

London E.8
Nov. 23rd
1978

Dear Ray a. Dunayevskaya,

Please forgive my long delay in replying. I get completely overwhelmed with my letters and tend to do all the routine ones first.

I had intended to enclose something I've written which originated as a talk about some implications I believe have been ignored by the left in Britain, which partly arise from the women's movement, partly from the longer efforts to work out ways of organising which avoid the ~~same~~ tendency to centralisation within democratic centralism. Part of this has to

be duplicated. I'll send it you when it's done. It's also got an account of the personal effect changes in I.S./S.W.P. had on me. I think the question of

organisation has always had a great atmosphere of authority around it for me which I find very disturbing. I think probably the groups e.g. S.W.P. have contributed to that - as if the answers were already known and deviation from them meant you fell down some terrible abyss. This makes it impossible for people to trust

their own experience - in fact it encourages people to deny it. Annoyingly in saying this they always accuse you of being dismissive of theory - by which they mean what they think.

I was very interested in what you said about Tony Cliff. I don't really know his theory. I know Hilda and his daughter Hana. Many

close friends of mine were in I.S.W.P. but most have left - or they've changed. I feel uncanny edges of the C.P. It's felt as if from 1975 they

were living out the late 20s early 30s and was set into the mid 30s. The anti-Nazi hege- mon has had a big national impact & got good publicity & footfalls & T.V. personalities support it. But the actual relationship of S.W.P. to

people who are non-members remains unworked out & there is a lot of arrogance and self-righteousness around the membership attitude. The positive aspect is their great strength.

in activity are going onwards to working class people.
But there is trouble too because the real problems
of a middle class group change. The class basis has
not been deeply examined. Their dismissal of theory has
become a discipline of itself. One new area
I think has been less section in relation to the
left of the various movements but has got a
different emergence which is dismissal of local
activity and everyday experience.

We have at the New Programme a discussion
simultaneous. They are a real pair & are a presence in
the women movement (mainly in London).

I have friends who know you well & have
been influenced by you. I have read Martin's Freedom
some years ago & hope now to read more. I hope
you will be in London here & my is going well. I will
write back if you have time to reply but there will
be long pauses. I have a 19 month old son called Will
which doesn't help.

TO OPEN SLIT HERE

RECIPIENT'S NAME AND ADDRESS (PLEASE SHOW YOUR POSTCODE)

Sheila Row Latham

London

AN AIR LETTER SHOULD
NOT CONTAIN ANY ENCLOSURE
IF IT DOES IT MAY BE SURCHARGED
OR SENT BY ORDINARY MAIL

SECOND FOLD HERE

BY AIR MAIL
AIR LETTER
PAR AVION AEROGamme



POSTAGE



10p

Raya Dunayevskaya
8146 Ward
Detroit Mich - 48228
U.S.A.

Rough transcript of Rowbotham letter

11/23/78

Please forgive my long delay in replying. I got completely overwhelmed with my letters and tend to do all the routine ones first.

I had intended to enclose something I've written which originated as a talk about some implications I believe have been ignored by the Left in Britain, which partly arise from the women's movement, partly from the longer efforts to work out ways of organizing which avoid the tendency to centralism within democratic centralism. But it has to be duplicated. I'll send it to you when it's done. It's also got an account of the personal effect changes in IS/SWP had on me. I think the question of organization has always had a great atmosphere of authority around it for me, which I find very daunting. I think the Trotskyist groups & SWP here have contributed to that-- as if the answers were already known and deviation from them meant you fell down some terrible abyss. This makes it impossible for people to trust their own experience-- in fact it encourages people to deny it. Annoyingly in saying this they always accuse you of being dismissive of theory-- by which they mean what they think.

I was very interested in what you said about Tony Cliff (I think he perhaps finds it hard to relate to women as people with theory). I really don't know him though I know Honey and his daughter Ilana. Many close friends of mine were in IS/SWP but most have left-- or they've changed. I feel uncanny echoes of the CP. It's felt as if from 1974-75 they were living over the late 20s, early 30s, and now are into the mid-30s. The Anti-Nazi league has had a big national impact and got good publicity and footballers and TV personalities support it. (But) the actual relationship of ~~the~~ SWP to people who are non-members remains unworked out and there is a lot of arrogance and self-righteousness around the membership's attitude. The positive aspect is their great stress on activity and going outwards to ~~the~~ working class people. But there is trouble too because the real problems of a middle class group changing its class basis have not been deeply examined. Their dismissal of theory has become a dismissal of thinking over new areas.

SWP file?

Self

begin because
of this

* Begin here

not only new but old
re-examined from old

Rowbotham 22222

I.M.G. (2)

? has been less sectarian in relation to the left and the women's movement but has a different arrogance which is dismissive of local activity and everyday experience.

We have at the other extreme Althusserian structuralists. They are a real pain and are a presence in the women's movement (mainly in London).

I have friends who know your work and have been influenced by it. I have read Marxism and Freedom some years ago and hope now to read more. I hope your work on Rosa Luxemburg is going well. I will write back if you have the time to reply, but there will be long pauses. I have a 19 month old son called Will and only one room for him and me which doesn't help.

Love, Sheila

Structuralist arrogance unmatched

① read

② read

③ Althusser all other over the movement

* Mandel - ites

15111