

"CHRONOLOGY" re 1949-50

1946 Barb, Ig, Frank, Billie Simon "colonize" after WP Convention

July 1947 JFT leaves WP (Andy meets Billie Simon in faucet factory)

INTERIM PERIOD: RD to Paris for FI Conference; Camerounian + dispute on Israel
12 bulletins; Aug. 20 Balance Sheet; Sept. WRP & RQ

Sept. 1947 JFT enters SWP

1948 CLRJ's Notes on Dialectic

Spring 1948 Andy joins JFT/SWP and enters mines; so does Red Massey

Nov. 1948 --mine explosion

March 1949 -- Andy out of hospital and back to mines

Feb. 18, 1949 RD sends translation of VIL Notes on Doctrine of Being to CLRJ

Feb. 25, 1949 RD " " " " Essence

March 12, 1949 RD concludes Phil. Notebooks translation and shocks CLRJ
on VIL vs. CLRJ re Notion

(May 14, 1949 = RD letter to Ruth on Woman and Socialism)

June 10, 1949 CLRJ first responds but disagrees on "the" point

June 1949 Miners' Strike begins (ends March, 1950)

Feb. 15, 1950 Meeting of three with JZ

Feb. 28, 1950 Tristate Meeting (RD's minutes)

March 6, 1950 Militant articles by RD (on Women, on Food Caravan)

March 14, 1950 RD letter on Marx/Capital/Miners

March 26, 1950 Tristate Meeting (RD's minutes)

April 4, 1950 Letter acknowledging minutes ~~and~~ and reports from Ward

Jan to June, 1950 + Jan ~~1951~~ 1951 = RD letters on changes in structure of Capital

May 14, 1949 - Sept. 4, 1949 = 3-way correspondence, these are not listed separately
in new Guide, but were so listed on pp 18-20 in
1978 Guide.)

Aug. 1950 SC&WR (includes philosophy, but ^{all} not re Contradiction)

Nov. 1950 RD Militant article on Pittsburgh phone strike

August 1951 JFT leaves SWP; Balance Sheet Completed

Sept. 1951 Miners' Seniority Strike; RD proposed (9/13/51 to JZ) special first
issue of new paper to be devoted to miners. CLRJ opposes this as ~~un-~~

Nov. 1951 Mixed Correspondence begins (Small Mass Partyism bulletin issued
Nov. 1, 1951 against RD)

1952 IH published

May 1953 RD Letters on AI

July 1953 Convention

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A NEW STAGE FOR OUR ORGANIZATION

Practicing Revolution

If there is anything I learned from Lenin it is that you don't have a new stage unless you realize it consciously; above all, unless you consciously realize that it didn't come about as a gradual evolution of everything that led up to it, but as the leap from it.

Lenin has given us an example of it in his analysis of Monopoly. For twenty five years everybody was speaking about monopoly, concentration, large-scale production, and nobody was getting anywhere because they had not seen that they had reached a new stage in reaching monopoly. Not only was no one getting anywhere, but everyone was going in entirely different directions. We had Luxemburg who said that it would all collapse after capitalism industrialized the agricultural countries. We had Hilferding saying we would be faced with a certain stability in capitalist development, or at least a unity of industrialization and finance capitalism, and all the workers would have to do would be "to take over". We had the Lenin of pre-1915 it was large-scale production, and it was something else too. But nobody, nobody knew what it was, what new stage had been reached. That is why the collapse of the Second was so unexpected, so shocking.

To Lenin monopoly first began to mean something in 1915-16. It was then that he began to shout MONOPOLY, MONOPOLY, MONOPOLY, everything flows from that. Unless we make that new relative stage into an absolute, and speak not of the class struggle in general, but of this specific stage of the class struggle in this newstage of capitalism, we will get nowhere. And indeed from the minute that he made monopoly into a new stage, he had all the great developments in his own thinking, from Self-Determination to "Turn the Imperialist War into a Civil War", to State and Revolution.

Therefore I say we must first of all realize what is the particular new stage we have reached. The stage we are facing now is not only new, but is a tremendous leap from the old. It is a tremendous leap not only in relation to our previous development, but a tremendous leap from one hundred years of Marxism, there is nothing in one hundred years of Marxism that compares with this.

I will call our new stage practicing revolution. You tell me where you have seen that before. We had discussed the 1905 Revolution as being a dress rehearsal for 1917. But that was after the event. And when 1917 came, Lenin first had to threaten his own party that he would go to the sailors because they didn't understand revolution was on the order of the day. They had to make the revolution. They had no chance to practice. But we are having a chance to practice.

Now let me explain this further. In a certain sense it seems that we are going backward to an internal life because in November we said we were going to have a paper; we were going to have \$20,000, and we are going to face the proletariat directly. It sounded absolutely wonderful. And now we say we are going to carry on a correspondence. Isn't that fantastic? Haven't we all corresponded for about ten years already, and yet, it is higher than the stage that we reached in November, because then it was abstract and now it is concrete. We are getting a paper in which everything revolves around the proletariat.

Paper
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everything is what we, with all that we knew about it, are writing about it and experiencing with it and yet don't show it to the proletariat, we show it to ourselves. We are having a chance to practice. Number two -- the practice consists in the fact that we are getting a completely collective leadership, and we are having a chance to practise at it. And the completely collective leadership is achieved not only organizationally, in the sense of decentralization, but that each locality, in decentralizing, have theoretic responsibility for one or another aspect of it. And finally we are going to do all this with Evans being absent, as far away as possible from us, and with everybody I hope not even corresponding with him.

Now when you face this situation, you have to be both abstract and concrete. Now I know I'm always being criticized for going back to 1848, but after all that is the beginning of Scientific Communism, of Revolutionary Marxism and it would be wrong only if we went back to it in order to show that we know history: In 1848, the Communist Manifesto; in 1871, the Paris Commune; in 1917, the Russian Revolution, -- a recitation of facts. But it isn't historical and isn't a recitation of facts. It's when Lenin said, "recall" in 1917 means "to a man" in 1917. In 1871 Marx wrote: "And it is well known that companies like individuals in matters of real business generally know how to put the right man at the right place, and if they for once make a mistake, to redress it promptly. On the other hand nothing could be more foreign to the spirit of the Commune than to supersede Universal Suffrage, by hierarchic investitures." In 1871 lack of hierarchic investiture means right not only to elect but to recall. In 1917 it means everyone "to a man" must run production and the state. Now what does this tremendous leap from 1871 to 1917 mean?

It means that he had said that we are never going to have parliament, we're going to have a working body, a working class government. We're not going to have "representatives". If it's the proletariat "to a man" what kind of representatives do you have? It's not only lack of hierarchic investitures, you have something entirely new; the Commune. So that when you go back to that kind of history, going back to 1871 actually means seeing the new stage. You suddenly begin seeing things; 1871 means this in 1917.

Now there is something else in 1917 that was never in 1871. And you say, now throw everything out that you have learned before; you are facing a new dialectic. That's what Lenin said on state capitalism. What is this whole nonsense on what we have learned on state capitalism before? You have never in your life seen State Capitalism and what you have learned either practically or theoretically has nothing in common with what we are facing in Russia now.

Now I have often said to Evans that about ten percent of the one hundred percent strained relationship between him and me consists of my getting absolutely ready to tear his head off because he does something so unprecedented that I say; this guy must be really nuts or an anarchist or an intellectual or something. After all he was an intellectual before he came here. He was a leader already. And then for the ninety percent after I get over the madness, I say; well, look here, if he did it and I find absolutely no precedent in 100 years of Marxism and if it is true that he represents something entirely new, that this is a new stage in Marxism. There must be a new dialectic. Let me throw everything over that I have learned before and find out what in the hell is making him act so. And every time when I found out, I have had to throw everything overboard for what had happened is that we reached a new stage while I was still in the old. I did find precedents in Marxist history, but before I become abstract again, let me say that, although I will go back to 1848, my conclusions

will deal with today and be very concrete. Let me state the end from the start. The concrete is; let Evans go away. I'm moving that he go away at least for a period of two or three months, during which we want to have absolutely nothing to do with him. That is the concrete.

The Instinct Of The Leader

And now let me return to the abstract. We used to say that Marx had so many fights because all tendencies made their appearance in 1848. It was a new stage in human development and while the proletariat appeared he was not separated off from the bourgeoisie nor the petty-bourgeoisie. They were all breaking from absolutism. So that the common in that fight hid much from other eyes than Marx's as to the difference within the proletarian movement. That is why the Proudhons, the Bakunins and the Lassalles functioned in one movement with Marx. And not only that, they fought him not on the basis on which they really objected -- a clear, revolutionary proletarian line, but under the cloak of fighting the "bureaucratism of the General Council", that is Marx's leadership of the First International. And don't think they didn't rally people on that platform. Fighting bureaucratism is always popular, while seeing the new form of the distinctly proletarian tendency is not so easy to detect. Not only by the movement "in general", but even in the closest circles.

Now let me tell you something else. There is no such thing as Marx and Engels, Lenin and Trotsky and, if I may be permitted, Evans and Weaver. There is only Marx, there is only Lenin, there is only Evans. The only thing you can say about Engels, Trotsky and Weaver is that these are smart enough to realize that there is only one Marx, one Lenin, one Evans. So that these "co-leaders" are smart enough to say we better find out what these guys are saying, and hope that when they die, we can follow the road they charted. And for a while these second in command are able to follow. They preserved what the others created. While Marx was alive, Engels looked to be "as good" because there was Marx there to give the line. And while Lenin was alive, Trotsky was almost as good, as the head of the Red Army. And while Evans is here to hit me over the head, I'm almost as good too. The point is -- what happens when he is not around?

