

Eugene

4th class -- Eugene

11/18/84

The title for this series of talks is Marxist-Humanist Perspectives and the Dialectics of Revolution. I would like to be permitted for today's class to change that title to an expression which will help us to capture the thrust of these ~~mass~~ classes. The methodology of Marxist-Humanism and how it is recreated at distinct historic moments in the

not only methodology which is crucial but the phil. level of the new

freedom movement, is the title I would like us to think about. When we say this, <sup>we</sup> do not view this methodology as <sup>ah</sup>suprahistorical, as some kind of collection of truths that we express. Rather, the expression "recreate at distinct historic moments in the freedom movement" is the only test of such a methodology.

Let us begin by seeing how <sup>how</sup> the first three classes ~~was~~ expressed this methodology. In the first class "How to Begin Anew? The Birth of Marxist-Humanism and the Vicissitudes of the State-Capitalist Theory"

the reading jammed together three historic periods: The 1940s when state-capitalist theory was first fully developed and <sup>the</sup> readings from the 40s. The 1950s when the Marxist-Humanist tendency expressed itself in a new organizational form, News and Letters Committees and <sup>hence</sup> the readings of ~~our~~ our first Perspectives Thesis "Theoretical and Practical Perspectives: Where to Begin," and our first printed pamphlet Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian

1970-80

Revolutions. <sup>The 1980s</sup> and the test which Marxist-Humanism faces today

and hence the reading of the 1984-85 Perspectives Thesis "The Movements from Theory as Well as from Practice vs the Great Artificer Ronald Reagan."

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What emerged from that first class <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> ~~ix~~ first the fact that even as an original theory to meet the objective reality of our ~~age--~~

state-capitalism as a world phenomenon -- was incomplete and would undergo ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ vicissitudes if it was not connected firmly

both masses in motion fighting for freedom and the development of a full social vision -- the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism. Second, that

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Marxist-Humanism was no abstraction, but was immediately put into practice in the 1950s in the founding of News and Letters Committees, the establishment of a newspaper, News & Letters, whose editor would be a production worker, Charles Denby, and <sup>whose paper</sup> ~~which~~ would be a unique combination of worker and intellectual in having voices from the freedom movement and Marxist theoretical expression, and that the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism would be further concretized in the assignment and completion of a task, the restatement of Marxism in book form with the publication of Marxism and Freedom. (I hesitate to use completed because as we all know, that first work then led to P&R and to RLWLKM and to a new book in press on Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution, and I ~~also~~ <sup>now</sup> to the in-embryo conception of a new Marxist-Humanist work on Marx, Marxist-Humanism and organization.) Third, the readings for the first class pointed to the ongoing nature of Marxist-Humanist Perspectives both in assigning as reading the 1984-85 Perspectives Thesis and in particular in our study of that final section of that Thesis "Not By Practice Alone". It is this last section which spells out the <sup>and responsibility</sup> tasks of ~~our~~ revolutionaries, one that Marxist-Humanist revolutionaries are determined to undertake; ~~spells it out in the most comprehensive manner in our history as a tendency.~~

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX We will return to this point later.

The readings for the Second Class--entitled "Black Consciousness and the Needed American Revolution"--concentrated on how Marxist-Humanism develops the specificity of a particular force of revolution: the Black Dimension, ~~xxxxxx~~ limiting <sup>ourselves</sup> ~~to~~ to two historic moments -- ~~the 1960s~~ <sup>the 1960s</sup> In America where we showed Black is both beautiful and revolutionary and we showed the dangers it faced by misleaders such as Sarmichael and Cleaver <sup>who</sup> wanted to take it in non-revolutionary directions -- and the mid 1970s in Southern Africa and that magnificent Soweto Rebellion of youth workers and the emergence of a Black Consciousness Movement. Jammed against this deep, creative, revolutionary movement

