

THE YEAR OF ONLY 8 MONTHS

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Report of the Expanded Resident Editorial Board Meeting January 3, 1987

News & Letters 59 E. Van Buren #707 Chicago, IL 60605

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THE YEAR OF ONLY 8 MONTHS

- I. Star Wars from the Skies.
- II. A New Philosophic Moment of Development: The Marxist-Humanist Significance of Location/Local; "Not by Practice Alone."
- III. New Perceptions of Lenin's Philosophic Ambivalence as they Developed during the Preparatory Work for the Biweekly News & Letters.
- IV. The Single Dialectic of Philosophy (A Body of Ideas) and Organization: Marx's Humanism, and the Marxist-Humanist Tasks for 1987.

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Two philosophic letters to non-Marxist Hegelian scholars will be sent out, one to each local:

(1) "The Idea of Cognition," (the penultimate chapter of Science of Logic) is key both to our changed perceptions of Lenin's philosophic ambivalence and of Hegel himself and his different projections of theory/practice in Science of Logic and in its abbreviated version in the Encyclopedia.

(2) The letter on Hegel's Third Attitude to Objectivity in the Smaller Logic, the 1827-30 edition holds the key to the 1980s retrogressionism.

Finally, with the eyes of 1987, I will write a New Introduction to the reprint of my 1960 "Notes on Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind," to be ready in June.

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that "foreign participants" in the space station project have been informed about a postponement of a meeting; it will be issued by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Don't think it doesn't concern you, much less that it isn't a total reversal of space exploration for so-called peaceful purposes. The real truth is that Reagan does not consider his regression completed until he has established superiority in nuclear missiles -- and that includes in outer space. Reagan has been pushing for "going it alone"; Pax Americana is now to occupy outer space, and that means excluding NATO from any joint participation in "scientific research."

The reason this whole story sounds so abstruse is that this horrific trial balloon is deliberately not attributable to a designated responsible person. The article was written by a John Noble Wilford in the NYT of 12/20/86. No follow-up article was scheduled, or has appeared since, though the writer held-- and not as an individual's opinion only -- that the "decision threatened to jeopardize delicate negotiations to arrange broad international cooperation in the project." Clearly, Western Europe, Japan and Canada had "agreed to provide financial support for the \$8 billion station. The Pentagon has now asked NASA to postpone further talks ..."

The ominousness of the situation cannot be exaggerated, though it is impossible to follow through because everyone is mired on the level of "who knew what, when," as they wallow in the details of the U.S.-Iran-Nicaragua contra arms scandal. As if the "Presidency" were the question, rather than the specific President, Ronald Reagan, the media as well as Congress itself are looking for a way to let this specific imperial presidency -- Ronald Reagan's -- off with, at most, a slap on the wrist. This is true also for the West European Allies, who said virtually nothing when Reagan abandoned the SALT II treaty last month, without consulting them, though they had shown great opposition when abandoning SALT II was first sent out as a trial balloon. Again, they evidently plan to say nothing as the space station for "peaceful purposes" is perverted into a platform for Star Wars missiles.

Finally, don't hold your breath for the State of the Union message that Reagan gives in late January every year. No doubt he will again feature NASA's space station as the

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cently to Col. Gerald May, director of space for the National Security Council, in Aviation Week (12/22/86): "We must keep our options open for the conduct of national security experiments on board." Anything from Khomeini/hostages/arms/North passes as "national security."

There are still two years to go in this imperial presidency. There is no place for illusions that all the scandals and crises befalling the retrogressionist Reagan will bring him down. He is the one, after all, who has unloosed a Col. North as a Rambo-on-the-loose all over the globe, from the imperialist invasion of Grenada in 1983 to the latest 1986 Iran-Contra arms scheme. Reagan is the one who called North the day he supposedly fired him, to designate him a "national hero."

Two more years of Reagan are not needed to understand why it is none too soon to start a biweekly N&L. Just look at the three issues since the Convention. The four months during which I was to have been "away," working on the book, were months when the objective crises of the changed world demanded that we act as if we were ready for a biweekly, indeed, a weekly if only we could afford it. The Dec. N&L had to cover the events of the illicit U.S.-Iran liaison within the week of its revelation. And at the same time, that issue also carried much that was written by revolutionaries around the world, as witness the Lead dictated by the South African writer, Jongilizwe, the same week.

Later, we will go into greater detail on the months of preparatory work for N&L as biweekly. What is more immediate at this point is the fact that our preoccupation with the extra labor needed for the biweekly must not subordinate what is integral to that -- the urgent need for organizational growth.

Indeed, therein lies the significance of the whole concept of location, which characterizes this year's expanded REB focus on locals, specifically the local at the Center, meaning, however, all locals.

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The truth of the question of location emerged first way back in 1947, after the trip to France, where I debated the world Trotskyists on state-capitalism and met the Camerounian with no "Party." Upon my return to the U.S., I refused to remain a New Yorker, chose, instead, an industrial region -- Pittsburgh/Vest Virginia, steel/coal. By the time the Johnson-Forest Tendency finally broke fully with Trotskyism (1951), the dominating subject for all became finding an industrial location where we would start a new kind of paper.

Retrospectively, I now see that the whole question of an industrial center for U.S. Marxism was Chicago, because simultaneously, Marxism as both the Labor and the Black dimensions came about as an aftermath of World War I and the Russian Revolution, which had produced the great migration from the South to the North, rooting both Marxism and Garveyism in Chicago in the early 1920s.

The historic "coincidence" of location/local held true also in the absolutely opposite direction in the late '20s with Stalin's victory over all post-Lenin tendencies in Russia, ordering U.S. Communists to make New York, not Chicago, the center. We, the youth then, called the move the abandoning of labor for "the CCNY boys." I proposed the return to Chicago when the State-Capitalist Tendency broke fully with Trotskyism. The decision to make Detroit the industrial Midwest center was made on the basis that Detroit was both industrial (home of the CIO) and that we had two revolutionary proletarians there -- John Zupan and Charles Denby. (Denby was, however, not made Editor until we had separated from C.L.R. James, and until, at our very first conference, I proposed that Denby become Co-Editor with Zupan. He soon became sole Editor and remained so throughout his lifetime.)

With the breakup of Johnson-Forest, the philosophic-theoretic continuation of Marxism for our age was finally no longer in doubt. It was first then worked out in a comprehensive form in its American Labor/Black roots as well as its Humanist world concepts, with the publication of Marxism and Freedom... from 1776 Until Today in 1957. Marxist-Humanist growth, organizationally as well as theoretically, opened the forum for workers not only in N&L but also in the many pamphlets. At the same time, we heaved out totally new philosophic roads with Philosophy and Revolution, from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao, published in 1973. Before the '70s ended, we had the book, Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal.

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Marx Centenary Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, in 1982, which threw out the challenge to all post-Marx Marxism, now that the Ethnological Notebooks made possible grasping Marx's Marxism as a totality.

Had we moved to Chicago in 1983, when Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution was in hand for the Marx Centenary, I don't believe there would have emerged the seeming gap between local/center, theory/practice, philosophy/revolution, that we seem to have experienced when we moved to Chicago in 1984.

Let's stop for a moment here to see what happened by the end of that year, 1984, specifically 12/30/84. 1984 had become for us, not just physically the "Big Move" to Chicago, not just the return to where my roots were, but the Actuality of the early 1920s with both Marxist history and the Black dimension integral to it. This concept was the idea of location and local as inseparable from a new philosophic moment of development.

1984 had, indeed, become a Turning Point for the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism. From the 1984 emphasis on "Not by Practice Alone" had flowed the 1985 concept of a biweekly and integral to it, the need for organizational growth. Olga reminded me of all this when we were discussing the carrying out of the 1986 Convention Perspectives, where the organization had voted for the biweekly -- I had raised the point a year earlier, before the 1985 Plenum. It is "Not by Practice Alone" that has been the ground for the biweekly as well as for the book, and for organizational growth.

Take the way Dialectics manifests itself at the present Turning Point in our development on the biweekly, on the one hand, and collectivity both in the local and in the leadership, on the other hand. I tried to do that again in the Sept. 21, 1986 letter to the new members of the National Editorial Board, Gene and Jane. We related the letter to our past as a body of ideas, i.e. the historic birth of Marxist-Humanism in the 1950s was made most integral to the actual objective movements that we had designated as a movement from practice that is itself a form of theory AND theory, which is itself a form of philosophy, articulating itself in Dialectic Methodology.

