

Personal

June 9, 1983

Dear Neda:

You are doing some very important work and I would very much like you to develop the actualities of that struggle you describe on p.2 of yours of 6/1, but your methodology is so non-dialectical, that is to say, instead of what flows from the concrete, and, instead of anything emerging out of the facts, relations, the concrete totality, you rush to impose a conclusion flowing, instead, from the fact that, as a Marxist-Humanist you, of course, do not wish to separate Reason from force, that you forget all about concrete history and concrete theory.

Since I am indeed so pressed for time that I cannot go into great detail as it deserves, and yet wish you to work out some of it for both discussion in E&A &pre-conv. Bulletin, please allow me to, more or less, limit myself to pp.1&2, with one being what I consider the imposition that doesn't flow from material, and 2 being the very best of actuality.

On p.1, even the so-called facts aren't. That isto say, take the 4 periods you list! The 1st on s-d which you state as before the break with 2nd Int. But the truth is that when it comes to s-d he was never fully with 2nd. In Russia he not only was for s-d as "principle" and so strongly that the famous break bet. Bol. & Men. 1903, she refused to attend altogether because it was right in their Constitution. What differed before and after 1915 (i.e., working out the dialectic and grappling with not only principle, but "bacillus of prol. rev." with the Easter Rebellion in Ireland) was that the dialectic of liberation led him not only to fight with 2nd Int., but with his own Bolsheviks, specifically Bukharin and all ultra-leftists who opposed national liberation though they were Bolshevik Party members.

Now take the 2nd par. which I will connect with your 2nd par. which somehow connects phil. break (1914-1915) and Nov. as if they were one and the same. That isn't quite true, because process becomes as important as principle and methodology for it is then that SUBJECT manifests itself both on NQ and anti-war and social revolution so that by Oct., it isn't only national liberation he is for but NEW FORM OF ORG. FOR PROL. AS WELL AND INDEED FOR "MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD" THE SOVIET FORM OF ORG. The very fact that you have to use that Kantian word (3rd. l., 2nd par.), "should" could have warned you that you were skipping an awful lot of stages and processes and thus you wouldn't have jumped to conclusion that, though VIL fought RL before, after, and during-- for the entire period RL came onto the historic scene of Marxism & at once declared she opposed "nationalism" and that though Marx showed he did not confuse national s-d with "nationalism" which meant she also opposed Marx, nevertheless they were both only "dialectical" & that both on s-d---and then the super-leap-- the Party.

Put differently, the point in the expression "flowing from", or emerging "out of" means that you would have had to develop various historic periods in which Marx said so and so on the party and it came to the tragic climax we point to, that after Critique of Gotha Program, and after conquest of power, he still clung to "vanguard power to lead" so that

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He left all those loopholes for Stalin. You, on the other, behave as if they were one and the same, disregarding not only the historic period you hear speak of, but the very thing event that helped kill VII. For the truth is that not only had he fought against Stalin in Georgia and Ordzhonokidze; not only had Lenin sided with the Georgians; not only had Lenin said: ~~that~~ "Scratch a Bolshevik and you find a Russian chauvinist", but he ordered Stalin's removal in his Will, ~~and~~ on the way to that final word, he had written "I openly declare war against them" (Moscowite Great Russians), but left it all to be fought to the end in the hands of Trotsky who did nothing. (Let's not forget either that by then Lenin had had his second stroke and lost his power of speech.)

Sorry, I've so exploded and my love for Lenin shows, for I started simply with the phrases you skip non-dialectically -- "flows from" and merges "out of" which led you to concluded "And that had he been able to see them as Reason, it would have been inevitable for him to develop his theory of self-determination after the revolution, into its fullest expression of organization." How do the dialectics of org. flow from theory of s-d? Isn't the question of Party, Party, Party, what came out of, 1st, fighting for the right of the proletarian not only to fight for economic needs, but also political? And when RL said, yes, that is so, and I do not challenge that-- every Marxist is for that-- what I challenge is the relationship of the proletarian in the party, and the spontaneity of the masses outside? And didn't both fail WHEN ~~neither~~ ~~neither~~ both were only ~~1~~-dialectical at that point because they failed to see that that isn't the question Marx posed; what he posed was PHILOSOPHY OF REV. IN PERMANENCE--and that, incidentally, is not limited to national self-determination--as ground for organization.

On Page 2 you are great because it is concrete and dialectical and new as facts. That you should develop much, much further so that your readers or listeners would see what flows from the actualities.

