

NOVEMBER 1, 1979

Dear Eugene:

Because I feel that you're really swimming very smoothly on both Trotsky's total lack of philosophy and, in this case, totality refers not just to the fact that he doesn't grasp or practice dialectics, but because he doesn't grasp but does practice organization sans philosophy. Naturally, there is nothing abstract about it; you're absolutely right that there is still too damn much Trotskyism around, and it isn't limited to E., who is the worst. In any case, I feel I do want to make some suggestions for the Thanksgiving.

First, there is not only the PFI, but the chapter, which unfortunately you don't have, even though I think that a whiff of this could be gotten from my letter to Mike on the fact that I want him to write a review-essay of Baruch Kadi-Pas' work on Trotsky. Here is why:

Unless we recognize that it isn't only Trotsky -- I absolutely believe that Lenin was the only one (Lenin, not Luxemburg) who did scientifically and totally follow Marx -- but the whole post-Marx's movement, beginning with Engels, and stretching to Luxemburg -- who absolutely did not, I repeat did not, know Marx as any sort of new continent of thought, or even a totality of "historical materialism", as including more than just economics. The other day, I read an absolutely fantastic, stupid -- I was going to say, ignorant, but Luxemburg was so erudite I cannot say ignorant -- article by Luxemburg on Marx, which, on the face of it, seemed to say we haven't yet caught up to Marx; it isn't that he has stagnated; it is that we haven't reached him, much less transcended him. But, in fact, what the article was saying was: since even though we did not know Volumes 2 and 3 of Capital until 1894, and thus did not know the "corrections" to Volume 1, such as the crucial decline in the rate of profit, and yet were pretty good in spreading Marxism and helping masses to class consciousness, it is due to the fact that the essence of Marxism is the class struggle and we did get that from Volume 1, and so all we need to do now is use his work as method and then really bring it up to date.

Now, if somebody as great a revolutionary and in the narrow sense of theory, great theoretician, as Luxemburg, can utter such idiocies, it shows that UNLESS WE REALIZE THAT WE, AND IN THIS CASE WE ALONE, SINCE LENIN DID NOT EITHER MAKE HIS PHILOSOPHIC NOTEBOOKS PUBLIC, MUCH LESS HAVE TIME LEFT ON THIS EARTH TO DEVELOP, HAVE FIRST RECONNECTED WITH MARX AND ARE THE ONES AND ONLY ONES WHO KNOW THAT PHILOSOPHY IS NO ABSTRACTION, AND THEREFORE MUST PROJECT M-H AS ORGANIZATION, WE WILL NEVER GROW.

Therefore, what I think has to be done concretely at this Thanksgiving meeting is the same analysis, or rather critique you made of yourselves at the USSC conference, but use it not as a critique of others, but as ground for being very proud of Marxist-Humanism, to say that that too is not an abstraction, and is not just an update, and has a very specific organizational form, we are asking you to join.

15207

Now here is the way it connects with the PEL on Trotsky. Those 12 years between 1905 and 1917, when Trotsky did absolutely nothing to develop his theory of Permanent Revolution, but did everything to attack all others in a way that it wasn't only that he was neither Bolshevik nor Menshevik -- he was nothing in between, either. And that isn't a joke. It is literally true that there was just no foundation for what he did. In a word, it wasn't only organizational and political conciliatorism -- well, frankly, I don't know what it was. I wonder whether he did. What I do know is that, because he worked without a philosophy, and because he didn't follow Lenin's great development, he not only was under the illusion that Lenin took over his theory, but it was as natural as anything for him to fall into the 1903 vanguardist party, because that is what he was doing when he had no organization, but very much wanted one.

Be sure and do not criticize the OD tour. However I do feel that you would be talking about yourselves and not OD, it nevertheless would not help in any way. And by help I mean creating precisely the ground you were talking about for when you leave next September. We just cannot worry about that. We just do what we can until then, and then forget it; otherwise, your year here would not achieve what we want.

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Someday or another I will try to write A. but his piece is way too serious for it to be reduced to a welcome back. I try use that form but it would still be on a level that requires more time for me to absorb all he was saying than I have now to spare. Shall

Yours,

15208