It is clear from the letter of Sept. 21 to G and J that when we talk of the Absolute, we see "in the Absolute,

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ant of the end -- an end that will only come to the future when masses-in-motion become Reason."

What happened with the Dialectic itself when it came to the 1980s? The Marx Centenary was not only the great year for us that had opened new doors in the Black Dimension, in Women's Liberation, in Youth, but we had the opportunity to project post-Marx Marxism as a pejorative in all fields. It was also the year of the U.S. imperialist invasion of Grenada, when the success of "doing it" (the Grenada Revolution) without a philosophy of revolution ended with one faction (Coard's) murdering the other (Bishop). It made the invasion by the U.S. easier, the U.S. having had its eye on Grenada from the moment that the revolution without a philosophy of revolution was "completed."

Pause for a moment and look at just the two words we added to Absolute Idea -- as "New Beginnings." Do you recognize how new, historically/philosophically new, those two words are, when they are appended to the words, "Absolute Idea"? Do you recognize what a great breakthrough that was in all of post-Marx Marxism, that, in truth, it was a concretization of what Marx himself had achieved when he transformed the Hegelian Dialectic into a new continent of thought and of revolution? Don't strip it naked of its historic-philosophic roots and turn "new beginnings" into a bare abstraction.

Finally, do you realize that where Marx paused in the "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic," promising to return to the specific section in the Encyclopedia of Philosophic Sciences, that "intermission" lasted 40 years? Those 40 years spelled out great achievements of the actual revolutions of 1848 and 1871, as well as the Grundrisse, where the Absolute was spelled out as the "Absolute movement of becoming." Only then came the monumental, historical work, Capital, followed by the unpublished Ethnological Notebooks, i.e. the discovery of the Third World, and with it still other forms of revolution.

Once a form of counter-revolution in Grenada came out of that revolution, it became imperative once again to talk of philosophy of revolution, not as some sort of abstraction, but most concretely. That is why the 1984 Perspectives of "Not by Practice Alone," as well as the 1985 concept of bi-weekly, integral to which is the need for organizational growth, continue to be burning questions. Relating the question of location/local to those concepts and perspectives brings us to today. That is to say, to the TEST of this new year that has but 8 months until we reach the Plenum.

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Each one of our activities, whether it's a question of writing or of circulating, or whether it's a question of being part of others' mass activities, has as a goal nothing short of the transformation of reality. The plunge into that Gargantuan task comes at a time when we are trying to simultaneously produce a biweekly that meets the challenge from the objective situation, as well as create an in-person dialogue with as many subscribers and friends in the movement as we can.

The direction is to establish an affinity with them so that they want to become part of the new continent of thought and revolution that is Marxist-Humanism. That will be the task also of the book-to-be. Central to the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy will be self-critique, a fundamental part of which touches on new perceptions of Lenin's philosophic ambivalence.

In the changed world since our September Convention as reflected in the Oct., Nov., and Dec. issues of News & Letters, whether we examine Gorbachev's shift East -- Japan and the Pacific generally as well as the Third World -- or everything falling apart for both nuclear Behemoths in Iceland, we cannot, must not leave our own self-critique at the wayside. It begins with the Resident Editorial Board Minutes of 12/1/86.

In trying to be brief about the relationship of the book-to-be -- which is very much in its initial stages -- and the needs of the moment, that is to say, the biweekly and organizational growth, a certain looseness of expression crept in. It appeared in reference to Lenin, and asserted that he "didn't grasp the dialectic in thought." That abbreviation of what was said is wrong both factually and conceptually.

From the first, whether it be only the translation of Lenin's Philosophic Notebooks in ¹⁹⁴⁸⁻⁴⁹ or the 1953 Letters on the Absolute Idea, where I separated myself not only from Lenin's rejection of the last half-paragraph of Hegel's Absolute Idea, but from his impatience when he reached the Absolute, I was always precise on the points of divergence. As I put it back in the letter of May 12, 1953: "I am shaking all over for we have come to where we part from Lenin. I

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only reflects the objective world but creates it, but that within the chapter he never developed it."

He then began quoting the Smaller Logic; and now I see what I didn't see then in Lenin's brief contents page of that work. That is to say, Lenin's outline of the Smaller Logic first begins with Being, which is p. 103 of Hegel's book. Lenin had entirely left out Attitudes to Objectivity as well as the Introduction. Yet these are the very sections added to the Smaller Logic after the Larger Logic was written -- a full decade after. Add to this new discovery, my latest exchange of letters with non-Marxist intellectuals, as well as reports and discussions at the REB itself. The fact that our critique of Lenin becomes very much sharper than it had been, does not in any way lead to such abbreviated, if not careless recordings, which cloud the meaning of what is new.

Here is why critique is so important:

(1) The Dialectic of Organization has so many facets that I must have two years to complete the book. It is clear that Reagan is not about to give them to me. That is to say, there are so many objective crises which make it imperative for N&L not just to be on top of the situation dialectically, but always to express philosophy as action, that it is inevitable that hurrying philosophic reports of progress can only produce such imprecision.

(2) The exact phase we are facing now insofar as Lenin and the Party is concerned is this: we had rejected the elitist party so many years before we ever started developing philosophy in any concrete sense that it led too many times to taking that question for granted, as though the Organization question were "solved." The result is that when it comes to the rigors of philosophy, you begin using the word, "dialectic," as if you were already in the Absolute. The dialectic as second negativity doesn't appear fully until the Absolute itself.

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what new discoveries I had made dealt with the dialectic in the Doctrine of the Notion, specifically the final two chapters -- the Theory of Cognition, being on the threshold, on the threshold only, of the Absolute, and the Absolute Idea itself.

I must repeat, at that Dec. 1 REB meeting, both in my talk and in the discussion of the REB members, the expression used wasn't that Lenin didn't grasp the dialectic in thought in general. It was that he hadn't grasped the dialectic in the Doctrine of the Notion, specifically in the final chapters that we were most excited about, and that we are working so hard to concretize for our age.

I should also add that by this I mean further that Hegel's Philosophy of Mind -- which Lenin didn't touch at all, especially its final three syllogisms -- and all the prefaces, introductions, attitudes to objectivity of the Smaller Logic, were written after the Science of Logic had already been completed and Hegel was re-examining his whole life's work. Thus, the 1830-31 writings of Hegel are as critical as those of Marx's last decade.

The point now is that Lenin's statement in his Testament -- that Bukharin, though he was a great theoretician, hadn't fully understood the dialectic* -- couldn't remain anything but an abstraction. Instead of ever publishing his Philosophic Notebooks, Lenin republished his old vulgarly materialist, Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, even as, instead of developing all the individual critiques in his essay Twelve Years, regarding the 1903 concept of the Party, he had What Is To Be Done? republished.

This question first manifested itself, mysteriously enough, at Lenin's very highest political-philosophic achievement on the eve of Nov. 1917, in State and Revolution, by the absence of a Dialectic of Organization, the Party. Instead What Is To Be Done? became very nearly a Bible.

The most difficult of all tasks that confronts us,

* Because Lenin kept his Hegelian writings private, the first time that philosophy appears openly in the movement is in Germany in 1919 and the early 1920s -- first, with Lukacs using the Hegelian dialectic as a revolutionary element vs. Social Democratic economic determinism; second, with Korsch. Both unfortunately capitulated organizationally, one to Stalinism, the other out of the movement. We have nothing original from them by the 1930s when Marx's Humanist Essays were published in Germany.

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back to Marx's Marxism -- is to project that it is not the Party or the leader or leadership, but philosophy, the body of ideas, the dialectic of ideas and organization, as against the party as well as distinct from forms of organization born out of spontaneity. While these, of course, are correct, as against the elitism and ossification of the Party, the truth is that these forms also search for an organization different from their own in the sense that they want to be sure that there is a totality of theory and practice against the establishment of a power that has stopped dead with its conquest of state power -- in short, altogether new beginnings.

The burning question of the day remains: What happens the day after? How can we continue Marx's unchaining of the Dialectic organizationally, with the principles he outlined in his Critique of the Gotha Program?

The question of "What happens after?" gains crucial importance because of what it signals in self-development and self-flourishing -- "revolution in permanence." No one knows what it is, or can touch it, or decide upon it before it appears. It is not the task that can be fulfilled in just one generation. That is why it remains so elusive, and why the abolition of the division between mental and manual labor sounds utopian. It has the future written all over it.

