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ON

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By OLGA DOMANSKI, National Organizer

Report to the Plenum of News and Letters Committees

September 2, 1979

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1979 PLENUM PROCEEDINGS

Summary of the National Editorial Board Meeting
of News and Letters Committees

September 1-2, 1979

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National Organizer's Report to the
Plenum of News and Letters Committees,
Sept. 2, 1979

ON ORGANIZATION / NEWS & LETTERS

I

There is no more dramatic, compelling, dialectical way to see what both the "Shift in Global Politics and the Need for a Philosophy of Revolution" is, today, than to review the last year's objective/subjective events through the ten issues of News & Letters that this Marxist-Humanist organization of workers and intellectuals has produced since we last met here in Convention one year ago today. There is not a single event of significance anywhere in the world that you will not find there -- whether a world-shaking event like the Iranian revolution, which every radical organization was instantly analyzing, or whether a simple hearing in Detroit on sexual harassment, which not another Left organization even considered worth "covering". We could take any issue and see the totality of the forces and reason of revolution in each. Or we could take some one subject -- like Iran -- which has appeared in one way or another in every issue this entire year, and see both the objective global political developments and, in just the different forms in which Iran has appeared, some of the subjective organizational developments for us.

In our October issue, Iran appeared in the form of an article by one of the Iranian students our Los Angeles Committee was working with, about the vicious clubbing of the students there who were protesting the lies American newspapers were printing about their revolution at home.

In November and December, we devoted the Editorial, and then the Lead, to the report and analysis of the ever-more massive revolt in Iran, not separated from the Two Worlds, where we printed the letter on "Iran's Revolutionary Past and Present" that Raya had taken time from work on the new book to send to the Editor.

By the January-February issue we were able to announce that the Letter had, at once, been translated into Farsi by Iranian students. Indeed, it was our first piece of literature with our new address on it, and was brought to our year-end Expanded REB in person, by a visitor on his way to the eye of the storm.

And by March we had the first of our eye-witness reports, direct from Iran, by an Iranian Marxist-Humanist, on the new forms of organization being created by the masses in motion as the revolutionary forces now faced the question, with the ouster of the Shah, of not only what they were against, but what they were for.

It was that same issue that printed our best cartoon of the year, at the time when all others were hailing Khomeini. There is not a single section of the paper that was not "part" of the way Iran entered our praxis. Our Youth columnist wrote on why the vanguardist U.S. Left stood aloof from joining demonstrations here which it could not set the ground for and control. ML-N&L devoted almost their entire space the next issue to the magnificent International Women's Day demonstrations of the Iranian women who were challenging that revolution to be total or to fail -- and to the support demonstrations around the entire world.

The highpoint came, of course, in May, when we were able to print excerpts from the Political-Philosophic Letter Raya had written -- in fact, had delayed writing until after she had a chance to discuss with another visitor his own Marxist-Humanist preparation for what he was about to experience. Indeed, that is directly related to how we have had all those eye-witness reports direct from Iran in every issue since. And how it is that we have so many friends with us today, to join with us in discussing our own Perspectives and the American revolution-to-be.

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At the N&L meeting where the first draft of this Organization/N&L report was discussed, Raya presented the concept that all of philosophy can be contained in the four Ws -- WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN. And we could certainly go through every single important objective world development, every What and Where and Who, whether China-Vietnam or Black Revolt; whether the Middle-East or the Anti-Nuclear, anti-war, anti-draft movement; whether Nicaragua or workers' strikes; whether the Pope in Mexico or Robotnik in Poland and Chicago -- and see it represented in these ten issues.

Or we could take the question of When -- and show that when the China-Vietnam events broke over the world, too late for a serious article on our paper already going to press, we were able to achieve something totally new by the ad that was not only on the question "Will China-Vietnam Trigger a Russia-China War?" but even more an essay on the relation of philosophy to organization to paper.

And that when the actual analysis of China's invasion of Vietnam and its global implications did appear the following issue, so fast do objective events erupt, that what the world had then had thrust upon it was the Three Mile Island near-disaster. Again, our April issue was already off the press. But we were able to write a leaflet at once that needed only to excerpt from Felix Martin's column (a letter written to Deborah who had been asked to speak on labor at an anti-nuclear conference and had asked our co-editor to write her his ideas on what to present); from Jim Mill's Youth column (and as part of his activity in the anti-nuclear movement, he had been moved to make a sharp critique of both the anti-nuke movement and the entire Left for failing to catch the revolt from below, and had as well caught the international links by writing of Czechoslovakia's Charter 77 expose of two serious accidents in that country). Most important of all, none of this was separated from the special attention drawn to that fundamental analysis of the China-Vietnam conflict and the nuclear holocaust that threatens all of humanity. And all of this just "happened" to be in our tiny eight page paper -- before Three Mile Island had happened.

But the most significant When of the entire year came with the May issue, the carefully-planned 12 pager that was to have a special review-essay by Andy, but which the objective situation following Three Mile Island AND the subjective situation following the classes we had been having in Philosophy and Revolution demanded be changed. It is very important to catch this. Raya's meeting with the PTC on that May issue came during the very week she was working out her fourth and final class of the series in Philosophy and Revolution. The truth is that it was not the objective situation alone, but the interpenetration of objective/subjective developments that marked the beginning of a new stage in our own development that would demand that N&L as paper be -- and be recognized by any reader as -- the publication of News and Letters Committees.

It is not simple "organizational consciousness" that we are talking about. In the very first issue after our last convention the Two Worlds was devoted prominently to a very new kind of report on the News and Letters Convention as philosophy and organization. We have found many ways to bring our organization into articles, writing as participants, mentioning our committees by name, as activists and thinkers. The NL-N&L Committee has perhaps done this more consistently than any other section of the paper. Yet, just consider that in the very issue where we could truly have shown ourselves, not only as initiators of the Wayne support demonstration for the Iranian women, but as the ones who saved the day, and blistered the counter-revolutionaries who tried to break it up by demanding they answer the all-important question of the revolution: "We're for freedom, what the hell are you for?" -- it was almost totally missed. Or take the fact that the New York

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WL-N & L Committee was the only one that had been able to translate into a leaflet form the very paragraph that the Iranian male revolutionary took back with him, feeling that it had opened up for him the whole vision of what Marxist-Humanism meant, as communication between the ages, between the continents, and between men and women. Yet, great as that leaflet was, consider what a few simple lines more could have added -- to say that the international support of all -- men, women and children -- was needed, and then to add something as simple as "Learn more about what you can do..." and then give our organization's name and address.

But, important as all these things are, that is not what Raya's meeting with the Philosophic-Technical Committee was discussing as the changes that the objective situation demanded in May. It was to have N&L as paper become a unifying force tying together our organizational activities and our philosophic foundations as inseparable one from the other. Thus, it was not only the number of reports of all our activities in the anti-nuclear movement and the great picture of our unique banner, or even their unification with an expanded Editorial and a Two Worlds from our living history archives that together projected Marxist-Humanism as a total philosophy -- but the totality of that entire issue where none of this was separated from the PPL on Iran, the labor dimension and the Black dimension, both at home and internationally. It is a tremendous issue. And yet -- the proof that it was still just the beginning can be seen in the simple fact that the "Who We Are" statement was simply reinserted as always, though it was that statement that Raya stressed the most, asking that the sentence which pointed out that we do not separate mass activities from the activity of thinking be seen as a creative task for development.

It is not that it would have been a simple task. Indeed, the statement did not undergo any reorganization until it became a task for the whole pre-plenum discussion, when the Who we are -- or the question of subject-- and the What we stand for -- the question of object or content -- did finally become the philosophic Us we are trying to grasp.

The most telling fact of all is that the classes -- those four classes in P&R that all of us had praised so highly as organizational -- did not appear in the pages of N&L at all, except for one small ad. We did not even think of how we could share the Syllabus with our readers, though we had special discussions about it, and can see by now that -- far from it being a "reading list" -- it is truly another form of a Who We Are and What We Stand For.

II

Why should it be so difficult to work out this relationship we have been struggling so hard to do, between philosophy and organization and paper? Isn't it because what we are trying to do has never been done before in all of world history? When Marx wrote in his Preface to Capital that "every beginning is difficult" it was not only a chapter in a book he was talking about.

When Marx founded a whole new continent of thought, he included in that the naming of the new subject, the new force and reason of revolution, the proletariat; and at the same time that he called himself and Engels "the party" he kept looking, from the day he first broke with bourgeois society until the day of his death, for the new forms of organization that the workers would create for themselves. He was always running to be with the workers, whether that was the League of the Just for whom he wrote and to whom he delivered the Communist Manifesto; or the First International, in which there were so many different tendencies, but where he could still be with workers; or whether it was the greatest new form of organization -- and not only of his lifetime -- the Paris Commune, to whom he had sent a young Russian woman revolutionary, and certainly not just as an "observer".