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from practice was the labor of a Marxist-Humanist Perspective on the Black Movement's relation to the need<sup>al</sup> American Revolution. That Marxist-Humanist perspective<sup>on</sup> Black has historically singled out: 1. Black as the touchstone of American Civilization, exposing its hollowness. 2. Black masses as Vanguard -- a concep<sup>o</sup>tion of what vanguard can mean & revolution<sup>ing</sup> far removed from its denegration into the elitist vanguard party. 3. M-H perspectives showed the two way road between Africa and America of freedom action and ideas, that is, a precise spelling out of how Black is a world revolutionary question, including the Carabbean. (See here especially our pamphlet on FFSABT.) 4. We show<sup>ed</sup> how Marx and the Black World intertwined throughout Marx's lifetime from America at the time of the Civil War to Africa to Australia at the end of Marx's life. And finally 5. How Marxist-Humanism sees the relationship between race and class, indeed between Black and all the other living dimensions of freedom -- workers, women, youth, other minorities. The Second Classes' readings on the new paragraphs added to RLWLKM after it went to press gave us a glimpse of how that same methodology which Marxist-Humanism strove to create with respect to the Black Dimension, was as well practiced with all ~~with all~~ forces of revolution, especially women.

If the first class was the development and practice of M-H out of state-capitalist theory as well as its recreation in 1984, and the second class was looking at how Marxist-Humanism views and helps to develop a living subject of revolution, then the readings for the Third Class, entitled "What is New in the Anti-War Struggles? What is New in the Sino-Soviet Conflict?" were a way of seeing how Marxist-Humanism enters the international arena -- both as ~~analyzing~~ <sup>analyzing ~~strategic events~~</sup> and in finding ~~new power for~~ <sup>new power for</sup> freedom on an international level. It did so by 1. returning to the question of state-capitalism, now not in the 1940s, but in the 1960s and beyond when what had emerged was not only one state-capitalist giant calling itself Communist, Russia, but a second China. Now the vicissitudes



How have we done so? On the one hand we have worked out a concept of what is the revolutionary practice of the masses and on the other hand we have been working ~~out~~<sup>out</sup> what is revolutionary theory in its relation to the masses practice, in its relation to a full philosophy of revolution.

Let's begin with working out the movement from practice of the masses and its relation to theory. In working this out we had a tremendous amount of help -- from the masses themselves.

① From the workers in America in the 1949-50 Miners General Strike we asked the most profound question of What Kind of Labor Should Human Beings Do?, in being the first workers to launch a strike against automated production in the form of the continuous miner. (You can study both that strike and Marxist-Humanism's relationship to it in our pamphlet on The Coal Miners' General Strike and the Birth of M-H)

② From the East European masses--the East German Revolt of 1953, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, who put ~~rev~~<sup>revolution</sup> against state-capitalism calling itself communism on the agenda, and did so while rediscovering the Humanism of Marxism, ~~not a return to private western capitalism~~<sup>Marxist</sup>. M-H's specific relation to these and other events in East Europe can be studied in specific chapters in M&F on East Germany and Hungary, in P&R on Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and in specific pamphlets on Poland and Czechoslovakia.

③ From the African Revolutions of the late 1950s and early 1960s The African fight against Western imperialism not only remade the map of Africa but truly gave birth to the Third World, and to the attempt to have an African socialism, centered on humanism.

④ From Latin America, the Cuban masses who dared challenge not only Batista, but American imperialism in 1959, and even earlier, the 1952 Bolivian Revolution which brought forth the dimension of Indian, peasant, miner and woman ~~as subjects of revolution~~.



that capitalism was not a historic and eternal, but rather that its absolutes were false, were in mortal opposition to each other, the highest one being on the one hand the absolute concentration and centralization of capital in the hands of fewer and fewer capitalists, while at the same moment using less and less workers, living labor, and thus bring forth the growth of the absolute army of unemployed which would be an army of revolt. When Lenin returned to Hegel in 1914 he found the concept of transformation into opposite, not Hegel's absolutes, as the philosophic dimension which spoke most directly to his age. ~~But~~ Dunayevskaya and Marxist-Humanism saw something ~~very~~ very new in Hegel's absolutes for our age. We certainly agreed with Lenin that transformation into opposite was profound -- competition into monopoly, and a section of the working class into its opposite, an aristocracy of labor. But we have had 50 more years of transformation into opposite, including the transformation of the Russian workers' state into state-capitalism, and ~~it~~ that ~~isn't~~ quite enough for our age. We need to know ~~how~~ <sup>how</sup> to prevent revolutions from being transformed into counter-revolution, witness Iran and ~~from~~ Grenada. ~~and~~ We are one with Marx about the falsehood of capitalism's absolutes, witness their absolute of science, which in their hands, has the form of high tech, high unemployment and the H-bomb and can only mean humanity's disappearance as a species. Or witness capitalism's fetishism of commodities at the same moment there is mass starvation.