Now the most that they can do, those who recognize what this person has personified, how he has somehow incorporated in himself the new stage of human development, is to say: I'll preserve it. They can preserve it, so long as it corresponds to the objective situation and the proletarian development. But when the development calls for more than preservation, a new leader must arise. There was Evans to say "Now wait a minute Trotsky you ain't really representing Leninism no longer. What you did -- and that's all in a certain sense that could be done -- will no longer do. We have reached a new stage and must make a new leap."

Now Lenin, as Marx, was called a bureaucrat, an authoritarian etc. Why? He couldn't possibly build the party on exactly the level of Marx whose age hadn't reached the stage of concretization of the 20th century. He had to begin anew. Now the only thing he could do is to find a few people who realized that he represented this new stage of human development. If Trotsky learned anything that was good from Lenin on the Party, it is not the things he said he learned -- that is, that the party is always right and now he knows the party etc. That baby, he is really saddling us with something horrible. But what

he has learned in politics. He said finally, now I have learned something from this Lenin. Now I'm not going to stand for you stinking Abernites, and Shachtmanites, and every other damn tendency all through the world going on this way. I'm going to say you don't represent me at all.

Now what was significant about Marx's fights? There were people who said: you are not so far away from Proudhon, and Lasalle was a very nice man, etc. But Marx was saying: Look, this is the line. I don't give a damn at all if Proudhon is or is not a nice man it's either going to be this or else. Everything has to be thrown out -- every other consideration. It has to be that way. If Marx had not been uncompromising, we wouldn't have been able to make this leap:

Now in a certain sense, you can see the beginning of a distinction between Engels and Marx in their estimate of Kautsky. Marx meets Kautsky and says, "God, what a horrible, stinky Jewish petty-bourgeois this man is." And Engels said that he isn't so bad. He is trying to learn something. And Marx says, "Well now look, Engels and Kautsky have something in common. They both drink." Let Engels take care of Kautsky. Now the only time Marx was wrong was when he changes his mind on Kautsky. But the instinct of the leader is something that we've got to study. If he says something and doesn't give you one hundred years of history to back it up, listen anyway. Just say: this is new. Shut up and find out what this instinct means. The only time Marx was wrong in his estimate of people was when someone convinced him not to follow that instinct.

There is no other way. Because it all comes from the instinct and the will and the new stage of development which gets concretized in this person. You see the same in Lenin. We must learn to trust the instinct of the leader, to learn from it. Now I'll tell you something of Herman. This is the way we are going to prove that we know what a new stage is and what collective leadership is. Herman is the greatest thing that we have found in our whole development. He represents our moving from the Russian Question to the American Proletariat. Not only that, but what the next stage will be in the relationship of the proletariat to the party. And yet Herman has not advanced at all. His highest development was meeting us. Now isn't that terrible. Our highest point was meeting him, and his highest was meeting us. And there's never been a movement from then. He's stuck. Now there's something wrong with us, if he can equate us to just "more politics". But there is also something wrong with him. If that's the way the proletariat is going to stop, baby, we ain't going to have a revolution, not with this new all-inclusive party.

There is something wrong with both of us. We must show the concrete in the abstract. When Herman writes saying, when must I come down for the plenum? I wish instead the day to come when Herman would appear days in advance in order to take up some more things -- we in the center didn't think of. That's when we will have proven that we are a collective leadership and we know how to apply these abstract principles and have proven as well that the proletarian development hasn't stopped with Herman's joining, but Herman's advance.

Lenin's Will

Now there comes a time in the development when suddenly something becomes transformed into its opposite. And then you really don't know. Here's what I mean. It is either a class division and if it is a class, you can't do

anything about it. It is going to tear you up. Lenin said in the Will that they are living in a dictatorship of the proletariat surrounded by the peasantry. Now if the fight and the antagonism between Stalin and Trotsky meant that, nothing can be done about it. The party will split into several pieces. In other words, that is the end. There is no dictatorship of the proletariat; we are going back to capitalism. But he is hoping that that is not what it means and therefore he is taking up a couple of new things in the relationship in the leadership.

You have to go back to personalities not because you are doing anything personal, but suddenly, once you reached this new stage and the dialectic, you haven't got any precedents when you could say in 1848 this happened, in 1871 this, and this means so and so in 1914. You have to say now, what are they representing? If they are just fighting and being cantankerous as personalities, then I'm not really interested. But if it means something, if there is a "why", then a new stage has appeared. The point is always to look at that why.

Read that Will. It says: "Stalin is rude. Trotsky is too conceited. Bukharin is collapsing. Zinoviev and Kamenev have not done something by accident, but still you shouldn't hold it against them. And, by the way, remove Stalin. He is altogether disloyal in addition to being rude. Now what in the hell can you make of a Testament like that. (I must say that Trotsky made absolutely nothing of it. Absolutely nothing. He practically gave it the same interpretation as Stalin did, insofar as he considered the statements as analysis of persons instead of tendencies.)

Stalin said, "Sure there is a Will. Lenin said I was rude. That's the way you have to be. It's a personal characteristic." Trotsky said: "Yes, sure there is a Will and he said: remove Stalin." There is a definite action. And Lenin said also a couple of things against me. But it really wasn't so important. It was just personal. He was wrong. I'm not really an administrator, I'm a revolutionist. Now what in the hell is this for a leader to go around saying this analysis was an analysis of personalities?

Lenin writing a personal characterization of these personal things meant what? That is the question. Good or disloyal meant capitalism was coming back. The administrator meant that we can't have a new stage, if the proletariat, the best the most revolutionary, was represented by an administrator instead of being there "to a man". Saying that Bukharin didn't understand dialectics meant that all of Bukharin's writings may just as well be thrown out. He's loved and all that etc.

My god, I read that Will every day. And every day I see something new, and I say to myself how in the hell could I have accepted Trotsky's chatter on that.

If you explain the why the Will was written in personal terms it's important. If you don't explain the why you might just as well have no explanation.

Now there is one thing for which I can criticize Evans, he said in his speech yesterday that Weaver probably objected to the correspondence being published or given around to the leadership, etc. That shows there is a little bit of the old organization in her. Evans didn't recognize that I had made the leap from the time that he talked to me and I asked him about leadership relationships. He came to Pittsburgh and I said, Evans, something has been bothering me about you. Our relationship. I always have to face an audience. I never

get a chance to speak five minutes with you alone. That annoys me no end for two reasons. One, I'm a little bit insulted. Why shouldn't I know ahead of time what you are going to present to us? And two, how can you raise up a leadership that way? I said; look at the wonderful things Trotsky used to write, and pretend that Cannon wrote them, or thought them. That's the way a leadership has to be built up. If you decided that this is the right person, then you have to snoop along a little bit and have everybody love that person. But a minute after I said it, I changed my mind. And when Evans replied, "Among other things, you know I have to watch out that no cliques develop among us—, if we had an organization of our own, and each of the leaders had a department he headed, and there wasn't this closeness, this nonsense, of being afraid when I get a cold, etc. We just can't have that kind of an organization. It will not do." The minute he said that, I began to see things in a new light.

New Relations

It appeared to me then that we have to have an entirely new type of leadership and it has to be built in a new way, not the old way. It is no longer sufficient to pass on the traditions of Marxism and what Lenin handed down and leave it at that. It is that, but it is more, it is that plus this new leap that we have just made. To make my point, I'll put myself up for display, so to speak. I have not been made in this group. That is I mean more, so to speak, to the Stalinists than I mean to the Trotskyites, in the sense that they know me best, they saw me lead strikes, do this, that and the other thing in the class struggle. I mean more to the Cannonites than I mean to you guys. (Now I wish the hell I hadn't brought up my damned past.) In any case, what I will mean to this tendency is either what I am going to make of myself, on the new basis, or so to speak, Evans was faced with having to say good-bye, for it would have proved that he hasn't yet met the one who could follow the new principles. You see when we said to him— don't always surprise us, take matters up first with the leadership—we were hanging on to old conceptions that there was a tradition and all we had to do was pass it on, and if we knew it a minute ahead of time, we could do it so much better. But it isn't that at all. We have just reached a new high because the proletariat knows so much already. Handing down traditions without being able to make a new leap at the same time will no longer do.

I had no other questions on the relationship of leadership. This was the question that bothered me. But anyone who now brings that up doesn't realize what Evans really means. I made my decision before I came to New York now and that is why I have the old correspondence all annotated, catalogued by subject, by date, everything. I am willing to publish it not only for the leadership to study, I'm willing to publish it for everybody to read.

What was one of the things that made everybody so afraid when Lenin left a Will? They wouldn't have anything to stand on if Lenin said something against them. But if we haven't anything to stand on, then we haven't moved from that stage. We haven't leaped from Leninism to Evans, if I may be permitted to say so, because it is a tremendous leap. We have a lot to learn from Lenin, we haven't begun yet to know him. But unless we also make the leap to Evans we aren't going to be any good. We will be good historians on what Lenin did. We aren't going to be the practicing revolutionists that Evans has given us a chance to be.

Another aspect that may still remain in us that we don't recognize is that when somebody says you are either for me or you are against me, I think

that Garnett said you are either for this or not for that, or else it is here in the correspondence, where you said that the trouble in Los Angeles, Solow had said so and so, everybody was mad at her and the suggestion had come, let's remove her. Now that also is a left-over from not only what the party thinks, but in a certain sense, if you permit me, the way the bourgeoisie thinks. You see, if he is no good, we remove him. But Marx says that if the Commune established anything it is that we can't copy the bourgeois way of choosing "the right man" because that is exactly what this break with the bourgeoisie means, we have no "hierarchical investiture". And Lenin said not only do we have the right to elect and to recall but, everybody "to a man" does it, and we have no "representatives" to do it. You do the whole thing by yourself. If that is true, how can we say "either -- or". We say to you this is what you have remained by virtue of the objective situation, by virtue of your experience so that now you can make this new leap. And I will give you the opportunity to make this leap. I won't hold you. Removing means one of two things: either your theory and everything is already a finished thing and you just have a bunch of people carrying it out, a bunch of office boys or something; or it is not just something like that, and you have to give a chance to these people to become the new people with the new proletariat.

