

MINUTES OF REB MEETING OF AUGUST 1, 1984

Present: All, plus Mary on way to New York; Jane as sitter-in

Agenda: I. Marxist-humanist Perspectives, 1984-85 (with form reorganized), New Classes-to-be, and New Hook-to-be, as Ground for Rooting the Center in Chicago, Nationally and Internationally -- Raya;
II. First Issue of News & Letters from New Center -- Eugene
III. G & V and future meetings

Before the announced agenda was actually taken up, Raya began with two special points: first was the announcement that off our backs Aug-Sept issue had carried both Michelle's review of RLWLM and Terry's critique of OOH's (described in the first paragraph of the Letter to the Locals of Aug. 2); second was to note that this first meeting of the REB in new Chicago National Office was taking place on a memorable date -- the day in 1944 of the national Polish uprising against the Nazis while the "Red Army" stood outside the gates.

I. Raya called attention to the fact that the reorganized form of the Perspectives begins with the very title: Where before we have always said "Perspectives" and took "Marxist-Humanism" for granted, this time we are spelling it out. It was this which permitted us a slightly shortened overall title: "THE MOVEMENTS FROM THEORY AS WELL AS FROM PRACTICE VS. THE GREAT ARTIFICER, RONALD REAGAN, FOR WHOM THE WHOLE WORLD IS A STAGE -- on which he rolls back the clock of history on the Black Dimension, Labor, Women and Youth, as he drives for world war."

Where the first two sub-headings remain exactly as given at the Convention, the merger of the third and fourth sections is by no means a technical term only: 1) The original III, which now becomes a subsection of "Not by Practice Alone" has a slightly different title -- "The New Sense of Objectivity: The Theory of State-Capitalism and New Forms of Workers' Revolts." This creates room for a more detailed way of showing how often during the long life of State-Capitalist theory we reached the Marxist-Humanist philosophy, first as early as 1941, when I completed the analysis of state-capitalism based on the statistics of the Five-Year Plans and already quoted from Marx's Essay on Alienated Labor in my article on "Labor and Society." 2) 1943-44, a most crucial year, directly related the new labor revolts in the U.S. to the Resistance Movement in Europe, so that the Miner's General Strike and the Black Uprising in Detroit and Harlem as well as the Zoot Suiters in California - were seen as not separated either from the revolts in Europe or the uprising in Madagascar which DeGaulle massacred.

The second subsection, though its content was delivered almost as is, had no title as an actual subsection. It now does: "What was Marx's Dialectics of Revolution to the Post-Marx Marxists of the Second International?" You may recall that the section in the Executive Session which was entitled: "What ever Happened to Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program?" is exactly what is developed here in a newer form still. That is to say, I am now talking not only against the reformists but stressing that even the revolutionaries -- and I'm talking about the great revolutionaries of the Polish and Russian 1905 Revolution -- had not dialectically rooted themselves in Marx's dialectics of revolution. It is true that the administrative mentality of intellectuals, even when they were revolutionaries, first became fully visible in the State-Capitalist age; it had actually characterized the Second International. Because the revolutionaries were unaware of it, someone like Trotsky could refuse, at the 1907 Congress, to discuss the nature of the 1905 Russian Revolution, demanding, like any pragmatist, "not a gab-fest, but a program of action." It was only after the outright betrayal in 1914 that Lenin dug into the Hegelian dialectics as a Marxist revolutionary, working them out as State and Revolution. Insofar as our tendency is concerned, you will

note in M&F that because the Second International had not put the nature of the Russian Revolution on the 1907 Congress Agenda, I declared it to be the beginning of the end without waiting for 1914.

You will note that the final two sub-sections of Part III are likewise transformed. That is to say, what was the climax -- "The Absolute Method, the Unchained Dialectic" -- now precedes the final subsection, "On the Threshold, 1950-53: The Relationship of Abstract/Concrete." That is of the essence, first in order to stress that the "Absolute Method" is not the end but the methodology of the whole. Secondly, even in the transition period, 1950-53, as we were reaching toward the breakthrough on the AI as a movement from practice as well as from theory, it is precisely that which motivated us as early as the Miners' General Strike to work out the dialectics of revolution. That is the characteristic of our new pamphlet which makes inseparable the philosophy from the activity. It is that also which is to characterize our activity in all support committees, be that with Africa or Latin America. And it is that which had me develop the question of Marx's "new moments" on the relationship between technologically advanced / technologically backward countries, which we called the "trail to the 1980s."