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Tasks for 1987

The fact that we cannot give a blueprint does not absolve us from the task. It only makes it more difficult. What we are trying to do with this book-to-be is to so deeply root this task historically and philosophically that both we and all whom we can reach on the outside will want to hew out these uncharted roads.

1987 is the year of the test. It isn't the test of preparing for something to do; it is the test of doing. There are only 8 months to our type of year -- i.e. to the Plenum of September 4-6, when the entire organization will want an accounting, not just of the four months of preparation for the biweekly, but of the eight months of actual carrying out of this intensified practice, plus how we made it integral to organizational growth.

Moreover, this is to be done as we have sufficiently advanced in our book-to-be so that the dialectics of philosophy, too, are inseparable from the dialectics of organization. It is this that is prompting me to share with you two of the letters to non-Marxist Hegelians on the new in my perceptions of Lenin's philosophic ambivalence. It also involves a new view of Hegel's Dialectic, as the letters show.

Let's now take another look at Marx's "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic." Please do read it in the original U.S. translation in the 1957 Marxism and Freedom, the only edition that has my translation. I am quoting from pages 313-319. The first quotation reads: "The truth of uniting this (materialism and idealism) is capable of grasping the act of world history." We must not forget that even in showing his indebtedness to Hegel's theory of alienation, Marx had reconstructed it both phenomenologically* and in actuality, both as capital/labor, and the Man/Woman relationship, as well

* Marx considered the Phenomenology of Mind the most creative of all of Hegel's works, the work of genius. It became the center of his "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic." It proved to be the essence of how he de-mystified Hegel, holding that the mysticism was due to Hegel's de-humanizing the idea as mere stages of consciousness, instead of human beings thinking. Put differently, he was attacking the structure of the Phenomenology of Mind, its stages of consciousness. We need to see my notes of 12/12/60 with eyes of 1987, and that is what I intend to do in the New Introduction for the reprint of these Notes, as I work on the Dialectics of Organization and

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ence of both materialism and idealism. History-in-the-making
marked the transcendence.

Here we are -- 143 years later -- and post-Marx Marxism has yet to grasp the full depth of Marx's Great Leap to the future, to his concept of "new Humanism": "Only by the transcendence of this mediation does there arise positive Humanism, beginning from itself."

We are the only ones who speak of philosophy not merely in general, not as if it were only theoretical rather than inseparable from practice, not as something that has no relationship to "program," but as Dialectics "in and for itself," so that we can work it out as dialectics of revolution and dialectics of organization as a single dialectic rather than as "the Party, the Party, the Party."

In a word, as opposed to the Party, we put forth a body of ideas that spells out the second negativity which continues the revolution in permanence after victory. The principle of revolution in permanence doesn't stop with a victory over capitalism; indeed, it doesn't stop until the full abolition of any division between mental and manual labor. Full self-development of Man/Woman that leads to truly new human relationships remains the goal.

The fact that Lenin didn't even know about the 1844 Manuscripts proves all over again that it wasn't only after Marx's death that what was projected by orthodox Marxism wasn't Marx's Marxism. It was Engelsian Marxism. Whether we knew it or not, we were all raised that way. What drove Lenin to finally go to Marx's true origin in the Hegelian Dialectic was the objective situation of his day -- the simultaneous outbreak of World War I and the betrayal of what all, revolutionaries as well as reformists, held to be orthodox Marxism.

We had to face the realities of World War II and post-World War II, especially the early 1950s. We saw it as a "movement from practice"; we concretized it further by calling that movement a "form of theory itself." That was the most fundamental breakthrough on the Absolute Idea. The ramification of that, however, was burdened by a certain inadequacy: we had all become so enamoured with the great opening to the future of the new reality that we very nearly subordinated the second half of that declaration.

Philosophy. I hope it can be mimeoed by June -- in any case, that it will be ready for the Plenum on Labor Day.

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the Absolute had not -- had not -- been limited to a movement from practice. It stated specifically that it was the unity of the movement from practice and that from theory which had produced the Absolute. In a word, inherent in the Absolute was both the movement from practice and the movement from theory. The unity of the two had also signalled Marx's historic transformation of the Hegelian Dialectic of a revolution in philosophy into Marx's philosophy of revolution. Which is how the 1880s laid a trail to the 1980s with its "revolution in permanence."

Finally, we need to return to the months of the preparatory work we have been engaged in with the biweekly plus the year's Perspectives, which now has only 8 months until next Plenum. You can sense the enormity of the task for the smallness of our organization. Were you not a dialectician, you would be a pessimist. But Dialectic, beginning with so simple a fact as that we are less than 100 but our paper has a press run of 7,000 -- many, many thousands who read it and think of it identify with the ideas -- gives a different view. On an international scope, it manifests the leaps you get when you have a forum both for the voices from below and for the projection of Marxist-Humanism, both concretely and Universally as a never-ending self-development.

Now then, let's get down to the immediate problem -- how can one simultaneously take on all the extras that come with being a biweekly instead of a monthly and yet concentrate at least one day a week on growth through in-person contacting or through participation in other movements and in all the creative ways we can think of?

The answer is simple. The very method of distribution twice a month gives you that much more contact with the outside, while the actual writing is, in a certain sense, less -- that is to say, in relation to columnists, in relation to the PTC, as they get divided between who is assigned to what. Not only that, creativity means abolishing the distinction between "us" and "them" and between the objective and subjective. Brevity becomes the key -- not merely because we now have only 8 pages instead of 12 pages. No, it is the key because it demands clarity in philosophic projection.

To embark on this Gargantuan task, members-at-large have the most difficult problem, since, though they do circulate the paper and actually participate in ongoing objective developments and mass movements (as Philadelphia and P-9 bear proof), they have it most difficult when they try to project

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their own stories in a Marxist-Humanist theoretical/practical paper. That becomes especially telling as N&L becomes a biweekly and constant new points of departure are thrown our way by the Objective situation. Take the fact that there hasn't been a single emergence of a revolution anywhere, be it Latin America, the Philippines, Haiti, South Korea, Southern Africa, or the Middle East -- and it didn't matter whether it was the 1970s and the Democrats, or the 1980s and the Republicans -- that you couldn't see what was dominating the world since the end of World War II, and that is those two nuclear Behemoths aiming for single world mastery.

This is the enemy and since we live in the U.S. the enemy is Pax Americana both globally and at home where reigns Reagan the strikebreaker as well as Retrogressionist in all fields from the Black Dimension to Women's Liberation to Youth and Education, unending unemployment, pauperization of the masses and national debt as high as the fantastic nightmarish Star Wars. He must be stopped.

What I am driving at with the biweekly, with the need for organizational growth, with the book-to-be, is, at the same time, the task for all. It is the in-person discussions, collectivity in projecting a relationship to a body of ideas, which requires a corporeal presence, both for feeling that you are not alone and for others feeling that you are not alone.

After all, the need is to fight the ruling class, the media; the need is the overthrow of all the old -- and to find where exactly is all the new. The fact that we are the only ones who do not keep the minutes of the REB meetings restricted to leadership, and you can hand others a copy of these minutes, does not present that corporeal presence. The truth is that we ourselves insist on having at least one national meeting a year so that we can see all of us together at one place and time. First then does one understand that the national, international relations as well as the relationship with non-members makes the Second America a reality. Let's go at it.

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The title Raya gave to this presentation, "The Year of Only 8 Months," is very sobering. We are no longer on the threshold of the biweekly. The 8 months has begun here and now. In 12 days the deadline; in a little over two weeks the first issue of the biweekly will be off the press.

Look at what we will immediately want to undertake within its pages: the racist attacks and murder in New York; the tremendous upsurge of student youth in France, and those that are continuing still in China; the imperial Reagan presidency that is moving towards a no-holds barred militarization of space.

But today it isn't so much the specifics of a particular issue of the biweekly that I wish to concentrate on, though I will return to the first two issues at the end. Rather, the nodal point is that these 8 months become a testing ground, the testing ground, for how we practice this body of ideas that is Marxist-Humanism.

We need to ask, What makes this period, January to September, so very different from other periods in our existence? How can we make sure our practice is truly a Marxist-Humanist praxis?

We are testing ourselves as Marxist-Humanists in a new and extraordinary way. The new is not alone that we are now a biweekly, or that we are striving for organizational growth, or the tremendous new philosophic-organizational leaps that Raya will no doubt be working out in the new book. The truly new for this period is that we want to refuse to compartmentalize those three dimensions of biweekly journalism, organizational growth, and the book on dialectics of organization and philosophy, and not treat them as if they were separate spheres, separate worlds. The task before us is the labor to work out the integrality of the three.