I will just say one other thing, and that is, to go back to form. Now I have been preoccupied with content and form. For months and months I had been writing all kinds of profound-sounding letters. And finally Evans said to me, "Now look here, either form is important, and therefore it is a question of class or it is a lot of nonsense and I am not interested in it." That's just it. But I didn't get straightened out till I was pulled up sharply. The form does tell the class content. That's the difference between the value form which is capitalism and the cooperative form which is socialism. Just think of all the things that have come out from this tendency since that illumination on form. We have the answer to Warde and Wright from that. We have the new style. I see it in everything. Everytime now anybody says anything, I say, it is as bad as... that is it belongs to an alien class altogether, or it isn't as bad as... therefore, it is one of the dialectical transformations or metamorphoses, and these developments go on forever. That's the only serious way to approach anything. Now I think that there is a lot

(EDITOR'S NOTE: here one and one-half minutes of presentation was erased accidentally.)

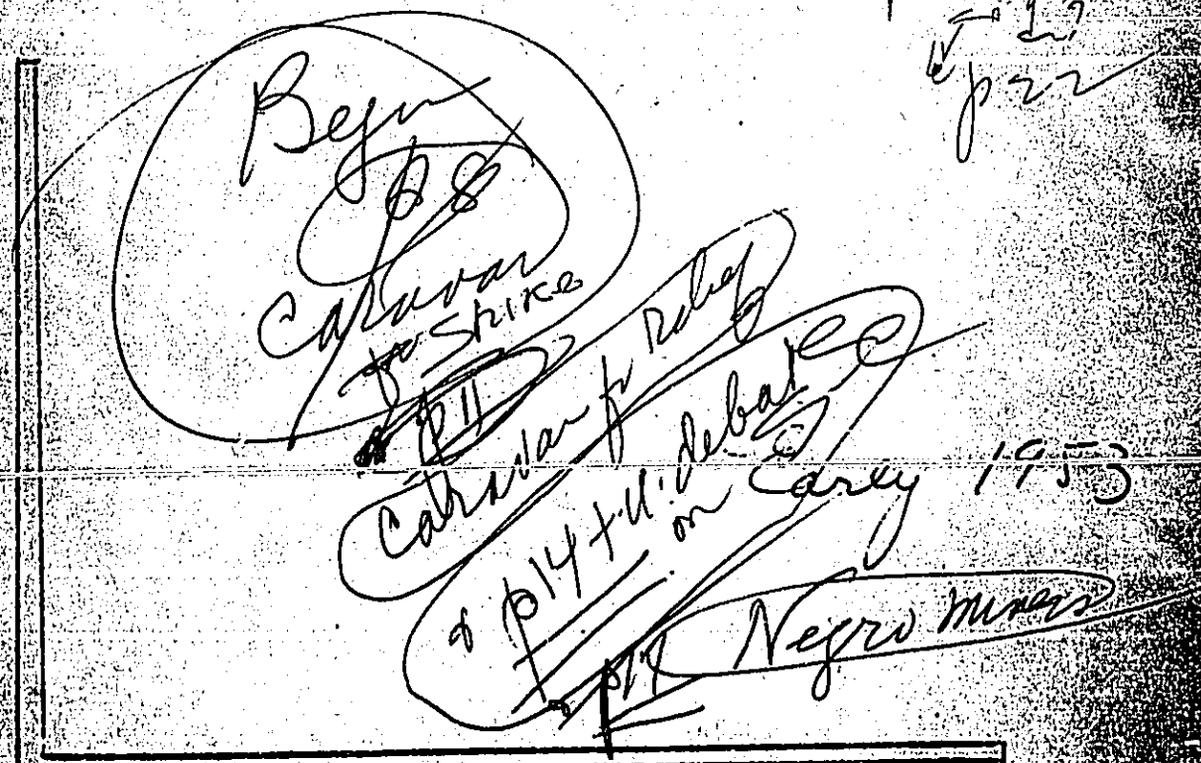
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HISTORY OF A SOUTHERN LOCAL

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STATEMENT OF THE RWC

At the last plenum the Southern local was chosen as the one area of all the small locals which would be retained and strengthened. Our main political-organizational task of decentralized-centralization aims, then, at establishing three centers and one sub-center. The Southern local was so chosen because it holds an exceptional place in any workers party's perspective. To concretize this, the RWC asked Asher to write a report of the region. See!

The local has a rich history. Though all have had their "try", none of the old organizations could touch the real resources of this area. Our organization alone, because we alone are mobilized to recognize the deepest layers of the working-class, has been able to maintain activity there, and to hold a perspective of ever deeper penetration into the lives and activities of the miners and their families.

The strengthening of the local means not only that some friends are to settle there, but that those friends themselves must be the ones to choose this as their area of activity. Contrary, therefore, to the manner of announcing which locals would merge with which, we left the question of who would go to the Southern region entirely open.

It is necessary that the entire organization understand the history of this local, and the life and the activity of the mining region. The attached report speaks for itself. The RWC proposes that this bulletin be studied and discussed by all the locals. Reports of these discussions should go to both the Southern local and the Center. The friends who wish to settle in that region should also communicate with both that local and the Center.

History of the Southern Local

First Steps

1943 was the emergence of our Education, Agitation, and Propaganda. Here we posed the Americanization of Bolshevism. Here, too, appeared the quote that the building of the party in America would be done by many working class groups, among them the "Southern miners." Not three years later, in 1946, this happened.

A young middle-class student, bred a few miles north of this coal region, found himself drawn to the radical politics of the W.P. Soon enough he found his way to us within the W.P. At the height of the coal miner's strike of 1946, when the nation feared a general strike and when the Taft-Hartley Law was being brewed, this student, now working in the mines, formed a coal miner's branch. The W.P. gave him assistance; Labor Actions were given and distributed freely; and the Coal Mine Labor Big Wheel in the W.P., came down to officially launch the branch.

At this point the only key politico was this student and even he knew little in terms of the organization. His virtue was that he had been bred in the region and had the intellectual capacity to make up for his lack of experience and training. Around him were his wife, Danzig, a young petty-bourgeois who had just left her liberalism for radical politics, and an old pal of his, Orhon, brought up in the same region, who had genuine working class upbringing. These latter two, Danzig and Orhon, are still with the organization: the original leader failed to make it with us and is now puttering about with the old sects. Around this "cadre", if it can be called so, were a number of working class and petty-bourgeois students from the university in the town. Together this group went about distributing Labor Actions in the many coal fields nearby and thus found genuine miner contacts with whom they held fairly regular meetings. Most of these miners were Negroes and one problem, among many, was the integrating of white miners. But this is a little bit ahead of our story.

To all intents and purposes this branch was a W.P. branch. Actually, because the young student leader had become one of us, it was our branch. In any case, the struggle that was going on in the party at large between us and the majority was reflected in this small and new local. When they finally discovered the political affiliations of the leader, they sent their worst hatchetman down, Fenwick, to save the local for them. The mine region was too much for an intellectual of his stripe so he left in a few months. This was all in early 1947 when we were getting ready to leave the W.P. When we did leave in July of the same year there was no cadre element of the W.P. present in the region. The split that occurred therefore was fairly clean: the miners went with us immediately into the S.W.P. - instead of carrying on a separate and brief experience as did the rest of the organization during the Interim Period. A few strictly petty-bourgeois students in the university, who had been close to Fenwick, remained with

the W.P. Asher, the present organizer, came to the Southern local at this point.

In the S.W.P.

Asher had been in the movement since 1941 and, though he had been quite close to the members of the organization for much of the time, he had not formally allied himself with them until 1946. For Asher the whole question of the unity negotiations with the SWP was the turning point. There was another factor which affected his decision, how much though is hard to say. He had come out of the war with his right leg amputated: the W.P.'ers were generally given to "feeling sorry" for him. Some of their leading people were prepared to see him become a sympathizer - ideas which he entertained at the time. The members of our organization were not so much indifferent to his condition as concerned rather with his political status. In strictly personal terms, the majority were defeatists, the minority, full of confidence and fight. He had gone, too, a few times to the office of the SWP on his own and was convinced of the need for the return to the SWP and the Fourth International. Further, he had seen many of his close friends of the WP "colonize and proletarianize" in the days when it was full of vim and vinegar. All during the war, he had dreamed of the day when he too would be back in the states to do the same. All in all then, despite the hesitations due to his disability, he was quite ready at this point to colonize.

*DP
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in 1946*

A day or two before the formal split he was confronted with the choice of going to Detroit or to the Southern local. There was no question about going to one of these places; the question was, which one? Since he had just returned from a trip to the Southern local with Weaver and a friend and had seen for the first time the mining center of the nation, he finally decided to migrate there. The morning after the night the U.S. was given he was on his way.

Things moved swiftly. A day or so after he arrived, the local, with all the miners, split from the W.P. and joined the SWP. This was apparently a severe blow at the WP. Inside of two or three weeks, Dave Coolidge, the labor big shot, the man too who had once worked with A.J. Muste, appeared in the home of one of the miners. The scene bears some description.

