

July 28, 1955*

TO BE READ TO ALL LOCAL COMMITTEES:

Dear Friends:

Now that the paper has gained a certain momentum of its own, the NEB discussed the question of concretizing the work on the book on Marxism that was dealt with at the Conference, and has asked me to address this letter to you.

At each break in world history, from the Civil War in the United States through World War II, Marxists have had to re-examine their principles, enrich them, and move forward with history -- or fall under the weight of the old society, as did the Second International.

That was true of Marx himself who first in the period between the Civil War in the United States and the Paris Commune in 1871 completed his life's work, CAPITAL. That was true of Lenin who had to go back to the philosophic foundations of Marxism in Hegel himself, just when the whole world was collapsing about him with the outbreak of the First World War.

It was not true of Trotsky who thought it sufficient merely to hold the banner of 1917 aloft. Perhaps no fundamental re-examination of Marxism was possible except on American foundation, and Trotsky could not fulfill that task, although he tried hard enough to compel the American Trotskyists "to teach him." So that as it might, there has been no fundamental interpretation of Marxism for our age since the death of Lenin.

Political theses -- and the political thesis based on the theory of state capitalism is among these -- are good, but not good enough. Lenin's statement that there can be no revolution without a revolutionary theory means something far different in our age than in his. We have lived through three decades in which the workers have done everything from the CIO and the Spanish revolution to the resistance movement and the East German revolt without the Marxist theoreticians contributing anything new. It is high time to begin.

Because we live in an age where the movement from practice to theory is richer than any other age, we have the opportunity to write the book as a collective effort not alone as regards the relationship of the individual author and the newspaper committee, but as regards the so-called outside and the inside. At no time in history will they in turn have had the opportunity to be the actual collaborators in every process of the writing of the book. Thus the present tour is scheduled when the author will have no more than a bare outline of what she wants in the book on which she has spent some 15 years. This will be vitally influenced by the discussion of the groups of that unique combination of worker and intellectual that so characterize the news committees and their friends. And there will be another chance for the whole organization in convention to act on it after the writing of a draft.

But each thing in its own time. At the present what is needed is the concrete preparation for the tour of the national chairman so that the group that meets knows what it is meeting for, is prepared to attend the whole series of four, and participate actively in it.

*We are appending this letter by Weaver, written three months after the Founding Conference, because of the illumination it sheds on the relationship of the writing of Marxism and Freedom to the work of the organization.

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First there is the question of paying for the tour, and then there is the organization of the friends to attend the lectures-discussions. The REB has decided it be a pay-as-you-go-tour, that is to say, that each local be responsible for the part of the costs of the tour so that the \$300 be divided in 4 ways between Detroit and Los Angeles, West Virginia and New York. This money must not come out of the regular pledges to the center, but out of special funds raised for it, both through special contributions of our members and their friends. Attached are two letters, one from West Virginia as a local, and one from Bess as an individual, which show two of the ways to meet the expense. Please note another point raised in the West Virginia communication on the question of time. It was originally thought that it should be held over two week-ends. Now it appears where the work week is 6 days, it would be better to meet only on Sundays and perhaps telescope the lectures into 3 on 3 consecutive Sundays.

The tentative schedule set is: West Virginia--Friday-16th of September through October 2nd; New-York one week only not as school; Detroit--Oct. 9 through Oct. 23rd. Los Angeles--Oct. 30 through Nov. 13.

Weaver (Raya Dunayevskaya)

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