

REB Meeting of Feb. 8, 1982

Present: All but Raya on assignment, and Jim excused. Diane as sitter-in.

Agenda: I- Politicalization and Proofreading; II- Next issue of N&L; III- Ongoing Activities and Correspondence; IV- G&W

I- Olga said that while the outpouring of interest in the specific subject of the new book, and desire to help us in the disaster of the stolen galleys, was most significant -- and being able to turn disaster into national publicity for the new book could ^{even} be seen as one type of "politicalization" -- that is not what she meant by "politicalization" in the proofreading Raya has just completed. We all knew that there would be "changes" introduced during this kind of reading, but there was no way to tell what form they would take until the mss. was gone over as a whole this way, during the intensive last week of work. Take the way adding the source of the Melville quote that opens Chapter XII sent RD looking for where to cite Larzer Ziff's study of classic American literature, Literary Democracy (which had first drawn that quote to her attention last summer). As it turned out, it will not be cited here, but in Part II, added to fn. 3 for Chapter VI, by drawing the reader's attention to Ziff's chapter on Margaret Fuller, in which Ziff develops his view of Fuller's "vigorous independence of mind" as inseparable from the fact that she had become a revolutionary in Italy and was returning to the U.S. "to work for the next revolution." Ziff's ending for that chapter is then quoted: "Such exhilaration at attaching passion to intelligence, will to action, self to history, was on the ship with her when she arrived off Fire Island. Kindled in Europe it was drowned within sight of the American strand." It is not only that such a beautiful formulation is now part of the book, but it surely demonstrates all over again the integrality of the three parts of the work, since it was constantly a question of where to add something the author felt was missing and having to choose which of the three parts, any one of which would have been possible.

The most striking thing in all the new "additions", however, was how -- whether it was a single word that was more incisive, or a whole new paragraph that was now included -- they were extensions of the "battle of ideas" we are always talking about, in the sense that, whether a specific "enemy" or "friend" was involved or not, the point at issue was always the sharpening of our uniqueness. There is no time to take up all the "examples", but there are four that will demonstrate, each in a different way, this kind of "politicalization."

1) We all knew that RD wanted to end the Index with Zulu, not Zinoviev; the question was where to include it -- and the truth was that we found the Zulu women were already mentioned in Chapter 8. But that was not the Zulu rebellion; where to add something on that? The perfect place turned out to be Chapter III on the Accumulation of Capital (mss. p. 55), where just before the powerful quote from RL is given, attention is drawn to the fact that although RL described concretely how the Boers and English fought "on the backs of the Negroes", she did not draw any conclusions about the Black Africans being a revolutionary force. Yet: "although neither the Maji Maji revolt in East Africa nor the Zulu rebellion in South Africa was known, no doubt, to anyone other than the imperialists engaged in putting them down, both had erupted in those pivotal years, 1905-1906." (And the fn. to this section now draws the reader's attention not only to Edward Roux's Time Longer Than Rope: A History of the Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa, but to the references to all these struggles in P&R, ACOT, and the Afro-Asian pamphlet.)

2) In Chapter X (on the French edition of Capital, 1875), the starred fn. on mss. p. 214 will now be able to cite Kevin's very original work and critique of Ben Fowkes translation. And the sentence crediting Fowkes with restoring Marx's philosophic language, has been thus further modified to now read: "The recent translation by Ben Fowkes... reestablished some of Marx's philosophic language. But the translator did not follow Marx in the sequence of the Parts..." (Even limited to counting out the right number of characters so as not to have to reset more lines, the greater inciseness is quite clear.)

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3) In Chapter XI, mss. p. 243, an asterisk has been added after the phrase "Paragraph by paragraph." And the ftn. for that reads: When it came to the political demands, Marx combined all five points and dismissed them as "a mere echo of the bourgeois People's Party." The significance of that addition would escape you if you did not know about the argument of some WL theorists, like Joan Landes, that Marx paid no attention to the male chauvinism of the Gotha Programme in his Critique, because he did not bother to attack the Programme's demand for equal suffrage "for all males..." This, of course, was one of the five that Marx did attack and dismiss all together. But it surely alerts us to the kinds of arguments we will be engaged in when the book comes out; for the article by Landes in Telos (number 49, Fall 1981) will certainly not be the only kind of argument we will be confronting.

4) The most important expansions come in those crucial final pages of the very last chapter -- XII. When RD said she wanted to stop the proofing at that point "to sleep on it," it was no surprise. What was startling was to hear her conclude the next morning that she didn't feel the sum-up of Section 3 "had made it" -- and begin to list what is truly new and unique in this specific Marxist-Humanist work, and whether it "came through" in that sum-up with sufficient sharpness: Post-Marx Marxism, as a category; what was omitted from the 1875 edition (in particular, those two important paragraphs); Absolute Idea as New Beginning explicitly; the EN; and Organization. The result of that critical review of those last few pages turned out to be three important new paragraphs:

Added to the present penultimate paragraph, we will now read: "And, these live human beings must do so in theory as well as in practice. It is not a question only of meeting the challenge from practice, but of being able to meet the challenge from the self-development of the Idea, and of deepening theory to the point where it reaches Marx's concept of the philosophy of 'revolution in permanence'."

There is also a new paragraph on what Engels omitted from Capital -- with the stress this time being that they "reveal how deeply the newness of imperialism, which Luxemburg thought was missing from Capital, was imbedded right there in Marx's analysis of expanded reproduction. What was needed to see it, and what was missing in Luxemburg, was Marx's firm, integral, deep relationship between dialectics and economics."

And finally, a beautiful new paragraph and ftn. on Gramsci -- as one post-Marx Marxist who had actually opened new doors for our age, had any heard him: "The quest for a new revolutionary humanism -- indeed, Gramsci called it an 'absolute humanism' -- was raised by Gramsci from Mussolini's dungeons in the 1930s: 'It has been forgotten that in the case of a very common expression (historical materialism) one should put the accent on the first term -- historical -- and not on the second which is of metaphysical origin. The philosophy of praxis is absolute "historicism," the absolute humanism of history. It is along this line that one must trace the thread of the new conception of the world.' While that new conception was not heard then, nor paid attention to in the post-World War II world even when his Prison Notebooks became well-known, it was impossible to disregard Marx's articulation of an 'absolute movement of becoming' once a whole new Third World arose." (The ftn. to this new para. quotes another magnificent view of Gramsci from his essay on "Problems of Marxism" and draws attention to his critique of Bukharin's Address to the Second International Congress of the History of Science in London in 1931. It is this address that the editors of the Prison Notebooks claim they cannot find -- but that RD had someone in England search for and xerox for her in the 60s. We will find a cite for this, as well.)

There have been some additions to the Bibliography as well -- but all the work on that is not completed. Andy, Mike and Olga will have one more full day to wind up the proofreading and the galleys will be returned (after we have xeroxed a copy to keep safe here) by the end of the week.

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