On the one side stood this old Negro, experienced in labor fights, and on the other stood three or four of us young white students. Around stood the Negro miners listening to the furious exchange of charges and counter-charges. The culmination was Coolidge's angry admission that he had come to "break us up".

From this time on the W.P. was quite effective in hurting us. Another cadre-man was sent down to fill the place emptied by Fenwick. In the beginning he was able not only to break the miners away from us but to build a fairly substantial youth

group in the university. But the overall degeneration of the W.P. had its effect on their group in the region. By 1949 in the middle of one of the longest miners' struggle to that date, the cadre-man left the area and the few young students that remained soon left too.

Nevertheless, the struggle that they waged against us had its effects. It did not break us up, but it did break off the weaker ones of our local. The original leader of the local returned to his studies and finally left the area altogether. His wife went with him. One of the young students of mining family background became drawn to the local labor bureaucracy and later, ended up a lawyer. These, then, like the W.P. ers, were about gone by 1949. Of the original group of the split, there was left only Orhon and Asher. Fairbanks was with us (but he had come after the split). Three young students were also with us but they too had come to us only later.

Throughout this period the S.W.P. had treated us pretty much like the baby-in-the-woods. Every now and then they paid us some attention: a big shot would come through and leave us some of his wisdom. We kept our books straight because they liked it that way. Actually, though, like the baby-in-the-woods, they would have liked to have seen us die. This was clearest in our relation to Pittsburgh. Here was their closest cadre local. As far as they were concerned we existed primarily to come to their meetings in Pittsburgh. They had almost no interest at all in our work. It reached a head after the 1948 convention when the organizer of the local "jokingly" proposed that we merge with them. We jokingly retorted that this was impossible and there it was left. From that time on we hardly existed for them and had to fight for almost everything we got; especially when speakers came through - we had to fight for them or do without. Only when we suddenly erupted in 1950, did they take any real interest, but then it was too late.

So it went: both Trotskyist organizations concerned less with the miners and more with getting us out of the way. The W.P. became more and more interested in the students of the University and finally vanished by late '49 and early '50. The S.W.P. had only us in the region and with the strike of '49 and '50 of the miners this reached a definite stage and finally ended altogether in 1951 when our whole organization left them. In any case, as far as consistent political activity was concerned, the Trotskyites and we were about the only active left wing forces in '47, '48 and '49. As was mentioned earlier, the Communists were briefly active for Wallace in 1948. Between us, then, and the labor-liberal Democratic forces of the community were no one else.

At present even the labor-liberal Democratic force is gone. For some time there had been what was called the Democratic Labor Committee in the town, made up of labor-liberal elements. This no longer exists either. What remains, then, is ourselves, the Republicans, and the old Democratic machine as organized political groups.

Early Type of Activity in the Area

In the early days of 1947 the main activity centered around the sales of the paper and pamphlets. There were two main regions, both about twenty-miles from here. This is a description of a typical day of that time.

Asher had the only car of the group. Everyone would pile into it early in the morning: the flaming red-haired young intellectual leader, who walked about as though he carried the world on his shoulders; his wife (Danzig) some seven months pregnant, tall and slender, except for the fullness; another young but precocious youth from the east side of New York, who was always in need of a haircut, and who was invariably either chattering away profusely about things he knew little about in the world of culture or deep in a despairing mood, brought on, no doubt, by pure homesickness and the inability to adapt to this entirely different world of the miners; Asher with his cane and his limp.

We would speed hectically over the torturous and narrow roads of the area and finally reach our destination of a mine town. All of us would barge out of the car and into the small home of the miner. If the world didn't know that we had come through the area then they certainly knew it by the time we stopped and all hopped out. Whereupon, one of us, generally Morgan, the young leader, would proceed to either sell the miner - almost always a Negro miner - a paper or pamphlet or inform him of some projected meeting. The most popular reading, incidentally, was the question and answer pamphlet dealing with the trial of the sixteen Trotskyites. The meetings came off often enough and many strangers would appear with whom we had had little direct contact. The meetings would generally be called a week or so after our visit.

This kind of activity was divided between the Run, which is only a few miles from this town, and a mining region some twenty miles north of here in a neighboring state. This latter region had been the home of Morgan, the leader, and Orhon, his friend. At first that state, provided most of the work, but the combination of internal local strains and the distance of the area made it more and more difficult. Thus, the Run soon took first place. We have not been to the neighboring region for some four years now, though we do occasionally hear about our friends there.

The University

In the town the University is of considerable importance. In the immediate post war period some 7,000 students went to it. Today, there are some 4,000. It was inevitable that it would play an important role in the life of the local as well.

In the beginning, all of the actual and active members of the local were students from the University. And our most

important gains at the time, Steve and Fairbanks, natives of the region, were attending the University. Danzig, also native, had gone to this University. All of the WP'ers were also going to the University.

On the campus, the work centered around the A.V.C. Though the WP'ers controlled it, we had a strong voice in it. When Kurt Schussnig, of Austrian notoriety in the early days of the Hitler regime, was invited to speak before a convocation of the University, it was our push in the WP which drove them to initiate a battle against having him speak that soon developed into a cause-celebre of the whole community. By and large, nothing ever came of this work in the A.V.C. The majority of students were not responding to it at all.

Another activity on the campus was that connected with the NAACP. Quite a rumpus was made on trying to get the student chapter of the NAACP accepted by the proper officials. This never quite succeeded.

If these activities did nothing else, they did bring the "Trotskyites" before the attention of the University and the Community. It is possible to say, too, that two of the students that later joined us, came in good part because of this work. Still, all of it came nowhere near the great mass of students. In fact, such had been the exhaustion produced by all this "fighting" that when the mass of students moved to fight the theatres in town for their high prices - it may have been in 1950 - we were nursing our wounds and tired spirits, drinking coffee in the school cafeteria!

Yet, throughout the life of the local, the University, its students and sometimes its faculty, has played some part in it. It should be noted here, that the far more important world of the teen-age high school students, has never yet been reached by us. The University students are transients: the high school students are born and bred in the region and, unless they leave the region for work after graduation (as so often happens), they are a far more stable and fruitful strata.

The NAACP

We were active in the NAACP almost from its inception here in 1947 to its final demise in 1950. From a sudden peak of 500 in 1947 it declined precipitously and vanished altogether in 1950 when its leading organizer, a Negro teacher, left the area. A silent struggle had actually rent it apart: on the one hand were all the petty-bourgeois who looked upon it as a lecturing society, and on the other hand were the working class Negroes who wanted some actions taken by it in the town to eliminate Jim Crow in the movies and the restaurants. The teachers suppressed the militancy and, thus, killed the organization altogether. We participated in its activities but, like the A.V.C. on the campus, the chief results were with the friends made rather than in any mutual actions taken by the organization. One of our closest friends today, a young Negro girl, was first met in the NAACP.

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Types of Friends

Some of the most active friends we had were the Negro women. In Pennsylvania, a veritable dynamo was a little, quiet spoken Negro woman, who was undergoing all sorts of personal tribulations but who was as active as could be with us and the Negro church. Like her and part of the same general circle of friends was a young Negro girl of high school training who moved the literature easily among her circle of friends.

At this time, from 1947 to 1949 or so, we met many individuals, whose manners and experiences were no doubt of tremendous influence on some of us in the local. These were miners, women, mostly Negro, whom young people such as we had never seen before. Poise, integrity, a great range of vision coupled with a delicate sense of propriety were the most common traits of these people.

There was the Negro preacher, tall and ebony black, living in the small and bare coal patch, who had been able to recall the tremendous upheaval of the Russian workers in his youth and their effect on America and the Negro people, but who was (when we saw him) the victim of paralysis. He could only moan futilely and occasionally his eyes would become moist with tears. His "nurse" was the little dynamic Negro woman described above whose only relation to him was that he had been her preacher. Without questions, with no hesitation, she undertook to care for him though she was herself without money, faced eviction from her home, etc. etc.

There was Andy, the white miner past sixty, who would come along with us on our long trips. He could recall The Appeal to Reason of the turn of the century. Now, some forty years later, he could go along with us quite matter-of-factly.

There was Dill, the Negro of some seventy years who had been a miner but whose battles for the Negroes and the miners had led him to finally be placed on a blacklist. He now sold the numbers. His sense of people and events was very acute and he could express this, though uneducated - except for his own grasp of the Bible - with fervor and eloquence.

These groups would suddenly appear, ask for us, and often, just as suddenly disappear and all the labor in the world couldn't bring them together again. Obviously they had given us a hearing and we had failed to give them what they wanted.

Into the Mines

And yet for all the activity there was little that was substantial about the local. We were all students or former students and only one of us, Danzig, was native to the town. Above all we had not yet been able ourselves to get into the

mines or to find a cadre type in the mines. This soon changed.

First the leader of the local found a job in the mines in the Hun. This, however, as it turned out, proved to be less a matter of doing serious work in the mines and more a desperate move to somehow straighten the affairs of the local, which was now getting more and more tied up in knots. Shortly thereafter, Orhon also entered the mines: both had been the closest of friends from boyhood. This was all done strictly individualistically and individualistically they proceeded in their activities in the mine and its local. In short order they were fired from their jobs - for having sold Labor Action on the local floor! Morgan, the leader, never really recovered from this. From this time on, he became more and more withdrawn from the work and responsibilities of the local, and towards the end, both his actions and proposals were aimed at destroying the local. Orhon, on the other hand, though he too became quite demoralized, picked up and by the strike of the miners in '49 and '50 was once again fully active.