But what Marxist-Humanism sees is a way out, a way out in that revolutionary movement from practice that we have designated as a form of theory, if at the same time revolutionaries grasp that there is a movement from theory rooted in a philosophy of revolution that needs to be made concrete for our age. It is precisely for that reason that we grapple with Hegel's absolutes anew. What we see is that Hegel's absolutes are not unmoving pinnacles of a system which stops some place touching God. Instead we see that Hegel's absolutes are in fact

revolutionary new beginnings in life and in thought -- that is, we can translate Hegel's absolutes as not <sup>at</sup> other than the absolute movement to become free, a ~~new~~ permanent movement toward freedom, an unchained dialectic, a permanence of revolution, when that dialectic is in the hands and head and soul of masses in motion and Marxist revolutionaries in revolutionary praxis. *So that the Self-Thinking Idea to which we will be unchained*

Everything we have done as News & Letters Committees, our paper, our pamphlets, our books, our participation in all the aspects of the freedom movement has that movement from practice of the masses as its beginnings; as its essence; as its ~~notion~~, or goal or aim. This is the self-development of masses in motion toward freedom. And yet, that movement from practice, this long march of revolt, that is our point of departure and our point of return, is not the totality of what we mean by Absolute Idea as New Beginning. Equally crucial is the Movement from Theory that <sup>not only</sup> is able to fully meet that movement from practice <sup>by being</sup> grounded in a philosophy of revolution. <sup>being capable of anticipating the next stage</sup> This <sup>is</sup> the long march of <sup>nothing to do with</sup> philosophy. <sup>prophecy & everything else</sup>

That movement from practice that is itself a form of theory we grasped very early, in the 1950s. The long march of revolt since then has been the masses continually <sup>making out</sup> creating new forms of revolt in the 60s, 70s and now the 80s.

The long march of philosophy in our era has not simply been a single breakthrough <sup>ough</sup>. If we take a critical look at our own praxis over three decades, we will see that the movement from theory, rooted in philosophy, had had a long march. It has been a march to become more and more explicit as to the role, the tasks, of Marxist revolutionaries.

Very early on we had rejected the vanguard party to lead and all its empty elitist theory. <sup>But what to put in its place when you</sup> But we had not fully worked out what to <sup>realise that both spontaneity and ORGANIZATION are objective is no easy task</sup> replace it with. <sup>Perhaps because we ourselves were not yet fully aware of</sup> just how new a relationship of theory to practice was demanded by the



and will be with us as a necessity

breakthrough on the Absolute Idea. Yes, we recognized masses as subject of revolution. And we counterposed their revolutionary subjectivity not only to the unfree, false objectivity of capitalism, but we also counterposed the masses subjectivity to the narrow subjectivity of would-be Marxistsx <sup>leaders</sup> revolutionaries from Mao, to Castro to the Trotskyists and others who we designated as post-Marx Marxist who didn't base themselves on Marx's Marxism. But at the same time we hadn't yet posed explicitly a second revolutionary subjectivity <sup>which means S-D/P the line</sup> which of necessity must arise together with masses in motion. And this is the revolutionary subjectivity of Marx's Marxism, as a philosophy of revolution, recreated for our day as Marxist-Humanism. Put differently Marxist-Humanism <sup>itself</sup> is very much a part of what we mean when we say Absolute Idea as New Beginning. <sup>with the emphasis on New Beginning from that totality</sup> It is precisely this philosophy of M-H which is along side ~~the masses as a New Beginning.~~ <sup>of the objective-subjective Absolute</sup>