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But none of them were strictly "Marxist" organizations, none were his own.

The very first one that was supposed to be a strictly Marxist organization, the organization founded at Godes in 1875 by the combination of the two then-existing German workers' organizations, was so riddled with Lassalle's notions that Marx would have nothing to do with it, except to write a blistering critique, which he unfortunately did not make public -- going through the programme, paragraph by paragraph, and exposing mercilessly all the loose terms that, as Marx put it, "Lassalle has put in the place of definite economic conceptions." The point is that while Marx never developed a "theory" of organization, he did always make his philosophy integral to organization -- and it is that which we have been trying so hard to recreate in a concrete form for our own age. Nobody has ever done that before.

Those who followed Marx and called themselves Marxists, instead, invented the concept of a Party to bring socialism to the proletariat and to organize them. And it was Lenin who -- I am tempted to say, unfortunately -- was so serious that, as we all know, he raised that idea to the level of theory in his What Is To Be Done? in 1902. We also know that in his practice he constantly repudiated the vanguard concepts he had enshrined as theory -- and nowhere more than after 1914, when his own philosophic reorganization opened up the most profound new concepts and allowed him three years later to translate Marx's Civil War in France -- with its profound understanding of what the Paris Commune meant as the philosophic and spontaneous organizational form for the creation of freely associated labor -- into State and Revolution and from there into "All Power to the Soviets" when the 1917 Russian Revolution erupted.

But with all that great reorganization of his own philosophy, with all the great non-vanguardist actions he practiced, Lenin did not give one inch on his organizational theory. Indeed, it is that organizational ambivalence that is the root of his philosophic ambivalence. For without an organizational breakthrough, the greatest theoretical breakthrough on earth, much less a philosophic one, cannot become complete, because it cannot become truly concretized -- whether that is Lenin or Rosa Luxemburg or us.

In an important sense, 1905-07 was Luxemburg's highpoint. Which is not to say that the period of 1910 to 1914 was not of great importance. It is certainly greatly significant to us today to see that Luxemburg caught Kautsky's direction and had the Second International's number, so to speak, four full years before Lenin. But it is also important to ask what it means if your theory falls short of total reorganization? That Luxemburg continued to remain, no matter how great her theoretical differences, as still a faction in the German Social Democracy could probably be counted as one of history's true tragedies.

And Lenin, who certainly did not only break with the Second International, but did in practice repudiate much of his vanguard partyism, never made philosophy and organization integral in writing until he was literally on his deathbed, in his Will. But it took three full decades before someone -- Raya -- finally caught that that was what the sentence about Bukharin never fully understanding the dialectic was all about. It wasn't only that neither Stalin nor Trotsky wanted that Will made public. It was that Lenin did not make it exactly easy to catch that thin critical thread to Marx's philosophy of revolution.

What I am trying to say is that the theoretical void left by Lenin could be continued by Trotsky, while the Fourth International turned out to be a still-birth, because all could accept the 1902 concept as if that were Lenin's true or-

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organizational legacy. And the very first beginning of the end of the void did not come until 1941, when Raya's break with Trotsky was marked by both the development of a theory of state-capitalism and the establishment of its organizational form -- the State-Capitalist Tendency. From the very beginning, the economic theory was never separated from philosophy, as Raya discovered Marx's Humanist Essays while she was working out the all-critical role of labor. And yet, and yet, although that was, in one sense, "our birth", we remained within the SWP for ten full years longer, until 1951.

But wait -- even that organizational break contained such a duality within it, that as late as 1951-2 -- although we had left Trotskyism behind us, although we had said we were through with vanguard partyism once and for all -- Johnson had us reprint and restudy two documents he had written at the end of World War II when we were in the WP. One was called "Building the American Bolshevik Party" and the other "Education, Propaganda and Agitation". It happens to be the very same period when Raya was teaching Capital with the Outline she had prepared, the very one we have just reproduced. Johnson's documents were written because there was great dissatisfaction with Labor Action and a demand on the part of the rank and file in the Party for more "socialism" in the paper; everyone wanted to know why the thousands upon thousands of copies of Labor Action had not produced organizational growth, and Johnson was going to tell them why. I happened to reread them a few weeks ago and suddenly realized that what they really represented was nothing more than the idea of popularizing Marxism for American workers, who supposedly knew nothing about European History -- and what do you think was his conclusion? Let me quote it directly: "We have to begin to build up the American counterparts of the Communist Manifesto, the 18th Brumaire, and even more important the American counterpart of What is To Be Done."

It is absolutely true that it was one of our tasks to find the American roots of Marxism -- but what these two documents revealed, as I reread them, was the vast gulf that existed between the concept of needing to write an American counterpart of Marx's great works because American workers don't know, don't care or can't understand European history -- and the kind of American roots of Marxism we finally got with Marxism and Freedom, where nothing that has happened in the entire world "from 1776 until today" is foreign to any modern worker; where the chapter on the Paris Commune is made integral to understanding the chapter on the Montgomery Bus Boycott; and where the chapter on 1848 and all the tendencies that emerged in that very first mass proletarian battle so illuminates the struggles not only between workers and capital but between workers and radical intellectuals, in so universal a way, that it became the chapter Iranian revolutionaries translated into Farsi to circulate in their pamphlet on May Day 1979.

It took nothing less than both the breakthrough on the Absolute Idea in 1953 -- which was finally seen by the founder of our Tendency as the movement from practice -- and, six weeks later, an actual movement from practice in East Germany against Russian totalitarianism, before that duality within the State-Capitalist Tendency was ended and our philosophic new beginnings were matched with an organizational new beginning that could concretize it: our unique, Marxist-Humanist, News and Letters Committees.

The theoretical void that we have talked about since Lenin's death was, thus, not "only" theoretical. It was, at the same time, an organizational void which had to be filled. In short, what Marxism and Freedom and Philosophy and Revolution worked out philosophically is what remains for us to work just as fully organizationally. And it is not an easy task. But there is no other task in the world more exciting and more important.

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When our Perspectives Draft says: "It isn't News and Letters Committees that is the question, but the form of a revolutionary Marxist organization, as well as the relationship of it to the spontaneous new forms that arise from below, as well as the continuous working out of new relations of theory to practice", it is to put the "little" problem that our tiny organization is breaking its head over on completely objective grounds. For it is this problem that is the root of the whole incredible list of revolutions, just in our own lifetime, that we have seen become transformed, aborted, or crushed before they even got a second breath, when counter-revolution arises so quickly directly out of revolution itself. Just consider all the tendencies now rushing to Nicaragua ready to stifle that revolution and you can feel how critical is this question we are tackling today.

It is not the committee form as such that is some sort of magic formula. There is no form of organization — whether a Party, or a workers' council, or a guerrilla foco, or a revolutionary committee — that can give action a revolutionary direction unless it is grounded in philosophy.

The breakthrough in 1953 is not only the point where, at one and the same time, we found our link with Lenin and departed from him, but the point where we found our continuity with Marx's new continent of thought and yet had to begin the new journey of discovery within that continent. For what we have been working out in both organization and paper is totally NEW.

That is why it is very important for us not to use those beautiful formulations "movement from practice" and "movement from theory" as if they are clichés. Practice does NOT mean anything somebody does. It means masses in motion, challenging capitalism, creating new forms of organization, and demanding new forums for expression as they move history forward. The movement from practice is something very special and very concrete. And it demands that when you have recognized it — say in something as important as the revolutionary force that women represent — you don't confuse the question by insisting that because some women are discussing hamburger recipes when Stalin died, they represent the "new" rather than the Black worker in Detroit who said, "I have just the man to take his place — my foreman", and asked to have an article on Stalin's death distributed at his factory gate.

And the movement from theory is also very concrete — and is not only great events like the breakthrough to a whole new concept, but can be something as simple and yet profound as knowing how to elicit that Black worker's real thoughts.

In short, what our philosophy tells us is that the movement from practice is a form of theory when its spontaneity discovers the power of thought along with its physical might. And it tells us that the movement from theory is a form of philosophy which is also activity — and must be practiced.

III

Let's review the past year, then, to see how we practiced Marxist-Humanism and Absolute Idea as New Beginnings last year, as preparation for what we face in the year ahead, when we have set ourselves a deadline of 1980 for finishing the book so much needed on Rosa Luxemburg and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution.

