, it was necessary to abolish exploitation and its culture and the only way to do that is through "the revolution in permanence". This was his concept, his action, his vision through all his life.

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II. In concretizing that for our age, as the Marxist-Humanist Archives have shown, it was necessary at all times to begin with the new in the decade and to see that that newness, its discontinuity with all that came before it, was not a break with a continuity with Marx's Humanism. We did not consider what form of organization that would take when the first worker's state was transformed into the state-capitalist society we know it to be; what loomed large on the horizon was the giant figure of Trotsky who fought Stalin. The fact that the expulsion from the CP signified only an opposition tendency, not a new form of organization, became especially troublesome once Hitler reached power. It is for this reason that I'm pausing on the years 1934-38 before turning to the concrete for us, 1986-87.

All the tactics seemed right as the Militant was issued three times a week. Its headline shouted, 'Austria is Next!' Yet the tensions within the organization only increased. It would be 1938 before a new Fourth International was called for. Why? Wasn't it a fact that we still did not talk of the class nature of the existing society, but called it still a worker's state, which the International must defend. (Raya here developed the questions of appearance/essence, Universal/Particular, as well as such qualifying phrases as "in no way", as if a "worker's state", though "degenerate", can in no way be other than a worker's state, bureaucratized. This was the transition point to considering those philosophic terms regarding the difference between Perspectives of 1985-86 and 1986-87).

Whereas the 1985-86 Executive Session says correctly that even the Absolute Method--that the process rather than the conclusion is the key--the Absolute Method is a pathway to the Absolute Idea which cannot be substituted for by anything. The whole truth is that the key to the Absolute Method, which remains the final pathway to that Idea, is that the dialectic of both is a single dialectic of both the objective and subjective situation. It is that alone which permits you to propose steps for the specific year, in this case 1987, to pinpoint what is needed as tasks for that year. Otherwise you could start 1986-87 as if it wasn't a question of pinpointing the new; that it was necessary to start all over again from your Particular, as if that was both origin and present urgency.

Or take the one reference at the Executive Session 1985-86 to what I listed as the Dialectic of the Party. For heaven sakes, what way of hiding the really new and making it appear as if it is the 1987 answer to 1902-03. Believe me, I am not writing a new What is To Be Done and taking that ground to answer the "opposite" to the elitist party. In a fundamental way the one who did the best rejection to 1902-03--and that for 12 long years--is Lenin. Why he didn't listen to his own critique, especially when 1905 showed so new a form of organization from spontaneity to Soviets, that it changed his very principle as to who brings socialism to whom, the intellectuals or the proletariat. Lenin didn't generalize his whole 12 year critique, but turned back to What is to be Done, let it be reprinted. All "Leninists", including Trotsky, then declared that 1903 form a Universal. This is what we have rejected and this concept of the elitist party will be totally uprooted in the new book on the Dialectic of Organization.

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III. Organization, be it of thought or of various forms of organization--committees, League, Workingmen's International Association--be it in Marx's time or in ours, what Marx called "principles", i.e., philosophy of revolution, when he wrote his Critique of the Gotha Program and said that that cannot be abandoned when one unites with another for action. In extending, elaborating this question of "principle" Marx for the first time ventured to concretize his vision of the new society the day after the conquest of workers power, stressing that only when the divisions between country and city, between manual and mental labor will vanish, that is to say work will be an entirely new activity, not the duality of labor in capitalism but that unity of mental and manual which is the prime necessity of life.

Now then, what is new with 1986 as against 1985? 1985 after all summed up the body of ideas especially as concretized through the 1980's. In the 1980's we reached not just a new stage of Marxist-Humanist development, but what finally was resulting from trodding the paths no one had tried before, the last three syllogisms in the whole of the Encyclopedia of Philosophic Sciences that were being made so urgent by the actual new passions and new forces from below that we saw it in our age and which produced globally Marxist-Humanism, whether it was East Europe or Africa, Asia or Latin America. In a word, P&R. One thing it didn't do is that the philosophic ambivalence of Lenin projected there (in P&R) was so fully on-revolution that the ambivalence part was left undeveloped. That is to say, in rejecting the vanguard party to lead, we acted as if it was all only political, a politics we rejected, but it had no philosophic root; Lenin simply couldn't get to the question of party at all in his State & Revolution. That certainly wasn't true of Marx in the Critique of the Gotha Program when he spoke against unifying two parties for action (in this case, Lassalleans and Eisenachists); that was for Marx no reason for not concretizing and making that the indispensable ground for a unified party building.