Which brings me back to the title of the last section of our 1984-85 Perspectives "Not By Practice Alone". If ~~we~~ we realize that for more than a quarter of a century we have explicitly rejected the vanguard party to lead. And that we have some thirty years of labor to show the revolutionary nature of what we mean by a movement from practice that is ~~it~~ itself a form of theory, if you see this, then you will understand how different and on a <sup>what</sup> completely new revolutionary level it is for us to say "Not By Practice Alone" how differently we mean it from all those others <sup>refer to every one of</sup> who ~~discuss~~ <sup>mean by practice of the masses.</sup> practice of the masses. We are saying that now, today, we are working out the role of revolutionary Marxist thinkers, theoreticians ~~and~~ and working out the role of organization in a way it <sup>had</sup> ~~has~~ never been worked out before. That is the task we are in the midst of.

I will return to this question once more in my conclusion. But first we have to see that this relation of theory to practice that I have been speaking of <sup>is</sup> ~~it~~ not a theoretical debating point, but a life and death question that has been the Achilles heel not only in the

past but is the Achilles heel we are facing today. So we want to discuss how philosophy is made concrete, how it is practiced. We are going to do it ~~and~~ in three ways, ~~xxxxxxx~~ that are presented in the <sup>class</sup> readings for this week. 1. I am going to take a specific year 1976 and take up a world hot spot, the Middle East and see how Marxist-Humanism analyzed through the two political letters the one of Jan. 1976 on the UN Resolution on Zionism is Racism and the Aug. 1976 Letter on the Civil War in Lebanon. 2. Terry is going to see how Marxist-Humanism takes up a whole Continent, <sup>LA</sup> not limited to one year by looking at Raya's Political-Philosophic Letter on Latin America's Unfinished Revolutions. And 3. Diane will be taking up how M-H analyzed a specific period of Marx's ~~last decade~~ <sup>more</sup> and will show how we are not just looking at a long neglected period of Marx's life work, but ~~we~~ are determined to connect those last writings of Marx to the revolutionary <sup>movement</sup> events and tasks of the 1980s.

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the sub-reports necessarily all without any philosophy + were all "political". Terry esp. was unrelated to phil. It would have been better if the concentration on a whole continent + had some dialectical principle like Kant "stopping dead" as he approached the dialectic + I am stopping dead at activity + said this, too, is impossible as world have been there, alone.

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revolutionaries developed principled positions on a national question. We won't take the time to follow in here in any detail. I am pointing to it for your study, so that you can see how Marxist-Humanism bring in revolutionary historical time into an analysis not for the purposes of quoting "authorities" but for purposes of grasping what is a dialectical methodology.

The anticipatory time that this January Letter raises in terms of the fight in Lebanon, and Syria's potential counter-revolutionary role as the PLO waffled ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> the ~~quested~~ <sup>quested</sup> of the ~~Lebanese~~ <sup>Lebanon's</sup> Civil War, comes through with a ~~xxxxx~~ <sup>a</sup> devastating truth by August when the PPL on Lebanon, the test not only of the PLO but the whole Left is written. For it is here where not only Syria's counter-revolutionary role is shown so very clearly, but even more crucial, the absolutely lack of ~~anything~~ <sup>anything</sup> approaching a revolutionary philosophic vision within the PLO--which then proceeds to suffer an almost equal defeat as the Lebanese Moslem Left does in the Civil War--a defeat ~~is~~ not at the hands of Israel, though there were most happy it happened, but a defeat at the hands of the so-called progressive allies, especially Syria. <sup>Del-orientation is as crucial in our age as it was in the 19th century</sup> It is clear that what unites the Arab nations big and small is not as much anti-Israel though that too is a unifying cement, as it is anti-revolution in their own countries. <sup>in Palestine Israel is and wants to be the revolution in each country</sup> That is what they will all unite to try and defeat, and the PLO among others, became a victim, though by no means an innocent one.