In place of the fantastic claims, made by some who have recognized "new moments" in Marx's last decade, that the "new moments" are a break from Marx's Marxism, I prove that it's a development of Marx's Marxism, by citing first, that in the Grundrisse, 1857, Marx first developed the Asiatic Mode of Production, what we now consider the Third World. There is no way for anyone to use the excuse that the Grundrisse had not become available until our age, since so crucial was the concept of four, not just three, forms of human development, that Marx summarized that in his Preface to the Critique of Political Economy, 1859 in a passage that remains the most famous to this day on historical materialism. The Perspectives quotes the footnote in Capital 1867 in the section on fetishism, which anticipates what he will do in the Ethnological Notebooks by calling attention to the fact that the whole question of pre-capitalist societies must be further developed. I there bring in the whole idea of the distinction between Engels and Marx in the last decade of Marx as Engels unilinearly develops it in Origin of the Family and Marx multilinearly develops it in the Ethnological Notebooks. In a word, it becomes clear beyond the peradventure of a doubt, that long before either the EN or our RLWIKM made a category of the "new moments", it characterized the whole of Marx's Marxism. In the Perspectives, it is further developed, not just as philosophy/theory but the practice in such current events as our activities in the support committees, or the activities in relationship to the current sub-drive, or what are our new pamphlets -- and I have extended the three to four. That is to say, I consider it of the highest importance to view Terry's mini-mini pamphlet on Eleanor Marx in Chicago as integral to our new 1984-85 roots in Chicago.

You can see how I approach the final section on "Organizational Tasks" and how that relates to why I transposed the Absolute Method as preceding both the transitional period and the organizational tasks; it is that section that begins: "The body of ideas comprising Marxist-Humanism is rooted in the new post-war movements both from practice and from theory. Marxism and Freedom, structured on the movement from practice, and Philosophy and Revolution, tracing the movement from theory, were not only worked out while deeply participating in all movements of the new age of revolutions, be it the 1950s or 1960s or 1970s, but were equally rooted in the past, i.e. history. In a word, the period was the whole expanse of the modern world that began with the industrial revolution -- indeed, we called the very first part of M&F "The Age of Revolutions -- Industrial, Political, Economic, Intellectual." It is in the organizational tasks where I show that by totality, in which we root all our work now, we have to hold in the back of our minds not only

REB, Aug. 1, 1984 -- page 3

our Perspectives, which traces the body of our ideas, not as an abstraction, but in the concrete, but also the yet-undeveloped classes-to-be and new book-to-be. As I put it in the conclusion of the Perspectives: "Because dialectics is the development out of the internal, the self-development, it is not possible to make an a priori statement. Thus, though we know that the new book-to-be will, "in general," relate to Women's Liberation, but by no means "just" Women's Liberation but, as always with us, that seen as integral to the totality of Marx's Marxism, the point is I cannot now cite any outline of it, nor say how it will affect what I call my "mini-tours" next year around the book-to-be."

Raya opened the discussion on her presentation by going over the eight concrete Convention motions, and extending the special thanks of the REB to the entire Detroit and Chicago locals for allowing us to accomplish the first, our move to Chicago, so quickly.

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16302

Chicago, Illinois

August 2, 1984

Dear Friends:

From our new home in Chicago of Marxist-Humanism -- or wherever you happen to be -- run to the closest bookshop and buy a copy of the Aug.-Sept. issue of off our backs, and turn to p.26 through p.28 where you will find a magnificent review of RLWLKM by Michelle Landau spread over 1½ pages, with a beautiful picture of Luxemburg and sharp subheadings like, "Not a Feminist Per Se," "Masses In Motion", "Fracture To Theory," "Challenging Ground;" and on the other 1½ pages, you will find, wonder of wonders, a picture of Marx himself, in the form of a letter "More on Raya D. (from a reader)" which is Terry's lengthy analysis and critique of their failure to have taken up Raya Dunayevskaya's challenge, with equally memorable subheadings such as "Don't Forget Raya", "Who is Raya?", "Marx and Feminism," and "Engels ≠ Marx." And don't forget that so concrete are both of these, that even our new address in Chicago is listed as where you can buy the Praxis article (50¢ plus 30¢ postage).

The point now is, what are we going to do with it? Surely we must create a special mailing list to which this will be sent -- do please send in your suggestions. Secondly, how will each one use this with the sub drive and general contacting in their locality, and what letters will continue, either to other journals, or at conferences and so forth? Use your most creative talents and let us know. It is the first time we have gotten a review in a popular journal and there is a way to begin relating it to the new book-to-be.