This is not a Kantian ought I am speaking of, which requires some external Herculean effort by ourselves to accomplish. Rather it is the truth of who we are -- it is what to me Raya is speaking of, especially in the final part of her talk. Because I am managing editor I want to take as the specificity, revolutionary journalism. ^{a new way of writing with a stress on brevity; it means as well} If an 8-page biweekly means a new way of working with the paper in which there is a stress on the ongoing nature of our writing, and thus an ongoing discussion with a circle of readers that, as Raya stressed, needs to be thought of as one-to-one contacting, including each of us setting aside time for visiting.

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Now look at how the book-to-be, as Raya is working it out, informs our practice of working with the newspaper. One of the letters to Hegel scholars she is sharing with us today has as its subject Hegel's Third Attitude to Objectivity. I cannot think of anything which speaks more to how we work with a biweekly than our discussion of the Third Attitude to Objectivity. That intuitionism, that looking for shortcuts, that impatience, is what we have to be very aware of. I certainly am for distribution of N&L, but more distributions in and of themselves will lead us only to small mass partyism. The follow-up on the distribution, the possibility perhaps of a literature table at a shop distribution, the ongoing nature of an in-person relationship to readers of this paper is what we need to work out as the manner in which we would concretize the Dialectic in a Body of Ideas.

Or take revolutionary journalism as the very difficult task of circulation we find in front of us -- of two mailing weeks and two mailing nights each month. If circulation in the period ahead becomes reduced to a question of all of ourselves doing more for this paper to ^{come} out, then we are more into Stoicism than to any dialectical attitude.

Rather, the development of friends of News and Letters who want to take part in all our activities, including those of circulation, as part of their journey into Marxist-Humanism, means that circulation as part of our journalism is not in a separate sphere from organizational growth. Maybe we all would feel like spending more time working out circulation tasks, including mailing nights, if it meant a place where friends of News and Letters would also be participating.

Organizational growth, revolutionary journalism, book-to-be in the Year of 8 Months are inseparable moments of the Dialectic in a Body of Ideas if this period is to truly be the "diferencia specifica" for us. Can we work out this Marxist-Humanist praxis? Part of working it out is knowing how we came to this moment of January to September.

If I said, "We came through Marx and Lenin," it isn't for purposes of hyperbole or empty rhetoric. The quote from Marx's "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic" in section IV in Raya's talk is precisely from the period of Marx's life that opened up his whole "New Continent of Thought." Marx's next 40 years were his labor to realize that new continent of thought. Marxist-Humanism's four plus decades have had, at each period of our existence, our labor to discern Marx's moments.

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working out the totality of Marx's Marxism from before he was a "Marxist" in his doctoral thesis, through every decade of his life, to those new moments of the 1980s as a trail to our day. And we are not done yet, as Raya's labors on her book-to-be with regard to Marx will no doubt illuminate.

We have arrived at 1987 showing what no post-Lenin Marxist has ever shown -- the Hegelian Lenin. We could not be where we are philosophically if Lenin had not labored on his Philosophic Notebooks in 1914. Any study of our Marxist-Humanist Archives will show that our return to Hegel was illuminated as much by Lenin's return to that dialectic as it was by Marx's writings on Hegel, and by the objective world of the late 1940s and early 1950s. More than a decade ago we pointed out the philosophic ambivalence of Lenin, and if today we have what Raya has entitled in this presentation, "New Perceptions of Lenin's Philosophic Ambivalence," its beginning point is of necessity Lenin's very revolutionary, very deep, return to the Hegelian dialectic in a way that no post-Marx Marxist had ever done to his day. Only then can we dive into the Idea of Cognition and Lenin.

We have arrived in 1987, some 33 years after Raya's first breakthrough on Hegel's Absolutes, and some 13 years after Philosophy and Revolution had explicitly shown Absolute Idea as New Beginnings. What must be noted is that when we as Marxist-Humanists return to the Hegelian dialectic and work out Absolute Idea as New Beginnings, it is not alone that we have gone where Marx did not feel compelled to go in his day, and to where Lenin stopped short of.

It is as well that we in the 13 years since Philosophy and Revolution have refused to stop dead. We have felt compelled to begin working out all of the ramifications -- philosophically, journalistically, organizationally -- of Absolute Idea as New Beginnings. We can't stop halfway. That is the test we are undertaking in this year of 8 months.

Let me put it another way. Philosophy and Revolution has three parts: the philosophic foundation of Hegel, Marx, and Lenin; the Alternatives that were not continuators of that philosophic heritage either in their writings or practice; and finally Part III where once again we focus on the movement from practice that is itself a form of theory in the Third World, especially the African Revolutions, in East Europe, and in America.

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But, I would argue that the whole structure, the whole Notion of Philosophy and Revolution, cries out for a Part IV -- a "missing" part on the theoretic-political-organizational practice of that philosophic foundation in our post-World War II world, not alone by the movement from practice, but by revolutionary Marxists. It was "missing" because Part IV could not have been written then. And it is a Part IV that is both in writing and in doing. The thirteen years since Philosophy and Revolution has been the writing of, the practice of, Part IV.

Most especially it has been within the half dozen years of the 1980s that we have through multidimensional paths been struggling to complete the task that the first three parts of P&R have set before us:

* It has meant the reorganization of the Archives and Archives Guide, first in 1981 and then again in 1986, so that we now truly can see Marxist-Humanism as a half-century of world development. And the specificity of those Archives presented for a particular subject of revolution in the collection Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future.

* It has meant the working out of a new category of post-Marx Marxism and a new presentation of Marx's final decade as a trail to the 1980s in the third ^{of the} trilogy of revolution, Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution.

* It has meant an extraordinary series of Retrospective/Perspectives which present us organizationally, politically, journalistically, as well as philosophically. I am referring to pamphlets such as 25 Years of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., tracing year by year our organizational practice unseparated from worldwide developments from the 1950s to 1980, and the Myriad Global Crises pamphlet which both traces the three decades of our paper, and presents the Retrospective and Perspective to The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection.

But I am also referring to the series of presentations to ourselves meeting in Convention, Plenum and Expanded REB beginning with 1984's "Not by Practice Alone" Perspectives; that same year's Expanded REB on "Responsibility for Marxist-Humanism in the Historic Mirror"; 1985's Perspectives that combined Perspectives and Executive Session on the "Self-Thinking Idea in a new Concept of and Relationship to the Dialectics of Leadership, as well as the Self-Bringing Forth of Liberty" and the year-end's "New Beginnings that Determine

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the End"; and this year's Perspectives with its "Single Dialectic in Philosophy and in Organization." And now "The Year of Only 8 Months."

* It has meant the public presentations of ourselves stretching from the Marx Centenary Tour, through the "American Roots and World Humanist Concepts" talk at Wayne State University with its Archives Exhibit, in 1985, to the most recent videotapes on class six of the Workshops on "Current Events and the Dialectic Method," and the U.I.C. lecture on Youth of the '60s and Youth of the '80s.

* It has meant the most comprehensive series of statements on the Black dimension in America, in Africa, in the Caribbean from the new paragraph worked out for the Marx Centenary Tour on Marx and the Black World for Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, to the 1983 Introduction to American Civilization on Trial, the 1984 Political-Philosophic Letter on "Grenada: Counter-Revolution and Revolution," the 1986 Introduction to Frantz Fanon, Soweto, and American Black Thought.

* It has meant our move to Chicago.

* And it has meant a revolutionary journalism of first a 12-page N&L and now a biweekly N&L.

So to return to where I began. We have come to our Year of 8 Months out of Marx, out of Lenin, out of Marxist-Humanism's confrontation with both revolutionary philosophy and the objective reality of revolution and counter-revolution and of Marxist-Humanism's self-critique.

The category of self-critique was presented in a powerful way in Raya's talk. The most fundamental one is on our breakthrough on Absolute Idea where Raya asks whether we became so enamored with the great opening to the future of "the movement from practice" that we very nearly subordinated the second half of the declaration "as a form of theory." And she follows this by saying: "Don't strip it (Absolute Idea as New Beginnings) naked and turn the words new beginnings into a bare abstraction." That is such a devastating critique. Perhaps devastating is not the right word; it is so deep a critique that it compels the most serious rethinking on our part.

Then comes the critique which says that we took for granted our rejection of the vanguard party-to-lead and never developed that critique. Certainly the new book-to-be is the development.