Let me take for granted that you have all read the organizers' reports in the bulletins — and I think we have reached something new in that not only were none of them "laundry lists", but the best were the briefest because, through selected specificity of all the experience each local had through the year, they show-

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ed where we made it to what is worthy of being called a "new beginning", and where we didn't. Not as a "guilt trip", but as what Eugene called recognizing the difference between a new stage of activity and a new beginning of Marxist-Humanist growth. For not until we do grasp that, will we be able to transform the new stage into a new beginning.

Take membership growth. Like last year, it was still modest -- but even more than last year, it was significant. Not only did every single local gain new members, several members; and not only did they represent all the forces -- Black and white and Chicano, men and women, workers and students; but all came attracted to the totality of our philosophic-political-organizational directions. The classes -- both in Marxism and Freedom and in Philosophy and Revolution -- were the most outstanding demonstration of this, particularly in Chicago and in Los Angeles, though it was certainly true elsewhere as well.

I choose Chicago to single out because there is no greater contrast to the deadend they had experienced during their first year of "running after" what they had mistakenly identified as the mass movement, and the Black dimension they gained this year by grasping that who are the forces of revolution includes News and Letters Committees, as philosophy.

In a very different way, Los Angeles reached what is a new stage of development with the mini-tour by the co-authors of the Frantz Fanon, Soweto, and American Black Thought pamphlet, not only because of the new confidence and skill they developed as speakers for Marxist-Humanism, but because of the diversity of the audiences they reached (which will surely yet have consequences for us). But the membership growth did not come from that experience, but from the classes -- which meant a genuine new beginning for their work in the Black dimension, and almost immediately was extended nationally, as Gene left at once to participate in the Decatur events and report them for N&L. Indeed, even internationally, Kevin wrote that he had been able to sell many of his subs in Europe by promising our full reports on Decatur.

More important, internationally, of course, has been our presence physically and philosophically in the land of revolution, and counter-revolution, this year -- Iran. We have never had such close relations with an on-going revolution. It was a development we could see reflected right in the pages of N&L, which I traced in the very beginning of this report. But what is crucial to grasp is that what made that new beginning possible was the theoretical preparation the Iranian Marxist-Humanists were assured by their discussion with the founder of Marxist-Humanism for today, at its center, right here in Detroit.

It is certainly not for lack of trying that we do not have that same kind of relationship with Latin America. We had several very important trips to Latin America, from Colombia to Mexico. We had a brand new publication in Spanish, La Lucha Latina, with a Political-Philosophic Letter that grows more and more imperative with every new unfinished Latin American revolution. But we have to face that LLL was probably our least successful venture of the whole year. Yet the linking of Latino and Marxist-Humanism is "in the air" and we do have new relationships, especially in our New York Committee. While the trip to Mexico certainly didn't work out as planned, it nevertheless brought out the significant increase in sales of Filosofia y Revolucion, and can only make us determined to keep digging and digging in that fertile soil so we can accomplish truly new beginnings, both South and North of that border, that both we and they need so badly.

No one can predict how the dialectic will develop the year ahead of us. But we can see how the dialectic developed last year, and learn from it -- from the

three months that produced that most unexpected Draft chapter on the Great Divide that separated everyone, including even Angela, from Marx's philosophy of revolution -- through the expanded REB -- to the Classes, and all the activities from anti-nuke to sexual harassment to Decatur.

It began with the Draft Chapter because what that work revealed was not only Marx's uniqueness but ours. It compelled Raya to propose a whole new series of classes that she herself would present. At the very same time, what brought Raya back to the organizational work was the objective situation in Iran and our subjective situation when we found it possible to have an in-person dialogue with Iranian revolutionaries. By the time the stress on the need to relate directly to Marx's philosophy of revolution had shifted Raya's attention (even on Rosa Luxemburg) to 1905, the move from the work on the book to the PPL on Iran was a natural, and actually anticipated developments in the struggle between revolution and counter-revolution in Iran.

At the same time, Raya's decision to change her position from "no tour" this year to the "five classes in Philosophy and Revolution" (and it was five, not four, because the lecture on Rosa Luxemburg and International Women's Day and Marx's philosophy was certainly an integral beginning of those classes) transformed our whole conception of philosophy and revolution to philosophy of revolution; in short, to the direct confrontation with our tasks and our organization. That is how, in the very course of the lectures themselves, the title of the final lecture became itself transformed into a treatise on the true movement of history: from dialectics as methodology and liberation to dialectics as organization. It took this long journey before we finally grasped that our conception of "new type of member" we wanted to win, which we have been talking about since last year, included ourselves.

Thus, while Raya did not take a tour, the organization did. Not only through the classes, but through the actual physical moves: the expanded REB became virtually a mini-Plenum; Peter's move to L.A. was through the Center; Deb came for a full month as the kind of conclusion of her full-time organizership that was designed to be a new beginning rather than a conclusion; Kevin spent two intensive weeks to prepare for his trip to Europe; and Lou and Diane came to stay -- both to learn what you can only learn at the Center, and to help build both the Detroit local and the Center.

What is necessary now is to see all these developments as the needed medication to the next year, when the interpenetration of the objective situation and our subjective awareness of Who We Are and What We Stand For, has impelled us to set a deadline of 1980 for finishing the new book.

Thus, it was the magnificent way in which Mike assumed the tasks of Acting National Organizer for those critical three months last year that not only were integral to producing the chapter on Marx's Ethnological Notebooks, but made it possible to project this year as a full year for Raya's concentration on the manuscript. Indeed, it was the combination of altogether new world connections as a result of the work already done on the book, plus Mike's experiences both in the office and abroad last year, that laid the ground for Kevin's trip this year -- and has given us a Mike who, far from oringing at the very idea of writing a letter, swims easily in correspondence with everyone from anthropology professors to foreign publishers to the newest subscriber. Nothing better demonstrates that the self-development we always talk about does not mean as an "individual" but as growth for the entire organization.

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What is demanded is that kind of organizational self-development of every single one --- whether that be in strictest adherence to deadlines, and making sure that every article sent to the center needs no reworking before it can appear; or working out the special kind of articles to which our 12 pages can give space; or whether that be in the way the POC will find it crucial to make the pre-deadline meetings so creative that they will inspire magnificent issues in the way in which Raya's meeting with them before the key paper produced the greatness of that issue.

Far from Raya's fulltime concentration on the book --- at the very moment we are stressing organization --- being a "paradox", it becomes a proof, IF we see that "Organization, Organization, Organization" is really "Philosophy, Philosophy, Philosophy."

The proposal to reproduce the Chapter on 1905-07 --- probably for the January/February issue in ML; the additional proposal to have three classes around that chapter in all the locals, with Raya's offer to initiate them with a talk in January on "Rosa Luxemburg's Life and Death, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution" --- all seen as pivotal activities for the year ahead, leave no doubt that the work on the book is the centerpoint for all organizational work; IF we grasp that those classes, like the chapter itself, are not "past history", but living and current history-in-the-making, tied as tightly to the current objective world as to all the revolutions of our age, from the Portuguese to the Iranian to the Nicaraguan;

and IF we grasp that none of this is separated either from a new concentration on the Black Dimension or from the new study of Marx's Capital. It is a sure bet that neither the Black Revolt nor the new global recession that is here to stay will permit us to, even if we tried.

When you consider that Indignant Heart was the first book we produced after our break from the SMP, precisely because we wanted to start anew, not on the "Russian Question" but on the American Black worker; when you consider how great was all the new development Charles Denby attained this year --- as speaker, as writer, as "mentor" to Jeremy Brecher; when you consider all the identity it gave us through radio, press reviews, our own Dinner With Denby right here; all the magnificent letters that have come from those who accepted his invitation to continue the communication between reader as audience and writer as Marxist-Humanist philosopher; and when you consider that so devastating is the development of Part II over Part I, so thoroughly does it destroy CLR James' ground for today, that the Jamesites were forced to attack it viciously in WIN --- you can see how all-embracing will be Denby's work and our work with Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal next year, when we will be undertaking a recreation of the dialectic of Black Revolt through a study of all of our writings from 1943 right through to today. I believe we will ourselves only then truly grasp also the greatness of our Frantz Fanon pamphlet.

In the same way, it is the global crisis today that makes us reprint Raya's original Outline of Capital, which itself came to be in the mid-1940s because the totality of the crises then, which culminated in World War II, had ushered in a whole new economic stage --- state-capitalism --- as well as a new stage of revolt within each orbit. Though Raya was teaching Marxism, straight Marxism, in those classes she taught in the Trotskyist Workers Party during WWII, it is no wonder she was accused by the majorityites of organizational "factionalism", that is, of teaching state-capitalist theory and winning members to the Tendency. Because that's just what was happening.

