

RD

November 20, 1984

Dear Ned:

I'm not in a position just now to write directly to Pilar, and I do suspect that there is more relationship than she cares to admit to religion, but you need not be concerned with that question when you write to her again.

What you can transmit to her is that you had a conversation with Raya, showed me her letter and that I felt a few ABC's must at once be stated, although a whole book -- or at least a pamphlet -- on Organization is the only serious way to deal with that question, which has been plaguing the Movement ever since Marx first discovered his whole new continent of thought and revolution.

First and foremost, Party and Organization are not synonymous. When we say we are opposed to "party-to-lead", we not only are not opposed to organization, but consider that the reason organization has not succeeded (except in one place, Russia; and Russia in 1917 to 1921 only) is that it did not have what Marx tried to tell us in his Critique of the Gotha Program -- that unless your revolutionary philosophy is ground for organization, it is best not to have one with other forces; and even if it is correct to be with another for a single action, it is for a single action only and without giving up your right to critique.

Secondly, even Marx, the founder of all of us, had not worked out the Organization Question until the very last decade and then only as "Marginal Notes." No-one picked it up to work out for his/her own age after that.

Thirdly, what Lenin did in establishing party as organization in his What is to be Done? was very specifically for Russia; very specifically for Russia in Tsarist days; very specifically for saying an organization must be political and not only trade union (those he was arguing with were then called "economists"). In that 1902 work the one great statement, which was not worked out, was his statement that without a theory of revolution, there can be no successful revolution. But since he didn't work it out, there were a million ideas of what it meant. He, himself, changed his MMK position on his worst statement -- that is, that workers cannot come to socialism on their own. Indeed, every time there was a revolution, he knew what to do (please re-read Marxism and Freedom on this question, especially Chapter II), but when there was no revolution, and the revolution-that-was (1917) was being attacked by Kronstadt, he unfortunately returned to the concept of discipline as it had been expressed in 1902. So we cannot learn from him, beyond what I worked out in M&F.

Fourthly, the way you describe "our own reality" and what activists there are saying is fantastic. It is wrong in the worst way. I don't think even a Stalinist dares to say the Paris Commune failed because there was no party. The Paris Commune was not only spontaneity, revolution, and a whole new discovery that nobody (including Marx) had thought of before -- but it was theory and practice together as a unity. Marx was alive and not only greeted it as such, but showed that it was the real discovery of the opposite of statism. But he also "criticised". But the fact that at that stage of human history, in one city like Paris, the Commune could under no circumstances have succeeded, in no way took away from the fact that the few weeks in which it did succeed remain for us to this day as the form. It has nothing at all to do with "Party."

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Any cult, any worship, any idol, including the worship of the Golden Calf, could not be a lower degree of mysticism than the so-called "materialism" of the Party, the Party, the Party.

*Here is real problem*  
Fifthly, at the same time, the cynics, who use "non-party political formation" demean non-partyism as badly as those who worship "Party". What we have stressed on "non-party formation" (which was best expressed in Portugal) did not give up history, dialectical philosophy or Organization; it specified that it couldn't be on what all connect party with -- the Communists or Maoism. What we mean, in addition, is that Yes, there should be as many formations and spontaneity should be followed through -- but that is no substitute for the organization that would be inseparable from the philosophy of "revolution in permanence". There always has been and always will be different timing in which organizations arise when. And while you are always ready to accept something like the Soviets, you never, never, never give up the uniqueness of the philosophic roots and vision.

Luxemburg was "contradictory" because she stuck to the party even though it had no philosophy except an abstract one, so that the Party was really in a different world from the spontaneity.

Finally, Yes, there must be an international base and relationship. Yes, there must be a relationship between advanced and under-developed countries without one superior to the other. Yes, there must be no racism and must be all forces of revolution -- especially so Women's Liberation because that one is the one unrecognized though it has been in all revolutions. When WL gets to work out a philosophy, they will be the greatest -- but so far they certainly haven't.

I think our committee-form instead of party is a good way to function, but that, too, would be totally inadequate without a philosophy of revolution, which is expressed both in our major philosophic writings as well as in our pamphlets on both current events and history, and in our paper.

Yours,

*all  
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have at  
least  
begun*