

RED Meeting June 12, 1978

Present: All, plus Bob as sitter-in
Agenda: I Perspectives Draft ; II Unfinished Business; III G&W

I- Raya read the rough draft entitled, "As New Beginnings: New Dualities and Mass Revolts vs. Shifting Imperial Global Alliances". The first paragraph of the introduction reads: As the 1970s are drawing to a close, new revolutionary beginnings are emerging, be it in Soweto or the South Bronx, women's liberation, especially in Italy, or youth in anti-racialism and anti-nuclear demonstrations in both Great Britain and Germany, East and West. These new beginnings, though they are the sheerest of beginnings, are forcing the Big Powers to undertake all sorts of desperate measures in search of global re-alignment that would bring about single mastery of the world, by "One", be it by either of the two super-powers, U.S. or Russia, or by ...

The Introduction then proceeds to quote from a comment on all the Cold War speeches emanating from Brezhnev and the President and points to the fantastic affinity of ideas with China, who had also chosen its emissary to embrace the murderer of Lumumba, Mobutu. It then reverts to the other hot spot -- the Middle-East -- which ever since the Arab-Israeli war in 1973 has shown the U.S. to be undertaking a shifting of global alliances by having two rather than one imperialist outpost in the Middle East, be it Israel or Saudi Arabia-Egypt. In any case, the showing of the China card makes it imperative to take up not only the imperialist global alliances but what the Left is doing to fight them, i.e. whether they will once again leave it at rhetoric or really try to develop a philosophy of liberation for our age.

The Thesis is then divided into the following three parts: I- Which New Beginnings Determine the End? II- The State-Capitalism of the 1970s, III-Forms of Revolt in the 1970s. And of course the Conclusion is our own tasks. The point about Part I was to demonstrate why we cannot repeat the euphoria of 1968 in all the celebrations of 68-78, as if all we are waiting for is to repeat '68 instead of facing what has been happening in the '70s. For example, in calling attention to the new revolts -- both their economic basis ever since the Kerner Report had to admit that the U.S. was two nations, separate and unequal, and the new Black Consciousness -- it was clear that this was not just as "nationalism" but as class and social and world-wide, not because we say so, but because Soweto showed that to be so. The economic crisis was by no means just objective, any more than the revolts were just subjective, and this relationship of objective to subjective became the essence of our pamphlet dealing with today's global crisis, Marx's Capital and the epigones who try to truncate it. It is this also which leads directly to Part II on the state-capitalism of the 1970s.

The new in the state-capitalism of the 1970s is two-fold: one is that the global crisis is so deep that even the bourgeoisie has to talk about Marx's "prudence" in seeing a decline in the rate of profit; and the second is that the Left cannot be satisfied with merely repeating that State Plan equals Socialism, and there is a compulsion on those who saw Russia as state-capitalists but did not see it was a world stage to admit that it is the reality of the 1970s.

The Thesis here stresses that so decrepit was capitalism that, far from growth, growth, growth, all the capitalists could think of to try to stop galloping inflation was to be satisfied with zero "growth." Whereupon the Vietnam War revealed the true face of world capitalism in the 1970s: the U.S. was not only the most savagely imperialistic nation, but it was the one where, for the first time, there was recession during an ongoing war.

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(The Thesis quotes only one paragraph from the 1972-73 Perspectives to show that Nixon had resily plunged into state-capitalism even in this most affluent private, competitive capitalist society with his wage and price controls, devaluation of the dollar, and letting it "float" on the international exchange-rate money market. But it is suggested that that 1972-73 Perspectives thesis actually be republished and studied along with the current Perspectives.)