In the same way, it is the study classes around Marx's Capital (which each locality will be working out for themselves as best fits their needs and their

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periphery) which will tie together Marx's philosophy of revolution -- that totality of economics, politics, philosophy, new passions and forces, and battle of ideas -- with Organization, our organization which produced the Outline and continued to develop that dialectic through Marxism and Freedom and Philosophy and Revolution through to today.

I will leave it for the Youth themselves to bring out in their discussion the inseparability of the establishment of the autonomous youth groups from the crisis that has brought forth a new anti-nuke, anti-war and anti-draft movement -- and for our Women's Liberationists to speak for themselves on how that banner in our January/February issue, "Relationship of Philosophy and Revolution to Women's Liberation", has been shown in this year, and will be developed in the year ahead.

What is clear, no matter from which vantage point we view it, is that we truly are facing the possibility of a leap to a whole new stage organizationally to match the new work, both as book and as concept, which is our point of concentration this year. In her last lecture of the series on P&R this year, Raya introduced the organizational question as the final and conclusive point -- calling it "the concretization of the Absolute Idea." It was not that we have not been doing just that ever since 1953, or at least 1955 when we finally expressed it openly as News and Letters Committees. But it was, she said, time to "stop keeping it as our organizational 'secret'". That did not mean that we were keeping our organization a secret. The secret we have been keeping is that our organization is the concretization of the Absolute Idea. That it is not only a mass movement, a new continent of thought, or an international revolution that is "new beginnings", but that we, too, are the new beginnings.

That is why the most important thing that was added to our new "Who We Are and What We Stand For" was not something we added at all, but something we "left out." When we deleted the invitation to readers to join us "in working out a theory for our age" it did not mean that we thought the job is all finished, anymore than Marx felt the job of working out what his new continent of thought meant, was all finished once he had written his Who We Are and What We Stand For for the League of the Just. What it does mean is that we have to begin not only accepting, but projecting to everyone we meet that the Marxist-Humanism that has been presented in Marxism and Freedom and Philosophy and Revolution, and that we are continuing to concretize in every issue of P&R we print, every leaflet we write, every speech we make, every activity we engage in -- is the liberation theory we are offering others as ground to join in building upon.

-- Olga Domanski

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A SUMMARY OF THE PLENUM OF NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES
HELD SEPTEMBER 1-3, 1979

INTRODUCTORY NOTE: Because the Plenum, at the conclusion of its deliberations, voted to print in full the Perspectives Report by Raya Dunayevskaya, along with the International Reports on Europe by Kevin and on the Middle East by Azadkar as Post-Plenum Bulletin Number One, and because the Plenum also decided to attach this Summary to the full reproduction of the Report on Organization/NEL by Olga Tomanski, it is stressed that the following summary is to be read in conjunction with those reports. Only in that way can the full development of the intense weekend of discussions on philosophy and revolution, philosophy and organization, be grasped.

Charles Denby, editor of News & Letters, opened the Plenum on Saturday, September 1, with a Welcome to all the members of the National Editorial Board, and to all the invited members and friends in attendance. He stressed that what was so new this year was both the setting of the 1980 deadline for the work-in-progress by our National Chairwoman, Raya Dunayevskaya, Rosa Luxemburg, Today's Women's Liberation Movement and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution, and the way we are looking at ourselves, at our own history, especially in relation to the Black revolt. If we go back to the mid-1950s, and the year of our birth, 1955, we can see the deep recession, as well as McCarthyism. But it was at that time that we chose to fight against McCarthyism and unfurl a totally new banner of Marxist-Humanism. It was also the time of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, and Marxism and Freedom was the only book that ever called it what it was: the beginning of a revolution against US capitalism and racism on the same level as the Hungarian Revolution against Communism. Others were forced to fight McCarthyism then too, like Coleman Young and others of the CP type, but now they have ended up on the opposite side of the barricades against the Black DPW workers and Black youth. In the 1970s, the need for a philosophy of revolution is clear. You can see it in Portugal and Angola, in Soweto and Nicaragua, and in Iran. But most of all, you can see it in our own organization, in the publication of Philosophy and Revolution, in Part II of Indignant Heart, and in FFSABT and WITE. On the doorstep of 1980, and Raya's third major work, we can see in the work we did in the 1970s what gives us the confidence that we can unite philosophy and revolution in our age. We are taking our responsibilities so seriously this year that we are assigning Raya to concentrate on the completion of the new book, and Olga to work with her, and we are assigning ourselves to work out all the new contributions to the anti-nuclear, women's liberation, the Black revolt and the rank-and-file labor struggles.

Denby declared the Plenum open, and turned the chair over to Ron, Chicago, for the organization of the Plenum. The Agenda, adopted at the preceding executive session of the NEB, was read, and a Presidium of four (one each from New York, Detroit, Chicago and California) was introduced. Ron then turned the floor over to Raya Dunayevskaya, National Chairwoman of News and Letters Committees, for the PERSPECTIVES REPORT. (Because the report is printed in full in Post-Plenum Bulletin Number One, it will not be summarized here, but the contents page alone will indicate the direction of the thesis):

ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE 1980s, AS OBJECTIVE REVOLUTIONARY NEW BEGINNINGS
AND AS DEADLINE FOR ROSA LUXEMBURG, TODAY'S WOMEN'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT,
AND MARX'S PHILOSOPHY OF REVOLUTION!

- I. The Overview: New Beginnings vs. Decadent Capitalism in Disorder
- II. The World Recession, Oil and SALT II
 - 1) The myriad political-economic crises
 - 2) Without a philosophy of revolution: oil and the PLO gaining a foothold with Black leaders

III. Objective Significance of "Subjective" 1980 Deadline
or
Can We Aid the New Beginnings--the Lamentous World Historic Events
of Our Decade--Develop Instead of Abort?

Deborah, Bay Area, took the chair for the PERSPECTIVES DISCUSSION. Eugene, Los Angeles, took up the form of Raya's book-to-be and its relation to how we practice Philosophy as Organization. Some of us have treated the book as if its form were "Rosa Luxemburg, Today's Women's Liberation Movement as well as Marx's Philosophy of Revolution." The key is our attitude to a new continent of thought--Marxist-Humanism. There is no corner, no special enclave, of our activity that does not have to be permeated by this new continent of thought. Eugene went on to develop this in terms of Latin American relations, on his attitude toward a Mexican women's liberationist who was enthusiastic about us, but without really examining if the affinity was strictly on Marx's philosophy of revolution as the ground. This duality within our own practice -- if we become conscious of it-- can help us to see new points of departure in relation to Nicaragua. Where many are linking the reconstruction of Nicaragua to US aid, what must become central for that reconstruction is the resource of liberated human activity, especially the youth, who for 15 months carried on the civil war. To confront that duality, our four Marxist-Humanist works in Spanish become central, as a way to establish a connection to Latin America and to the Latino dimension at home. The task to be concentrated on now is the need to have on-going relationships with individual Latino revolutionaries around those four works.

Peter Mallory, Detroit, concentrated on oil, on how it isn't just OPEC that is blackmailing the public, but the big oil companies, and the effects they have had world-wide, with gasoline prices up 42 percent in the first nine months of 1979. Carter's plan for artificial oil is even more costly. The real concern of the politicians is the availability of oil for war. When I did my study of oil and labor in the 1940s, the oil industry published its statistics that told you all the facts. Now they have a fat book that tells you nothing. It is looseleaf, like a Russian history book, so that embarrassing facts can be easily replaced. The nationalization solution of the Left is no answer, as the current situation in Mexico shows, with peasants driven off the land by PEMEX. But the Iranian oil workers show that there are catalysts for revolution within oil itself.

Ron, Chicago, reported on some of the experiences they had reading Capital this year. As they read, they kept a newspaper clipping file on the business world. Hardly a single paragraph in Capital didn't describe a current development, like "freakish economic phenomena" such as the "baffling collapse of productivity growth." There is such a contrast between the intellectuals who agree: "there are no answers anymore," and the workers who caught the anti-humanism of the new stage of automation as it began. On Chicago's south side, one worker called his shop a "concentration camp" because of the level of concentration on this alienating production demanded of the workers. Reading Capital really has helped us to see how only a philosophy of freedom can develop that needed self-certainty of the subject, and thus helped show the urgency of the 1980 deadline.

Kevin, New York, spoke about how in his summer in Germany he never heard as profound an understanding of the German workers as Raya gave in just a few paragraphs in the Perspectives report. In a similar way, we have to recognize what it means that the dialectic of the Middle East passes through Detroit. The report today is different even from the Draft Perspectives where the conclusion was on ourselves as development from tendency to organization. Here philosophy--as the new book--is a crucial part of the possibility for social revolution. We have to work out what that means for our individual self-reorganization. Felix Martin, West Coast Editor, talked both about production in the GM plant where he works, and about the coal mines in Kentucky he had just visited.