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When Raya puts forth the idea of location and local as inseparable from a new philosophic moment of development, it becomes a tremendous critique when it is concretized that we had not moved to Chicago with RLWLKM and thus "created a certain gap." Don't we thus have to ask whether we have fully worked out where Raya says "1984 had, indeed, become a turning point for the Body of Ideas of Marxist-Humanism" and related that to the fact that we moved at that point to Chicago? Have we grasped that turning point's relation to location?

The immediate task which we all feel in Chicago and in other locals of the biweekly before us is surely a test, but it is the kind of test that is at once a pathway -- a pathway for organizational growth, a pathway for our relationship to the book-to-be. These two-way roads of the Dialectic of a Body of Ideas stretch out before us both for the Year of 8 Months, and far beyond.

Two final points, the letters to Hegel scholars and the first two issues of the biweekly.

Raya comments that the 1830-31 writings of Hegel are as critical as those of Marx's last decade. In the letters, both the Three Attitudes to Objectivity and the final three syllogisms -- both 1830-31 -- are taken up. These two writings were not taken up by Lenin in his return to Hegel.

Let me pose my comments as questions. Is there a way in which the Third Attitude to Objectivity and the three final syllogisms are connected today? Did the fact that the Third Attitude to Objectivity had a pull on post-World War II Marxist revolutionaries (for example, CLR James) mean that they were pulled away from working out those three final syllogisms in Hegel's Philosophy of Mind? And on the Third Attitude holding the key to the retrogressionism of the 1980s -- is the most extreme attitude of that Grenada, counter-revolution and revolution? And do we also see it in other places, in other forms?

On the "Idea of Cognition" -- yes, it means this changed perception of Lenin. Does it also mean a changed perception of Hegel? I am talking about where Raya writes to the Hegel scholar that "Hegel left open the door for a future generation of Marxists to become so enthralled with Ch. 2, 'The Idea of Cognition'" (in the Smaller Logic, with the subsection on Volition) that they didn't return to the Larger Logic for its chapter on The Idea of Cognition and on Absolute Idea.

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Finally, on the first two issues of the biweekly. I would like to propose the following possibilities for the first two Leads. For issue No.1 (deadline Jan. 15), new dimensions in the youth demonstrations worldwide with specific concentration on China and France. For issue No. 2 (deadline Jan. 29), a state of the union analysis of Reaganism. The first issue will no doubt have as well a version of Raya's Part I on Star Wars from the Skies. And we can look forward to in-person reports from Lou on the South and Russell on the Far East in the near future.

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ON AN EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA
AND NON-MARXIST HEGELIAN SCHOLARS

January 7, 1987

Dear Colleagues,

Because differences in Hegel's Science of Logic and the Encyclopedia versions impinge on my changed perception of Lenin's philosophic ambivalence, I feel that I should give you a sense of the scholars' critique on the Idea of Cognition.*

First, the critics deny that there is a conflict between the Smaller Logic (Paragraph 235) and the Science of Logic, since the Absolute Idea makes clear that each category--theory/practice--is one-sided by itself. The Absolute is a great deal more than the achievement of "Will"; that only "leads to the Absolute Idea." Paragraph 236 was quoted to show that it's the unity of Subjective and Objective and that that alone "is the Absolute and all truth." And of course they were happy to announce that "neither Logic supports Lenin's interpretation."

It is at that point where the critique began against my interpretation of Absolute Spirit, holding that there "is a more complex issue. I do not think, though some interpreters do, that the Absolute Spirit can be so radically identified with the Absolute Idea as I thought you were willing to do."

Surprisingly, one of those non-Marxist-Humanists did agree with my interpretation that the eternal idea is ceaseless motion, but then very strongly disagreed: "But I no longer follow you, when you call the eternal idea 'revolution-in-permanence'. Your social interpretation is, in my opinion, not supported by Hegel's text." The letter ended with a rejection of my interpretation of the final syllogism, Para. 577, as being any source of "entrance to the new society. I would rather read it as an entrance into philosophy."

Yours,

Raya

P.S. I also enclosed excerpts from my 1953 Letters on the Absolute Idea, calling attention to these sentences from the letter of May 12, 1953: "I am shaking all over for we have come to where we part from Lenin. I mentioned before that, although in the approach to the Absolute Idea Lenin had mentioned that man's cognition not only reflects the objective world but creates it but that within the chapter he never developed it." And from the May 20, 1953 Letter, I sent my analysis of the three final syllogisms, Paragraphs 575, 576, 577.

*I'm referring to A.V. Miller's translation of Science of Logic, pp. 775-823, and to Hegel's Smaller Logic, Paragraphs 226-235, which includes "Volition."

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July 3, 1986

Suddenly I remembered when we first met at the University where I talked on Philosophy and Revolution. We continued the dialogue after the formal talk. I believe it set the ground for my paper on "Hegel's Absolute Idea as New Beginning," which was accepted for the 1984 Hegel Society of America conference. Don't you think that in a way we have had a continuing dialogue since? At any rate, I consider you a very good friend. I hope you agree. Or do you think that the sharpness of my critique of Hegel scholars who are non-Marxists goes beyond their critique of Marxism? I seem always to get friends -- Marxist as well as non-Marxist -- who consider me a friendly enemy rather than a friend. That friendly enemy relationship continued, for example, with Herbert Marcuse for three long decades, and we still never agreed, specifically on the Absolutes. That's where I want to appeal to you, even though we do not have the same interpretation either.

Along with the battle I'm currently having with myself on the Absolutes (and I've had this battle ever since 1953, when I first "defined" the Absolute as the new society)*, I am now changing my attitude to Lenin -- specifically on Chapter 2 of Section Three of the Science of Logic, "The Idea of Cognition." The debate I'm having with myself centers on the different ways Hegel writes on the Idea of Cognition in the Science of Logic (hereafter referred to as Science), and the way it is expressed in his Encyclopedia (smaller Logic), paragraphs 225-235, with focus on paragraphs 233-235. The fact that the smaller Logic does the same type of abbreviation with the Absolute Idea as it does with the Idea of Cognition, turning that magnificent and most profound chapter of the Science into paragraphs 236-244, and that paragraph 244 in the smaller Logic was the one Lenin preferred** to the final paragraph of the Absolute Idea in

 * I am enclosing an excerpt from my May 20, 1953 letter on Absolute Mind.

Science of

** All the references to Lenin are to his Abstract of Hegel's / Logic, as included in Vol. 38 of his Collected Works, pp. 87-238. Concretely the subject under dispute here is on the Doctrine on the Notion, Section Three, Chaps. 2 and 3, "The Idea of Cognition" and the "Absolute Idea."

the Science, has had me "debating" Lenin ever since 1953. That year may seem far away, but its essence, without the polemics, was actually given in my paper at the 1974 Hegel Society of America Conference.

Whether or not Lenin had a right to "mis-read" the difference in Hegel's two articulations in the Science and in the smaller Logic, isn't it true that Hegel, by creating the sub-section B, "Volition," which does not appear in the Science, left open the door for a future generation of Marxists to become so enthralled with Ch. 2, "The Idea of Cognition" -- which ended with the pronouncement that Practice was higher than Theory -- that they saw an identity of the two versions? These Marxists weren't Kantians believing that all contradictions will be solved by actions of "men of good will."

There is no reason, I think, for introducing a new sub-heading which lets Marxists think that now that practice is "higher" than theory, and that "Will," not as willfulness, but as action, is their province, they do not need to study Hegel further.

Please bear with me as I go through Lenin's interpretation of that chapter with focus on this sub-section, so that we know precisely what is at issue. Indeed, when I began talking to myself in 1953, objecting to Lenin's dismissal of the last half of the final paragraph of the Absolute Idea in the Science as "unimportant," preferring paragraph 244 of the smaller Logic -- "go forth freely as Nature" -- I explained that Lenin could have said that because he hadn't suffered through Stalinism. I was happy that there was one Marxist revolutionary who had dug into Hegel's Absolute Idea.

Now then, when Lenin seemed to have completed his Abstract, and writes "End of the Logic. 12/17/1914." (Vol. 38, p. 233), he doesn't really end. At the end of that he refers you to the fact that he ended his study of the Science with paragraph 244 of the smaller Logic -- and he means it. Clearly, it wasn't only the last half of a paragraph of the Absolute Idea in the Science that Lenin dismissed. The truth is that Lenin had begun seriously to consult the smaller Logic at the section on the Idea, which begins in the smaller Logic with paragraph 213. When Lenin completed Chapter 2, "The Idea of Cognition," he didn't really go to Chapter 3, "The Absolute Idea," but first proceeded for seven pages with his own "translation" (interpretation). This is on pp. 212-219 of Vol. 38 of his Collected Works.

