

IN LIEU OF REB MINUTES OF MEETING OF JULY 31, 1981

August 3, 1981

Dear Friends:

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Raya entitled her talk on Leadership: "A Note on the Dialectics in Organizational Relations, or Leadership as Both Philosophy and Spontaneous Action." The emphasis from first to last is the concrete, and the concrete is limited to one year's perspective, so that, instead of anyone thinking that they should "wait for the real thing"-- the dialectics, the philosophy, the history, the thesis -- the real thing is the concrete. Therefore, the point about finishing the book this year meant concretely that neither I nor Olga would be in the office regularly. (We were there a lot more than we should have been.) Mike and Eugene had to, at one and the same time, take time out from "being in the office" to keep up with the changes in the book's self-development. On the whole, the responsibility was theirs both for the 12 pager and the Archives (which is exactly why we brought Eugene to the center), as well as the organizational responsibilities. Eugene recognized full-blast what organizational responsibility for ideas means, not just as history, but as the ongoing, regular, very new type of 12 pager, and therefore fulfilled the tasks both of ITC chairman & archivist but was not totally "in the office." Mike had most of the National Organizer's tasks.

Raya said that the most disappointing thing to discover on the tour, which, on the whole, had been the best ever, was to find that the book had not determined the work of the national organization. Which was why the classes around the 25 Year History had not led up to an audience for the book. It was the tour that began the creation of that audience for the book. What, therefore, we must learn from it is that there is no such thing as "understanding" the book, knowing it "inside", if it is not being projected to the outside. THE ONLY PROOF OF KNOWING IT INSIDE IS BEING ABLE TO PROJECT IT OUTSIDE. Because that is the essence of everything this year, it is this which we have to keep in mind, not only when we go into various historic periods but when each historic period we single out is actually one more way of analyzing our own tasks and checking up on them. Thus, whether we talk of: 1) Up to 1914; 2) 1914-1923; 3) Break with CLRj 1953-1955; 4) Projection of Marxist-Humanism as "Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution" , and the totally new type of classes which this book demands, and which will practice the responsibility for Marxist-Humanism organizationally.

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The section on Up to 1914 laid the stress on the fact that up to that moment, no philosophic division had separated any revolutionary tendency from another. The one new thing Raya had found in Luxemburg was that it wasn't only the division between spontaneity and organization, but spontaneity and consciousness, with the Party representing consciousness, so that all the stress on spontaneity and the greatness that it would compel the leaders to the deepest revolutionary actions, nevertheless retained a vanguardist element which explains why theory is not yet a philosophy. In any case, Lassalleism permeated them all, to a degree that is unbelievable to this day. What we found, however, is that, though we rightly rejected the vanguardist concept, that didn't solve the problem of our "organizational work." For example, the first time I left the office to work on Marxism and Freedom, I found quite a mess on my return, and to really carry through with the projecting of M&F now that it was published meant asking Olga and Andy to move to Detroit.

When the 1914 philosophic break in Lenin did come about, and it did create the Great Divide in all history, and it showed itself in everything from materialism and idealism to imperialism and the National Question, and also the creativity of mass movements -- and we were certainly correct in stressing that Lenin had not been stuck in his own 1902 concept but had made many modifications in his theory of the Party -- it is nevertheless an indubitable fact that Lenin did not extend that philosophic reorganization to the concept of the Party. So we still have a problem, and no full answer. But, on the other hand, did we ever fully work out "Cognition not only reflects the world, but creates it." Or did we just jump to conclusions without going into the process?

(Raya then detailed the 1875 chapter of the RI book as something in which she thought she was emphasizing the first part of the title: "The Theorist of Permanent Revolution", whereas she felt the organization loved best the second part of the title: "Creates Ground for Organization.")

HER CONCLUSION WAS TO CREATE A NEW CHAPTER 12 OUT OF SECTION III OF CHAPTER 11, SO THAT NOT ONLY WOULD ORGANIZATION NOT BE THE FINAL WORD, BUT THE NEW MOMENT IN THE WRITINGS OF MARX'S FINAL YEARS WOULD SO PREDOMINATE THAT WE WOULD KNOW IT AS THE TASK OF THE AGE AND THUS THE 1880s CONCLUDES ON THE VIEW OF THE 1980s.