Still, the act of the leader stimulated two of our newer members: Steve and Fairbanks. Both were former veterans, students, native to the region, and sons of working class families. First Steve, then Fairbanks entered the mines. For Steve, somewhat like Morgan, going to work in the mines actually turned out to be the way of leaving both the movement and, finally, the mine region itself. We saw less and less of him while at the same time the small labor bureaucrats saw more and more of him. By late '48 he had left us entirely and when the '49 strike began he proved to be one of our enemies, subtler, to be sure, than all the rest of our open enemies.

Fairbanks, on the other hand, though he seemed far less proletarian than Steve, given to "culture" and philosophical abstractions, proved staunchest of all. He entered the mines hesitantly in the summer of '48. Shortly thereafter, he suffered the loss of the full use of his left arm in a mine explosion. He was out of the mines for a good many months but returned in time to be active for the '49 strike. Since that time he has worked regularly in the mines and at one time was president of his local.

One more member has to be considered here before we go on to the big strike of '49 and '50. As we have indicated, the branch was undergoing severe strains at this time. When the leader silently abdicated his position, the battle between he and Asher slowly mounted in intensity. One of his weapons against Asher was that Asher was alien to the region, given too much to philosophy and culture, and impractical. It became then, for Asher, a challenge to disprove all this. Asher had been in the movement long enough to know that this could be done only in work and devotion to the local. At about this time Asher met Jack. He had come, like Steve and Fairbanks, from a working class background. He was a native of the mine regions of the south, had been a veteran, and was now going to school. At the same time that he was going to school he was working in the mines. Asher met him some time in

'48. For a whole year he saw him, talked with him, invited him and his wife and child to go to picnics with us. At one point he left the mines to manage a small store and he cooled considerably to Asher. He had to return to the mines and again he warmed up to Asher. So it went for a good part of a year or so. After a year of such persistent work on Asher's part, he joined us. When he joined, then, he knew little of the cliques and intrigues of the local. He also came at a time when Morgan was on his way out; Orhon was still paralyzed by the firing in the mines; Steve was out and playing with the labor bureaucrats; and Fairbanks paralyzed between Steve, for whom he had the deepest regard, and Asher; and Danzig, Morgan's wife, though active in the local, felt that her higher alignments were with her husband despite the fact that by this time he had begun to break with us politically.

Now all this became of prime importance for us and the problem of the union and our own politics also became more concrete than it had ever been. It drew us into a new circle and a new type of activity. The friends we made were friends now made in the mine itself and not casually because of some distributed reading matter. The types we met now were more articulate and experienced in the ways of organization. It had many advantages but also disadvantages. For one, we no longer had much to do with the direct and powerful types like the Negro women and the old fighters, nor did we have as much to do with the students as we had earlier. Be that as it may, '49 rolled around and started us off in a direction and tempo we would not have thought possible, given the low state of the local.

The '49 Strike

'43 had marked our theoretical preparation, among other things, for the mine fields; '46 had marked the concretization of the theory; '49 marked the first full participation in the struggles of the miners. When the first picket caravan of the year moved, in March we think it was, Fairbanks, Jack and Steve though he was no longer one of us - were active in it. Asher squeezed himself in by chauffeuring for the miners. The first caravan was a terrific experience and of considerable significance.

In the black hours of the morning, a number of cars met at a central point. Small clusters of men whispered quietly about the cars. At a given signal, after some fifteen or twenty minutes, we moved on to still another point, slowly going south toward the District headquarters. After some two hours of this stopping and going and picking up cars, it was broad daylight and the cars numbered over a hundred. They followed closely behind the other and looked like some gigantic snake weaving its way slowly over the torturous hilly highways of the south. The men were all in high spirit and the whole thing had less the atmosphere of a battle than of a holiday. Some of the men were high; some had brought their clubs or pistols; others joked

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continually. Finally, all the cars parked near the crest of the hill and all the men poured out. They milled about, it seemed, aimlessly. Suddenly, there were a few yells, a scurry of men toward the highway, a racing coal truck, thrown rocks, squeeling tires, and finally curses. When still another truck appeared, the men managed to slow it up, leap on the running board while it was still in motion, and start fighting with the driver. The truck careened and the pickets leaped off. On the side lines some of the miners cheered or cursed, depending on the outcome. And, interestingly enough, the leading figure in the fights was Steve, our former member. So it went through much of the day: one mine after the other was closed down. They were mostly small, unorganized mines, in predominantly farm country, notoriously anti-union and largely unorganized. The District officials traveled in a big, shiny car and when especially hilly terrain had to be hiked, they somehow had a jeep to carry them. For Asher a good deal of it was reminiscent of the army. The District officials carried themselves with the same shame and false humbleness that did the army officers, who had contempt for the man but were fearful of their power when the actual fighting developed. Asher had trekked over some rough land with the miners to get to one of the mines that was still operating. On the way down, the "officers" and the jeep stopped to pick him up, since he was obviously quite tired hiking on his crutches. He said he felt like some wounded soldier being given a lift by a benevolent general.

But participating in the caravan bore special fruit: Jack reported back an incident which was to guide us more and more throughout the strike. The incident itself amounted to almost nothing; but it revealed, we felt, a great deal about the attitudes of the men and that of the union bureaucracy. Having distinguished himself in the later caravans by his extreme militancy, Jack, our member of only a month or so, became the center of what was to us the first sign of anti-bureaucracy. All of the men were pushing to enter the non-union coal fields. The District official proposed that a small hand appointed crew of men go into these fields instead of the whole caravan of miners. This crew was to report back to the District who would in turn make the further decisions. Obviously the District was leery of going into these fields. What Jack reported back was that a few of the men from around another town had approached him and suggested that they, strictly on their own and in secrecy, send out their own crew to check the District's checking crew. It never got beyond just this proposal but it helped illuminate the way for us. It was clear that there was a distinction between what the men were fighting for and what the labor bureaucrats were fighting for.

By the fall of ¹⁹⁴⁹ that year we were involved for the first time in a community wide action. This we initiated, organized, and led. So that, not only had the losses in the local not hurt but, given the intensity of the miner's own struggle, we were stronger than we had ever been.

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Two Negro miners had gotten into a fracas and one had seriously stabbed the other. When the wounded miner got to the local hospital, it was clear that he didn't receive immediate care because he was a Negro. He died soon after. The Democratic Labor Committee mentioned earlier looked over the incident and gave the hospital a clean bill of health: a whitewash. The man who had stabbed the dead miner was in the same local with Jack. He was arrested and it looked as though he would have to take the full blame for the death. Jack pushed to have the local branch take some steps. Asher hesitated; Morgan and Danzig were about to leave the area altogether; Orhon was still withdrawn from all activity; and Fairbanks seemed unready for participation in any such actions. That would have left the major part of the work on Jack, who was quite new, and Asher. Nevertheless, we went into it. It turned out to be our "dress rehearsal" for the still bigger and national action of January '50.

It took no time at all for a defense committee to be formed. Almost all of the locals in the Run were involved in this and Jack and Asher were formally made the officers of this committee. We undertook our own investigation of the hospital, doctor's, nurses, the Democratic Labor Committee, and the District! Throughout the few weeks before the trial, some ten to fifteen of us were in effect carrying on our own jury investigation of the whole community. It must be known that the people of the Run are still looked upon as dirty, drunkards, and brutal. But here now were the people of the Run carrying on probably one of the most truthful, clean, and sure studies of the snobs of the town that had been held for a long time. And one of the conclusions that emerged clearly enough for us was that the District bureaucracy was a bureaucracy not merely in the mines but in the community as well. We could see now that one of the chief props for all the prejudices, fears, and frustrations of the whole community was the District office of the U.M.W. in another town.

Our chief aim in all this was somewhat limited: we were anxious to see that the man who did the stabbing did not get all of the responsibility for the death of the miner. If he got a year or so only it would mean that the hospital shared some of the guilt in the death by implication. When, as a result of the trial, he got even less than a year imprisonment, we rejoiced, feeling that our activity had been quite instrumental in achieving this though there was no real way to prove this. It was a victory for us: A little more than two years after our formation as a local and with less than half the local - two or three of us - in fighting form, we had been deep in the life of the Run and the community. Within the local it marked the finish of Morgan's influence: Orhon who had been so close to him and still looked upon him as one of the leaders was now prepared to move - as we shall see that he did in January. Steve, however, was still a force and Fairbanks reflected this in his somewhat casual attitude to all the activity, even though he did play some part in it. For Fairbanks, January would be decisive.

When it was over we asked ourselves how it was possible that only three of us had been able to do what we did. The tentative answer was this: that throughout the coal fields the miners were in ferment and this constant movement on their part had thrown the otherwise stable bureaucracy off balance. We had been able to call them to our "trial" and they had come and let themselves be condemned because they had lost their sense of balance. How right we were! January came and our tentative conclusion was corroborated by the miners themselves.

The National Action.

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It is no exaggeration to say that by now we were looking for "mischief". The miners response to our activities had heartened and emboldened us: what next? We knew, and everyone knew, that the miner's battle, started back in March of last year (1949), had not yet reached a conclusion. Lewis, faithful to his timid strategy of pulling the men out and then sending them back in again, varied it somewhat by calling out all the miners of the largest coal producer in the country, Pittsburgh Consolidated Coal Company or Consol, as it is more popularly called by the miners. But by this time the miners had lost their patience with Lewis. More than the miners of Consol came out. In a few days, some 90,000 had come out. Lewis told the others to go back. Still more came out. Finally he called them all out: if you can't beat them, join 'em - goes the old saying. Now the government courts came into the picture. They ruled an injunction against the miners.