I question much in the rest because you keep jumping to a conclusion before anything develops into its logical conclusion so that, for ex., final par. on p.4 you mix up 2 different concept of federation and make a category of "neither". I believe you are here confusing "neither" with national/cultural ind. In any case, I'm quite unclear since the par. of the civil war-- where there really are no two ways of approach--you are either for rev. or ~~against~~ rev., there can be ~~neither~~. And the 1922-23 period is Lenin's last battle. And you also mix up Galiev, Roy, Sultan Zadeh and some people you really wouldn't wish to associate with as if all were, 1), revolutionaries, and national revolutionaries as "one". The truth is Galiev wanted the whole nation--think of Iran and see whether you would wish for a single moment to be with the "whole nation" as if a whole nation could be called "proletarian." Roy was the exact opposite--he was far to the ultra side even of Lenin as he wished the whole nation to be ~~denies~~ "unless" the whole is "Bolshevik." Zadeh was close to Lenin and he did not go either with Roy or Galiev.

With Marx's philosophy revolution

Let's find time some time to discuss this further.

Yours Ray 16847

June 1, 83

Dear Raya:

You had singled out in the Call, "...the half-dialectical attitude of RL on the national question or VIL on the Party question". It is precisely on this question of Lenin's attitude to organization that I wanted to open a dialogue with you, since I have been concentrating on the impact of the Russian Revolution on the East, including Russian Moslem Borderlands, as well as studying the implications of Lenin's theory of self-determination of nations in the following four periods:

- ✓ Before the break of the 2nd Int.
- ✓ Lenin's Philosophic break and the Oct., Revolution
- ✓ The period of Civil War
- ✓ 1922-23 period

Furthermore, I have come to see that if as M-Hists we consider a fully dialectical attitude as one of recognizing "new passions of Revolution" as Force and Reason of Revolution, then we should conclude that as great as Lenin was in comparison to RL, he was also half-dialectical on the question of self-determination, ^{He saw} ~~in seeing~~ national forces as Force and ^(unlike RL)

^{but did not see them as} Reason. And that had he been able to see them as Reason, it would have been inevitable for him to develop his theory of self-determination

after the Revolution, into its fullest expression, dialectics of organization.

But first ~~let~~ permit me to begin with a short history of the formation of the nationalist organizations, ^{rather in a dialectical sense} I am following Azerbaijan in particular, the Communists attitude (i.e. Stalin) and Lenin's reaction.

Much of the Moslem borderlands, which had come under the Tzarist Russia's domination, only in the 19th century, were treated as colonies of that country (Turkestan and Caucasus area were part of Iran until nearly the mid century). I thus began to see the two way road of ideas between the two regions, which every historian has treated separately until now;

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This is the two way road of ideas, between Moslem Russia and Iran
The Russian Azarbaijani Hummet party, - ~~becomes~~ which ~~was~~ active
during the 1905 Russian Revolution, included many Azarbaijani members,
Iranian and Russian, who went to Iran and participated in the 1905-11
Iranian Revolution. Following the defeat of the Iranian Revolution,
many of these revolutionaries returned to Russia and participated in the
ever increasing strikes, the culmination of which is the 1917 Russian
Revolution. Hummet and the Iranian -Azerbaijani workers who formed
Adalet party, become the very revolutionary forces who help the
Bolsheviks take over, following the Turkish invasion of the Caucasus
areas; and Adalet party members, including Sultan Zadeh, founded the
first Iranian Communist Party in 1920s while he and many of his
Iranian comrades continued ~~to work~~ the work ^{with} of the Russian revolutionaries.

With the 1917 ~~Feb.~~ Revolution, and before the Oct one, the nationalist
expression finds its fullest form, ever, organizationally and Armenians,
Azerbaijanis, Georgians, Ukrainians and Belorussian find a great amount
of cultural/national autonomy. ^{But also go beyond national issues?}

The all-Moslem -Russian congress, formed in May first 1917 includes
200 women delegates and the first issue of the day becomes passage
of a motion on equal rights of Moslem women, and ending her subordinate
position in the community. A month later, the second congress takes up
the issue of land appropriation, as well, as addressing other radical issues.
Apart from the Soviets of the workers, including the Baku oil workers,
peasants soviets especially in the Turkestan area, begin to form (Sultan
Zadeh was active in this area).

