

RD

AI AS new beginning

Totally for, is important December 3, 1984

Dear Anne: only if it ~~is~~ create new ground + both

Let's have a strictly philosophic discussion. Here are the quotations around which it will revolve:

"...Cognition is reconstructed and united with the Practical Idea: the actuality which is found as given is at the same time determined as the realized absolute end, -- not however (as in inquiring Cognition) merely as objective world without the subjectivity of the Notion, but as objective world whose inner ground and actual persistence is the Notion. This is THE ABSOLUTE IDEA." (Hegel, Science of Logic, vol. 2 Johnson & Struthers edition, p. 465)

(The underlining is my emphasis; the all caps is Hegel's.)

high tech, look how creatively applied it

"...formal thought makes identity its law, and allows the contradictory content which lies before it to drop into the sphere of sensuous representation, into space and time, where the contradictory terms are held apart in spatial and temporal juxtaposition and thus come before consciousness without being in contact." (Science of Logic, p. 477)

" 'Come before consciousness without mutual contact' (the object) -- that is the essence of anti-dialectics." (Lenin, Collected Works, vol. 38, p. 228.)

Because they are held apart in space + time

"This is the Notion, the realm of Subjectivity or of Freedom." (Science of Logic, p. 205)

I had to sign Anne's letter to Vicissitudes
BE Le - need for...

" NB Freedom = Subjectivity ('or') End, Consciousness, Endeavour NB "

(Lenin, Collected Works, vol.38, p. 164)

**** or at least not st. apart. I think they were...*

Anne, when I said strictly philosophical discussion I wanted to stress that that is primary. I did not, however, mean that it isn't at the same time political. It will result in your writing me a commentary, which will be the proof that the contradiction has been resolved -- (if it is concrete and is very personally concrete. I hope you will take advantage of the Christmas vacation,

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because this can not be done in a day, or even a week, but I hope you will bring it with you at the end of the year.

Note that the quotation from p. 205 of the Logic is just one sentence, and it is the sentence that Lenin rewrites in even less than a sentence because both Hegel and Lenin wish to stress that they are not talking about petty-bourgeois subjectivity but about Freedom and that the whole question of what sounds abstract, Notion, is the realm where that subjectivity is also the goal. In fact, the Doctrine of the Notion is exactly the concrete, the Hegelian concrete where Objective and Subjective will finally result not just in unity, not just in totality, but totality as a new beginning, or as we put it, the Absolute Idea as a new beginning.

first
The key to the whole is the quotation I gave you, from p. 465 of Logic, especially the sentence I underlined, beginning with "not however (as in inquiring Cognition) merely as objective world without the subjectivity of the Notion, but as objective world whose inner ground and actual persistence is the Notion. This is the Absolute Idea." The emphasis I put is that there consciousness is not isolated but where Objectivity and Subjectivity are jammed up against each other, and not just lying side by side "without contact." The whole trouble with the Kantians, the Trotskyists, and in fact all non-dialecticians (and that includes even Rosa Luxemburg) is that they do recognize that there is a Universal as well as an individual, and they certainly live by internationalism and not just nationalism -- but that the little word, dialectic, is made the equivalent of hardly more than dynamism and activity, activity, activity. But the truth is that the real dialectic is not when you consider only the objective world as the proof that you weren't egotistically subjective; in a word, you keep each realm -- objective and subjective -- separated from each other, or let them merely lie side by side, instead of forcing them into each other to produce a new beginning.

The whole difficulty in grasping the Absolute comes over the fact that one thinks that one sacrifices a lot and gives one's whole life to the Movement and thinks that that is the proof that one is not subjective. It only proves that being on the threshold of the Absolute, one automatically goes forward to the full idea of Freedom. It only means that the next step forward would be the Absolute; but from the threshold, one can go not only forward, but can fall backward.

Nothing is worse than taking something for granted.

The one and only proof of assuring going forward is laboring objectively -- that is to say, putting oneself as part of the contradiction. (To see how Gramsci put it, reread the paragraph of Gramsci that I included in the Draft Perspectives this year.) It is only when you do not take things for granted, and when you put the philosopher as part of the contradiction that you are not subjective, that the Universal as Subjectivity (i.e. philosophy) becomes objective.