Just before this happened, though, we had discussed what to do if it happened. It would mean that the finances of the union could not be used by the striking miners. If they continued to stay out despite Lewis and the government they would need food to sustain their battle. So that even before it happened we had called together a preliminary meeting to discuss the question of raising money and food for the miners. A number of sympathetic unions responded to the call of Jack and Fairbanks, who were both active union members. When, therefore, the injunction was ruled and when, as we had felt, the miners seemed ready to ignore it, we moved into action. We had lists of unions all over the country already. We sent out circulars advertising our plight. Into this work came some of the students of the university and even - almost against their wishes - the remaining few students of the W.F. Orton and one other student member were the chief links between our local, the Miner's Relief Committee, and the University. We made contact with S.W.P.'ers in Pittsburgh, Ohio, Toledo and Detroit. A clear route was now opened for a small "caravan" of miners of our committee to solicit aid from the unions elsewhere. We were successful beyond our imagination. We raised money, shoes, and food. The money, I think, went far beyond \$5,000 and the climax of the food raising campaign was the appearance of a huge trailer truck from the Ford local in Detroit. A student committee for the miners had been formed and they raised some \$15 for the miners.

In this action the S.W.P. acted like the dinosaurs of old who are said to have fallen before the invasion of the newer and small species of animals who were quick in their movements and brighter in their heads. When we informed them that the local press was getting ready to strike a blow at us, they panicked and advised retreat. When it turned out that we defeated the local labor-liberal coalition, who had been out gunning for us with F.B.I. agents and all, the S.W.P. retreated, then covered itself by praising us to high heaven.

The students of the U.P., who had given us so much trouble a year earlier, were literally driven, as a dog might drive birds from the ground, into doing our bidding and flying against their wills. All in all, in their political condition, it probably settled in their minds once and for all that they would quit playing at revolution and go back to their teaching or their homes in the suburbs.

The labor-liberal force, as organized in the Democratic Labor Committee, did all they could to destroy us. They had already been severely hurt by us in the defense committee of a few months earlier. Now they brought the local press, a preacher, all of the small bureaucrats of the local unions of the region, as well as the F.B.I., to undermine our work. In the end, they too, like the S.W.P. had to admit in private that we had done good work.

In the local, Orhon and Fairbanks emerged as solid members of the organization - our organization, that is. What they had seen done and the work that they had contributed had cleared away once and for all the doubts and hesitations that they had both been subject to. Jack, on the other hand, who had been the real public figure in all this, had actually exhausted himself in all this. He had been fired from the mines and he made a few futile efforts to find work in other mines. When this proved too difficult, he finally left the region entirely making a bee-line straight for the Lewis bureaucracy of the Ohio region.

Steve should be mentioned here if only because he will appear once again in this account and then for the last time. In this activity he straddled the fence between our relief committee and the small town committee of the D.L.C. As we shall see by the time of the next event, the Seniority Wildcat Strike of 1951, he would be clearly on the side of the small time bureaucrats and against the rank-and-file.

The Miner's Party

The party that we had to celebrate the whole experience was the kind of party we had never had before and have not yet been able to repeat. It was held in a miner's home who had traveled on the caravan for the committee soliciting food and money. His family was a large one and his wife, his teen-age

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daughters, his young boy, his wife's father; all were present. Then there were the neighbors, wives, husbands, and babies: a Negro miner and his wife; our people from town and from Pittsburgh; two S.W.P.'ers from Ohio; a young Negro girl from town whom we brought; and several students from the University. Behind all the chatter and talk and laughter ran the strains of the music of Yugoslavia. It was played by the children of a miner who had heard about us and who had offered the entertainment free! He had a family of some twelve children, ranging in age from three all the way to nineteen. He had taught almost all of them to play instruments and the music was the music of his homeland, Yugoslavia. Beer flowed freely enough and if anyone had one too many no one seemed to notice it: everyone was in too high spirits to be nasty or bother with anyone that may have been. By eleven or so, everyone seemed ready for more than just isolated talk and chatter. Speaking began, with everyone sitting quietly and listening, and when the party finally broke up, the friendships established there, the discussions held, and the experiences exchanged remained with all present for a long time afterwards.

Effect of Party Split

Several of these miners joined us but when they attended one or two meetings they no longer came again to them. More and more the militant sounded like the Communists and our own meetings were no doubt permeated with much of the same atmosphere. It was an impossible situation.

When Dunne had come down to speak he admitted that he had to scrap all of his speech and speak off the cuff for the miners. His written speech had been too much directed to the small time bureaucrats and aspiring workers of the S.W.P. and their friends in the big unions. He felt this and changed his speech to suit the miners. The result was that he went over fairly well. Cochran, however, who came down not long after, stuck to his speech and literally ruined us. He spoke in his florid manner, as though it was this for which he really spoke - style for style's sake. As he spoke, too, the fact that the miners hardly responded to him, produced more and more an almost contemptuous look on his face. No one was pleased with the whole thing. Was it an accident, too, that he felt that he had to leave that very night to catch the bus to Pittsburgh, we raced to make the bus, missed it at the station, then raced along the highway to catch up to it, stopped it and then, a week or two later, heard from him that we were all a bunch of "boors" because we had not remembered to give him five bucks for his carfare?

We had just gone through a tremendous experience and now, because of the S.W.P., all of it was being systematically destroyed. Except for the few men who had gone through the relief experience with us we had no activity to speak of. More and more we felt ourselves being isolated from the community that we lived in. Fairbanks and Asher, the last two remaining (Orhon and two

of the other students had gone to Pittsburgh), led almost no social life together. We met once or twice a month and perhaps discussed informally in between but otherwise we more or less went our separate ways.

HERE 1950
debate was held in Pittsburgh between Weaver and Braverman of Ohio in preparation for the 1950 S.W.P. convention. When the two miners, who came up with Fairbanks and Asher heard the rather abstract debate - and least so it seemed - they drew one conclusion: "This means split!" They were happy about it. They couldn't stand Communists, they said, meaning, of course, the S.W.P. It set the tone for the rest of the period for us. From this time, then, until the split itself in August of 1951, our main concern became an internal one. We unconsciously looked forward to the day when it would happen and both our thinking and our actions were more or less oriented that way. When the split finally did come we felt we had been freed from a stranglehold and would once again be able to come close to the miners and the people of the community.

It was a great day for us. For one thing, throughout the four years of our existence in the region, though we had almost from the very beginning been a local based on the ideas of the organization, we had nevertheless remained part of the larger and dominating organizations. What we had done we had done almost despite the U.P. and the S.W.P. Now, we were finally on the road to being in consonance with the larger organization, our own organization.

The Seniority Wildcat Strike

This has been dealt with extensively in other documents so we will merely make a few observations here.

It occurred, as it will be remembered, in the fall of 1951, right after our founding gathering. Some 5,000 men were involved and throughout it all we played a dominant role. The local that had initiated the whole thing was a local in which both leaders and ranks - some of them, that is - knew us. Steve was the president of the local and now our enemy. The local officer who spurred Steve to take the action of calling all the other locals was a young miner very close to us, Fairbanks was probably the clearest representative of the voice of the rank-and-file in this strike. Steve became the best and leading expression of the hesitations, doubts, and fears of the small officials of the local unions. Thus, Fairbanks and Steve, who had both been so close in our small local, were now expressing different strata of the miners and in strong opposition to one another. Surely we had come a long way from the days of the dominance of college students and wild rides through the hills to now, when hardly a major action of the miners started, that two close friends - or enemies - became deeply involved...

Further, it was this strike which brought before us - or, rather, we began to see more clearly - the Bill-type-of-person; the white, rank-and-file, production worker. Despite, too, the urging of the organization, we did very poorly indeed with this type. At present we are close to another of this type and as with Bill so too with Tom, we face one of our most serious challenges.

The thing about the Bills and Toms is that they move in a circle of friends that is quite different from that of the trade-union circle. The immediate circle is close, well-knit, and small. Drinking, gambling, or sports seem to be one of the elements of the group. The other, of course, is that they are not in the least impressed with all the hubbub of the unionists - except in strikes. They seem to be extremely sensitive and the smallest sign of opposition or indifference to their way of life meets with their finally being impossible to contact. However, though their immediate group may be small, they move in hundreds of them and know, like Bill, many others of their kind. It is not literature, as such, which draws their interest, but the way of life that they see, which may or may not quite suit them. Drawing them out, seems to be a patient and slow process at this point. This we have not yet learned to do.

Ever since the '50 strike most of our activity and social life were bound with this small mining town some ten miles off from town. We had not really been active in the Run since the Defense Committee of '49 and this town had taken its place for us. A few months after the strike, the mine around which the town had been built closed down permanently. Almost all of our friends had to leave to find work elsewhere. Most of them went to Ohio. It left us practically without friends once again and the shutdown hurt us too. But we think it helped us see more clearly some of our weaknesses.

The Women of the Mine Fields

While all the union activity had helped us go deep into the life of the miners, it also seemed to take us further away from the really deep revolutionary strata of the miners and the community. However big these actions, few of them involved the women, the younger Negroes, etc. These, so far, have remained in the background of much of the union activity. The result, often, was that our closeness to the activists meant a certain amount of alienation from the deeper layers.

Take Bob as an example of this. He had toured the states on the relief committee. We had held a wonderful party at his place. He had introduced us to many other friends of his. In many ways he was indispensable to us. But for all that he was a tyrant to his wife and somewhat contemptuous of the rank-and-file of his own local. Now we can see that when some of the ranks saw this, they often cooled to us. His wife, though friendly, remained somewhat aloof from us. It seemed obvious that she often wondered

what we could see in this man who was often so unconcerned with her needs and those of the family.