But where the anticipation of this M-H analysis is really seen is today--looking at the Middle East, Lebanon in particular. "When history and theory get into each other's way, and philosophy and revolution get separated, there is no exit from counter-revolutionary consequences." What else has Lebanon 1977-1984 been except the horror of counter-revolution from Syria, to Israel, to the fascist ~~Salange~~ <sup>Phalange</sup>, to the destruction of remnants of the PLO, to the rise of Khomeni supporters to the destruction of both Lebanese and Palestinian people.

It is that jamming together of ongoing events, historic time, future time

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*What is Marxist-Humanism? analysis con. practice*

(Terry report here, and then Eugene introduces the following)

The question of failed revolutionary practice <sup>and to be the way</sup> cannot be answered simply by more practice on top of failed, incomplete theory <sup>total absence of philo</sup> that does not deserve even the name of half-way dialectic, whether in the Middle East or in Latin America or anywhere in the world. It has to be addressed by digging back into Marx's philosophy and <sup>an</sup> understanding of his concept of revolution. We are doing that in this class by seeing how Marxist-Humanism went back and dug into the Marxism of Marx.

Diane will examine this in terms of Marx's last decade and how Marxist-Humanism ~~xxxxxx~~ views it as new moments for our revolutionary era.

(After Diane's report, Eugene has his conclusion)

Revolutionary philosophy is not <sup>more</sup> something to 'know', but <sup>imperative</sup> something to practice. How do we unchain the revolutionary dialectic in the age of Reaganism. That is what the classes are trying to dig into. What we ~~xxxx~~ have seen whether today when we looked <sup>at</sup> the Middle East and Latin America, or whether as in earlier classes we looked at Mao, at the Black Dimension, at the question of war and peace, <sup>and</sup> war and revolution -- what we have in all these moments is that the masses in their revolutionary practice have

time and ~~time~~ again unchained that dialectic of freedom in the actuality <sup>of their struggles</sup>. The powers in the <sup>United States</sup> East and West, North and South, have constantly sought to keep the people in shackles, to keep the dialectics of revolution in chains. But we have also seen that the revolutionary movement itself has not unchained that revolutionary dialectic in thought, an unchain <sup>in</sup> that is so necessary if we are to ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ fully unchain <sup>it</sup> that dialectic in life.

Marxist Humanism has written of a single dialectic in <sup>life</sup> thought and <sup>in</sup> actuality. We do so not because we put it together, but because in <sup>in</sup> actuality there is only one revolutionary dialectic, one that is an ~~intertwining~~ intertwining of the ideal and the real, thought and reality, theory and

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practice.

It is these classes -- because they reinvestigate what Marxist-Humanism has down in working out that relationship between theory and practice <sup>act. phil. rev.</sup> which can help us grasp how to unchain the dialectic. Not by practice alone ~~which~~ does not mean any substitution for the masses practice. ~~But~~ <sup>or</sup> it is a recognition that that single dialectic <sup>well</sup> is one of thought, of a philosophic vision, of a recreation of Marxism for our day, and that such a recreation is not only needed by the movement as a whole, but must of necessity find organization expression if it is to be worked out fully. That is what News and Letters Committees strive to be -- an organizational expression of the recreation of Marxism for our day. That is what we are trying to show ~~to~~ <sup>in</sup> these classes -- not only no separation of theory and practice, of masses self-activity and the self-determination of the idea which is revolutionary philosophy, but that that revolutionary philosophy has a home, an organizational form -- News and Letters Committees. And I want to say to those of you who are participating in these classes who are not yet members, If you find that you agree with this philosophic vision, then you ~~will~~ in the end should feel compelled to make News and Letters Committees your home, your organization <sup>well</sup> expression of these ideas. It is in such a collectivity as News and Letters Committees, that one can ~~best~~ ~~fully~~ work out the fullest expression of these ideas so that revolution will not ~~remain~~ remain a future to be, but the actuality of become free. When Marx penned "Time is the space for human development" he most certainly meant not capitalist <sup>time</sup> ~~time~~, but the revolutionary time of a new society in the process of becoming. Now is the time for this becoming.

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