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Lenin there divided each page into two. One side, he called "Practice in the Theory of Knowledge"; on the other side he wrote: "Alias, Man's consciousness not only reflects the objective world, but creates it." I was so enamoured with his "Hegelianism" that I never stopped repeating it. Presently, however, I'm paying a great deal more attention to what he did in that division of the page into two, with these "translations." Thus, 1) "Notion=Man"; 2) "Otherness which is in itself= Nature independent of man"; 3) "Absolute Idea= objective truth." When Lenin reaches the final section of Chapter 2, "The Idea of the Good," he writes, "end of Ch. 2, Transition to Ch. 3, 'The Absolute Idea.'" But I consider that he is still only on the threshold of the Absolute Idea. Indeed, all that follows p. 219 in his Notes shows that to be true, and explains why Lenin proceeded on his own after the end of his Notes on the Absolute Idea, and returned to the smaller Logic.

Thus when Lenin writes that he had reached the end of the Absolute Idea and quotes paragraph 244 as the true end, because it is "objective," he proceeds to the smaller Logic and reaches paragraph 244, to which he had already referred.

Although he continued his commentaries as he was reading and quoting Absolute Idea from the Science, it was not either Absolute Idea or Absolute Method that his 16-point definition of the dialectic ends on: "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)." No wonder the preceding point 14 referred to absolute negativity as if it were only "the apparent return to the old (negation of the negation)."

Outside of Marx himself, the whole question of the negation of the negation was ignored by all "orthodox Marxists." Or worse, it was made into a vulgar materialism, as with Stalin, who denied that it was a fundamental law of dialectics. Here, specifically, we see the case of Lenin, who had gone back to Hegel, and had stressed that it was impossible to understand Capital, especially its first chapter, without reading the whole of the Science, and yet the whole point that Hegel was developing on unresolved contradiction, of "two worlds in opposition, one a realm of subjectivity in the pure regions of transparent thought, the other a realm of objectivity in the element of an externally manifold actuality that is an undisclosed realm of darkness," (Miller translation, p. 820), did not faze Lenin because he felt that the objective, the Practical Idea, is that resolution. Nor was he fazed by the fact that Hegel had said that "the complete

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elaboration of the unresolved contradiction between the absolute end and the limitation of this actuality that insuperably opposes it has been considered in detail in the Phenomenology of Mind." (The reference is to p. 611ff. of the Phenomenology, Baillie translation.)

In the original German the above sentence reads: "Die vollständige Ausbildung des unaufgelösten Widerspruchs, jenes absoluten Zwecks, dem die Schranke dieser Wirklichkeit unüberwindlich gegenübersteht, ist in der Phänomenologie des Geistes (2 Aufl., S. 453ff.)."

Nothing, in fact, led Lenin back to the Idea of Theory and away from dependence on the Practical Idea, not even when Hegel writes: "The practical Idea still lacks the moment of the Theoretical Idea... For the practical Idea, on the contrary, this actuality, which at the same time confronts it as an insuperable limitation, ranks as something intrinsically worthless that must first receive its true determination and sole worth through the end of the good. Hence it is only the will itself that stands in the way of the attainment of its goal, for it separates itself from cognition, and external reality for the will does not receive the form of a true being; the Idea of the good therefore finds its integration only in the Idea of the true." (Page 821, Miller translation.)

In German this sentence reads: "Der praktischen Idee dagegen gilt diese Wirklichkeit, die ihr zugleich als unüberwindliche Schranke gegenübersteht, als das an und für sich Nichtige, das erst seine wahrhafte Bestimmung und einzigen Wert durch die Zwecke das Guten erhalten sollte. Der Wille steht daher der Erreichung seines Ziels nur selbst im Wege dadurch, dass er sich vom dem Erkennen trennt und die äusserliche Wirklichkeit für ihn nicht die Form das wahrhaft Seienden erhält: die Idee des Guten kann daher ihre Ergänzung allein in der Idee des Wahren finden."

I cannot blame Hegel for what "orthodox Marxists" have done to his dialectic, but I still want to know a non-Marxist Hegelian's viewpoint on the difference of the two articulations on the Idea of Cognition and the Absolute Idea in the Science and in the smaller Logic. What is your view?

To fully follow out this question we need, in one respect, another journey back in time -- to 1953 when, in the parting from Lenin on the vanguard party, I had delved into the three final syllogisms of the Philosophy of Mind. You may remember that in my paper to the Hegel Society of America in 1974, where I critique Adorno's Negative Dialectics

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-- which I called "one-dimensionality of thought" -- I said that he had substituted "a permanent critique not alone for absolute negativity, but also for 'permanent revolution' itself." I had become so enamoured with Hegel's three final syllogisms that I was searching all over the "West" for dialogue on them.

Finally in the 1970s, after Reinhart Klemens Maurer had published his Hegel und das Ende der Geschichte, which took up those final syllogisms, I tried to get him involved, his sharp critique of Marcuse notwithstanding. Maurer was anxious to establish the fact, however, that he was not only non-Marxist, but not wholly "Hegelian." In any case, he clearly was not interested in any dialogue with me, and he told a young colleague of mine who went to see him that "I am not married to Hegel." But as I made clear at the 1974 HSA conference, I do not think it important whether someone has written a serious new study of those three final syllogisms because of a new stage of scholarship, or because of the "movement of freedom surged up from below and was followed by new cognition studies."

The point is that as late as the late 1970s, A.V. Miller wrote me calling my attention to the fact that he had not corrected an error in Wallace's translation of paragraph 575 of Philosophy of Mind. He pointed out that Wallace had translated sie as if it were sich, whereas in fact it should have read "sunders" not itself, but them. That, however, was not my problem. The sundering was what was crucial to me; the fact that Nature turns out to be the mediation was certainly no problem to any "materialist"; the form of the transition which was departing from the course of necessity was the exciting part.

In introducing those three new syllogisms in 1830, Hegel first (#575) poses the structure of the Encyclopedia merely factually -- Logic-Nature-Mind. It should have been obvious (but obviously was not) that it is not Logic but Nature which is the mediation.

Paragraph 576 was the real leap as the syllogism was the standpoint of Mind itself. In the early 1950s I had never stopped quoting the end of that paragraph: "philosophy appears as subjective cognition, of which liberty is the aim, and which is itself the way to produce it." It justified my happiness at Hegel's magnificent critique of the concept of One in the Hindu religion which he called both "featureless unity of abstract thought," and its extreme opposite, "long-winded weary story of its particular detail." (Paragraph 573.) In the following paragraph 574 we face Hegel's counter-position of what I consider his most profound historic

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concept -- and by history I mean not only past, or even history-in-the-making, the present, but as future -- "SELF-THINKING IDEA."

My "labor, patience, and suffering of the negative" those 33 years hasn't exactly earned me applause either from the post-Marx Marxists, or from the Hegelians, who are busy calling to my attention that the final syllogism (paragraph 577) speaks about the "eternal Idea," "eternally setting itself to work, engenders and enjoys itself as absolute Mind," fairly disregarding what is just a phrase in that sentence: "it is the nature of the fact, which causes the movement and development, yet this same movement is equally the action of cognition."

It is here that I'm in need of your commentary both on Absolute Idea in the Science of Logic and on Absolute Mind in the Philosophy of Mind. The "eternal idea" to me is not eternality, but ceaseless motion, the movement itself. Far from me "subverting" Hegel, it is Hegel who made Absolute Method the "self-thinking Idea." George Armstrong Kelly, in his book, Hegel's Retreat from Eleusis, said that "for the complex linkage of culture, politics and philosophy, within the matrix of the 'Absolute Idea,' Mme. Dunayevskaya proposes to substitute an unchained dialectic which she baptizes 'Absolute Method,' a method that 'becomes irresistible... because our hunger for theory arises from the totality of the present global crisis.'"

The "eternal Idea" in Philosophy of Mind not only reinforced my view of Absolute Method in Science of Logic, but now that I am digging into another subject for my new work on "Dialectics of Organization," which will take sharp issue with Lenin, both on the Idea of Cognition and on the Absolute Idea, I consider that Marx's concept of "revolution in permanence" is the "eternal Idea."