The third subsection on "The Break with CLRJ, 1953-1955" centered around the inseparability of theory and organization, philosophy and revolution. CLRJ may have escaped the reductionism of Trotsky who laid down as principle for the creation of the Fourth International, "The crisis of the world is the crisis of leadership." CLRJ also achieved the consciousness of the opposite of state-capitalism, the new forms of revolt, but the fact remains that when these new forms of workers revolt appeared in East Europe, he had not considered them something that must be worked out anew. On the contrary, the attitude was that this new phenomenon confirmed an a-priori view of workers revolt which he already had. In a word, there was no way for him to reach the re-establishment of Humanism on new, historic grounds. Working out organizational responsibility for Marxist-Humanism, therefore, became ours alone.

The philosophic break with CLRJ did create ground for organization, grounded in the movement from practice that was itself a form of theory; but let us under no circumstances think we have more than the ground for organizational "answers." What we do have is: 1) our original and serious contributions to dialectical philosophy, Marxist-Humanism; 2) the sensitivity to ever-new social forces of revolution in addition to the proletariat -- Black, WL, youth; and 3) organizational responsibility for Marxist-Humanism in two ways. One is via the Center with three full-timers in the office (O, M, E); the other, of equally "first importance", the Book.

AB
V
MT
ML
LW
MT
ML

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The Totally New Type of Classes on the New Book, ROSA LUXEMBURG, WOMEN'S LIBERATION AND MARX'S PHILOSOPHY OF REVOLUTION for 1981-1982: A Series of 8 Sessions Suggested by the Author

What I mean by totally new type of classes is by no means just tied to the fact that the book will be at a single place. Nor is it limited to the fact that the person who will give the first lecture will also be the one to give the summation, even though that aspect of it is, of course, very much more important than the fact that the book is only at one place. What this means is that it cannot be a new person, and preferably it would be an NEB member. And it goes without saying that this person would have responsibility for the entire book -- that is to say, he or she must make notes of every single lecture given, not just to include the essence of the individual lectures in the summary, but rather, to refer back to what the author of the book had in mind for the totality of the book.

I. Luxemburg at Revolutionary Turning Points Including her Personal Life

1905
Plan
+ Now
Plans
+ 1905
Personal

Readings: Chapter 1 ("Before and After the 1905 Revolution") and Chapter 2 ("The Break with Kautsky, 1910-1911"), and Appendix ("Luxemburg's Speech at the 1907 Congress").

Personal
+ Political
RL

Please note that, as against Chapter 1, when the two turning points referred to were 1899 and 1905, in the lecture, the 1899 debate against Reformism is to be very nearly disregarded. The concentration instead is to be on 1905 and 1910; the personal break with Jogiches is to be seen as very political and to be stressed.

II. Confrontation with Marx: Different Attitudes to Objectivity

Marx
+ 1974
crisis

Readings: Chapter 3 ("Marx's and Luxemburg's Theories of Accumulation of Capital") Chapter 10, Section II ("Capital, Especially 1875 Edition").

It is important to note that, though the entire Chapter 3 is a confrontation with Marx, I very deliberately jumped to Section II of Chapter 10 so that Marx's greatest theoretic work would not be seen only in the context of a polemic, but seen as Marx wrote it and restructured it. It is of the essence that this specific lecture be given by someone who has had experience in discussions of Capital. Under no circumstances should the one responsible for this lecture be one who is giving only a first reaction to the content.

III. Confrontation with Lenin on the National Question: Three Differing Views on Organization

Readings: Chapter 4 ("From the 'National Question' to the Dialectics of Revolution"); Chapter 11, Section I ("Critique of the Gotha Program").

Here, again, the point is to get the views of Marx, not only as seen in a polemic, and one closer to our time, but as Marx developed it in his time.

IV. Anti-Militarism, Revolutions -- German and Russian -- and New Forces of Revolution

Readings: Chapter 5 ("War, Prison, Revolutions, 1914-1919"); Chapter 6 ("The Women's Liberation Movement -- An Overview by way of Introduction"); and Chapter 9, Sections I and II ("A Preliminary Note on the Dialectic")

in Marx of the Early 1840s; in Luxemburg, 1902; in Lenin, 1914", and "Prometheus Bound, 1841-1843. ").

Getting acquainted with Marx before he broke fully with bourgeois society is essential for grasping the concept of dialectic as revolutionary in Hegel, and then tracing what it became in Marx.

V. Luxemburg as Revolutionary, as Feminist; and Today's Women's Liberation Movement

Readings: Introduction; Chapter 7 ("Luxemburg as Revolutionary, as Feminist"); Chapter 8 ("The Task That Remains to be Done"); Chapter 9, Section III ("Prometheus Unbound, 1844-1848").

Please read Chapter 9, Section III before Chapter 8, because it is there we can fully grasp why it is that we define Marxism as a whole new continent of thought and revolution, and see the unique points that lead to MLM.

