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Office

September 27, 1980

Dear Sheila:

By the end of the week, I should finally finish the full draft of Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, the Contents page of which I will enclose.

I'm up North in Canada -- at Little Current -- that doesn't exactly make a splash either in the news or the post office, but your revised and expanded edition of Beyond the Fragments, along with Peter Goodwin's attack on you, which made it irrefutable for him to attack me also, evidently (to which I'll come later), finally reached me.

It is impossible, I'm sorry to say, for me to comment seriously on it now, but one central point did impress me -- a certain affinity of ideas we have insofar as opposing the Vanguard party concept and fact, and the search for a new form of organization. But where you try to work this out from experience since the 60s, I start with Luxemburg and beyond that go back to Karl Marx before I return to the 60s and 70s and the Women's Liberation Movement. As if that weren't enough -- don't grow too loudly -- the final chapter is all on Marx's philosophy of revolution, because I cannot see how one can possibly write on organization without writing on a philosophy of revolution. Surely the uprooting of this exploitative, racist, sexist society is nowhere more clearly understood both in its depth and totality than by the WLM. Which is why, as early as 1955, the News & Letters Committee, in its Constitution, singled out both as forces and Reason of revolution: rank and file labor, Black dimension, Women's Liberation, and youth. I had to take time out from my book to write the History of our Tendency on this its 25th birthday and I will send you a copy just as soon as I return to Detroit, at which point the pamphlet ought to be off the press.

Now then, that dishonest super-factionalist, Peter Goodwin, couldn't have made more errors in less than a single paragraph than he did in his reference to me on page 101 of IS, Summer, 1980, first and foremost; Facing Reality, far from being something I penned, was written by Grace Chin Lee, and CLR James against me, specifically as an "answer" to my Marxism and Freedom. Naturally, both the theory of State-Capitalism, and an appreciation of the spontaneity of the masses were worked out by us jointly, from 1941 to 1954. And these remain as points of reference, but they ran far, far, not only away from Marxist-Humanism, but from something a great deal more real and threatening -- McCarthyism. No sooner was the Johnson-Forest Tendency listed than CLR James left me to face the music as he broke up the organization and was safely in England.

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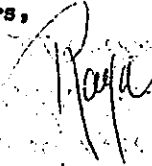
Secondly, I am not Grace Chin Lee, who by now has broken not only from me but from CLR James, and does her damndest to act as if she were Black, and proclaim from on high that Marx was but a 19th century white European. (By the way, Sheila, it may interest you as to why Peter Goodwin is by no means the only one who has "created" me in the form of Grace. You see, I was the little Russian activist who knew some economics but had no degrees in philosophy, whereas Grace Lee has the proper PhD in Philosophy. Ever since way back, in 1947, when I first translated Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks, I saw all sorts of peculiar explanations as to how Ria Stone -- Grace's pseudonym -- was really "Raya", which made a beautiful mess of Indian, Chinese and Russian culture, not to mention putting me in my proper place as not having the credentials.)

Thirdly, anyone who has read even a single copy of News & Letters knows that it is a Black production worker, Charles Danby (have you read his beautiful autobiography, Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal?), is the editor, not I.

Fourthly, it's true Chaffieu's name appears along with Lee and CLRJ on the cover of Facing Reality, but he assured me -- and rightly so, since he has broken with Marxism long ago -- that he was not a co-author. But why should Peter Goodwin be concerned with endless questions of fact when it is so easy for him to dismiss as a good vanguardist, not only the start of a Marxist-Humanist journal in the U.S. at the height of McCarthyism, but its attainment of 10,000 readers. I'm sure it's not a mass movement, and perhaps for the IS (SWP) who are such great theoreticians, why should anyone try to combine theory and practice in a workers' paper?

What are you doing now? Do drop me a line.

Yours,



(Raya)

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