Concretely, then, it is ~~not examples~~ that can be used as proof, because all that gives ~~us~~ proof are manifestations of the Universal and that is the solution. Otherwise it is a half-way dialectic. Take the specific work on Latin America. It is that which you have to work out concretely and universally. You will then not conclude that five years of activity has gone down the drain, but on the contrary, five years of activity which did not result in creating a single Marxist-Humanist is proof that it is no longer possible to have any illusion that activity alone will do it. On the contrary, it will then become historically imperative to show how the missing link of philosophy has led even the greatest revolutionaries like Rosa Luxemburg -- and Nicolai Bukharin -- who have always been revolutionaries, and one was even part of the greatest revolution in 1917, to be left as only half-way dialecticians. Therefore, what is now imperative in any solidarity work is that it was only because Lenin was there and was so adamant after reading the Science of Logic about ~~XX~~ ~~only one way~~ to revolution that he permitted himself to ~~say~~ say his Bolshevist co-leader, Bukharin, was projecting "imperialist economism"! He did so because for Bukharin to be "ultra-revolutionary"; and to ~~XX~~ be against "nationalisms" even when they were for freedom from the imperialist state; and then, nevertheless, to call any state "a pirate state" rather than just the executive committee of the capitalist class -- only proved that WWI had "suppressed" the thinking of even great revolutionaries.

Bukharin

Lenin, instead, judged the Irish Revolution to be that new beginning of the revolutionary road, that bacillus of genuine proletarian revolution. VII was mild, at the same time, when he criticized Bukharin's work on the Transition Period of the workers' state itself in those marginal notes. It is only at the very end of his life -- the Will -- that he concluded that the greatest theoretician of the Party, activist and scholar, Bukharin, did not understand the dialectic and therefore could not be considered fully Marxist. It was too late. It was "subjective." Because he didn't really foresee, not even in Stalin, whom he did order to be removed, that that could be a class distinction; to him, counter-revolution could still only come from the outside.

And now for the first time, let me ~~you~~ tell you one critique on dialectic that I feel Lenin, too, did not reach. Take the very famous 16-point definition of the dialectic (pp. 221-222 in Vol. 38) and note that the two final ones (15 and 16) state:

- 15) the struggle of content with form and conversely.
The throwing off of the form, the transformation of the content.
- 16) the transition of quantity into quality and vice versa.
((15 and 16 are examples of 9))

The very fact that the two final ones relate to a previous one -- * (9) not only the unity of opposites, but the transitions of every determination, quality, feature, side, property into every other [into its opposite?] -- shows where his historic period

17189 *wing of the present*

It could go further = the remainder the immediate was
Stopped dead i.e. Shocked

In a work, he VII, did J.R. ~~work out~~ ^{work out}
-4- ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~last~~ ^{last} ~~two~~ ^{two} ~~pages~~ ^{pages}

could go no further. VII has reached the Absolute, but only at ^{3rd} the point of transformation into opposite. Please reread my 1953 Letters and grasp how important it is that I ~~took issue with Lenin~~ ^{took issue with Lenin} for having dismissed the final paragraph of the Absolute Idea, and then see how that criticism led me to all the other work, and finally only after we ourselves became independent to make that historically original contribution, the Absolute Idea as new beginning. In other words, totality too is not the end. It is only after you grasp the totality and begin working out the new beginnings that your age and its new passions and forces have created ^{new} ground for. Note also that Lenin only after his Notebooks wrote On the Question of Dialectics, that he finally took issue with Engels too, but still forgave him on the basis of "popularization." He, however, did now (1915) conclude that the dialectic was indeed "fertile, genuine, powerful, omnipotent, objective, absolute human knowledge" (p. 363 Vol. 38). That did help for Lenin to decide in 1922 that even though he did not publish his Notebooks, he should make it clear that Hegel must be not just interpreted but studied in his own words, advising the editors of the new Under the Banner of Marxism to consider themselves "Materialist Friends of the Hegelian Dialectic." That was hardly enough and in any case post-Marx Marxists went nowhere as far as Lenin.

This is really not the essence of my letter to you now. I brought it up for only two reasons. One was to show that only this year are we beginning to criticize Lenin ~~for never relating dialectics and the Critique of the Gotha Program to Organization.~~ ^{for never relating dialectics and the Critique of the Gotha Program to Organization.} The second reason was simply to show you how historically and philosophically I look at any mistake. Indeed, my criticism of you, as you can see from this letter, was not "to put you down" but to outline the type of methodology all of us must apply to every and all subjects, instead of shortcutting it either to psychology or to individualism. As Hegel put it in the third part of the Science of Logic, specifically Chapter 2, "Life": "Pain is the 'actual existence' of contradiction in the living individual." The reason Lenin praised Hegel for including "Life" in so abstract a work as Logic was because he recognized that personal life, too, unless it is approached with the Absolute Method, can no more be "solved" -- perhaps it would be more correct to say "resolved" -- than contradiction in general without that recourse to the Absolute. Or as I put it, no "private enclaves" will do. (Please reread the Oct. 22 FEB minutes, especially.) It is only when we fully understand what Marxist-Humanism represents historically, philosophically, uniquely, that we will know there is no substitute for News and Letters Committees.