Whatever will be the "answer", i.e., the "conclusion" of Dialectics of Organization, we cannot now know. It is high time, however, to dwell on the many "firsts" we established with the break from Johnsonism and the establishment of News & Letters Committees:

- a) At the very first convention we established the uniqueness of the Black Dimension and voted CD to be co-editor with Johnny Zupan; he had not been anything but a columnist in Correspondence.
- b) The first publication, was the mimeographed pamphlet which contained the first English translations of Lenin's Abstract of Hegel's Science of Logic and my 1953 Letters on the Absolute Idea.
- c) That first convention assigned me to finish what had been Marxism & State-Capitalism and what became Marxism & Freedom. Crucial to that transformation of M&SC into M&F was the singling out of the new in the American character represented by Abolitionism, both as past and as ongoing, in the new pages for freedom being written in East Europe, Montgomery Alabama, and the two-way road between Africa and the U.S.
- d) For the first time ever we adopted a Constitution with its decentralized committees for News & Letters both as paper and as organization.
- e) Again for the first time ever, women as proletarians had been so crucial in our development that we had no less than three columns--Angela Terrano's 'The Working Day', one by Jerry Kegg, and Ethel Dunbar's 'The Hay of the World'.
- f) Youth was made into a revolutionary category.

Now then, only after you have absorbed and know that the only proof of absorbing is projecting what philosophy is, the philosophy of Marx's Marxism, the dialectic of second negativity, and that it is indispensable for revolution-in-permanence, which necessitates organizational responsibility, and with it, organization, only then can you possibly see what leadership is for Marxist-Humanists (i.e., for News & Letters Committees). No other organizational experience could possibly have taught it. It is true that here too discontinuity is incomplete without linking it to continuity, and that we have not come out of the clear blue sky.

Whether Bolshevism or the 1960's was your first organization--and I shed many a tear over the fact that Lenin saw that only if the layer of Bolshevism wasn't so thin, relative to the Russian population, that he had to depend only on that thin layer (i.e., the party)--the point now is, this body of ideas called Marxist-Humanism as it developed from the 1950's and what is projected in 1986-87. The new book will make it clear how it is necessary to tread uncharted paths in organization, as I found it necessary to do in philosophy. I have long ago stopped shedding tears over Lenin's attitude that the only ones to depend upon were the thin layer of Bolsheviks. Instead, the new book will show that, though he did see in the Critique of the Gotha Program the philosophy of revolution, beginning with the need to smash the bourgeois state, he stopped short of the principle Marx said must not be abandoned in party building.

A lively discussion followed the presentation. Its comprehensiveness, historically, philosophically, concretely, organizationally, opened new points of departure. All agreed with the new alternates proposed to the REB-NEB.

Yours, Raya.

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It is precisely that year, 1844, that has the ground for seeing "The Why" orthodox Marxists were followers, not continuators of Marx's Marxism -- i.e. not facing the new reality of the 1880s through 1890s, the 12 years that Engels outlived Marx. That was when the world confronted monopoly capitalism, imperialism, stratification -- what Marx had called the "hot-house fashion" in which the state helped capitalism to develop through colonization. It was Marx's analysis of the Accumulation of Capital that Luxemburg attacked, claiming that was Marx's position but adding ^{that} one had to wonder what Engels had done with Marx's manuscripts. (We will return to this later.)

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The one word is Dialectics. Dialectics pure and simple. "Dialectic proper," i.e. dialectic as Hegel expressed it in his mystical form without ever forgetting organization, but making it clear that the Absolute met its Golgotha: "The goal, which is Absolute Knowledge or Spirit knowing itself as Spirit, finds its pathway in the recollection of spiritual forms (Geister) as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their spiritual kingdom. Their conservation, looked at from the side of their free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History; looked at from the side of their intellectually comprehended organization, it is the Science of the ways in which knowledge appears. Both together, or History (intellectually) comprehended (begriffen), form at once the recollection and the Golgotha of Absolute Spirit ..." (Phenomenology of Mind, p. 808, Baille edition)

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Now, when it comes to Vol. II, that is not the way Marx conceived Vol. II to be. He left had left Vol. II and what we call Vol. III as Vol. II. What we now know as Theories of Surplus Value, was called by Marx History of Theory, and was to be Vol. IV.

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It is what I translated when it was still unavailable in English. You'll find it in the Edition.

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II. In concretizing that for our age, as the Marxist-Humanist Archives have shown, it was necessary at all times to begin with the new in the decade and to see that that newsness, its discontinuity with all that came before it, was not a break with a continuity with Marx's Humanism. We did not consider what form of organization that would take when the first worker's state was transformed into the state-capitalist society we know it to be, what loomed large on the horizon was the giant figure of Trotsky who fought Stalin. The fact that the expulsion from the CP signified only an opposition tendency, not a new form of organization, became especially troublesome once Hitler reached power. It is for this reason that I'm pausing on the years 1934-38 before turning to the concrete for us, 1986-87.

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Whereas the 1985-86 Executive Session says correctly that even the Absolute Method--that the process rather than the conclusion is the key--the Absolute Method is a pathway to the Absolute Idea which cannot be substituted for by anything. The whole truth is that the key to the Absolute Method, which remains the final pathway to that Idea, is that the dialectic of both is a single dialectic of both the objective and subjective situation. It is that alone which permits you to propose steps for the specific year, in this case 1987, to pinpoint what is needed as tasks for that year. Otherwise you could start 1986-87 as if it wasn't a question of pinpointing the new; that it was necessary to start all over again from your Particular, as if that was both origin and present urgency.