It should be noted here, in fact, that Bob's conduct was not entirely unique. So many of the other miners that we came into contact with seemed to have the same relation with their families. The woman's business was the home and the kids: the man's, work and the union. Habit and convenience seemed to hold them together more than anything else. Unlike the big cities and the larger industrial areas, the woman cannot go finding a job so easily in the mine region. Not infrequently then, when a serious clash develops between her and her husband, her only recourse is to go back to her relatives or her friends. So that with these shifts and changes, the miner's family often has little resemblance to the one in the book. He may be married to a second wife who is caring for the kids of his first and they, if they are old enough, may sometimes have "illegitimate" kids of their own. Occasionally they may be also rearing someone else's child for one reason or another. And, in the background, may be a grandfather or some other in-law. Certainly this was true of Bob and it was also true in part for a whole list of others that could be named.

15 This is all
And yet it would be a mistake to think that the women did not wield their power in the various struggles of the miners. For most of the time, though, this is largely indirect. There are constant mishaps in the mines and often explosions. One woman neighbor we knew related that when a really big explosion occurred in the mine in which her husband worked, it was she who threatened to leave the house unless he left the mines. He left. No doubt this sort of thing goes on during a strike period and, for that matter before. As a general rule, it would seem that the women are indifferent or passive to the strikes that the miner's carry on. To keep a certain amount of harmony in the family and to make sure that his wife cooperates with him during a strike and doesn't sabotage his efforts, the miner has to give or find good motivations for the strike. In short, her indifference is not simply indifference but a spur to her husband to go deeper into the heart of the things that both feel and desire.

In fact, perhaps one of the reasons that the local has not moved as it might have is due to this whole question of the women. Though there is quite a gap between the miner and his wife, the overall limits of the life of the coal fields also brings them very close together. It means, then, that though the woman is often in the background of our relation with the miner, she is there nonetheless and she is evaluating us just the same. If she is sympathetic to us, then even if the husband isn't too excited about us, things will move easily. If she is cool to us, then it becomes difficult. They have to see the relatives, or don't like parties, or this is too "radical, etc., etc.

Mention has already been made of the two Negro women of the early days who played so important a role north of here. Danzig, the wife of the first leader, played a most active role in the formation of the local. And when her husband began to weaken, she continued as a veritable powerhouse of strength and confidence. A non-party woman, Asher's wife, also was quite important to the local. She contributed money, maturity to the local and its members. At times her judgements and her sense of people were far superior to those of the group. Most recently, we have found that the most sympathetic to our reading material have been the women. So that though this is largely a man's area, in the sense that there is almost no work for women except as housewives, maids, waitresses, they have been all important to the direct work of the local.

The Negro II

Add party w. sh. w. w.

Like the women, the Negro has played so continual a role in the work of the local that it is almost unnecessary to make a special point here. Still a few things might be said. Negroes have always been either members, as in the early days, or in the periphery as today. During the strike activities, they did not seem - like the women - too involved with us. We think this is due to the fact that much of the strikes were run by higher layers: the lower layers, like the women and the Negroes, have not yet found the strikes quite as profound as they would like. The result was that just at these "critical" times, it seemed we moved away from the Negro periphery around us.

^{last} Since our independent existence it is the kind of problem that has concerned us more and more. Except for the Seniority Wildcat there have been no major actions of any importance. Our activity, therefore, in this past year and a half or so, has consisted largely of (1) our internal existence; (2) our relations to individuals and small groups. Of course, since Fairbanks is active in the union local, the problems of the local have also played some part in our discussions but far less than they did earlier.

In one way, this last period has been somewhat reminiscent of our early beginnings. We have sought to find not merely those who were active in the union but also those who were drawn to our ideas and activities without regard to their strict social position. As in the beginning so too now: our friends are of many types.

Recent Activity

At first our activity was centered around Correspondence. We were cautious, perhaps too cautious, and we let only four or five know of it. Their response was not the kind to especially excite anyone. They liked this or that about the paper but the paper as a whole did not seem to draw them out very much. We

increased our bundle in hopes that a wider distribution might find more sympathetic readers. This led nowhere in particular and to all intents and purposes the paper here is practically a dead issue. A part of this, Asher feels, has to do with the fact that it is mimeographed and as such has a very limited appeal: the published paper, he thinks, will make all the difference in the world.

At about the time when the paper was beginning to lose its importance in the local, came Project B. B opened many doors to us. It also created a few problems.

Perhaps the biggest was that the Negro miner friends we had given it to, who had been in on it from the very beginning, failed to move it with any of the speed and wideness that we had thought they would. It is still a question as to why this is so. Part of the problem is made more complicated by the fact that one Negro miner, of almost chance acquaintance in another town, has done more with it than these friends of many years.

It should be noted here for what it is worth that Asher has all the time there is to give to our work. Fairbanks is on the afternoon shift so his time is quite limited: weekends are about the only time he has to really do work. In any case the main burden of the work falls on the two of us. Further, the mine community is spread far and wide and, except in major strike struggles, general mobility is narrow. These may be or may not be of much importance but they are considerations that do set the mine fields off from other areas. They may help explain some of our difficulties here.

Still, B helped us to break out of the isolation we had been in for some time. It was probably the main factor that made possible the sudden social activity that followed.

The Parties

Beginning a short time before Christmas of last year (1952), we had an informal party of a few people who had known and read B. Except for the one Negro working class girl, the rest of us were all of the University, one Negro girl and the rest white, male and female. (Fairbanks was the other exception here, though he too, before his mining, had come from the University.) The main part of the evening dealt with a discussion on B. Everyone seemed to have had such a good time that we had still another party a week later. To those that came to the earlier one, there were four more, all white and students, that came to this one. This second party, unlike the first, dealt with no politics or books. In fact it is a question whether it could be called "our" party: it was loose and free and the only thing that might suggest "us" was that most had read or heard of B. The party itself, though,

was a wonderful success and no one seemed ready to leave. It moved from listening to music, to acting on the tape, to idle chatter and jokes, and, in general, to doing what each liked to do. The party was a natural.

It was at this point that we began to feel that "something was happening" and instead of leaving the next party to chance we decided (Fairbanks and Asher) to have a broader one, better planned, and with our worker friends present. Some two weeks later we held the third party. This party was different from the others in many ways. In the first place miners were present at it, the first time, white and Negro. There was an almost equal balance between the miners and the intellectuals. Here, too, we had some fresh music: a miner accordionist played his polkas and popular tunes for us. The main activity here was dancing. The Negro girls who had been present at the first two parties were unable to come to this one.

One incident of the party that everyone noticed has to be related. Two of the Negro miners brought a friend of theirs who knew little about us. He got drunk and kept making a pass at all the women present (all white, intellectuals - none of the wives of the miners were present). There was no scene but the Negro himself kept thinking and acting as though others were arbitrarily speaking against him because he was making these advances and because he was Negro. We left it up to the women to take care of themselves and by and large everything went well.

The incident is related mainly to illustrate how different the party was from the first two. The miners, including the one who had gotten drunk, said they had had such a good time that they pressed for another party, this one to be held in the Run. The students said they had a good time but it was not said with the same type of spirit with which they spoke of the earlier ones. One, however, did say later that this party had "opened his eyes". Presumably this meant opened his eyes to the importance of the social question in his life, to which he had in the past seldom given any special importance.

Not quite a month after this the party in the Run was held. This was in January of this year. It marked a return to the Run since the days of the Defense Committee of '49. But it was also the first time in all the time that we had been in the whole area that we had had a party in the Run. The key figures in this were the Negro miners who worked with Fairbanks, and Fairbanks himself. They found the place, worked it up, etc. Most of the students we knew had left town because it was between semesters. Only two of them were present. Pittsburgh was present with one of their Negro girl friends. From the Run itself were some eight miners, which includes their wives. The accordionist again played for us but this time his music didn't quite fit: blues were in order and someone got a bunch of blues records to dance to. Dancing was the main activity. The party started very slowly and finally picked

up toward late in the evening. One of the key miners, who had been to the earlier one, had expressed his desire that there be speaking at the party. Asher spoke and dealt with the limited theme of mixing in the Run. No one seemed to think very much of the impromptu speech and it was even strongly criticized by Pittsburgh. Fairbanks also spoke and it was felt that he did a better job. A brief remark by Danzig who said that she had been glad to see two of the Negro girls present met with the most favorable responses. Good or bad, the speeches were soon followed by the first real sign of spirit: everybody was dancing and the cliques around the walls practically vanished. No one felt that this party was a howling success: it had picked up too slowly and had ended too soon. The miner who had been mostly responsible for it felt, however, that it was a beginning and that in time, he said, it would be impossible to hold another party in the place because of the huge crowds anticipated.

All in all, this series of parties were the first we had held since the last big one of the '50 strike. One of the big problems we have had to struggle with as a result of them is the question of the relation of the organization to them. One thing that we are quite certain of and that is that they should not be nor have they been like the parties that we used to hold in the old organizations where the "line" was hammered in one "subtle" form or another. On the other hand, now we often feel that what is being held is simply a party for the sake of a party.

Let us qualify that last point somewhat, though. Certainly in this region the mere combination of white and Negro and worker and intellectual is not usual. Perhaps the "organization" exists in that it makes it possible to bring together these otherwise alien elements?

Summary

During the Interim Period, at the time of the split from the W.P., a miner, his wife and his baby were present at our gathering. This was 1947. When we split from the S.W.P. miners were again present at our deliberations! 1951. Throughout, then, at all our turning points miners have been present. Recently, the school that we held also had a miner present: 1952. But if miners have been present at most of the turning points of the organization, the organization, as the history of this local has shown, has also been present in all the recent turning points of the miners. The marriage has been a happy one, though not always an easy one.