My plant got cut back to one shift. I'm still working, but others with less seniority aren't, but everybody should have a right to live. In this society, if you don't have a job, you don't have a right to live. I go to Kentucky, and the coal companies are stealing coal from people's lands, and not paying royalties, and nobody goes to jail. Raya showed in the report how these same thieves are in every country, stealing from workers. I think of the 1980s; it's only four years before 1984. We need that revolution to come right now.

Mike, Detroit, took up the 1980 deadline and the archives of Marxist-Humanism in relation to Raya's work over nearly 40 years on Rosa Luxemburg. If you compare Raya's 1946 analysis of RL's Accumulation of Capital with what RD has just written on RL in last month's Two Worlds column, the difference makes you work out the process of development. It was the new stage of Women's Liberation--both as unfoldment of, and as contradictions in--that was the context within which Raya began pointing to another aspect of RL's legacy that might help propel the movement forward. It wasn't WL alone that gained from this re-organization, but everything from the view of Iran 1979 to the title of the Draft Perspectives--"Shift in Global Politics," which for RL meant the end of the old stage of capitalism, and the confrontation with new revolutionary forces--was illuminated. Tommie, Detroit, developed three "news:" the new people we have met, the new book-in-progress by Raya, and the new stage of the Black struggle. The women we met through the sexual harassment hearings were seeking a total uprooting in society and thought. The racism and sexism of this country shows you why. Yet at the same time there is a division within the Black movement that also needs uprooting. We showed it in ACOT, but I think of it in a new way because of J.'s article on religion and women in Iran in the pre-plenum discussion. Isn't it time we faced the role of our own caste of male-only preachers and teachers that appointed themselves to lead the Black movement? They will never offer the kind of total uprooting the new people we met are looking for. But we can. In the new book, Raya will take up 1848, not just as Seneca Falls, but as Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth. But most of all as how a total uprooting needs a total view, like Marx writing the Communist Manifesto and raising a new banner for society before the revolutions broke out. That is why I believe this book is preparation for the revolutions to come.

Derrick, Chicago described the strike at his plant, against both minimum wages and mental abuse. The boss is a tyrant, a slave-master. Mental abuse is an important part of how they conduct their fight. Derrick explained the events of the strike thus far, concluding with Victor Hugo's quote that "no army can withstand the force of an idea whose time has come." We say to the boss: his time has come. (Derrick will be writing up the story of the strike for REL.) Andy, Detroit, told of reading recently about the Bolsheviks and seeing that they had a committee structure. The word "committeeman" was an important category. After the 1905 revolution, the reaction drove the Bolsheviks down from 40,000 members to 400. There were impediments to revolution in the committeeman's vanguardist mentality that accepted the idea that socialist consciousness came from outside the workers. Andy developed how this was related to the difficult tasks we will be facing in the period ahead, and how hard it is to root out the vanguardist mentality. He pointed to the need for the whole organization not to divert from the work on the book in the year to come.

After a break for lunch, the Discussion on Perspectives resumed. Derrick, Chicago, asked for the floor to make an application for membership. His application was taken up immediately, and Derrick was unanimously voted into membership.

Olga, National Organizer, recounted how she first reacted when she heard the news of the PLO and the Black leadership. First was what were its ramifications globally and for the American revolution? And second, was how many other events like this will break during the year ahead, and what will that mean for the REB, our paper, and for all of the committees? We all know to look for the "new." But you can't get to the new without finding out where we came from. Olga described how Raya's

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reading a reference in the NYT to the National Black Convention in Cary, 1972, sent her to studying what we had written at the time in NBL and the Perspectives Report of 1972. Last year we saw how the Perspectives was actually a road map of the events for the rest of the year, from Carter-Dogin-Sadat at Camp David to the Israel-Egypt treaty six months later. You saw what had to be different because of the Iranian revolution. Israel-Egypt became a military pact. The point, Olga said, was in going back to see what we had already written, and then to see the "new" within "old" writings. This was especially true this year in the address on the China-Vietnam War. (He then developed this in relation to the collection of Two Worlds columns.) Only one thing can prevent us from being able to work out the new events in the year ahead: if we ever separate philosophy from organization, or the daily work from the work on the book. If we think that Raya has been given one "assignment" to work out, and that we have another, rather than a unity we are working out together, we really will be unable to meet the challenge. But there is such a rich experience to draw on, if we only see it, we can pass the test with flying colors.

John Alan, Bay Area, said that the work on the book next year puts a greater responsibility on us. This unity of philosophy and organization we talk about can't be abstract. It means that the organization has to reflect all the forces for revolution, and that each of us must grow philosophically. He also took up the firing of Andy Young and the way making it into a Black-Jewish confrontation is taking the heat off Carter. Some elements of the top Black leadership are getting close to saying "Zionism is racism." Yet Carter is the one who fired Young at the same time he is making contact with the PLO.

Mary, Detroit, spoke about the need for a comprehensive theory being as burning a question as activity for Women's Liberation, and about our preparation and contributions for the coming year. Mary expressed it in terms of Raya's trip to Mexico City and her talk to WL there. After Raya's talk on intercommunication across national boundaries and ages, the questions immediately went to the level of "strategy." Raya refused to discuss on this level. Mary then described some of the tendencies in that meeting, including Wages for Housework, and how Raya answered that tendency by looking at Selma James' positions in 1953-55 and our own, and where each ended up today. Mary asked whether we really understand our own history, how we came to specify women in our Constitution as one of the forces of revolution. Or whether we have worked out why Raya spends so much time on a Hal Draper in the Draft Chapter, by looking at Rowbotham's acceptance of his version of Marxism. Mary went on to say that we can no longer "hide behind" the MM as if we did not have something to offer, and not on the level of "strategy," but on the need for a comprehensive theory. Laren, Bay Area, said that she was really impressed with the diversity of people here. The 1980 perspectives say to me that we must have achieved a certain maturity. At the youth meeting you got the idea that autonomy wasn't just about youth, but all of us, as new type of members. What was so clear about the Draft Chapter was that posing the problem as the division between mental and manual labor means that all forms of exploitation must be exposed or we won't make it. (He then showed how this related to her work in the Tenderloin area of San Francisco.)

Gregg, Bay Area, discussed what was new for him in "re-organization." He said that contact with NBL Ctes. has meant finally understanding the relationship of ideas to the concrete world. Indignant Heart showed me what philosophy is about. Gregg felt that we don't need a philosophy of revolution--we need activity that is grounded in philosophy. The need is to practice something new, not just go to supporting one country or another as the answer to this society. Peter, Los Angeles, said that what struck him in the Perspectives Report was how the 1980 deadline flows from the objective situation of the last year. It has been a very exciting year, with more revolutionary activity than at any time in the past decade, and two on-going revolutions. Peter said that the Iranian revolution was central to understanding the year, especially as counter-revolution tied into revolution, and the fact that no philosophic tendency existed

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that could really challenge Khomeini. This is why translating Raya's PPL into Farsi is so critical for the on-going revolution. Unless you have a fundamental critique of Khomeini, he has three rein against the Kurds and the Left. The duality in all revolutionary movements, Peter said, demands concrete intervention, right here in the USA. We have had a lot of that experience in the anti-nuke movement this year, and it is this experience that is beginning to reveal the organizational ramifications that Iran's duality will compel us to see.

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Marcotte, New York chaired the next session, on EYEWITNESS INTERNATIONAL REPORTS, and turned the floor over first to Kevin, New York, for his report on Europe. Both Kevin's report, and the report on Iran by Azadkar which followed are reproduced in full as appendices to the Perspectives Report and printed in Post-Plenum Bulletin Number One. They are therefore not summarized here.

After the INTERNATIONAL REPORTS, the Discussion Continued both on these reports and on the Perspectives Thesis. First to speak was Malcolm, Detroit, who reported on the situation in the tire plant where he works. After the five-week strike, we got nothing at all. In fact, the absentee policy is worse than ever. He told of how the ratification vote was fraudulently conducted, and the disgust of the rank-and-file. Now the firings are nearly every day. (Malcolm will write up the latest events for the next N&L.) One last thing. N&L is the only newspaper cut out and put up by the workers. Sometimes it is the Uniroyal article, but another time it was the Russian WL poem. Urszula, Chicago, discussed the work she is doing with the Polish underground paper, Robotnik. She described for the Plenum some of the serious and varied subjects taken up in each issue, from unemployment in Poland today to a story on a chemical plant where they are still using a process abandoned because of its deadly effects everywhere else in the world. You learn of the shortage of medical supplies, and the mass deaths in the severe winter. There is the internationalism too, in relation to the Russian movement. One bad note is what has happened to Kuron, who was a real leader of the opposition in the 1960s. Now he has given up on the idea of revolution, and denounces "rioting."