Don't take the one reference at the Executive Session 1985-86 to what I listed as the Dialectic of the Party, for heaven's sake, as a way of hiding the really new and making it appear as if it is the 1987 answer to 1902-03. Believe me, I am not writing a new What is To Be Done and taking that ground to answer the "opposite" to the elitist party. In a fundamental way the one who did the best rejection to 1902-03--and that for 12 long years--is Lenin. Why he didn't listen to his own critique, especially when 1905 showed so new a form of organization from spontaneity to Soviets, that it changed his very principle as to who brings socialism to whom, the intellectuals or the proletariat. Lenin didn't generalize his whole 12 year critique but turned back to What is to be Done, let it be reprinted. All "Leninists", including Trotsky, then declared that 1903 form a Universal. This is what we have rejected and this concept of the elitist party will be totally uprooted in the new book on the Dialectic of Organization.

When I sd. Abs. Method is not FI, it was not meant to say any other Method can substitute for it.

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III. Organization, be it of thought or of various forms of organization--committees, League, Workingmen's International Association--be it in Marx's time or in ours, what Marx called "principles", i.e., philosophy of revolution, when he wrote his Critique of the Gotha Program and said that that cannot be abandoned when one unites with another for action. In extending, elaborating this question of "principle" Marx for the first time ventured to concretize his vision of the new society the day after the conquest of workers power, stressing that only when the divisions between country and city, between manual and mental labor will vanish, that is to say work will be an entirely new activity, not the duality of labor in capitalism but that unity of mental and manual which is the prime necessity of life.

Now then, what is new with 1986 as against 1985? 1985 after all summed up the body of ideas especially as concretized through the 1980's. In the 1980's we reached not just a new stage of Marxist-Humanist development, but what finally was resulting from trodding the paths no one had tried before, the last three syllogisms in the whole of the Encyclopedia of Philosophic Sciences that were being made so urgent by the actual new passions and new forces from below that we saw it in our age and which produced globally Marxist-Humanism, whether it was East Europe or Africa, Asia or Latin America. In a word, P&R. One thing it didn't do is that the philosophic ambivalence of Lenin projected there (in P&R) was so fully on revolution that the ambivalence part was left undeveloped. That is to say, in rejecting the vanguard party to lead, we acted as if it was all only political, a politics we rejected, but it had no philosophic root; Lenin simply couldn't get to the question of party at all in his State & Revolution. That certainly wasn't true of Marx in the Critique of the Gotha Program when he spoke against unifying two parties for action (in this case, Lassalleans and Eisenachists); that was for Marx no reason for not concretizing and making that the indispensable ground for a unified party building.

Whatever will be the "answer", i.e., the "conclusion" of Dialectics of Organization, we cannot now know. It is high time, however, to dwell on the many "firsts" we established with the break from Johnsonism and the establishment of News & Letters Committees:

a) At the very first convention we established the uniqueness of the Black Dimension and voted CD to be co-editor with Johnny Zupan; he had not been anything but a columnist in Correspondence.

b) The first publication, was the mineographed pamphlet which contained the first English translations of Lenin's Abstract of Hegel's Science of Logic and my 1953 Letters on the Absolute Idea.

c) That first convention assigned me to finish what had been Marxism & State-Capitalism and what became Marxism & Freedom. Crucial to that transformation of M&SC into M&F was the singling out of the new in the American character represented by Abolitionism, both as past and as ongoing, in the new pages for freedom being written in East Europe, Montgomery Alabama, and the two-way road between Africa and the U.S.

d) For the first time ever we adopted a Constitution with its decentralized committees for News & Letters both as paper and as organization.

e) Again for the first time ever, women as proletarians had been so crucial in our development that we had no less than three columns--Angela Terrano's 'The Working Day', one by Jerry Kegg, and Ethel Dunbar's 'The Way of the World'.

f) Youth was made into a revolutionary category.

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proof of absorbing is projecting what philosophy is, the philosophy of Marx's Marxism, the dialectic of second negativity, and that it is indispensable for revolution-in-permanence, which necessitates organizational responsibility, and with it, organization, only then can you possibly see what leadership is for Marxist-Humanists (i.e., for News & Letters Committees). No other organizational experience could possibly have taught it. It is true that here too discontinuity is incomplete without linking it to continuity, and that we have not come out of the clear blue sky.

Whether Bolshevism or the 1960's was your first organization--and I shed many a tear over the fact that Lenin saw that only if the layers of Bolshevism wasn't so thin, relative to the Russian population, that he had to depend only on that thin layer (i.e., the party)--the point now is, this body of ideas called Marxist-Humanism as it developed from the 1950's and what is projected in 1986-87. The new book will make it clear how it is necessary to tread uncharted paths in organization, as I found it necessary to do in philosophy. I have long ago stopped shedding tears over Lenin's attitude that the only ones to depend upon were the thin layer of Bolsheviks. Instead, the new book will show that, though he did see in the Critique of the Gotha Program the philosophy of revolution, beginning with the need to smash the bourgeois state, he stopped short of the principle Marx said must not be abandoned in party building.

A lively discussion followed the presentation. Its comprehensiveness, historically, philosophically, concretely, organizationally, opened new points of departure. All agreed with the new alternates proposed to the RFB-NEB.

Yours, Raya

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