I'm sure all of you already wish that the next Convention were coming soon so you could see our new office. Allow me to whet your appetite further by explaining what great talents Marxist-Humanists have, especially in the persons of Steve, Dave and Nick, who made of their hard manual labor the most beautiful creation of library space that match up to the contents of the Marxist-Humanist works on display. We offer the most grateful thanks to them, and to the whole Detroit and Chicago locals that truly put in yeoman's labor to get us moved so quickly. This created the possibility of having our first REB meeting last night, at which there was also present Mary from the Bay Area who is on her way to NY, and who was so intensely at work on the Perspectives that we will actually be able to present them to the organization in 10 days.

As you know, the first 2 REB meetings after Convention revolve around carrying out the Convention decisions. Los Angeles is especially to be thanked for having gotten out the first bulletin, Eugene's report on News & Letters, and we're going to ask them whether they can also do the Organization and Black Reports bulletins, which will be sent to them in a week; they should have them out by the end of August. The last of the reports to be issued will be Mike's summation of Convention proceedings, and that will be ready by Labor Day.

16303

The other great news of this, our first month, comes from Detroit. The contradiction in that is that, on the one hand, it was a thorough surprise and even falsification, and on the other hand, it can create very new openings for Lou in the Black world, especially in Detroit. Here is the way this all developed: Jim called to say that, to their surprise when they turned on WDET, they heard Lou's voice in that last debate he had with Vaughn at the Afro-American Institute on the Garvey papers. But instead of being as it was actually delivered, it had been edited by Vaughn to make it appear that he had been interrupting Lou with his commentary throughout the talk, and Lou supposedly never answered him. The truth is the exact opposite, and not only do we think we can make a "case" about this, but the point had already been made about the impact made by Lou's talk, that he had already been asked to give a talk on the Black World as straight Marxist-Humanism and the REB is now deciding that Lou should return in August to Detroit for the Afro-American festival to give precisely such a talk.

Now then, here was the agenda for the first meeting of the REB: I. Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1984-85 (with form reorganized), New Classes-To-Be, and New Book-To-Be, As Ground for Rooting the Center in Chicago, Nationally and Internationally, (1) Carrying out the 8 Convention decisions in that context, plus (2) View of process, locally today and in the near future; II. First Issue of N&L from the New Center, -- Deadline, assignments, brief view of paper as a whole and announcement of first PTC meeting III. G&W and Future Meetings.

As you can see by the agenda, the subject is way too lengthy and important to just summarize here. The minutes will be sent to you in a few days and you will no doubt schedule a discussion on them. The point here is that what you were already informed of last week, that Parts III and IV of the Perspectives were merged, is by no means simply a technical term. First and foremost, it is that the whole philosophy "Not by Practice Alone: The Movement From Theory" becomes the ground for all our activities, practical as well as theoretical, and theory, too, is not separate from philosophy. Thus the transformation of what was originally Part III -- "Theory of State-Capitalism, the New Sense of Objectivity and Two Kinds of Subjectivity", becomes the first new subsection below Part III and instead of the phrase, "Two Kinds of Subjectivity", we immediately turn to what actually was the truth in the 1940s, i.e. "New Forms of Workers' Revolts." I call attention to the fact, for example, that we were meeting this August 1, on a very historic date, the very first day of the historic 1944 Polish uprising -- which we didn't wait for the 1980s to celebrate, but celebrated then, in 1944. A new subheading was also made for (2) "What Was Marx's Dialectics of Revolution to the Post-Marx Marxists of the Second International?" Finally, subheadings (3) and (4) were likewise transposed, so that what was the final section, "The Absolute Method -- The Unchained Dialectic" will now precede, by no accident whatever, since that is to be the principled ground for all our theoretical and practical tasks, from the point of transition, 1950-53, to the very latest

consideration of Terry's mini-pamphlet on "Eleanor Marx in Chicago," as the 4th of the new pamphlets.

Just wait until you get the full minutes of the report and discussion, and begin relating it to what you're doing locally. The whole thing will be kicked off with the first new issue of N&L from here, which will initiate the subscription drive. It is this which motivated the brief report by Eugene. First and foremost is the deadline, AUGUST 16. Please obey it rigorously.

Eugene briefly reported that the lead would be brief excerpts from the Perspectives. The 3rd spot on page 1 will be the announcement of the sub drive, within the context of the Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1984-85, new classes-to-be, and the new book-to-be. The new PTC will have its first meeting Aug. 8, and since it is the first, you will get the minutes of that meeting so that you will know in detail what is being planned and what you can contribute.