Charles Denby, said that he wanted to continue with the discussion Raya began and John Alan continued this morning, on the Black leaders and their direction. Denby told of his visit to Decatur, Ala., and how the SOLO leaders waited one year before they went to join the protests against the frame-up of Tommy Lee Hines. Then quite a few proposed a conference in Norfolk, Va., against the KKK, but when the Andy Young situation came up, all the leaders there jumped on that issue instead, and talked about the PLO. The KKK was forgotten. From Gary in 1972 to today, Denby said, the leaders have forgotten the ranks, and the movement that created them. In contrast, I have gotten a lot of letters from workers who read IHABIAN, and either complimented me or had honest and serious criticism. But what was so sickening was the lying, slanderous article in WIN magazine by this Prof. Marable. Like some of these phony leaders, he doesn't consider that workers have any thoughts of their own.

Marcotte, New York, then took the floor to tell of his experiences in a South Bronx factory, and in the Latino, especially "Newyorician" community. At lunch, he said, you go across the street and see there is no difference between the employed and the unemployed—all are the people of the NY blackout of 1977. To me, philosophy and organization is tied up with how we relate to this world and the Latin Americans from every country in exile in NY. The opportunity is there for developing serious relations, in the Capital classes and in the chapters we will be studying of the new book. Russell, New York, also related the summer's discussions in the factory, and then went on to tell of how N&L was received at Hos-tos College after an absence. It is a place where all of Latin America is represented, and where we are so well known. Many have read P&T or N&L in Spanish. It is our internationalism, and our view of a second America that makes students want to come up and talk.

The Plenum then heard a report from a visitor from Nicaragua, on the history of the Sandinista struggle for freedom. She traced the movement's origins with Sandino up to the seizing of the National Palace last year, when the whole world finally began to pay attention to the struggle to get rid of Somoza. She described how Somoza boasted that he was going to be the one to "exterminate Communism." The youth said: it is us you are trying to exterminate, and it is us who will exterminate you." She recounted how repression after repression drove the youth further into revolution against Somoza, explaining that it was the youth who really made Somoza fall. After the assassination of Chomorro, armed struggle became the only possible way. There are several different tendencies today in Sandinismo. Some of this came from the studying the students did themselves, since the schools would never teach anything about the real history. Everything is different now, she said. The US can never come back as the exploiters of the banana plantations. They can come as tourists, but not as the White House.

Beas, Los Angeles, said that what concerned her in the international reports, both on the Middle East and on Europe, was how we make relationships. It is especially important for New York, with the Latin American community there. How do we get this one-to-one relationship between revolutionary individuals from the Middle East or Latin America? Marianna, Detroit, wished to return to the Perspectives presentation, on the question of anti-semitism. We are the only Left group that is thinking seriously about that question today. In our discussion, 1943 is very important, both as the birth-time of the Marxist-Humanist tendency and as the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto uprising. And we said "all roads lead to Warsaw." Marianna traced the history of our tendency on this question through 1948, when all roads didn't lead to Palestine, and 1967, when Israel became the occupier, to today. The two worlds in every country, Jewish and Arab, is what stand out, she said. Each stage is different, and you have to work it out. That is what she was thinking of when she worked out the compilation of a pamphlet of Raya's writing on the Middle East, to try to establish a dialogue with Israeli Women's Liberationists.

A women's liberationist visitor from the Middle East took the floor to speak about the Middle Eastern situation, women's liberation there, and the opposition we are facing from religion. The WL movement is today facing tremendous problems from the fact that separation between government and religion never happened in the Middle East. In Iran, when the WLM raises its questions, the Maoists say to wait for the present government to get rid of its problems. For the CP, there is no change from women as means of production to human beings. She described the woman in Iran with no financial and spiritual support, who nevertheless wants and needs a new movement to free herself. The women in Iran have supported some movements, such as the family protection law movement, and they are important. But these movements are not directed to a philosophy. The new government is now replacing children's texts that were previously corrected on sexist language, restoring all the narrowness of girls' roles. All the religions of the Middle East, whether Judaism, with its prayer: "Thank God I was not created a woman," or Islam, with sexism in all its daily rules, or Christianity, have to be fought with a very concrete philosophy.

Gene, Los Angeles, wanted to pick up on what Marcotte had related on the lack of difference between employed and unemployed. In the NY blackout, the majority put in jail were employed. Workers saw that capitalism was taking something from their everyday lives that they had to recapture. The employed of today always come out to be the unemployed of the future. This is all related to forced overtime that workers are facing now, while others are on the streets. Becky, Chicago, felt that even though she had only been coming to M.E.L. Cte. meetings for a few months, she could say what she was thinking and have it be heard. I am from the women's movement, and I was attracted to it because of the desire that women have expressed to create something new. That new is putting social and material relations back in their proper place—that we treat each other as people. Here I see that no human being is stagnant, and that continuing revolution is to continue to question ourselves.

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Raya then took the floor for a summation, which she has asked not be summarized here, since instead she has added an addendum to the Perspectives Report itself, which was reproduced in Post-Plenum Bulletin Number One, and which she wished to include in place of both this summation and the one she gave at the conclusion of the session on Organization the following day.

Raya did, however, offer one MOTION: 1) That the first Post-Plenum Bulletin include not only Raya's Perspectives Report, but add both of the Eyewitness International reports by Kevin on Europe and Azadkar on the Middle East. Cd.

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The Plenum reconvened on Sunday, Sept. 2, at 9:30 AM, with Anne, New York, in the chair. Anne then turned the floor over to Olga Domanski, National Organizer, for her report, which, for the first time, combined as one report News and Letters Committees as organization and News & Letters as newspaper. (Olga's report has been reproduced in full elsewhere in this bulletin, and will not be summarized here.)

The DISCUSSION RESUMED with Dan, Flint taking up the anti-nuclear movement in Michigan and our participation in it. He traced the separation between the mass crowds that turned out at Monroe and Midland after Three Mile Island and the increasingly narrow, elitist "organizers," beginning with the attempt to ban anti-Dow Chemical speakers at Midland, and continuing up through the recent planning meetings where being against capitalism was considered a diversion. Worst is the role of the Left groups. They come in disguise, denying they belong to anything other than anti-nuke groups, and vote and speak for narrow reforms. M&L Ctes. really is the only one to speak for a revolutionary solution, but there are quite a few activists, like the Big Rock 14, who are listening to us now.

Deborah, Bay Area, felt that it was necessary to break down the two compulsions for our discussion on revolutionary-philosophical-organization: the objective compulsion, as in Iran, and the philosophical compulsion, from the new book-to-be by Raya. Inseparable, she said, from Marx's critiques of everything was his singling out of new revolutionary subjects. It isn't the critique alone that shows you the way out; it's when it is combined with the new subject. Deborah then took this concept to Raya's breakthrough on the Absolute Idea in 1953--she made the category of philosophy and organization, which could only have been made in our age. All this has a great impact on the WLM, if we see our contribution, as in the Draft Chapter.

Peter Mallory, Detroit, pointed to the newness of Olga's report combining paper and organization. Yet such a combination is the truth of ourselves. In years back, he said, you could say that the paper was a reflection of what the workers were doing in the world, but it was harder to find in it what we were doing. The eyewitness reports from Iran, as well as movement demonstrations in the UC, point up the relation of all work to the building of this Marxist-Humanist organization. The new "Who We Are And What We Stand For" statement draws this into sharper focus, as we consider "living archives" today not only as living past, but as living future. He concluded with a few words on the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection both at Wayne State and the archives still to be donated. There is a perspective of much needed work in both areas in the next year.

Eugene, Los Angeles, wished to continue the discussion on philosophy as organization, looking specifically at the Black Dimension as central to the American revolution, and to our own working out of that centrality over the last 35 years. Eugene developed the new in the objective-subjective state of the Black struggle today, and the dualities within the movement, including the attachment of leaders already separated from the masses to the apparatus of state power, attachments which put them in conflict with Black workers. Eugene went on to show the need to dig deeper into our own work, our methodology and how it developed along with the movement from the 1940s to to-

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day. The need is shown in the fact that the most penetrating parts of FFSABT were not those on the US struggles, but on Fanon and on Soweto. Yet it is preparation for the American Revolution that is needed most concretely.

At this point, the Plenum voted not to wait for the afternoon session to hear reports from Women's Liberation and Youth, but to ask those speakers to give their reports now, adding to the totality of the discussion on philosophy and organization.