Raya

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December 8, 1986

Despite the acknowledged gulf between us on the Absolute Method, may I discuss with you (and may I hope for a comment from you?) my latest self-critique on Organization? On that question I also see Hegel in a new way. That is to say, the dialectical relationship of principles (in this case the Christian doctrine) and the organization (the Church) are analyzed as if they were inseparables. All this occurs, not in the context of a philosophy of religion as much as in the context of the great dividing line between himself and all other philosophers that he initiated with the Phenomenology of Mind, on the relationship of objectivity/subjectivity, immediacy/mediation, particular/universal, history and the "Eternal". This addition to the Logic--the Third Attitude to Objectivity--I see in a totally new way.

I can't hide, of course, that though it's not the Absolute, I'm enamored with that early section of the Encyclopedia outline of Logic, because it was written after Hegel had already developed Absolute Knowledge, Absolute Idea, Absolute Method.

Here history makes its presence felt, by no accident after the Absolutes both in the Phenomenology and in the Science of Logic, as well as in anticipation that he is finally developing the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Mind. Indeed, that to me is what made possible the very form of compression of those innumerable polemical observations on other philosophers and philosophies into just three attitudes to objectivity.

This time, as we know, a single attitude, the First, embraces everything preceding the modern age. Further emphasis on this compression is evident when Hegel comes to the modern age and includes both empiricism and criticism in the Second Attitude.

My attraction to the Third Attitude was not due to the fact that it was directed against those who placed faith above philosophy--the Intuitionists. (I'm not renewing our old debate, just because I'm an atheist; atheism, to me, is one more form of godliness, without God.) Rather, the attraction for me continued to be the Dialectic. Far from expressing a sequence of never-ending progression, the Hegelian dialectic lets retrogression appear as translucent as progression and indeed makes it very nearly inevitable if one ever tries to escape regression by mere faith.

Here again, history enters, this time to let Hegel create varying views of Intuitionism, depending on which historic period is at issue. Intuitionism is "progressive" in the period of Descartes because then empiricism opened the doors wide to science. On the other hand, it became regressive in the period of Jacobi.

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It is here that I saw a different concept of Organization when it comes to the Church than in all of Hegel's many oppositions to the clergy's dominance in academia. Do please follow my strange journeys that I identify as the self-determination of the Idea.

The Third Attitude begins (paragraph 61) with a critique of Kant whose universality was abstract so that Reason appeared hardly more than a conclusion with "the categories left out of account." Equally wrong, Hegel continues, is the "extreme theory on the opposite side, which holds thought to be an act of the particular only, and on that ground declares it incapable of apprehending the Truth."

In praising Descartes, Hegel points not only to the fact that empiricism opened the door to science, but that Descartes clearly knew that his famous "Cogito ergo sum" wasn't a syllogism, simply because it had the word 'therefore' in it. This becomes important because Hegel's critique could then be directed against the one-sidedness of the Intuitionists for equating mind to mere consciousness, and thus "what I discover in my consciousness is thus exaggerated into a fact of consciousness of all, and even passed off for the very nature of mind." (Paragraph 71) That too is by no means the whole of the critique. What excited me most about this attitude to objectivity is the manner in which Hegel brings in Organization. As early as Paragraph 63 Hegel had lashed out against Jacobi's faith, in contrast to Faith: "The two things are radically distinct. Firstly, the Christian faith comprises in it an authority of the Church; but the faith of Jacobi's philosophy has no other authority than that of personal revelation." As we see, Hegel now has suddenly equated Organization to Principle, Doctrine: "And, secondly, the Christian faith is a copious body of objective truth, a system of knowledge and doctrine; while the scope of the philosophic faith is so utterly indefinite, that, while it has room for faith of the Christian, it equally admits belief in the divinity of the Dalai Lama, the ox, or the monkey..."

Hegel proceeds (paragraph 75) "And to show that in point of fact there is a knowledge which advances neither by unmixed immediacy nor unmixed mediation, we can point to the example of the Logic and the whole of philosophy."

In a word, we're back at the Dialectic and it's only after that (paragraph 76) that Hegel uses the word "reactionary" in relationship to the whole school of Jacobi, that is to the historic period, "The Recent German Philosophy." "Philosophy of course tolerates no mere assertions or conceits, and checks the free play of argumentative see-saw." (Paragraph 77) Freedom and Revolution (which word I "borrowed" from Hegel's very first sentence on "The Recent German Philosophy") will hew out a new path. In this way I see the dialectic flow in the third attitude to objectivity from a critique of the one-sidedness of the Intuitionists to organizational responsibility.

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January 21, 1987

Talking to Myself (For Individual study, not for reading to the Locals)*

Dear Colleagues, the above title may sound strange but it is one way in which I make notes for future development, not only on the book-to-be on Organization, but in all of my works when I have not yet worked out a definitive form in which to present the issue. That is why I have noted, parenthetically, that this is not to be read to the locals; it is for individual study only. I do feel, however, that I need now to write up the parenthetical promise on p. 3 of the Jan. 12, 1987 REB Minutes which noted that I will do so, and do so not mysteriously, but so that you can work out for yourself the references to the 1953 philosophic letters on the Absolute Idea. The focus is on page 2 of the May 12, 1953 Letter on the Absolute Idea, as excerpted in the 1982 edition of Dialectics of Liberation. The point is to catch the dialectical flow of the Self-Determination of the Idea, paragraph by paragraph.

The first paragraph on p. 2 calls attention to p. 483 of the Science of Logic, which shows how the stage of "exteriorization" is also that of intensification, i.e., "interiorization", i.e., objective manifestation makes the inward extension more intense.

The second paragraph on p. 2, which attacks impatience in "an absolutely uncompromising Bolshevik" manner, I attribute to Hegel, after which I quote from p. 484 of the Science of Logic:

That impatience whose only wish is to go beyond the determinant... to be immediately in the absolute, has nothing before it as object of its cognition but the empty negative...or else would-be absolute, which is imaginary because it is neither positive nor comprehensive.

The dialectic flow of this quotation is in no way related to the two names quoted in the preceding paragraph of the letter, but even if said unconsciously, has everything to do with what I follow the Hegel quotation with:

I am shaking all over for we have come to where we part from Lenin. I mentioned that, although in the approach to the Absolute Idea Lenin had mentioned that man's cognition not only reflects the objective world but creates it, but that within the chapter he never developed it. Objective world connections, materialism, dialectical materialism, it is true, but not the object and subject as one fully developed.

*The references to the Science of Logic in 1953 were all to the Johnston & Struthers translation. The penultimate Idea of Cognition, which includes the Idea of the Good, is covered in Vol. II, pp. 460-465; in the A.V. Miller translation, it appears on pp. 818-824. The Absolute Idea in Johnston & Struthers is pp. 466-486; in Miller, pp. 828-844. The specific paragraph on impatience occurs on p. 483 in J&S; in Miller it is p. 841; while the "idea freely releasing itself" appears on p. 485 in J&S, and p. 843 in Miller. So far as Nature in the Smaller Logic is concerned, Paragraph 244 is the final paragraph of the Encyclopedia outline of the Science of Logic.

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Stop for a moment. Hold tightly to the fact that ever since 1948-49, when I first translated Lenin's Abstract of the Science of Logic, I have done nothing less than extolling Lenin philosophically, specifically on the Science of Logic. There is no question about the fact that it was Lenin who created the Great Divide in Marxism in 1914-17. Our present changed perception of Lenin's philosophic ambivalence shows here that I actually did have some philosophic differences as far back as the early 1950s.

The fact is that it was not only Lenin who, by keeping the Philosophic Notebooks to himself, separated philosophy from politics. When we broke politically with the concept of the vanguard party, we kept philosophy and politics in two separate compartments. What this 1953 Letter shows now, is that imbedded in it was a sharper critique of Lenin's philosophic ambivalence than shown in Marxism & Freedom. In 1953, on the other hand, as we saw above, I had stressed that in the chapter on The Idea of Cognition Lenin had not concretized the objectivity of Cognition.

Here I wish to introduce something totally new from what I reported to the REB on Jan. 12. Since then, Mike and Olga have completed going through another box of archival material, and from it came out a letter to me from Grace Lee dated August 31, 1952. With her usual hyperbole, here is part of what she wrote me:

You have mastered Hegel. You write in your letter of August 29 as you have never written before. Instead of that one-to-one correspondence where you impose a movement on the Logic, you are now inside the movement of the Logic, caught up in its rhythms. The number of people in the world who can do that can probably be counted on the fingers of one hand. You are absolutely right in characterizing Herman's (Johany Zupan) search for the party as the Logic of the "Idea of the Good"--which stands in its own way and hence must in the end turn against itself.