VI. A Decade of Historic Transformation, Including That of Organization

Readings: Chapter 10, Section I ("Economics: Only Class Struggles, or 'Epochs of Social Revolution'?, 1857-1858"); Chapter 11, Section II ("The Theory of Permanent Revolution: from 1843 to 1883"); Afterword to Chapter 11, Section II ("Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution").

In this instance, it is important to include one thing outside of the book -- the new, special bi-lingual pamphlet on the question of historic transformations, because both the essay on Bolivia and on El Salvador relate to the whole movement from practice that previously had referred to the revolts in East Europe in 1953 and now refers to Latin America beginning in 1952.

VII. The Last Decade of Marx's Life: A View from the 1980s

Readings: Section III of what is now Chapter 11 ("The Unknown Ethnological Notebooks, the Unread Drafts of Letter to Zasulich, as well as Undigested 1882 Preface to Russian Edition of the Communist Manifesto"), which will now become the core of a new Chapter 12.

It is of the essence that the maturity of Marx's great philosophic discoveries in the last years of his life has opened many new points of departure, from the question of Permanent Revolution to the relationship of organization to spontaneity and to philosophy; from women's liberation to the question of what we now call the "Third World"; and from new anthropological studies that in fact become not just historic narrative but projection for future development.

VIII. An Overview of the Entire Work, its Urgency for Today's Myriad Crises

If I have completed Chapter 12 by the time you reach this last session of the series, that will serve as the ground for the overview of the whole. You can get a feeling of what that new chapter will be, however, from the Subheading I have chosen for the last section of that new chapter: "New Moments in Marx's 1880 Writings that Become Ground for the 1980s."

trail of the 1980s

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Dr. Dick Sess

The way all this adds up to that "Note on the Dialectics in Organizational Relations, or Leadership Both as Philosophy and as Spontaneous Action" is two-fold. One is the question, all over again, of: What is Theory? Because we so correctly stressed Marx's break with the concept of theory as he moved from a debate with theoreticians to production relations at the point of production and in the open political class battles, we unfortunately gave the impression that there was no such battle of ideas with bourgeois theoreticians. The truth, however, is that there was and must continue to be such a battle. Marx didn't throw out Vol. IV -- "Theories of Surplus Value", which was not his title, his was "History of the Theories of Surplus Value" by he transferred it to the end of his lifelong study, Capital. In so doing, he was anxious also to show that bourgeois theoreticians had been unable to carry through dialectically the logic of their own positions. If they had, they would have discovered that the logic of their theory that labor is the source of all value, was that labor was also the source of all unpaid hours of labor, i.e. surplus value.

tinues.

For us, the battle of ideas ^{is} ~~can~~

Two, the new in Leadership this year is that projection of Marxist-Humanism expressed in the new book, which gives a total view both of Marx's own works and of the new of our age, in the context of all post-Marx Marxists. Whether we are talking about the beginnings of our theories -- state-capitalism, or about Marxist-Humanist philosophy as it has been worked out in Marxism and Freedom and Philosophy and Revolution, or whether we are talking about the committee form of organization, the point at all times is that theory and practice are a unity. Specifically, what we have to stress this year is that theory is not separate from practice. We have, unfortunately, all too often stopped at the committee form of organization, rather than philosophy and organization. And it is the philosophy that is new, totally new, not the committee form of organization, crucial as that form is to fight vanguardism. The leadership and organization, especially the latter, is leader likewise in relationship to other tendencies and organizations. Because philosophy is our ^{main} contribution and answers the urgency of the age on actual revolutions, it is quintessential to study the new book in the ^{new} totally new classes. Study again the session titles. It is not only chapter 12 that has not yet been written; it is the final editing in so creative a way that it actually requires all my time, and most of Olga's. Yes, she is coming back to the office, but not totally, only in part, and that not only because there is so much work still to do on the book, from the bibliography and all sorts of unseen tasks, but because the organization itself demands also a perspective from someone who is not in the office daily.

The absolute minimum for the Center is two full-time Marxist-Humanists, specifically Mike and Eugene, responsible for the paper and the organization.

And, of course, we need Diane full-time in the office; she will remain, also, as sitter-in at the REB meetings.

It may not appear that part of the question of leadership relates to what Mike will include in his report on who moves where, when. But, in fact, the philosophic ground for it came from the book, and unless we recognize that every day of our lives, so to speak, we will not achieve an audience for the book. That audience is already there and demanding to be recognized.

Yours,
Raya

This is to say give action to Marxism

more precisely that

asked my beginning to edit for a variety of goal of Marx's Humanism