The third part of the Thesis on the forms of revolt in the 1970s takes up, year by year, the new duality; that is to say, 1970 is not just the awful extension of the Vietnam War by Nixon into Cambodia and the shooting down of the Kent students but the anti-war youth movement reaching its most massive expression. In 1971 it is not only the startling reversal of U.S. policy to China and Mao's rolling out the red carpet for Nixon, but no abatement of the international as well as national anti-war movement, as well as tremendous new strikes as in Great Britain against the Industrial Relations Act. Even the full rebirth of imperialism in 1973 with: 1- U.S. imperialism's counter-revolutionary role overthrowing Allende in Chile; 2- the Arab-Israeli war; 3- the use of oil as a political weapon and the quadrupling of oil prices, which got Kissinger to shout threats against the oil kingdoms and double-dealing with them to see if new imperialist outposts were possible in the Middle East. -- did not stop the new forms of revolt of the '70s. Quite the contrary, '74 to '75 is the most revolutionary year of all, as we witness the overthrow of fascism in Portugal and its development, if not to the level of October 1917, surely to February 1917, and with this revolutionary development in Portugal, came simultaneously the African Revolutions in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola. When you consider the imperial pressures from NATO, from Helmut Schmidt in West Germany, from U.S. imperialism, and aided also by the new reactionary moves in China toward the so-called Second World, you see that the successful military grabbing of power in November 1975 could not crush the Portuguese Revolution, though it stopped it in its tracks.

1975 was also the year of the civil war in Lebanon which could have developed into a genuine social revolution were it not for, among other facts, the delusion of the PLO that since Israel is the only enemy and since Syria opposes Israel, Syria's army could be permitted in as a friend. The truth, of course, was that Syria came to help the Christian Right carry through its bloody counter-revolution. (There will be a footnote here to the Political-Philosophic Letters #1 and #6.)

The review of the '70s ends with the great new miners' strike and the stage of militancy not only against management and the government but also against its labor bureaucrat. There is no doubt about the fact that its end is not the end, but rather foretells a new stage of labor revolt as the other labor contracts are up for renewal and everyone is still looking at the miners as not only a model for militancy but for raising a great many more fundamental problems about what kind of labor man/woman should do. Its impact was truly international as can be seen both from the European trip by Mike and from the fact that it was translated into Spanish.

All this leads up to our own tasks. First, the modest growth that we have experienced from the classes in Marx's Capital, we feel sure will be extended with the Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought pamphlet. At the same time, we will, for the first time, have a Spanish pamphlet which will have, 1-Andy's Lead and Editorial on the miners' strike; 2- the Political-Philosophic Letter on Latin America's Unfinished Revolutions; 3- Eugene's Lead on Latin America; and 4- this will be related also to our work with the Hostos youth, whose participants' stories will likewise go in.

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Secondly, the internationalization of M&F and P&R, which became fact this year with Italian & Spanish editions, will next year also see French, German and possibly Greek and Japanese. In any case, especially for the 'new relations with Latin America, the fact that we will have a pamphlet as well as the books means that truly the activities in that field will come to fruition in a way that the Latin American work is not south of the border, but right here.

The new activities this year, especially because of the new stage of labor revolt, the continuous development of Black revolt, the anti-Nazi activities, and women's liberation, as well as youth and theoretical work, rounds out two decades of work that we started even before the birth of News & Letters with Denby's Indignant Heart. The unity of theory and practice, of personal life of a worker as a universal dimension, is now completed with the summation of what has happened in those two decades. It becomes imperative therefore that the new book, which will include Indignant Heart, be published within the year.

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nally, we must create time for Raya to complete the work on Rosa Luxemburg, which is by no means only Rosa Luxemburg; great and important as she is in her own right, nor is it only Rosa Luxemburg in relationship to the Women's Liberation movement of today, crucial as it is to see where we are going. No, what the times, objective and subjective, demand is the relationship of both these subjects to Marx's theory of revolution. There is no way to theoretically prepare for revolution without concretizing Absolute Idea as new beginning in relationship to the forces for and Reason of revolution for our era. This will require a serious reorganization of work in the national office and for the REB especially. Whereas all the ramifications of this will first be concretized in the Organizational and Executive Reports, it is of the essence that all of our activities, be they organizational, mass participation, proletarianization, or youth, at no time separate theory from practice or the long-term objective on Rosa Luxemburg, Today's Women's Liberation Movement and Marx's Theory of Revolution.

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