I'm confident, Anne, that you will not only not feel that years of work have gone down the drain, but that through that experience, through that pain, the reorganization will come.

Yours,

New 1954
Dialectics
The New
Historic

Points cannot be skipped.

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MINUTES OF REB MEETING OF DECEMBER 3, 1984

Present: All but Raya; Jane as siter-in

Agenda: I. Letter from RD to REB; II. New Philosophic Points RD is working out on Organization; and Brief Report of Olga's meetings in New York; III. Finances; IV. Ongoing Activities; V. G&W

I. In sending the REB some of the new points she was working out on Philosophy and Organization, which she was asking the REB to consider as ground for the brief report Olga would be making, Raya wrote that she trusted all would see not only why she had consented to delay until January her lecture on "A Marxist-Humanist View of the 'Dialectics of Revolution and Women's Liberation'", but why, at the same time, she did not want to delay the end-of-the-year sum-up -- which she proposed be held on December 30. She stressed, however, that it must be a very mini-"Expanded REB" and a very abbreviated one, as well, in which Philosophy would be the predominant feature, and not just "in general." It would be a projection of philosophy in relation to Organization (with a capital O), although nothing would be presented as a conclusion. Rather, Raya wrote, "Everything will be projected as philosophic task which is yet to be resolved." All other decisions will depend on the advice of Raya's doctors. (Olga said she would be writing to the REB member in each locality Raya will ask to attend.)

II. The points Raya had asked Olga to read to the REB, although she was not asking for an immediate discussion on them at this meeting, began with three quotations from Hegel's Science of Logic and two from Lenin's Collected Works, Vol. 38 :

* Cognition is reconstructed and united with the Practical Idea: the actuality which is found as given is at the same time determined as the realized absolute end, not however (as in inquiring Cognition) merely as objective world without the subjectivity of the Notion, but as objective world whose inner ground and actual persistence is the Notion. This is the ABSOLUTE IDEA. (Science of Logic, vol.2, p. 465 Johnson & Struthers-ed.)

(Underlining is Raya's emphasis; the all caps is Hegel's.)

* Formal thought makes identity its law, and allows the contradictory content which lies before it to drop into the sphere of sensuous representation, into space and time, where the contradictory terms are held apart in spatial and temporal juxtaposition and thus come before consciousness without being in contact. (Science of Logic, p. 477)

* 'Come before consciousness without mutual contact' (the object) -- that is the essence of anti-dialectics. (Lenin, vol. 38, p. 228)

* This is the Notion, the realm of Subjectivity or of Freedom. (Science of Logic, p. 205)

NB Freedom = Subjectivity

End, Consciousness, Endeavor

(Lenin, CW, v. 38, p. 164)

Or rather pushing THEM into CONFRONTATION
FREEDOM

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As New

Raya had then discussed these quotations: Note that the quotation from p. 205 of the Logic is just one sentence, and it is the sentence that Lenin rewrites in even less than a sentence because both Hegel and Lenin wish to stress that they are not talking about petty-bourgeois subjectivity but about Freedom and that the whole question of what sounds abstract, Notion, is the realm where that subjectivity is also the goal. In fact, the Doctrine of the Notion is exactly the concrete, the Hegelian-concrete where Objective and Subjective will finally result not just in unity, not just in totality, but totality as a new beginning, or as we put it, the Absolute Idea as a new beginning.

The key to the whole is the first quotation, from p. 465 of Logic, especially the sentence I underlined. The emphasis I put is that there consciousness is not isolated but is where Objectivity and Subjectivity are jammed up against each other, and not just lying side by side "without contact." The whole trouble with the Kantians, the Trotskyists, and in fact all non-dialecticians (and that includes even Rosa Luxemburg) is that they do recognize that there is a Universal as well as an Individual, and they certainly live by internationalism and not just nationalism -- but that the little word, dialectic, is made the equivalent of hardly more than dynamism and activity, activity, activity. But the truth is that the real dialectic is not when you consider only the objective world as the proof that you weren't egotistically subjective; in a word, you keep each realm -- objective and subjective -- separated from each other, or let them merely lie side by side, instead of forcing them into each other to produce a new beginning.

