

In Lieu of REB Minutes of July 24, 1983

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Dear Friends:

Raya's first projection to the REB of the report she will present to an Executive Session at the Convention is, because it is preliminary, always presented in this form of an "in lieu of" minutes. The three parts were: 1) What the Marx Centenary and the National Tour taught us about ourselves, especially re Marx vs. Engels; 1875 vs. 1891. 2) The philosophic ground of the trilogy of revolution and what philosophic ground meant to Lenin, Luxemburg and Gramsci. 3) The specificity of Marxist-Humanism, as well as the ground of the 1983-84 Perspectives, with great emphasis on Organization.

Raya began by saying that, though our challenge to post-Marx Marxism emphasized the fact that it began with Engels, it was so centered around Origin of the Family as no bequest of Marx's, and the different attitudes to primitive communism, that we did not extend that question to organization itself. That was particularly true since Marx and Engels were together in the Critique of the Gotha Program, and Engels remained determined to have it published, and did, in fact, succeed by 1891. We let it go at that. What we now find out about that year, 1891, is that, first, there were some sharp critiques of individuals that Engels eliminated when it was published. Furthermore, it was not published as a ground for the new organization, but, as the GSD put it, as a "contribution to the discussion." The

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program they did adopt was Kautsky's Erfurt Program, which was quite some distance from the ground of "revolution in permanence." Yet, it was that program and that Social-Democratic Party which was held up by Engels as the prototype for all parties of Marxism. And, whereas none can say that what the GSD degenerated into was what it was at its birth, there was definitely an element of economic determinism. This, in fact, is seen not just in the program but in the fact that it was the year 1891 when Engels produced the fourth edition of his Origin, with a new Preface which very nearly elevated unilinear evolutionists like Morgan and Darwin to be veritable historical materialists.

Because the question of ground is very crucial philosophically, and must be recast for specific historic periods, Raya asked the comrades to restudy two of the different ways Hegel developed the question of ground. She read from Vol. I. of Science of Logic, chapter 3, "Ground", especially the two last sections on "Real Ground" and "Complete Ground," and then went to the Doctrine of the Notion at the entrance of the Absolute Idea, p. 465, where Hegel is talking about cognition and practice as inseparable because "The Notion as objective world, whose inner ground and actual persistence is the... Absolute Idea." She also read what Lenin had to say in relationship to the first citation on Ground from Hegel (Vol. 38, pp. 146-7, VII Collected Works): "Continuation of the work of Hegel and Marx must consist in d i a l e c t i c a l elaboration of the history of human thought, science and technique." Lenin, on the side, noted the relationship of materialism to idealism: "It must coincide, as induction and deduction in Capital." And, of course, on the last quotation from Hegel, VII stressed, over and over again, the whole relationship of theory to practice, i.e. its unity.

At that point, Raya went through the question of the relationship of philosophy to organization, in Lenin, in Luxemburg, in Gramsci, as well as the structure of M&F, P&R and RLWLKM. This was further related to the development of N&L before and after each book appeared. This was especially true in relationship to the first book, M&F, and she suggested that in future classes in M&F, the Afro-Asian pamphlet must be included. That completes the 1950s and sets the ground for all of our activities in the 1960s. Once we are again confronted with an aborted revolution in 1968, the imperative-ness of theory becomes the ground for P&R, and its structure singles out not only the continuation of Marx's Marxism, but what is new originally and specifically for our age, first in chapter 1, and climaxed in chapter 9. The structure of our latest book is grounded not only in the new objectively, and in the new subjectively (the publication of EN), but in what Rosa Luxemburg helped shed light on, in the whole relationship between spontaneity and organization. But we and we alone made so inseparable the relationship of philosophy to organization that we entitled Chapter 11, "The Philosopher of Permanent Revolution Creates New Ground for Organization."

Finally, in summing it up for the Perspectives, the whole stress of activities and thought was said to reside in the new type of member -- the uniquely Marxist-Humanist ground which is the only ground for all, from the founding members to the newest member who will join tomorrow.

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