Ronald Suny, writes that in the period of 1917 at the time of flourishing
of national aspirations, class solidarity was still a much more important
criteria, and indeed ^{it} forged alliances between ^{the} historically hostile
Armenians and Turkish workers (~~as in~~ ^{the} period of civil war is the
opposite). In general there is a favorable attitude towards the Bolsheviks,
especially on the part of the Moslem community (who were the subproletariat
vis a vis Armenians and Russians)

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Naturally one cannot follow here the very complicated details that follow the Oct., Revolution, which I am sure you are much more keenly aware of than I.

The point is that throughout 1917, and even the period of Civil War that follows, solidarity with the ideals of the Revolution even when there were strong disagreements, were so great that separation of Russia is not what the minorities want. Even when faced with Turkish ultimatum to declare their separation, the Armenians, ~~Georgians~~ and Azarbaijanies, do so reluctantly. If the Azarbaijani Mussavat had any illusion, they quickly changed their mind once they faced the reactionary policies of the Turkish government, and as mentioned earlier indeed helped the Bolsheviks take over.

Reluctance is not opposed

because of ethnic ties with Turks

The final chapter is ofcourse the take over of the Red army which is supported in both Azerbaijan and Armenia by much of the population.

At which point both the Soviets and the ~~the~~ native Communist parties become subordinate to the Russian CP. There is much resentment, after all, understanding that the majority of the population were nomads and agricultural workers (particularly in Moslem borderlands) and had always been subordinated to Russian lords, "the dictatorship of the Proletariat, soldiers and Peasants" who were a small minority of the community, and often not native, meant the continuation of Russian hegemony - maybe not the feudal owners but by the

think of it

"Russian Proletariat". The final showdown ofcourse is between the Moscow group of Bolsheviks (headed by Ordzhonikidze) and the Tiflis group (Mdivani) in Georgia.

But V.I. opposed + support Mdivani

The Tiflis group attacked Ord. for turning the Georgian takeover into an invasion rather than allowing the native group to help an internal uprising. Furthermore they resented the fact that their independence rather than a formal alliance with RSF became subordinate first to Stalin's proposed "Transcaucasian Federation"

to give up

they had

and then through that organ to Moscow Bolsheviks.

Stalin's concept of self-determination, which meant- was spelled out as a right to be determined "by the proletariat and not the bourgeois elements of the nation " meant in effect no right to self-determination. In every region, the first step after Oct, 1917, was to bring under the control of native communists the native organizations, or if this did not work, it meant setting up their own version of nationalist organizations.

Next the Bolsheviks would attack and destroy the native organizations, making the native communists who also dominated the Soviets as the sole representatives, and finally the last step was the subordination of the native Bolsheviks to the Russian Communist Party.

This was exactly what was done to the All-Russian Moslem Congress.

~~The Congress is replaced with a Moslem Socialist Committee,~~

Stalin not finding inroads into the all-Russian Moslem Movement, helped set up the Moslem Socialist Committee (headed by Vakhitove). In Feb 1918 the headquarters of the all-Moslem Russian Congress ^{were} ~~was~~ attacked and the ^{was} ~~the~~ leadership ~~is~~ arrested and power transferred to the Socialist Moslems, and finally a few months later, the Socialist Moslems signed their own death warrant by dissolving the Russian Party of Moslem Communists, subordinating everything to the Russian Communist Party.

So much for Stalin's concept of Self-determination, but what about Lenin?

What is of the essence is that Lenin's theory, was now after the revolution, faced with a new challenge from below to further deepen that theory, reaching a- the point of philosophy. Lenin's theory gave national minorities either a right to secede or to become one with the Soviet state, but once we follow the demands of the various ethnic organizations such as the all-Moslem Russian organization, or the demands of the native communists, as in the case of Tiflis Communists, we see that they were asking for neither. Instead what the various national minorities wanted was both cultural/national independence and alliance with the Soviet

Russian state in a Federation.

Lenin, faced with the actual independence of the Transcaucasus area as a result of Turkish ultimatum, realizes that either Russia would face secession of these states or if it is to avoid such ~~fact~~ fate, it should accept some form of Federation. In the 1919 Russian Congress He thus proposes the concept of Federation as a transition to unity. But makes it quite clear that there was not to be a Federation of Russian Communist Parties, and that the Federation of Republics was only of temporary nature.