First to speak was Suzanne, Detroit, reporting on Women's Liberation, News and Letters Committees. Suzanne's presentation, tracing the activity of the committees in relation both to world events and to the new theoretical departures Raya made this year, stressed the need for each of us to become the "new type of member" we talked about this year. She asked where we made it this year--and where we didn't. We were best in our response to the attacks on the women's movement, from Rome to Cincinnati, and especially in the demonstrations in support of the Iranian women after International Women's Day. Iran helped show why we have to make the links to all other forces of revolution, showing what we mean by a total uprooting. We began to do this by speaking as Marxist-Humanist women's liberationists at anti-draft and anti-draft demonstrations. Another high point was the participation in the Detroit sexual harassment hearings, after the last P&R class, where we did take up "a total uprooting" with the women we met.

Yet on both of the most important organizational developments this year--the Jan.-Feb. Draft Chapter and the classes in P&R, we didn't get the new. Suzanne told how she had just now seen that the new book was not a book on WL, but on Marx's philosophy of revolution. Did we miss the same point on Sexism, Politics and Revolution? She went on to discuss the significance of the man/woman relationship in the Draft Chapter, and its relevance for Iran, where it emerged as one of--but only one of--the measures of that revolution's incompleteness. Look how quickly the Kurds followed the women. Women were not the only ones. If you concentrate only on the man/woman relationship, you miss the totality.

To make a new beginning this year, we have to ask why we missed all the letters Raya was writing us every step of the way on the Draft Chapter. (Here Suzanne traced RD's letters in last year's Pre-Convention Bulletins, where she had already concentrated on the relationship of Marx to Engels, and asked WL to try to work it out, and later, after she got the Ethnological Notebooks.) In fact, in the eight years since the WL "Who We Are" statement was written, we have missed many new beginnings because we separated Raya as founder of a whole new continent of thought--including WL thought--from ourselves as WL committees.

The idea and practice of WL was always present in Marxist-Humanism's organization, even before we had a WL committee that called itself one, beginning with Raya's 1951 "On Organization," which pointed to the women drawn into war production, and then thrown out. It was reprinted in 1955 to show that women's struggles weren't all confined to those in the home. The greatest thing about the women's participation then was Angela Terrano's column called "The Working Day." You see what a columnist can be, and we could all benefit from re-reading them. The most total challenge to new beginnings, Suzanne said, is contained in the UCAE lectures on "Women as Thinkers and as Revolutionaries" that Raya gave in 1975. If we studied them now, how much we would see about what Raya has been developing on the book all this time! The point is to see how we can re-organize ourselves, individually and as a committee, to attract a new kind of audience for the classes on the new chapter in Jan.--and to be that new kind of audience ourselves. The same re-organization is needed for the WL page. Tommie and Diane did the most last year with their contribution to the battle of ideas on Michelle Wallace and the Hares. All of us need that re-organization that will help us get to new beginnings.

Jim, Detroit, Youth representa-

tive to the NEE, then gave the report from the Youth Meeting, held Aug. 31, at our national offices. Twenty of us there spent three hours discussing what young people are doing everywhere against the system, and what we intend to do as an organization, with our philosophy giving our action its direction. The interpenetration between philosophy and spontaneity, Jim said, is what really came through. There were so many exciting points in the discussions, from Gene's on the unity of student and working youth struggles, to Karen's on the self-determination of people and ideas that is at the heart of youth movements. There was certainly a focus on the first Internationalist Marxist-Humanist Youth pamphlet, the Farsi translation of "Iran: Unfoldment of, and Contradictions in, Revolution." And Erica pointed to next year by looking at last year's highest point: Raya's five lectures at Wayne State University, and what we will do for the classes we will hold on the new Draft Chapter to come.

For himself, as a young autoworker just laid-off, Jim felt that the recession was something that never really went away. The bankruptcy that hits you isn't just Chrysler's, but the bankruptcy of ideas and the revolt of youth against it, from high school students fighting ID badges to the youth in the factory even when times are "good," stopping the line, sitting down, walking out. He described the revolt of the young workers in his plant, the way they fought the union leadership as well as the company. The recession is producing people with ideas of freedom.

In the anti-nuke movement, our view is certainly unique and critical to its direction. The fact that the special issue of the Flint Voice on the anti-nuke movement will be printing an article by Lou Turner will be important for our work this year. Everything will be heightened by the kind of policies that will be coming out of Carter's Energy Mobilization Board. As a way of beginning to take seriously our own importance to the movement, the Youth Meeting decided to do some things we never did before. We took minutes. We decided to publish a Youth Bulletin on the meeting, and also to write it up in the Youth column in N&L. And next year, Jim resolved, we really will have regular Youth correspondence which helps bring together all our activities. If we meet these perspectives, we will be ready for our second publication--the first issue of the Internationalist Young Marxist-Humanist.

 After the NL and Youth reports, the Discussion resumed on both of those reports and on the report by Olga on Organization/N&L.

Kevin, New York, wanted to talk about correspondence, and not alone the correspondence he sent back from Europe, but the stack of correspondence he received from Raya, Olga, Mike, the NEE minutes, the letters from the comrades in New York. They gave me a concrete political-philosophical link with the organization and sustained my day-to-day political direction. The other correspondence, my letters to the Center, also helped give me direction, Kevin said, because it forces you to sit down very concretely and think about what you did and what you will do next week. Correspondence is a form of organization of thought. Lenin didn't want free-lance intellectuals running all over; and Kevin wasn't in a local. But that correspondence helps you have the organizational sense you need, and it shouldn't just be for Europe, but continue now that I am back in New York.

Peter, Los Angeles, continued the discussion on the Youth Meeting, stressing that the world-wide youth revolutionary involvement was in sharp contrast to the organizations within the movement who want to water down the struggle, to limit the expression of the struggle's totality. Peter said that this duality was the context of the formation of the Internationalist Marxist-Humanist Youth Committee and the reason for its strict connection both to new subjects of liberation and to Marx's new continent of thought. He pointed out that the committee began in the Perspectives discussion in June, as a central part of

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our organizational conclusions, not as a tactical question. He then reviewed the work of the IMHYC in Los Angeles this summer, with the classes on M&F, the publication of the Farsi pamphlet, the anti-make work, and the connections to the Latino movement, stressing that the "Internationalist" in our name is not an illusion of a new International, but part of the totality of our commitment to the needed American Revolution.

Dave, Chicago, described his experience with Robotnik in Chicago, and the "mixed responses" he got. A shipyard worker was very impressed and wanted to get it reprinted in the union paper, but the Leftists see "the party is infinitely good," and they don't want to read any more. There is a lot of relevance for Chicago, since we have the Pope coming to visit us this year too. The "Liberated Trybuna Ludu" really is, as Raya pointed out, a very high stage of revolutionary opposition through satire, and Dave wanted to add an American touch, on the subject of the Michigan anti-nuke "organizers" voting against a "new human society:" "Save the forest/ the hell with the trees/ a brand new society/ but no people please!"

Bill, New York, said that he had been reading Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program, and was struck by the passage on wage labor as a system of slavery. Where he works, Bill said, the word "slavery" isn't rhetoric. We work days of 14, 16 or 18 hours every week. The limit of the working day is when the job is done. An old worker on my job said to me: "You're a slave." And he wasn't kidding; it is real today. In the classes on PAR this year, Raya expanded on the illumination of the Black dimension that Marx saw in John Brown's movement. Bill then raised some new points on the struggle in Kansas, and John Brown's conclusion: "I will carry the war to Africa (Black America)." Bill agreed to develop these points for a future article.

Thome, Los Angeles, concentrated on the situation in auto, where he is now laid-off. Discussing the forms the revolt takes, whether absenteeism against forced overtime, or incomplete jobs against speed-up, Thome showed how the union is only an aid to production for the company. The Blue Sheet at GM South Gate, he said, has been the only alternative workers can turn to—and they have. Sharon, Chicago, reported on the Women's Music Festival held last week in rural Michigan, where 7,000 women, mostly lesbians, enjoyed music and talk. This year, the contradictions in the gay movement and the women's movement were brought sharply home, Sharon said, when Canadian women were harassed by border police and most of the women at the festival were too into their own thing to care about their sisters. They talked about the wonderful feeling of "sisterhood" while doing nothing. Counter-culture isn't enough.

After a break for lunch, the Discussion Resumed on Organization/N&L, with Felix Martin, Los Angeles, chairing. Becky, Chicago, asked to apply for membership. After discussion, Becky was unanimously voted in as a new member of News and Letters Committees.