The whole difficulty in grasping the Absolute comes over the fact that one thinks that one sacrifices a lot and gives one's whole life to the Movement and thinks that that is the proof that one is not subjective. It only proves that being on the threshold of the Absolute does not mean that one automatically goes forward to the full idea of Freedom. It only means that the next step forward would be the Absolute; but from the threshold, one can go not only forward, but can fall backward.

Nothing is worse than taking something for granted.

The one and only proof of assuring going forward is laboring objectively -- that is to say, putting oneself as part of the contradiction. (Read the paragraph from Gramsci I included in the Draft Perspectives to see how he put it.) It is only when you do not take things for granted, and when you put the philosopher as part of the contradiction that you are not subjective and that the Universal as Subjectivity (i.e. philosophy -- which means "philosophers", including ourselves) becomes objective.

Olga then reported briefly on the meetings she had held both with the New York NEB and with the New York Local, where we had found that the problem of how not to lose our Marxist-Humanist perspectives in the support work with Solidarity Committees was continuing to plague us. The truth, however, is that far from the problem being New York's alone, or being only a question of our Solidarity work, it is a question that confronts all of us, and takes many different forms. What was presented to both the NEB and to the Local was the need to re-view the ground for any and all of our activity which was laid at the Convention and in our Perspectives. The three points of focus that were then taken up concretely were: 1) the classes; 2) the new book; 3) the mini-tour -- but only after a brief view of all the even newer ground that had been laid for us since the Convention in the work Raya had begun on Organization right in the Introduction/Overview for the new book, when she

On the threshold

Joseph rather thinking you can do it = not a page only one

1015 ML 7/19/34

said she was dissatisfied with how the organizational question had been developed there, reworked it many times, and then concluded it would need a whole new book to develop all the ideas she had now seen in that question. Those REB minutes are in need of serious study, just as are the Oct. 22 minutes, which we were asked not to discuss immediately, not in order to file them away, but in order to study them carefully. (Excerpts from a letter Raya had written to Peda for Pilar were also especially important to the discussion in New York, and copies will be xeroxed to send to all locals.)

When the three specific points of focus were taken up, Olga said, it was clear that the classes have proved a lot harder than we expected everywhere because methodology can't be disembodied, but working it out in our analyses and in our activities has proved to be the hardest task of all. As for preparing for the new book, from which the new classes are really inseparable, what has become clear is that just agreeing that "the new book isn't about WL, but about all the forces and about the dialectics of revolution" is a superficial generality unless it involves seeing what taking up the whole 35 years means. Being able to include the essay on the miners' wives is important, not just because it shows that the new stage of WL was there that early, but because it was caught by today's philosopher of revolution-in-permanence. If it had not gone on to the full development of Marxist-Humanism, that early essay would mean nothing. Mastering the dialectic method -- for WL and for all of us -- means not only Hegel, Marx and Lenin, but grasping the unique contributions of the founder of Marxist-Humanism for our age. The two periods that all our work could then be focused on were projected as from now to Raya's lecture on the overview of the new book (which we now know will be in January); and from then to the actual publication of the new book in March.

Olga said that everyone in the REB and in the local contributed to the discussion of these points, and that a new sense of collectivity which had been lacking before, did seem to be evident in the discussion that had followed the presentation, although all agreed that there is much to work out.

In the DISCUSSION, Eugene said that Raya's letter to us in which she tells us that her presentation to the Expanded REB will be a "projection of philosophy in relation to Organization (with a capital O)" is what runs through all the points raised tonight. In our classes, one of our major thrusts has been to try to say what has been the relationship of philosophy to organization -- but as exciting as most of the classes have been in Chicago, especially in relation to the audience we have achieved, we have all found how difficult it is to absorb the material first, then project it, and try to concretize it anew. Yet, even if we haven't yet worked it all out, in Chicago something significant has happened, and we do have a consistent attendance at the classes of new friends who keep wanting to come back and are genuinely interested in studying Marxist-Humanism. What was presented tonight about not being too quick to think we know what the new book is about makes you realize what a tremendous voyage this 35 year journey with the new book will be, and how unique is the voyager who took it. There will be some very different ways to project this book if we develop them creatively. (Eugene also raised the many new doors that can be opened to us if we succeed in projecting what the new class on the videotaped interview on the black dimension embodies.)

Terry said she appreciated the way we show that a problem one local may have is really one we all have, in different ways. There is such a pull on you when you want so much to support a freedom movement that you tend to give your time and energy and passions without any reservation, but you have to stop at some point and ask yourself where it is all going when you find that you are just doing what Peter put so bluntly at the Convention -- "renting your mind and body." Raya's new points on philosophy and organization are what can help all of us in the most concrete ways in whatever activities we are doing.