It would be hard to summarize the hectic first month or to "predict" what we have to do. What is clear is that the ramifications of those Convention decisions, whether it be on the sub drive or the syllabus for the classes-to-be, or the new book for which I have not had a free second to turn to, will also undergo their own self-development. And because it is imperative not only for the publisher, who is putting a lot of pressure on me, but for what we ourselves are very anxious to achieve, to become at one and the same time, more concrete, more collective, and more comprehensive, I will have to disappear for a week. Therefore, instead of setting the next REB for 2 weeks from now since we always meet every 2 weeks (except preceding conventions when we meet every week), the next REB will be held Aug. 21 and this will make it possible for Kevin to join us at the Center.

Yours,

Raya

16305

1984-85 PERSPECTIVES REPORT
by RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA
National Chairwoman of News
and Letters Committees

THE MOVEMENTS FROM THEORY AS WELL AS
FROM PRACTICE VS.
THE GREAT ARTIFICER, RONALD REAGAN,
FOR WHOM THE WHOLE WORLD IS A
STAGE -- as he is busy trying to change his tone this
election year, which does not hide his actual drive for world war
and his rolling back the clock of history on Black Dimension, Labor
Women and Youth

I. THE IMPOTENCE OF THE SUMMITS, THE INTENSITY OF NEW
LABOR STRUGGLES, AS THE BLACK DIMENSION LOOMS EVER
HIGHER

II. FROM MANAGUA TO GRENADA, FROM EL SALVADOR TO BERLIN,
FROM AFRICA TO ASIA -- U.S. IMPERIALISM'S TENTACLES
(and those of its Allies from Great Britain and France
to Japan) EXTEND TO THE PACIFIC AS WELL AS THE ATLANTIC

III. THE THEORY OF STATE-CAPITALISM, THE NEW SENSE OF
OBJECTIVITY AND TWO KINDS OF SUBJECTIVITY

"He who glorifies theory and genius but fails to re-
cognize the limits of a theoretical work, fails like-
wise to recognize the indispensability of the theoretician. All of history is the history of the struggle
for freedom. If, as a theoretician, one's ears are at-
tuned to the new impulses from the workers, new 'cate-
gories' will be created, a new way of thinking, a step
forward in philosophic cognition."

Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today, p.89

IV. NOT BY PRACTICE ALONE: THE MOVEMENT FROM THEORY

1. Abstract and Concrete: On the threshold, 1950-53,
and Other Transitions at Historic Turning Points
2. The Absolute Method, the Unchained Dialectic

V. ORGANIZATIONAL CONCLUSIONS

Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 1984-85

THE MOVEMENTS FROM THEORY AS WELL AS FROM PRACTICE VS. THE GREAT ARTIFICER, RONALD REAGAN, FOR WHOM THE WHOLE WORLD IS A STAGE -- on which he rolls back the clock of history on the Black Dimension, Labor, Women and Youth, as he drives for world war

I. THE IMPOTENCE OF THE SUMMITS, THE INTENSITY OF NEW LABOR STRUGGLES, AS THE BLACK DIMENSION LOOMS EVER HIGHER

II. FROM MANAGUA TO GRENADA, FROM EL SALVADOR TO BERLIN, FROM AFRICA TO ASIA -- U.S. IMPERIALISM'S TENTACLES (and those of its Allies from Great Britain and France to Japan) EXTEND TO THE PACIFIC AS WELL AS THE ATLANTIC

III. NOT BY PRACTICE ALONE: THE MOVEMENT FROM THEORY

He who glorifies theory and genius but fails to recognize the limits of a theoretical work, fails likewise to recognize the indispensability of the theoretician. All of history is the history of the struggle for freedom. If, as a theoretician, one's ears are attuned to the new impulses from the workers, new 'categories' will be created, a new way of thinking, a step forward in philosophic cognition.

Marxism and Freedom, p.89

1. The New Sense of Objectivity: The Theory of State-Capitalism and New Forms of Workers' Revolts

2. What Was Marx's Dialectics of Revolution to the Post-Marx Marxists of the Second International?

3. The Absolute Method -- The Unchained Dialectic

"...our epoch is a birthtime, and a period of transition..."
Hegel, Phenomenology of Mind, p.75

4. On The Threshold, 1950-53: The Relationship of Abstract/Concrete

"Every emancipation is a restoration of the human world and of human relationships to man himself."

Marx, The Jewish Question

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL TASKS

16307