Mike, Co-National Organizer, agreed that no one can predict the events of the year ahead, but said we shouldn't act as though we have no idea about what the relationship will be between Raya's work on the new book, Olga's collaboration on it, and all the organizational tasks we have set for ourselves this year. All are part of one logical-historical movement—one single movement—to end the separation between philosophy and revolution that has emerged at the heart of every revolution in our age. Mike traced the three months last year when Raya worked with Olga on the Draft Chapter, and he was Acting National Organizer, stressing the experience we had then; when Raya, far from "disappearing", wrote to us on the progress of the chapter, on Pope John Paul II, and on the Iranian revolution.

Many people, Mike said, have asked "what they could do to help" next year, and he offered to tell them now, first and foremost on the paper. The key is individual re-organization about our relationship to the paper. On space, seeing that stories are not written at unusable lengths, and expecting the Center to cut them. On deadlines, scrupulously adhering to them

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so that all the articles can be here in time for us to have a view of the paper as a whole. And most of all, to see the 4 Ms Raya has talked about as our test of revolutionary journalism, so that articles do not have to be re-written here. Mike had just one last point, on correspondence. If we all followed the report Kevin gave on correspondence between Europe and the Center, and concretized it for our own activity, that is something that would make a world of difference next year.

Anne, New York, felt that Marx's philosophy of liberation will be the measure of whether we can make a leap in truly uniting philosophy and revolution, whether on the MM or on the German Social Democratic women's movement, and how it takes women out of history. The opposite is what we will be doing on the study of the new book, and on the classes in Capital. They will be an opportunity to challenge many people we know in the MM. Lillian, Bay Area, felt that the cases of battered women are now becoming very important. Women have been able to turn around the criminal justice system. She asked that the committees for battered women be supported, and told of new friends she had met in this work.

Tommie, Detroit, was concerned with three points on the Black movement we need to be taking up in M&L this year: leadership, youth and the man/woman relationship. There is such a division between the "leaders" and the Black youth, whether the leaders are middle class or radicals. She described how some nationalist adults at a youth meeting were terrified of the youth reading M&L. But everyone bought a copy anyway. Tommie also took up how Michelle Wallace and the nationalists seem to be on opposite sides of the fight over man/woman relationships. But both are reducing the question to sexual relations, and making social revolution into "sexual revolution." The greatest expose of this, Tommie said, wasn't either her own or Diane's review, but Raya's in the Iran PPL. We can't let people write any nonsense and call it Black Thought without answering it in the year ahead.

Andy, Detroit, pointed to the amount of writing Raya and Olga had done for M&L last year. It amounts to $3\frac{1}{2}$ issues, just in space terms. That is what we have to give serious attention to when we write. Andy returned to what Raya was able to see in the M&L reports on the Gary convention of 1972--the whiff of oil that is now becoming a stench. The "who, what, where, when" in Denby's article written then, helped Raya go back and work out what the Muslims and Maoists were doing now. Andy felt that M&L had incorporated so much of the experience that Lenin's Pravda had made, that our newspaper is now breaking ground no one has ever seen before. Ted, Bay Area, on strike at a child care center, told of the confrontations with armed security guards. It lays bare the despotic plan of capital vs. the plan of the workers. The kids understand the strike very well. He said that the main point for M&L now is getting ready for Denby's trip in October.

Erica, Detroit, was struck by how much the Youth meeting had grown both in numbers and seriousness over the years. Part of the new is the national office, where the meeting was held. And Jim being on campus full-time will make a real difference this year, she said, and might mean that we can finally understand our relation to the archives. Frank, Detroit, said that Olga's presentation on our history made him think of the phrase "long march of philosophy." In his own life, from the 1940s, as a youth falling in love with the dialectic to today, there is a whole history. Organization, the relation of us to each other, is philosophy. This is what we are working out, and it needs camaraderie to do it.

Mary, Detroit, stressed that M&L's central role for the year to come wasn't the same as that for the youth. And it isn't only "lower and deeper." It is on "woman as reason," she said, and especially in our responsibility for the WL page. Mary questioned whether our attitude toward WL journals left M&L "last on the list," and whether when we do feature what the mass movement has done, as in Iran, we have really caught what is new. Diane, Detroit, spoke as a new

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Detroit and a new member of the Philosophical-Technical Committee responsible for putting out the paper. Describing the way the committee discussed each article, she stressed both the need for adherence to deadlines, and the importance of sending in articles in a way that they will not need a lot of re-working. As the one responsible for the labor page, I will see how important it is to work out what Raya said in Perspectives on watching the developments in labor for the next two months.

Bess, Los Angeles, felt that it was important to see what we have done on the Latino movement. She singled out Eugene's speech at a conference on Latin America this year as a high point, and described how she works with it as "follow-through." Terry, Chicago, spoke of reading Capital and P&R at the same time that she was in a class on current WL theorists, and how the ground of Marxist-Humanism was so important to take instead of those junky "theorists." Terry reported her resolve to write for MEL each month, not worrying about whether it is published or not, because, she said, "self-development is exhilarating."

Chris, Bay Area, talked on the urgency of the anti-nuke movement's need for a new kind of leadership—one that does see a totality, rather than narrow technical-cultural elitism. Chris described the Bay Area's work with Lou Turner's article on the anti-nuke movement and Native Americans, as part of the way all the divisions were forced to emerge. Evan, Chicago, took the floor to express how different News and Letters Committees seemed to him than all the other Left groups. There is a real sense that you express the development of the human individual toward a new society.

Bob, Detroit, stressed that the 1980 deadline is created by the world situation and is not a date for having a new book in our hands. Instead, it is also a date for ourselves to be new members, and to attract a new audience to discuss the book with. We won't write the book, Bob said, but we have to see that we are there with it. Susan, Detroit, asked what kind of activity can you have in another organization as a Marxist-Humanist? She suggested that activity reports at the local meetings be given much more seriously, thought out beforehand, because the separation between the "business meeting" and the "educational" is another form of the separation between philosophy and organization.

At the conclusion of the DISCUSSION ON ORGANIZATION/MEL, Raya took the floor for a summation. She has asked that all study the Postscript to the Perspectives Report in Bulletin Number One in lieu of any attempt to reproduce that summation here.

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John Alan, Bay Area, took the chair for the next session, and turned the floor over to Charles Denby to present the FINANCE REPORT.

Denby introduced the finance report by tying it very tightly to the new high stage of the unity of philosophy and organization we have reached in the preparations for the book. The financial aspect of that preparation included financial responsibility for a full-time national organizer at the Center, at the same time that all the new work of this year is being expanded, and that we make sure MEL is sustained. Denby concretized that responsibility immediately by spelling out \$25,000 as the amount we would need for the year to come. He stressed that this goal had nothing in common with Jimmy Carter's call to sacrifice, since our whole history has proved what it really is: our own self-development. This was shown for the past year in the many creative ways the comrades found to raise the money we needed, even when we were faced with such crises as having to move our headquarters in the middle of the winter—a move that turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Nor were the contributions limited to the members. The Appeal this year brought in over \$1,000.

If you look at the financial report for this year, what stands out immediately are the sales of our Marxist-Humanist literature, a figure far greater than any in our entire existence,

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\$2600 more than last year. One area, he said, that needs to go up still more this coming year is subscriptions to N&L. The sales of Denby's own book, INABWJ, as well as the Black Thought pamphlet really helped open new doors everywhere from the campus to international relations, and now it will soon be on sale in Britain. What this whole year had proved to Denby was how a small group like N&L Ctes. can bring forth from ourselves and others creative ideas and the needed money to put them into practice. Wouldn't it be great, he said, if we could have two in the office full time, all the time, and not only when Olga is away with Raya?

Denby then opened the floor for discussion and pledges by turning over the first contributions to the Sustaining Fund--a week's wages from Dick A., in Britain, and a very substantial check from friends in the Middle East, anxious to help us with the American Revolution. During the finance discussion, there were two more applications for membership--from Kate, Bay Area, and from Ron, Chicago. The Plenum took up both applications immediately, and warmly accepted both Kate and Ron into membership. At the conclusion of the discussion, the total pledged for our Sustaining-Publishing-Organizing Fund came to over \$26,000.

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The following MOTIONS were then made and voted upon:

- 1-To publish, as the first Post-Plenum Bulletin, Raya's Perspectives Report and the Eyewitness International Reports by Kevin and Azadkar. Cd.
- 2-To publish, as the second Post-Plenum Bulletin, Olga's Report on Organization/N&L, attaching to it the Summary of this Plenum. This Bulletin to be published no later than Oct. 1. Cd.
- 3-To approve the Finance Report, and its Sustaining Fund goal of \$25,000. Cd.

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Michael Connolly,
Co-National Organizer