

EXCERPTS FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION OF
N&L CONVENTION, SEPT. 5, 1976

DIALECTICS OF LEADERSHIP /S THE CREATION OF A PHILOSOPHIC NUCLEUS
IN HISTORY'S MIRROR, AND TODAY'S OBJECTIVE WORLD

OR

SELF-THINKING IDEA AS THE SELF-BRINGING FORTH OF LIBERTY

(The one hour talk by Raya is hard to summarize and may well be left at her own introduction to the talk, since all that referred to objective world and Perspectives were developed separately in the Report and Political-Philosophic Letters. That, in any case, is all we will attempt here.)

Raya: Because the originality and profundity of our historic contribution to Marxism have not, I believe, been creatively grasped by our leadership we were risking a veritable philosophic stalemate in the very year of our best organizational growth. Which is why we didn't act as challengers, not alone in the movement from practice -- there we were most active -- but in relationship to all other Tendencies in the movement, though they had not even attempted, much less actually filled, the void since Lenin's death, whereas we produced both M&F and P&R, especially P&R.

It is for this reason that the Political-Philosophic Letters were started -- to fill the need for politicalization and the imperative nature of the creation of a philosophic nucleus. The further aim is to overcome our greatest weakness: the relationship to Chairwoman. Still, this is only part of the reason why the tour, the new editions of M&F and P&R, and the Political-Philosophic Letters have not yet been fully worked out.

Perhaps the situation can be illuminated from a view, necessarily brief as it must be, from something unrelated in any direct sense to our problem -- literature. But if we do take, with the view of Hegel on tragedy, the perspective of Marx's theory of proletarian revolution, we will see a relationship. I have no intention whatever to go into literature comprehensively. You can read for yourselves the works that Hegel bases his theory of tragedy on -- Orestiae, Antigone, Hamlet, Lear, Antony and Cleopatra, Othello -- and come to other conclusions, but it is a fact that Hegel's philosophy of tragedy is grounded in the fact that the two main combatants are of equal stature, but, since they live in a period of transition, representing very different historic moments, as one historic period ends and another is about to begin, their attitude to objectivity is most "unequal". The "equality" in stature lends the excitement, the drama; the different attitudes to objectivity in a period of transition and historic transformation lead inevitably to tragedy.

It is this which, philosophically, adds up to irreconcilable contradiction right within the Absolutes -- and to death. In the Phenomenology Hegel's Absolute Knowledge meets the Gogotha of the Spirit. In the Science of Logic, Absolute Idea is first to become new beginning in Encyclopaedia, and therefore just ends by telling the reader it is really not ended and indeed, as we know, from his last three Syllogisms in Encyclopaedia, that he will, indeed, "throw out" Logic altogether, and 15019

when he comes to the final of the final /bsolutes -- /bsolute Mind -- it becomes the abstraction, Self-Thinking Idea, so the philosopher himself retires with his "Owl of Minerva".

It is this which Marx totally reversed with his theory of proletarian revolution. His new continent of thought had a subject, a real, actual, live, subject -- the proletariat, the gravedigger of capitalist society, which could reverse those Gottsdamerungs so that equality/inequality of hero-heroine/period of transition became the challenge of the future wherein Subjectivity -- Subject and theory -- hold the key. Marx's new subjectivity was his Humanism, philosophy and revolution.

(Raya then went into why the very title of her Perspectives Report, "Philosophy and Revolution in Today's Global Struggles", as well as the proposal for the new form of study of the book, as well as actual activities -- whether in proletarianization or Women's Liberation -- lays ground for rejection of non-dialectical methodologies, "shortcuts" to revolution, whereas Absolute as New Beginning is not just theory but the actual road to revolution.)

Just as "full-time organizers" for Marxist-Humanism is inseparable from politicalization and creation of philosophic nucleus, so we cannot, say, separate WWFF from "Appendix" merely by the "declaration" that there is no such division. No, we either understand that WWFF as mediation meant both the elicitation from below AND News & Letters' contribution, not as something "at the end" but the something that created the very ground for elicitation. The unnamed authors have themselves to recognize that they have gained a new dimension because of our "mediation", or we succeed neither in bringing the outside inside, nor the inside outside.

Finally, and this is of the essence for the leadership -- and by leadership I do not only mean REB-NEB, nor even its extension to the membership as a whole, although that is crucial, but all those who now, or after the classes, grasp what we mean by "philosophy, not philosopher" so intensely that they become activists, members for the expounding of Marxist-Humanism as the road to revolution. Toward this end, it is of the essence that leaders do understand what is meant by self-reorganization, with emphasis on RE-organization, for it is here, exactly, where we have failed, whether that be on relationship of ourselves to National Chairwomen or to outside. There are three aspects to Self: 1) Self-development, the individual -- and that we do understand very well, I think, and do measure ourselves, but hardly in the historic mirror rather than just by comparison with others.

2) Mass self-development -- which is of the essence, both objectively and subjectively, and can not be reduced to a mere "Particular" but must be that Particular which causes the self-development of the Individual. The spontaneity and leadership-to-be of the masses, the "masses as vanguard" means your Self as philosophy uniting with it.

3) Finally, there is the Universal, the "bsolute Universal", which is, at one and the same time, concrete and everywhere. And until you -- each one of you -- work this out for yourselves by holding up the Historic Mirror, with which to measure yourselves, whether that be Marx's time, 1843-1883, or ours in the year 1976, and re-organize yourselves on the basis of the concrete events from Portugal to Angola to Detroit, as well as the subjective demands of N&L Committees organizationally, we will not get out of the "transition period" to the transformation of reality.

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