

RRR 2/3/80

Raya concluded by saying that she would limit herself to three points. One is the objective situation. It is imperative that we do everything to stop Carter's drive to war and not only in activities but in the battle of ideas with all other tendencies so that Marxist-Humanism stands out clearly as something quite unique, ideologically and organizationally.

Two is the transformation of N&L, and its expansion to a 12 pager. While the reason behind the jumping of the gun on the convention is due to the many new responsibilities and tasks that would flow from it for N&L Committees, that is to say, the need to practice theory, so that the decision at the Convention will be based on solid achievements in these seven months, there is also no doubt that the objective situation and the need to influence that objective situation makes it, at one and the same time, more urgent and even more necessary to stress indispensability of dialectical philosophy. It's not only the difference between Correspondence which literally dumped all responsibility onto the shoulders of the masses in meeting the Cold War, and News & Letters which started both with a Black production worker as Editor and with making its very first pamphlet a reproduction of Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks in English and the exchange of letters on the Absolute Idea. It is also the way the present book on RL and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution informs the activity, not because we are any sort of "Luxemburgists", but because Dialectics helps answer her, philosophically and not only politically -- and doing so not only on the National Question and Accumulation of Capital, with which we disagree, but doing so even when she is wholly correct; and, always, let us never forget she was one of the greatest revolutionaries. Nevertheless, we show that even where she was correct, she was not deeply enough rooted philosophically. For example, we contrast what appeared as deep philosophic rooting when she rejected Bernstein's demand for removal of the dialectic scaffolding with what she did when she disagreed with Marx on the Accumulation of Capital, and reduced methodology to "rococco" style. Put differently, had the Marxists considered Marxism as a new continent of thought instead of just "founder", great economist-materialist, and even great revolutionary, as if that could be separated from his new continent of thought, RL would not have thought it was sufficient to contrast what was new in the period she lived, with the period in which Marx was alive. It isn't that Marx can't make mistakes, and it isn't that you as a Marxist can't criticize and bring out what is new; indeed, that is the task for your age. It is that you must dig into the methodology which made him neither right or wrong, and learn from it. Luxemburg did no such thing, any more than did the so-called orthodox "heirs". We must understand how unique we are, that while it's true that without Lenin, especially after his philosophic reorganization, we would have no solid ground, but we alone see in Marx's new continent of thought and try to define our tasks accordingly.

Let me give you one example, as to how the book can be misunderstood, or at least not fully appreciated, and not only by the outside, but by ourselves, by citing my interview with the Italian reporter. After I praised Luxemburg's views on spontaneity, writings on 1905, and precience about imperialism and the opportunist character of Kautsky, he asked how close we are to Luxemburg. My answer was that we are not Luxemburgists, far from it. One word can sum it up and yet tell you nothing unless you do appreciate the depth as well as self-development in dialectics. But if you do, then that one word, dialectics, is why we are not Luxemburgists, whether we take up the question of Women's Liberation, or the National Question, or Accumulation of Capital. People have forgotten that the battle of ideas involves not only labor and capital, which are absolutely irreconcilable, but the battle of tendencies, and that battle of ideas within the movement is when you first must appreciate SELF-DEVELOPMENT OF IDEA or you cannot understand, much less come to be the SELF-BRINGING FORTH OF LIBERTY.

What I have been speaking about in the last paragraph is actually the third point: the book. And it is in relationship to what the book is about, and that first

2/3/80 REB

-10-

chapter which that journalist was inspired enough to want to translate and see if he could convince his publisher to publish excerpts, that the whole subject moved from question of interview on the chapter and 1995 to What is Marxist-Humanism? and his desire to get the Archives. I was also asked in New York (I believe it was Ray) to explain the expression "And yet, and yet, and yet." On the one hand, it is, of course, very demanding and seemingly overbold when we say that even an Engels, even a Luxemburg -- indeed, very nearly all Marxists except Marx -- had reached a turning point they could not transcend. And it is wrong for comrades to think that I have to tell them (as if I knew) how the book would end. It isn't that I don't know the general direction. And it isn't that both the totality of the book and the reason for the subject have not been undertaken for both the objective situation and the whole movement of the difference between philosophy and revolution to philosophy of revolution. It is that knowing "in general" is not knowing in the concrete, and I am a dialectician who practices the fact that you cannot know before you know, that it must come out of the whole movement of the book itself.

What the book does is compell us to go back to methodology at all times, trace self-development both from below and from philosophy. That is to say, the movement from practice and the movement from theory are no abstractions. But unless they are united, we have not measured up to the challenge of the age. Absolute Idea as New Beginning is our point of departure whether we talk of the book or we talk of resistance to Carter's drive for war. The new beginnings projected today in a transformation of the paper and in the announcement about the chapters of the book which will be available to all by Convention-time, and in the activities projected, (not only as to Youth and Black but for each one of us), will be the test at the Convention.

Meeting Convened 10 AM, Adjourned 3:30 PM

15220