We haven't found my letter of August 29, 1952 which produced that enthusiasm a year before I broke through on the Absolute, but it is clear from what she said on August 31 that I had evidently been writing on the penultimate chapter from the Science of Logic, "The Idea of Cognition." She further points to that specific chapter because, very clearly, I had been relating the Idea of Cognition to the concept of Organization. What was facing the JFT now that it finally broke fully with Trotskyism was the question: What kind of Organization now? This took a most ominous turn as I was coming to a break with Johnsonism, 1950-53. The specific objective event that precipitated the crisis in 1953 was Stalin's death.**

**The same type of crisis as occurred in March-April 1953 over the JFT's attitude to Stalin's death reoccurred with the first issue of Correspondence in Oct. 1953, for which I had written the lead on the Beria Purge. Reexamining this in 1987, I realize that what looks like the "Russian Question" -- that same old "Russian Question" which caused the first break with Trotskyism at the approach of World War II and reoccurred in 1950 on the Korean War--was, far from being on the "Russian Question", was actually on the decisive question of War and Revolution which has always marked that new continent of thought and revolution of Marxism from its birth. 1917 designated its move to the twentieth century. It was Stalin's counter-revolution that gave it a narrow nationalist stamp. Why the hell have all of us been caught in that linguistic web?

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In March 1953 I felt very strongly that an incubus had been lifted from the heads of the Russian and East European masses (evidently also from my head) and that revolts were sure to happen. It was a very exciting day in Detroit, both because the Black production worker, Charles Denby, and the head of the Youth, Ben, had independently thought that, no doubt, I wished to write a political estimate of that world-shaking event; they volunteered to work with me all night. When Denby appeared after his day at Chrysler he concretized this further, laughing jubilantly and saying that what all the workers were talking about, as the radio blared forth the news of Stalin's death, was: "I've got just the person to take his place -- my foreman." Denby asked if I had that article I was always talking about on the great trade union debate between Lenin and Trotsky in 1920 (on which I had been working since the 1940s). Denby felt that the workers would now welcome such a revelation; he wished to distribute it to them.

Think of the unpleasant shock that then occurred when Grace, who was in California and the responsible editor for that issue of the mimeographed Correspondence, felt that the Lead article could not be on Stalin's death, but on the "new" women around Selma who disregarded the blare from the radio announcing Stalin's death. Instead, they were exchanging recipes for hamburgers. Not only was that idiotic suggestion floated, but she undertook to censor my analysis on the significance of Stalin's death, so that it too sounded not so world-shaking. Such an attitude towards a world event produced such a struggle between me and Grace, that it actually affected the whole IFT.

What was CLR's "solution" to the crisis created by the different attitudes, both to Stalin's death and to the tasks of a Marxist newspaper? It was typically Jamesian: I was judged to be "politically" right, but nevertheless totally wrong because of my sharp attack on Grace. Grace was judged to be "politically" wrong, but absolutely right because she listened to the "new". After two months of this type of meaningless, diversionary, empty "solution" to both things happening in the objective world and attitudes to what are the tasks of a Marxist newspaper to objective events, I asked for a week off, left Detroit for Ann Arbor and out of me poured those Letters of May 12 and 20 on the Absolute Idea.

Now then, because the dialectic flow in the present singling out of p. 2 of the May 12, 1953 Letter points also to the relevance of looking at it with eyes of 1987, let me examine the new find, the 1952 letter which shows I had made a plunge into the Idea of Cognition, especially on the section "The Idea of the Good." Clearly, I definitely had Organization in mind. This was not on the level of James and Grace and their dialectic of the "Party", but on the question of Dialectic "in and for itself." While I do not remember where I raised the question that I wasn't quite happy with Lenin's 16 point definition of the Dialectic, I had called attention to the fact that Lenin says its final two points (15 and 16) are "examples of point 9." This, I felt, was a step back from proceeding with the Absolute Idea and returning to the Doctrine of Essence, Form and Content specifically.

At the same time -- and that's when I did get brave and started arguing with Lenin as if he were right there -- I began arguing with Lenin because he had asked the readers to disregard the last half paragraph of the chapter on the Absolute Idea while I insisted that had he suffered from Stalinism for three long decades he would have seen the relevance of following Hegel's Absolutes to the end. (This of course is taken up in the May 20, 1953 Letter, where I deal with the three final syllogisms, but for the present what is compelling is to trace the many ways of the development of the Self-Determination of the Idea.)

Here is how the May 12, 1953 Letter manifested the dialectical flow on p. 2: from exteriorization/interiorization it lapsed into a would-be "absolute" which led Lenin to remain at the "approach to", i.e., on the threshold of, the Absolute Idea. This is the reason why Lenin preferred to let the Absolute Idea stop at Nature (Practice), crediting Hegel with "stretching a hand to materialism," instead of following Hegel to the last part of that paragraph when Hegel insists that the Absolutes had not been completed with the Absolute Idea, and must still go through the Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy of Mind before completion is reached with Absolute Mind. Put another way, in place of any self-criticism, or objectivity, Lenin left future generations without full illumination of what may befall them -- Stalinism. It is the generation that followed, our age that suffered through those three decades of Stalinism, that had to face the reality of what happens after. It is this point, this objectivity, this concreteness that emboldened me not to stop where Lenin stopped at the approach to the Absolute Idea, but to follow Hegel to the Philosophy of Mind. The Absolute Method opened new doors already in the Absolute Idea, which Hegel defined as:

The pure Idea, in which the determinateness or reality of the Notion is itself raised to the level of Notion...is an absolute liberation, having no further immediate determination which is not equally posited and equally Notion. Consequently there is no transition in this freedom...The transition here therefore must rather be taken to mean that the Idea freely releases itself...."

Now stand up and shout: "The Idea freely releases itself." Shout this while a flashing light illuminates Reality and its meaning, philosophy and revolution.

Instead of placing a "No Entrance" sign over organization as "pure politics", we finally are in the process of working out dialectics of philosophy and organization.

Raya

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THE YEAR OF ONLY 8 MONTHS

- I. Mid-January: Star Wars from the Skies
- II. The Marxist-Humanist Significance of Location/Local, especially as it relates to "Not by Practice Alone"
- III. New Perceptions of Lenin's Philosophic Ambivalence as they Developed during the Preparatory Work for the Biweekly News & Letters.
- IV. Once Again, the Dialectic in a Body of Ideas: Marx, Lenin, and Present Marxist-Humanist Tasks

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Two philosophic letters to non-Marxist Hegelian scholars will be sent, one to each local:

1) "The Idea of Cognition," the penultimate chapter of Science of Logic, is key to our perception of Lenin remaining on the threshold of the Absolute Idea;

2) The other letter is on Hegel's "Third Attitude to Objectivity" in the Smaller Logic, the 1827-30 edition; though it is what Hegel called just an "Outline" of the Science of Logic, he wrote it after the whole body of ideas was completed and when he had worked out those 3 final syllogisms in the Philosophy of Mind.

Finally, with the eyes of 1987, I will write a New Introduction to the reprint of my 1961 "Notes on Phenomenology" to be ready in June.

10725

January 13, 1987

Dear Friends,

The same REB meeting discussed Raya's report on the ramifications of that most unusual Bulletin on the Expanded REB of 1/3/87 which, also for the first time, not only reproduced the report of Raya, but also the supplemental talk on the biweekly by Eugene as well as the voices of the 21 non-REB members as well as REB members who discussed not only the Reports, but the exchange of Letters with non-Marxist Hegelian scholars, on both our changed perception of Lenin's philosophic ambivalence in the Idea of Cognition as well as their critique of my interpretation of Hegel's Absolutes. As one put it, "I no longer follow you when you call the eternal idea 'revolution-in-permanence'."

In a word, integral with the biweekly, the need for organizational growth and our organizational tasks in general, was the book-in-progress. There truly is no separatism between theory and practice and this indeed was shown as our unique characteristic from the original 1953 breakthrough on the Absolute Idea as comprising the unity of both the movement from practice that is itself a form of theory and the movement from theory that is itself a form of philosophy and revolution.

"The Year of Only 8 Months" needs concentration on the biweekly, integral to which is organizational growth of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism. At the same time I hope to be working out some of the sections of the "Party" and Forms of Organization Born out of Spontaneity in the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy.

Yours,

Raya

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