In the final stage that is the period of 1922, and the Georgian affair, Lenin becomes totally disgusted with the concept of incorporation of the Republics to RSFSR, seeing the only consequence as showing with brutal frankness the dependence of all the communist Republics on Russia, and thus making it difficult to win nationalist movements for Bolshevism in colonial and semi colonial areas, which is when he insists on the formation of a new Federation.

which brings me to the following points:

1- Whereas there certainly was nationalist opposition to the Soviet's Rule (Anvar Pasha and the Basmachies), the bulk of a opposition came from within national minorities, including native communists, whose opposition was in many instances not so much nationalistic as a way to fight Russia's burea- strangling centralization, bureaucracy, Russification and Russian domination (in the name of Russian proletariat) and Stalin's ascendancy. *St's ascendancy is, however NOT being subject to this faulting Stalin, his had no basis in Stalin's Russia*

2- It is no accident that among intellectuals who opposed this policy of centralization, Russification, the national minorities have an important place, take Sultan Galiev who was most vocal, and the first high ranking party member to be purged in 1923! or Skrypnik (Ukrainian) who defended Galiev's position. (Obviously I am not including "Russified Georgians" but communists with a national consciousness)

Lenin however, never saw the struggles of nationalities, including

Handwritten notes in left margin:
1- Lenin's policy
2- Stalin's policy
3- ...
4- ...
5- ...
6- ...
7- ...
8- ...
9- ...
10- ...

5/

???

Why?

Handwritten note:
not one

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their intellectuals , as Reason of Revolution. Had he grasped their demands both the masses and the intellectuals, who were trying to work out questions of fighting bureaucracy, centralization as well as alternative pathways in underdeveloped lands (as Galiev, Sultan Zadeh and Rpy) in short had he seen them as Reason grappling with the question of Revolution in Permanence, it would have been inevitable for him to further develop his theory to meet this movement from practice. Instead he continued to regard them as Force which brings me to the third point:

Q

Lenin either dealt with the question as a way of fighting "Russina chauvinism" that is dealing with it as if it were a Russian problem, or that the solution could be found in certain "code of behaviors" for the Russian Communists. In this sense he was more a "humanist" appealing to the sense of fair play of the dominant majority than a "Marxist-Humanist" who would look for the solution in the ideas of the oppressed minorities. *What about SD & Idea?*

Another reason, why Lenin dealt with the question of minorities, apart from the tremendous dependence of Russia, economically and militarily on the borderlands, was the fact that the Borderlands were Key to a Bolshevik Revolution in the neighbouring countries, and that if the Russian nationalities were in opposition, there was no link to the colonial, and semi-colonial world. That is again, regarding the minorities as a Force of Revolution in the struggle for the East. *This is wrong in itself*

Psychology
of
the
masses

Why? don't think he had ever truly broken with the concept of backwardness of masses , particularly in the East, and so long as he had not , there could not have been a reorganization of thought on the question of the Party.

Instead what I want to say, is that we are not facing two different questions, the first being Lenin's philosophic organization on the question of the self-determination of the nationalities, and the second

Lenin's lack of reorganization of thought on the question of the Party. The two were not ~~two~~ fundamentally separate questions. Rather we are facing Lenin's half-dialectical attitude towards the question of self-determination of nations which did not extend itself to the realm of organization. Half dialectical because it considered masses only as force and not as Reason, half-dialectical, because it occupied itself only with the question of "making a Revolution" rather than a "revolution in Permanence".

Wrong

I would like to know your comments on the above. I also have some ideas for an essay for ESA and N&L (if you find it appropriate).

must be rejected

And that is the question of alternative ways to Revolution in underdeveloped lands, and the three Eastern Marxists (Galiev, Sultan Zadeh and Roy) who began to grapple with the question, Galiev's genius on the question of designating Russia as State Capitalist, fighting against centralization, and his emphasis on the needed Revolution of the East, S-Z's formulation of the peasant soviets in underdeveloped lands and his emphasis on supporting revolutionary movements of the East against the industrial sectors of West (his unwillingness to differentiate between various classes in the East on this question). S-Z's contribution to the Second CI, where he was for support of bourgeois national/democratic movements only where there were no strong Communist movements, and his formulations of the needed peasant soviets in underdeveloped lands, Roy's concept of primacy of Eastern Revolution; as well as the grappling of all three with the question of "bypassing the capitalist stage " as presented by Lenin in the Second CI, and the question of Religion in the ME. This also touches the similarities of Lenin's concept or its dissimilarities with Marx's formulations of "possibility of revolution in underdeveloped lands." (on this last point I still don't know much). All of this in the context of today's revolutions of the ME where either the army or Moslem socialism which is closer to fascism, have become the "pathway"

IS TOTALLY opposed to his idea

Roy is not in the center of the century he is further

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I know how busy you are with the draft of the Perspectives, and I am
sorry this letter became so long.

Yours,

Neda