Ray's Philosophy

Ray

*Notes
perfect
MHT
FW*

Ray's philosophy is powerful

Remember not to let... [unclear] [unclear]

REB

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he NEW Kevin took up, briefly, the quote from Lenin that Raya had included in her new material, in which Lenin called "coming before consciousness without mutual contact" as being "the essence of anti-dialectics", which is exactly what he later said about Rosa Luxemburg. Kevin reported also a discussion he had just had with Ted concerning the full 82 pages of Raya's translation which is included in the Archives. It demonstrated, he felt, how overwhelming is the wealth of material in the Archives we have scarcely begun to recognize. And, despite the high level we have achieved in terms of class audience in Chicago, he felt we have not yet engaged fully enough in the battle of ideas with intellectuals that is possible in a city like this.

Kevin also took up the new ways we could take advantage of the "extra" class the video-tape of Raya's interview by Cedric Robinson offered us, which Bob likewise discussed as a great opportunity to reach Black Chicago. Suzanne took up the kind of question that had been raised in the class by those who wanted to know "but what do you people do?" in terms of how Raya is always asking "Where is philosophy?" and how we are only just beginning to understand what Raya had called seeing philosophy as Subject." Diane also appreciated Raya's always asking "Where is philosophy?" in terms of how clearly it can be seen in the Miners' Strike pamphlet, and how the problems of "philosophy and organization" involve not only our Solidarity work but all our activities and most especially the Youth work. And Lou felt the problem of methodology included not yet catching the methodology of the classes themselves -- why these particular readings? why these particular reporters? As difficult as the classes have proved to be, the new friends attending them see us people trying to work these questions out, and there have been as many stimulating discussions out of the classes as right in them.

Mike reviewed the problems we have confronted for some time around our Solidarity work in order to stress that, in what we presented to us as ground for our discussion tonight and in what Olga reported what was presented to N.Y., you find the principles that are involved in a Marxist-Leninist critique. The three concrete activities that were discussed -- classes, new book, mini-tour -- are all about Philosophy and Organization, which is what Raya discussed is the subject for Dec. 30. If each of us tries to work out, as an assignment, what Raya presented to us tonight, we will come to that meeting very different people than we are today. The fact that it must be a mini-Expanded REB, and an abbreviated one as well, means that we must be more prepared, not less. When Raya writes that just giving your whole life to the Movement is no proof you are not subjective, it brings home much more directly what it meant that RIM/LKM was not about reformists but about full revolutionaries. It isn't just a question of throwing your life on the scales of destiny, but after that knowing how to check yourself at each point. That is our assignment for Dec. 30.

I. Olga reported on the summary of our regular income and expenses since the Convention, which revealed that nearly \$6000 of the Sustaining Fund has already been used to cover the deficit between expenses and income to date, with only \$3000 still remaining on hand. (Note: quite half of the pledges made at the Convention to that Sustaining Fund have already come in, and a reminder will be included in the Letter to the Locals this week that it is urgent for all to meet the deadline of Dec. 30, when a full report will be made to the Expanded REB.)

Lou said a report of the sub-drive would have to include more than just the number of new subs that have come in, encouraging as they are, since the measure of the expanded circulation we have achieved includes also the new categories (areas where we now have 6 or more subs); the number of subscribers who are participating with us getting their friends to subscribe; and the letters coming in with renewals now. He will have a full report of the 3 month drive ready for the Expanded REB.

Meeting Convened at 6:30; adjourned at 8:30 PM

RD

December 3, 1984

To the REB:
Dear Colleagues:

I'm sending you a copy of the letter I just wrote to Anne that I would like read to you tonight. There is, however, no need to discuss it tonight. What is important is that this serve as ground for the brief ~~report~~ report you will get from Olga concerning the specific difficulties in New York, which are by no means local.

When you have had a chance to study the letter by itself, you will see, I trust, why I have consented to the delay of my lecture on: "A Marxist-Humanist View of 'The Dialectics of Revolution and Women's Liberation.'" "

But I do not want to delay the end of the year sum-up, which I am proposing for December 30. It must, however, be a very mini- "Expanded REB". Even the NEB will not be asked to attend in full; and only a very few rank-and-filers will be especially invited. It will be a very abbreviated REB meeting.

Philosophy will be the predominant feature, and not just in "general". It will be a projection of philosophy in relation to Organization (with a capital O). That will be in general; I mean that I will say nothing as a conclusion; everything will be projected as philosophic task to be resolved we know not when.

All other decisions will depend upon the doctors.

Yours,

Raya

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