At present, the local is undergoing another one of its difficult moments. The parties and I have made this clear. The organization as a whole, of course, has also helped to underwrite this. The main reason for the difficulty, perhaps, is that our

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past activity in the life of the U.M.W., while it helped integrate us more than before also served to remove us from the constant source of deep revolutionary drive of the third layers, of the Negroes and especially the Negro women, the women, the youth, and the young, militant, but inactive union members, the rank-and-file. Even, in fact, when we came and come into contact with such types our relations with them is too often formed by the prejudices and habits of the union type of member and activity. The plenum report states: "Yet on this issue fundamental class attitudes are involved. I repeat, the future of the organization in theory and practice must rest upon the impulses that come from the third layer." To express, to find, and to work boldly with this layer near the organization has been difficult for the local. It is too much permeated with the attitudes of the garden type of trade union activity to see or fully understand or work out in practice the meaning that here class attitudes are involved.

Take, as one example, the ^{youth} youths of the University - let alone those of the high schools. They helped found the local. They helped in the miner's strike of '49 and '50. These were not members, it is to be noted, just friends, political and personal. In this recent period of our independent existence, they have been most sympathetic to the parties that we have held. They, however, seldom seem to respond to a line, the tendency of the unionists among us. But real workers and Negroes and working class housewives draw a tremendous response from them. With these students, we vacillate between giving them a line, a program, theory, the plan and on the other hand, of having a good time, mixing with ordinary people, etc. If they fail to respond fully as we would hope isn't it because they sense in us the split character?

There was the case with B, where the neighbor of a neighbor liked it very much. There was no immediate follow up as there should have been, while some of the less interested ones were pursued, simply because they were close to the union and the place of work.

The most glaring case was that of the miner who attended our school. The follow up was weak and timid and lengthy. Is it any wonder that he doesn't respond fully to us while he is very much concerned with the letters of our friend from Detroit who has written to him from miles away? This miner is not active in the union but the central fact that he came to the school, was very responsive to B, seems to have had less importance than that he is not active in the union and is not as articulate as the experienced union members. Yet this worker, given our politics and our organization, its insistence on the creative impulses of the third layer, could develop into a personality far exceeding those of the present, fast talking unionists.

It is not the intention at all to make a case here against the unions and the unionists. It is rather this: that the revolution has come to be thought of here too often as closely allied

*Personality
phase*

with the trade union movement. This has blinded us, in fact, to the revolution breaking out in personalities all over the place.

"Fundamental class attitudes are involved" (our emphasis). It is at the basis of our difficulties.

But difficulties or no, it is clear that more is required to meet them now than merely Fairbanks and Asher, who have been at this without anyone else now for almost three years. We are known throughout the region and have ourselves, no doubt, fallen into a too routine way of doing things. Except for strike periods, the smallness of the region and the mines make it difficult to function freely. Certainly "new blood", those who have had a different experience, etc., will help to overcome some of the more obvious obstacles. You who read and discuss this, consider what part you might play in a local and region such as this. Consider, too, what types are needed here. Bear in mind, further, that while housing is no problem at the present, jobs are. The mines are the main occupation here. There is a faucet factory, two or three glass factories, and one shirt factory that will hire women, though at present these are somewhat slow. Then, of course, there is the possible work that any town will have of clerks, cabbies, etc. The university is also a main source of employment. Finally, there is a large chemical plant here. All of these are slow and the region, at present, is fairly close to being on the critical list as far as employment goes. Still, as one miner said to Asher: "These are the good times, when people start to thinkin' and doin'!"

VOLUME XIII. RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA, C.L.R. JAMES AND GRACE LEE (BOGGS):
PHILOSOPHIC CORRESPONDENCE, 1949-1951.

Introductory Note

This new addition to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection consists of 35 unpublished letters between Raya Dunayevskaya, C.L.R. James, and Grace Lee (Boggs), written from February, 1949 through January, 1951. It was during this critical period, marked on the one hand by the outbreak of the Korean War, during which the SWP was, once again, following the Russian line; and on the other hand, the general strike of the West Virginia miners in which Dunayevskaya was very active, that the Johnson-Forest Tendency made a decision to, once and for all, end its stay in the SWP.

Among the final documents handed in to the SWP's 1950 convention was State-Capitalism and World Revolution, written by Dunayevskaya, James and Lee. This document included, for the first time anywhere, even in the existence of the Johnson-Forest Tendency, a section directly on philosophy. That section, however, centered on contradiction, whereas the philosophic letters between Dunayevskaya, James and Lee which preceded it had concentrated on the Absolute Idea.

The correspondence included in this addition to the collection begins with Dunayevskaya's translation of Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks -- their first appearance in English -- and her accompanying notes on them in February and March 1949. The letters on the Absolute Idea stop by September, 1949, when James says that he will work out its ramifications. He never did, and the subsequently-written section on philosophy in State-Capitalism and World Revolution does not even go as far as the letter.

Dunayevskaya, however, makes two totally new, concrete propositions on the basis of the letters. First, that a worker be invited to participate in the discussions of the work-in-progress then titled "Marxism and State-Capitalism". (These discussions are already included in the Collection. See Vol. VI, Sec. II.) And second, that Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks, along with the self-activity of the American workers, represent the ground from which the new book was to develop. Henceforth, any economic analysis, even one which viewed the world as state-capitalist, but which did not see Humanism as its revolutionary opposition, would remain economist.

It was to take three years, and the impact of Stalin's death for Dunayevskaya to return to the study of the Absolute Idea, and finally achieve a breakthrough that established Marxist-Humanism as movement from practice that is itself a form of theory. (See her 1953 letters to Grace Lee (Boggs), Vol. VI, Sec. I.) Only after that philosophic leap, and only after the creation of a Marxist-Humanist tendency, was "Marxism and State-Capitalism" published as Marxism and Freedom in 1957, taking its impulse from the East German workers' revolt against Communist totalitarianism and the American workers' battle against automation. The 1953 events and the publication of Marxism and Freedom did not, however, complete the development of the Absolute Idea for today. Rather, it remained for Philosophy and Revolution, written under the impact of the near-revolutions of 1968, to bring to their culmination the studies on Hegel's Absolute Idea, begun more than twenty years before.

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Wom's Place
Stalin
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Letters Included in Vol. XIII

1. Feb. 18, 1949. Dunayevskaya to James.
on Lenin's notebooks on Hegel's Science of Logic. (Doctrine of Being.)
2. Feb. 25, 1949. Dunayevskaya to James.
on Lenin's Notebooks on Logic. (Doctrine of Essence.)
3. March 12, 1949. Dunayevskaya to James.
on Lenin's Notebooks on Logic. (Doctrine of Notion.)
4. May 14, 1949. Dunayevskaya to James.
on "circumstances surrounding" Lenin's Notebooks.
5. May 17, 1949. Dunayevskaya to James.
on Lenin and the "actualization of the dialectic proper."
6. May 18, 1949. Dunayevskaya to Lee.
on Lenin's Materialism and Empirio-Criticism.
7. May 20 (?), 1949. James to Lee.
on Lenin's Materialism and Empirio-Criticism and the Philosophic Notebooks.
8. May 27, 1949. Discussion notes: James and Lee.
9. June 8, 1949. Dunayevskaya to James.
on Lenin's Notebooks on Imperialism.
10. June 10, 1949. James to Dunayevskaya.
first response to the correspondence thus far.
11. June 13, 1949. James to Dunayevskaya.
on Lenin's Notebooks and the period 1914-1923.
12. June 19 (?), 1949. James to Lee.
on Lenin's method and the method of this correspondence.
13. June 20, 1949. Dunayevskaya to James.
on the Logic, Marx's Capital and the new stage of capitalism (imperialism).
14. June 24, 1949. Dunayevskaya to James.
on the article for Marcuse--notes.
15. June 28, 1949. James to Dunayevskaya.
on the article for Marcuse--notes (continued).
16. June (?), 1949. James to Dunayevskaya.
on abstractions in Lenin's thought.
17. July 2, 1949. James to Lee.
on abstractions in Lenin's thought.
18. July 5, 1949. Lee to James.
on abstract and concrete in Lenin.

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- 19. July 5, 1949. James to William G. on conversations with Novack and articles in progress.
- 20. July 6, 1949. Dunayevskaya to James. on Lenin before and after 1914; on monopoly.
- 21. July 9, 1949. Lee to James. on Lenin and Bukharin; the Taylor system.
- 22. July 15, 1949. James to Lee. reply to letter on Bukharin.
- 23. July 20, 1949. Dunayevskaya to James. on Lenin 1914-1917.

24. July 25, 1949. Dunayevskaya to James. on Lenin as "revolutionary dialectician and thinking Kautskyian".

25. July 29, 1949. Lee to James. on Lenin's Notebooks on the Logic.

26. August 16, 1949. Lee to James. on Hegel's categories of Universal, Particular and Individual.

27. August 25, 1949. James to "everybody". on Lee's letter of August 16, 1949.

28. August 29, 1949. James to Lee. further comments on Lee's letter of August 16, 1949.

29. August 30, 1949. Dunayevskaya to James. on Lenin's approach to dialectics: 1900-1902; 1908; 1914-1916.

30. September 4, 1949. Lee to James. on Hegel's Logic: Doctrine of Essence and "the revolt".

31. January 24, 1950. Dunayevskaya to James. on the structure of Capital.

32. January 30, 1950. Dunayevskaya to James. on Marx's plans for Capital.

* 33. March 14, 1950. Dunayevskaya to James. * on the miners' strike and Marx's writings on coal.

** Cf for direct - P of copy*

34. June 7, 1950. Dunayevskaya to James. on the structure of Capital.

35. January 15, 1951. Dunayevskaya to James. on Vol. III of Capital.